

All Things are Curves: Notes on the intersecting lives of Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio

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“All things are curves”...there are no end points or the end points connect in a curved mirror. All things, in this sense, fulfil their own cycle.’

Jean Baudrillard, in conversation with Jean Nouvel (Baudrillard and Nouvel, 2002)

‘Circuit, short-circuit, there is no circus without a circle...’

Paul Virilio (Virilio, 2012)

There is something of a contemporary vogue in global intellectual culture for biographical work on the golden generation of French social theorists who have now passed on – Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari amongst others. Major substantial biographies have recently been published (Dosse, 2010, Peeters, 2013) which allow new analytical perspectives on the relationships between for instance Louis Althusser and Jacques Derrida on the one hand and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari on the other. As a result of this new biographical material, it can be seen that there is a fission and fusion, even confusion, between the lives of figures in this generation which gives rise to new interpretations of their work. In this short essay I want to look at some intimate connections between the late Jean Baudrillard and his long time friend and colleague, Paul Virilio. Jean Baudrillard died of cancer in March 2007 but left some significant work to be published posthumously (Redhead, 2012). Virilio, still producing pithy and provocative books is, alongside Helene Cixous, Alain Badiou and Jacques Ranciere, one of the last living representatives of the post-war generation of radically influential French social theorists who exported what Mike Gane labelled ‘French Social Theory’ around the globe (Gane, 2003) at breakneck speed. These preliminary notes on aspects of the life and work of Baudrillard and Virilio describe some points where their oeuvre has converged and some points where their work diverged, where they agreed and where they disagreed, and where they agreed about disagreeing, with a view to re-assessing their legacy, separately and together.

Non-postmodernism and post-theory

Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio have both been regularly categorised as postmodernists (as well as poststructuralists) by scholars in various different fields – for instance, criminology, socio-legal studies, media theory, sociology, cultural studies, sport and leisure studies, geography, jurisprudence, politics, architecture and art (Armitage, 2011, 2012, 2013, Armitage and Bishop, 2013, Redhead, 2004a, 2004b, 2008, 2013). Further they have, alternatively, been described as post-hypermodernists (Armitage, 2000, 2001). Recently John Armitage has begun to label Paul Virilio’s contemporary contributions as interventions in what he calls ‘postmodern critical cultural theory’ (Armitage, 2011: 25). Jean Baudrillard, at least in his lifetime, similarly endured a reading of his work which “became fixated on a handful of concepts – most notably ‘postmodernism’, ‘simulation’ and ‘hyperreality’” (Smith, Clarke and Doel 2011: 326).

However, in fact, these characterisations are deeply misleading and have held back much needed sensible discussion of the contributions Virilio and Baudrillard could make to contemporary theory today, and their legacies for understanding the 'radically uncertain' future of the world in the twenty-first century. For example, Paul Virilio demonstrably has deep roots in French phenomenology (James, 2007), let alone Teilhard de Chardin and (in his own self-labelling) 'Anarchistic Christianity' (Redhead, 2004a), rather than the milieu of the postmodernists and the poststructuralists with whom he is frequently bracketed. Indeed Francois Dosse (Dosse, 2010: 154) in his spell-binding, mesmeric historical account of the intimate connections between Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, what the biographer sees as the indelible 'intersecting lives' of Deluze and Guattari, reminds us that:

'Deleuze was ambivalent towards phenomenology, keeping his distance and at the same time using several Husserlian notions, such as "passive synthesis" and "transcendental empiricism" for his own purposes. His friend Paul Virilio, who emphatically proclaims his ties with the phenomenological program, says that Deleuze greatly appreciated Merleau-Ponty's last book Visible and Invisible, and also drew from Husserl, for whom sense is what is expressed or the expression and who questions the sense of perception that cannot be reduced to the physical object or to psychological experience.'

Furthermore, Jean Baudrillard, although more often situated by critics as firmly rooted within postmodernism and poststructuralism, has really 'never been postmodern' (Redhead, 2008, 2011). As the best of the burgeoning critical commentators and re-interpreters of Baudrillard and his significance have astutely pointed out:

While it is perhaps understandable that this situation should have arisen, particularly given Baudrillard's initial reception within the English-speaking world as the "high priest" of postmodernism, it is far from an accurate portrayal of the potential Baudrillard's work offers, or indeed, of Baudrillard himself. It is telling that the waning of interest in the postmodern since the 1990s has not, in fact, led to a corresponding decline of interest in Baudrillard. On the contrary, now that his work is no longer interpreted in the one dimensional terms dictated by the modern/postmodern debate, a far fuller, richer, and more diverse understanding and appreciation of Baudrillard's import is beginning to emerge.

(Smith, Clarke and Doel 2011: 326)

In the light of this maelstrom of critical re-interpretation, I would argue that there are ways in which the substantial legacies of both Paul Virilio and Jean Baudrillard might be better seen as singular but related 'post-theory' (Redhead, 2011), or extreme theory for an extreme world (Gane, 1991, Redhead, 2011, Coulter, 2012) and that the time is ripe for a re-assessment of both their trajectories, separately and together. In these notes on their 'intersecting lives' which I present in this essay, there are connections and combinations which make them worth considering, to some extent, as a duo. But equally because of their specific differences and quite determinedly specific trajectories, they can be considered individually. Nevertheless there is a specific context, drawing on Francois Dosse's highly original work, which we must remember here: the fraught intellectual and political context of post-war French social theory. Dosse in his comprehensive analysis of the relations between Deleuze and Guattari, and their respective 'scenes', also provides intimate detail of how Baudrillard and Virilio connected to these, and other, French social theorists such as Jacques Derrida (Peeters, 2013: 567). The stories for example of how Virilio (through the publishers Galilee) became Guattari's friend, editor and publisher are fascinating (Dosse, 2010: 390-2) though 'Virilio's impulsive decision to publish *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* in a prestigious collection was a moment of enthusiasm' as 'the book never managed to attract a very large public' (Dosse, 2010: 391). Sadly another publishing project, the transcript of a multiphase dialogue with Virilio on the aftermath of the Gulf War, was interrupted by Felix Guattari's untimely death in 1992. These are but fragments of what, as Dosse demonstrates with aplomb, are previously unknown 'secret histories' of the genesis and reproduction of French social theory.

Intersecting Lives: Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio

The late Jean Baudrillard once said that in his opinion, as Jean Nouvel reminded him in conversation, 'all things are curves' (Baudrillard and Nouvel, 2002:15-16). Paul Hegarty (Hegarty, 2004) has argued quite correctly, in an excellent book on the 'live theory' of Jean Baudrillard, that Paul Virilio was the theorist closest to Baudrillard's ideas (though he also pointed out that they always differed in quite important ways) and that Virilio is the one person Jean Baudrillard engaged with most over the years before his death in 2007. The 'curves' connecting and defining the two theorists of the 'end' (or in Virilio's word 'finitude') are certainly intriguing and surprisingly underexplored (Redhead, 2004a). They are also the markers of links between the theoretical explorations of the two theorists in the realm of 'post-theory' (Redhead, 2011).

Rather accidentally Baudrillard and Virilio have often had linked publishing histories making it seem as if they are more of an intellectual pairing than they actually were. Semiotext(e) in the USA has published the original work, translated into English from the French, of Baudrillard and Virilio for decades. Also more recently both Virilio and Baudrillard had new versions of their books by Semiotext(e) in a revisiting of both theorists' work for the twenty-first century. For instance, in 2008 Semiotext(e) published a 'lost' series of seminars from 1990 and 1991 about 'radical alterity' (Baudrillard and Guillaume, 2008) and a fresh version of *Forget Foucault* (Baudrillard, 2008) with a new up to date introduction by Sylvère Lotringer. In 2007 Semiotext(e) published a new version of Baudrillard's *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities* (Baudrillard, 2007) with a newly translated essay 'Event and Non-Event' as one of the Chapters. A new, third, expanded, edition of the classic book of early 1980s Virilio conversations with Sylvère Lotringer, *Pure War* (Virilio and Lotringer, 2008) was also published by Semiotext(e) at this time. Virilio's *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* was also given a new lease of life by Semiotext(e) (Virilio, 2009a) with a new introduction by Jonathan Crary. One of Baudrillard's posthumous books, *The Agony of Power* was published by Semiotext(e). Two English translations of Virilio books have been published by Berg in England (Virilio, 2005, Virilio, 2007a) and Berg were until April 2009 the distributors for Seagull Press, a small Indian publisher based in Calcutta which has published two of Baudrillard's posthumous books (Baudrillard, 2009, 2010b). Also Baudrillard and Virilio have been published by Polity Press in England (Baudrillard, 2005a, Baudrillard, 2005b, Virilio, 2007b, Virilio, 2010a, 2010b, 2012), adding to the longstanding translation and publication of Baudrillard and Virilio by Verso books, standard bearer of the new New Left. In 2002, alongside Virilio's *Ground Zero* (Virilio, 2002) Baudrillard contributed one of the other books in Verso's 2002 mini series on September 11, 2001 called *The Spirit of Terrorism*, which went into a second, expanded edition in 2004 (Baudrillard, 2004). Virilio and Baudrillard have both had edited books of essays devoted to them in a Polity Press series on theorists *Now* (Bishop, 2009, Armitage, 2011) and Edinburgh University Press have published large scale, collectively written, dictionaries on both theorists in the last few years (Smith, 2010, Armitage, 2013). Baudrillard has an online International Journal of Baudrillard Studies devoted to his work; it is surely only a matter of time before a similar virtual enterprise is devoted to Paul Virilio. Manifestly, 'Virilio Studies' (Armitage, 2011) and 'Baudrillard Studies' (Bishop, 2009) are now phrases which are part of global academic culture, alongside, for instance, 'Badiou Studies', 'Deleuze Studies' and 'Zizek Studies' all of whom have their own dedicated open access international online journal.

We know that Baudrillard and Virilio were long term friends. Is there, though, any evidence of Baudrillard and Virilio working together? Collegial work between the two French intellectuals together did in fact sometimes occur, especially in their middle age, from the mid-1970s onwards. As Mike Gane (Gane, 2003) noted in his forensic analysis of French social theory and its main historical protagonists, Virilio worked with Baudrillard in Paris on the journal *Traverses* between 1975 and 1990, after Virilio previously worked independently on the Catholic-inspired journal *Esprit*. Virilio told European Graduate School students at La Rochelle, France in 2007 (Virilio, 2009: 68-70), a couple of weeks after Baudrillard died, about their collaboration and that he saw that:

'The big difference between Jean and me is that he worked on simulation and I worked on substitution...I would like to relate a small anecdote about Baudrillard and simulation and substitution. When we found ourselves at the Revue Travers, I had just finished my photographic campaign, which took ten years, on the wall of the Atlantic. Baudrillard hated photography at the time. I went to the Revue Travers because before, in the Revue de L'esprit, they didn't have photos or images. At the Revue Travers, I could publish my photos and I told the revue, "I am coming". When I saw Baudrillard, he said "Tisk, tisk, tisk". And now he is dead and I am still alive...It's been quite a long time now since I have stopped taking photos, but he, he began taking photos. He even finally became a photographer. This is typical in our movement.'

Virilio and Baudrillard were both, separately, at various times in the 2000s, Professors at the European Graduate School, Saas-Fee, Switzerland, where Sylvère Lotringer (a long time friend, publisher and interlocutor of both theorists became the Jean Baudrillard Professor). Indeed Virilio's current designation is as Professor of Urban Philosophy at the European Graduate School. YouTube has many hours of free downloads of both Virilio and Baudrillard giving their various independent French language lectures for the European Graduate School. As with many other theorists mentioned in this essay who are also part of the European Graduate School, video lectures have been uploaded on the internet for free downloading by anyone, all over the world at the same time – exactly illustrating Virilio's imagined 'city of the instant' or 'futurism of the moment'!

Even though, as far as we can see, they never wrote together, a critical comparison of Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio, and their intertwined histories can undoubtedly be made both within and without French social theory as a specific body of knowledge (Redhead, 2004b: 1-9, Redhead, 2004a: 119-124; Gane, 2003, Redhead, 2008:1-13). Virilio, as well as seeing the important simulation/substitution debate as a major dividing line between them, commented on subtle, substantive differences with Baudrillard, in the days after the latter's death. In conversation with Sylvère Lotringer of Semiotext(e) in La Rochelle three months after Baudrillard's passing, Virilio (Virilio and Lotringer, 2008: 235) in an emotional remembrance emphasised that he and his old friend Baudrillard radically disagreed and that they actually:

'had a radically different approach to things. For me, things have a purpose, every moment has its purpose. He didn't believe so. That is why we could never discuss certain subjects. On the other hand, we had something in common, which was the uncertainty principle, not believing your own eyes, conscientious objections. That is why he wrote what he did about the Gulf War. There are conscientious objectors who don't want to see the war and those who don't believe in the war, even when it takes place, since the war was created out of its image.'

Other commentators have drawn attention to the similarities *and* differences in Baudrillard and Virilio. In 'Elegy for a Dead Friend' in *Grey Ecology* a book published in 2009 in a series called the 'University of Disaster' in honour of Virilio's contemporary concept of the 'university of disaster' (Virilio, 2009b: 19), Drew Burk, Virilio's translator into English from the original European Graduate School French language seminars in Virilio's home town of La Rochelle in April 2007, and an interpreter at the event, commented:

'I must say that before meeting and interpreting for Virilio, I had quite a few problems with his writings, especially concerning art. I was more akin to his friend and theoretical antagonist, Jean Baudrillard and while I desperately wanted to enjoy both of these thinkers' philosophical inquiries into the mediated world that we find ourselves immersed in today, Virilio's thought, as opposed to Baudrillard's, at the least seemed too defensive. But as Virilio began to plead his case, his presence gave another quality to his work. I couldn't help but deconstruct the scene. Virilio, in the aftermath of his friend's death (Baudrillard had died two weeks prior) seemed more concerned than ever with maintaining a "distance" from what Baudrillard would name the hyperreal...But something struck me quite curiously here when Virilio proposed his grey ecology and with it a recoil, a necessity to take a step back from the instantaneity of what he calls "cinematic energy" in order to maintain a distance. One started to see a certain difference in the unfolding of Virilio's critique and that of his friend Jean Baudrillard...Virilio would call this position of study the University of Disaster.'

The Death of Death?

Most starkly, though, it is religious belief which most clearly divided Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio throughout their long friendship. Virilio believes in the death of death and Baudrillard believed in 'symbolic exchange and death', a very different thing altogether. Drew Burk (Virilio, 2009b: 20-21) has noted the source of this breach, which has deep theoretical repercussions for the interpretation of their work, as the:

'Christian ether surrounding Virilio. When he responded to a question regarding what artists today should do to fight the problem of speed and technology he quoted St. Augustine, "Do whatever you want, but do it with love". But for Virilio there is an interesting twist that makes all the difference. His idea of revelation is not that of the end, but of a revealing, and this for Virilio is the essence as well of his concept of the integral accident. This leads me to Baudrillard and his relationship to Virilio. Virilio believes the biogenetic bomb is one we must be wary of. He warns against cloning not only of people, but perception itself. Virilio however does not believe that we have already entered the "hyperreal" of Baudrillard. I asked him the question. He thinks we have yet to move over. Virilio still claims we can gain the necessary distance from the technological speed of the virtual. But Baudrillard obviously thought differently. He states "Distance is obliterated, both external distance from the real world and the internal distance specific to the sign". Virilio calls for us to take a step back from the instantaneity of screen technology, but for Baudrillard, it has already burned itself onto our retina. For Baudrillard, the cloning that Virilio speaks of has already taken place, perhaps not physically yet (this is debatable, but at least psychically with the mass popularisation of certain figures, styles, etc). For Baudrillard, the hyperreal has already taken over, and more to the point, we have entered the realm of the pataphysical, the theatre of cruelty that is the science of imaginary solutions. The "integral accident" of Virilio, his thought is always/already framed in the theatre of the global. But Baudrillard reminds us of the place to which thought should not be instructed, to an idea which he and his friend Virilio would perhaps have agreed upon. Baudrillard states, "Thought must refrain from instructing or being instructed by, a future reality, for in that game, it will always fall into the trap of a system that holds the monopoly of reality. And this is not a philosophical choice. It is, for thought, a life-and-death question". And this brings me to point on which I think both of these philosophers (one always reminding us of his architectural hauntology, the other of his Jarry nature) can agree. They are both trying to carve out a thought and a mimetic mirror of actuality without coming to a limit, an absolute. When Virilio quotes St Augustine, it is in the same way that Baudrillard makes up a fake quote from Ecclesiastes. It is for a love of existence, even if it is the smallest of things.'

A major deficiency of Paul Virilio's work, as opposed to Jean Baudrillard's, is his lack of a sophisticated psychoanalysis or even a radical psychological framework. He admits, openly, to a relatively conservative Gestalt psychology. Louis Althusser, Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Jean Baudrillard, for example, all embraced, to some extent or other, a psychoanalytical culture in their work. Paul Virilio (Virilio, 2009b: 42) has even explicitly stated that 'contrary to my old friend Jean Baudrillard, I have no psychoanalytic culture; zero, it doesn't interest me', and furthermore that:

'concerning Baudrillard, I believe that there wasn't much we agreed on. Like the saying goes, we don't have to agree to get along. Jean was a great friend. On many points we were in complete disagreement. Well, you have understood I am a Christian. That is to say, I don't believe in death. And Baudrillard didn't believe in life, that is the reality of life. This is where one gets the idea of simulations. We were both conscientious objectors. Both atheists, but not the same kind: he didn't believe in reality, in particular in its acceleration, and I don't believe in death, that is to say, in cessation.'

These differences of intellectual culture fundamentally affect how useful the respective legacies of Virilio and Baudrillard are going to be in the problematic global future. It is worth considering some recent work in order to problematize this question. In 2010 Virilio published a book called *L'Administration du La Peur*, later translated as *The Administration of Fear* (Virilio and Richard, 2012). Published by Textuel in Paris this volume of conversations with Bertrand Richard was full of everything from Virilio's views on social media such as Facebook to his usual diet of war technologies (for example, the Manhattan project), the spreading 'fear' of the title and the horrendous, catastrophic state of the planet we inhabit as climate change goes into overdrive. The title originates from an ironic word play on a book title used by author Graham Greene – suitably another haunted

Catholic like Paul Virilio. *Le Grand Accélérateur*, Paul Virilio's subsequent book in French but translated later into English as *The Great Accelerator* (Virilio, 2012), consisted of three short essays. One was on the Credit Crunch and Stock Markets Crash (the global Financial Crisis or GFC) of 2007/2008, one was on the 'slow death' of private life in Western culture and the third, which also serves as the title of the book, considered the Large Hadron Collider. In the title essay Virilio homed in on the idea of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) scientific experiment at CERN in Geneva in Switzerland, and its experimental risk of 'humanity', as he puts it, heading into a black hole, thereby recycling his long term opposition to a 'post-human' future (embraced emphatically by Baudrillard in contrast). Issues such as 'what right does CERN have to cause a black hole?' have, as Virilio pointed out, already been litigated and Virilio pursues with venom and high energy the background of this 'risky' scientific experiment with 'progress'. Albert Einstein has always been a symbolic figure for Virilio, but Virilio's Catholic religious belief and his commitment to an explicit 'humanism' in his philosophy have often led him into some strange and potentially reactionary areas for an avowed left wing intellectual to inhabit and the LHC is another potentially treacherous platform for his exploration of the vagaries of scientific progress. Subsequent to Virilio's book being published in France, in 2011, researchers at CERN claimed that a neutrino beam fired from the particle accelerator near Geneva to a lab 454 miles away in Italy travelled 60 nanoseconds faster than the speed of light, thus questioning Albert Einstein's long standing 1905 theory of relativity, a major feature in Virilio's own work since the 1950s.

Moreover, it should be noted, Paul Virilio has left a strange legacy of religious architecture, and architectural theory (Redhead, 2011). Again, recent publications have aided scholars in their quest for comparisons of Virilio and Baudrillard, both among the foremost architectural theorists of our modern age (Redhead, 2004a, 2004b, 2008). For instance, for a period in the 1960s, Virilio worked with architect Claude Parent in the group Architecture Principe, creating works like the Bunker Church at Nevers in France (Virilio and Parent, 2010) and reorienting modernist architecture in the process. In the early 1960s Paul Virilio, who was a master glassmaker at the time, and architect Claude Parent, with several others, set up Architecture Principe – though many of the group's ideas never came to fruition. Perhaps the duo's most famous building to see the light of day was the 'bunker church' at Nevers. The church, Saint-Bernadette du Banlay, has sloping floors and oozes Brutalism – it is a 'bunker' in appearance, modelled on Virilio's photo/textual study (1958-1965) of the World War 2 Atlantic Wall German bunkers in France, built, in the throes of invasion, to keep the Allies out of occupied territory. A lavish coffee table book published in 2010, in French and simultaneous English translation on the same page, entitled *Nevers* (Virilio and Parent, 2010) served as a remarkable tribute to the idea of, and eventual building of, the 'bunker church'. The volume had numerous colour and black and white photos, interviews with both Parent and Virilio looking back from the perspective of the twenty first century five decades after the original construction of the church in 1966, documents and pictures from the construction of the project and essays and chronologies galore. Some of *Nevers* was reprinted (from Architecture Principe pamphlets in the 1960s and Virilio's recently reprinted 1975 book *Bunker Archeology* – Virilio, 2009c) but the majority of the 184 page hardback book had never been previously widely publicised.

Jean Baudrillard's contributions to architectural theory are also provocative and profound. It was in the conversations with celebrated 'starchitect' Jean Nouvel (Baudrillard and Nouvel, 2002) with which we started this essay, that Baudrillard's immortal pithy statement was uttered: 'all things are curves'. But, significantly, Baudrillard's contribution to architectural theory was secular not religious. Jean Baudrillard, for his part, whenever he was asked about the religious aspect of Virilio's work, merely restated, deadpan, the fact of the matter of his friend's Christianity in throwaway one-liners. Baudrillard admitted to an epiphany in his own life but it was not religious. Jean Baudrillard's mid-life epiphany occurred, according to Sylvère Lotringer, in San Diego in the mid-1970s when, teaching with celebrity academics Fredric Jameson, Michel de Certeau and Jean-Francois Lyotard. Jean Baudrillard came to the realisation that, in Sylvère Lotringer's words, society was "losing all its moorings" (Baudrillard, 2010a: 11). As Lotringer, who was geographically present on the east coast of the USA for some of the time, recalls, the speed at which Baudrillard wrote his key work *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (Baudrillard, 1993) is noteworthy. Before leaving the USA for a return to France in this period (circa 1976), Lotringer tells us, this vital book in the Baudrillard catalogue was written. It was published in 1976 in French, but not really fully appreciated by English speaking readers globally until much later into the era of what Baudrillard called the 'end of the century party' (Baudrillard, 1993, Redhead, 2008) on publication in English in 1993. Crucially, this master work contained the theory of reversibility which would become so important to Baudrillard's writing until his own death. As Lotringer puts it, "reversibility is the form death takes in a symbolic exchange" (Baudrillard 2010a: 14).

All Things Are Curves?

Whatever their differences (and I would argue that they are singular voices which should be listened to separately) both Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio, and their major body of work stretching back to the 1950s, are useful 'post-theoretical' tools in what I have imagined as these 'claustropolitan' times (Redhead, 2011) – a phrase which is inspired by Paul Virilio's notion that claustropolis has replaced cosmopolis in the contemporary world of 'post-catastrophe' and 'post-politics' (Redhead, 2011, 2012, 2013). Jean Baudrillard is dead, but remains as relevant as ever to the enterprise of theorising the 'now' (Clarke et al, 2008, Bishop, 2009, Smith, 2010, Smith, Clarke and Doel, 2011). Paul Virilio is still very much alive, looking back and looking forward (Virilio and Parent, 2010, Virilio and Richard, 2012, Armitage, 2011).

But, we might in conclusion, posit, somewhat mischievously, one of the questions underlying the work of Baudrillard and Virilio, together and apart, which has led to them being, rather unfortunately, bracketed with postmodernism and poststructuralism: is linearity also dead? After all everything speeds back on itself in accelerated culture (Redhead, 2004a, 2011). Let us at least hang on to Jean Baudrillard's enigmatic phrase – 'all things are curves'. But let us allow Paul Virilio (Virilio, 2012: 85-88), 'post-Baudrillard' as it were, to have the last word, in writing about the Large Hadron Collider and the 'great acceleration' now taking place in our world :

'Circuit, short-circuit – let's go back now to the circle, the kuklos, and this circular particle accelerator, the CYCLOTRON, which is at the origins of nuclear physics, having been invented at Berkeley in the early 1930s and which suddenly, in 2009, turned into an underground CATHEDRAL, the temple of an epic science launched in quest of "God's particle"...now, finally, we have Europe's LARGE HADRON COLLIDER, 27 kilometres long. The name is significant since we've gone from the invention of the ACCELERATOR – linear then circular – to the COLLIDER, the impact study of the speed of light concluding with the spectacular smashing of the Time Barrier!'

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