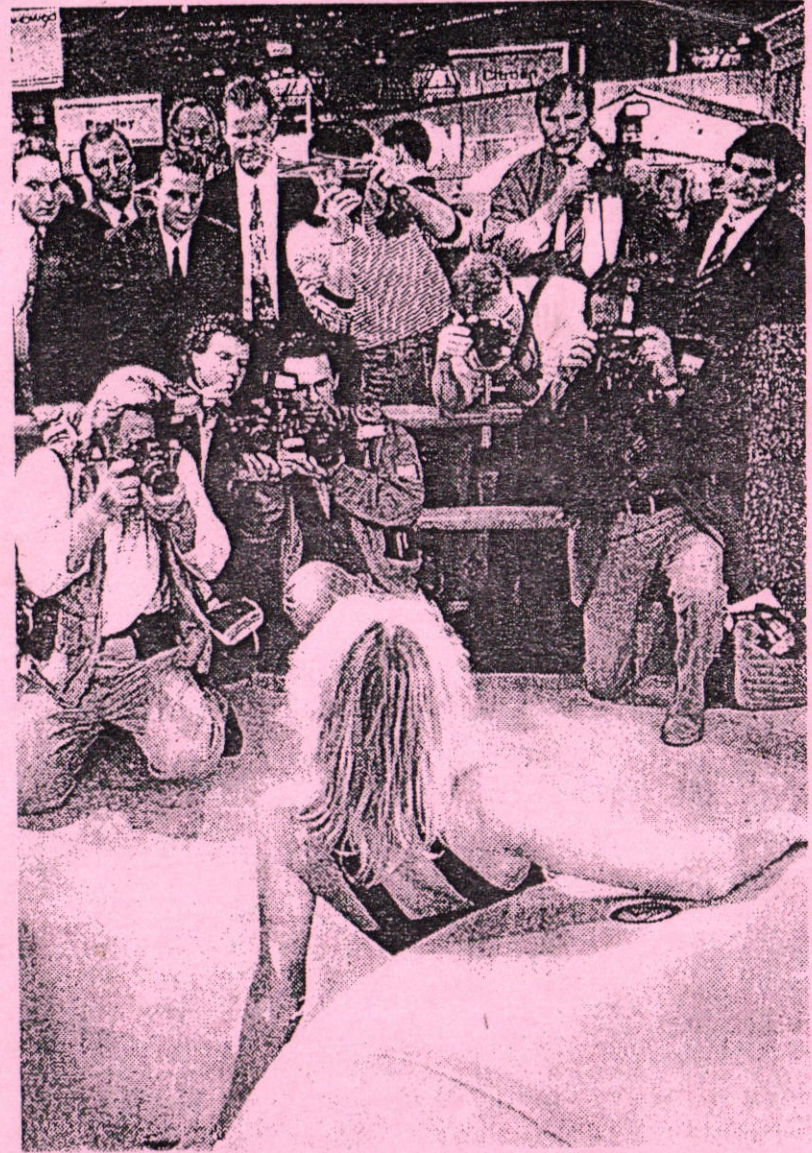


Cars - they're all around us - but what exactly is a car? Do they give us freedom - or are they just a nuisance? Can they be blamed for drink driving - or is it more the beer? In fact, can anything at all be done to halt the spread of these smelly devils?

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Away with all Cars
by Mr Social Control

A FEW CONTACTS

Carmageddon . (The "Earth First!" car campaign). c/o PO Box 2573, London, N16 6HN. Tel 081 806 1561. Ask for their list of local groups.

London Greenpeace. c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London N1. This is not Greenpeace plc, and had the name first. They are @narchos.

Whose World? I think these people may be christian environmentalists or something. c/o The Trinity Community, 119 East India Dock Road, Poplar, London E14.

Pedestrians Association. 1 Wandsworth Road, London, SW8 2XX. Nice line in stickers.

Alarm UK (Alliance Against Road Building). 13-15 Stockwell Rd., London, SW9 Tel 071 737 6641

No M11. c/o 4 Colville Rd., London, E11 4EH

Reclaim the Streets. 435-437 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London, SW9 8LN Tel 071 738 6721

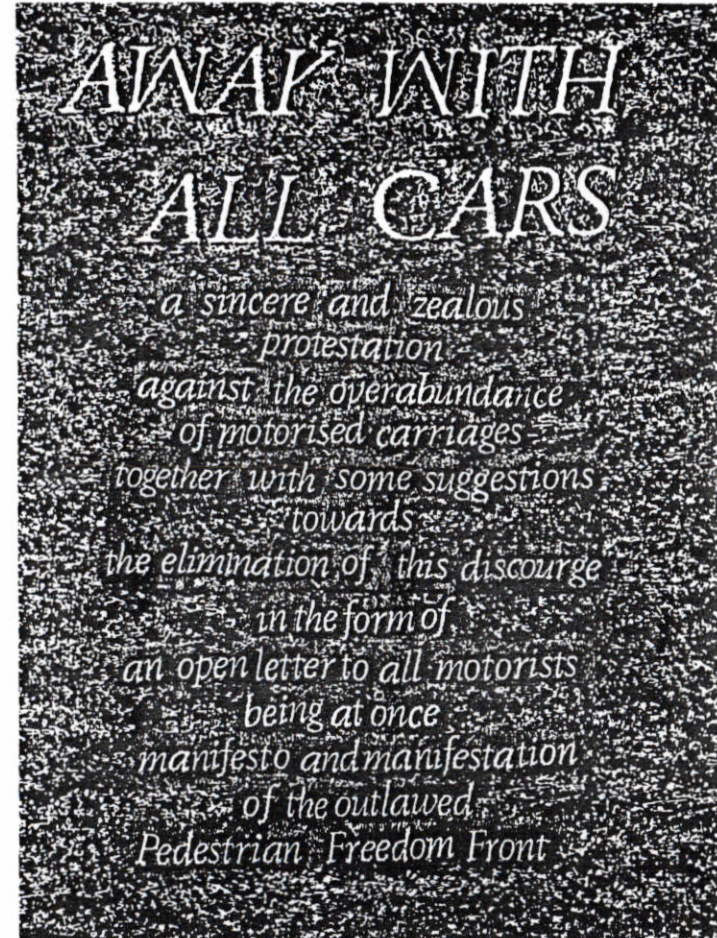
Earth First! Oxford. Box E, 34 Cowley Rd., Oxford, OX4 1HZ

PARC (People Against the River Crossing). c/o 82 Cranbrook Rd., Deptford, London, SE8 4EJ

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For spiritual and material assistance: Ade, Jason, Jason, Mipsi, Leslie, Sned, Boffo from Halifax, Sam, Madame Lily, Oblivia Channon (for the crack), Luke Barcode, Dick Oak, Garry, Sybil, Dave M and my mam.

Lay out at Community CopyArt, 41 Battlebridge Road, London NW1.
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PLAY TIME FOR EVER PRESS

**DON'T
COMPETE
PLAY**

B.M. JED, London. WC1N 3XX

"The Car Factory, The University and The Working Class". FiFi LaRue 1991. Fascinating account of the malleability of the car as a symbol and of joyriding inside the Cowley factory but downplays the role of joyriders in terrorising local communities and thereby dividing them and letting the cops in. As with much "Class Warrior" writing we are lead to suspect that only gangs of drunken young men can be revolutionary. Available from WRACAU Press, Box B., OXFIN, Unit One, Paradise Street Business Centre, Oxford, OX1 1LT.

"Crash". J.G.Ballard. Brilliant. If cars are sexual potency, then what does crashing represent? This is kind of science fiction except that its all extremely true.

"Concrete Island". J.G.Ballard. Modern day Robinson Crusoe gets stranded on a roundabout off the Westway.

"The Car Culture". James Flick. MIT press. Cambridge Massachusetts. 1975.

"Rethinking the Role of the Automobile". Michael Renner. Worldwatch Paper 84, June 1988. Lots of statistics, chiefly about exhaust fumes.

New Internationalist. May 1989. Special issue entirely about cars.

"Carmageddon the Case against the Car". Bob Finch. Splendid rant. And aeroplanes, they're no better. Available from Terra, 46 Albany St., Spring Bank, Hull, HU3 1PL.

"A Day in the life of the Car: 24 damning facts". 1989. Solid anarchist leaflet from Steve, PO Box 71, Hastings, East Sussex.

Fifth Estate. (US @nacho paper, from PO Box 02548, Detroit(!), Michigan, USA) Spring 1987 edition was an anticar special.

"The Environmental Impact Of The Car". Greenpeace International. 1991. Pretty informative but not worth a fiver.

The Fatuous Times #1. Superb anticar postnihilist poster book. Every one should read it. No-one shouldn't. Available from: PLAYTIME FOR EVER PRESS, PO Box 406, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 4RN.

"Driving Passions: The Psychology of the Car". Marsh and Collett. Johnathan Cape.

"Automania: Man and the Motor Car". Pettifer and Teurner. Collins 1984.

Totally Normal #2. Very small rantzine against cars and most other things. From BM CRL, London, WC1N 3XX.

"Energy and Equity". Ivan D. Illich. Caubler and Boyars. 1974.

Motorist 'An Undesirable Member of Community'

SIR—Major Oliver Stewart has got it all wrong. The motorist, he says, used to think of himself as a free and uninhibited member of the community, but now thinks of himself as an undesirable and potentially criminal interloper. Surely the modern motorist is in fact an undesirable member of the community who thinks himself entitled to be uninhibited.

I remember the time when one could enjoy walking, cycling or driving along British roads. Now 18 people a day are killed on them (incredibly, nobody seems to mind very much) and all the pleasure has gone. Not only are the streets of every town cluttered but, in many places, even the pavements—so that pedestrians face the final irony of being compelled to walk in the roadway. Nevertheless, any suggestion that this free-for-all might be curtailed brings howls of rage from car owners.

Meanwhile, nobody seems to be trying to find out the psychological reasons for all this lunatic to-ing and fro-ing. What are all those mobs doing in the West End, for instance? Working? If so they are wasting a tremendous amount of their own, their employers' and everyone else's time. If they are not in the traffic blocks by necessity, why on earth are they there—not only by day but also at all hours of the night? Has the whole nation suddenly got a passion for social calls? Is it the victim of an obsessive compulsion simply to be on the move?

Only one thing is perfectly clear: that no Government will have the moral courage to control this anti-social tide in the interests of civilised living. We shall go on hesitating and tinkering until, before the end of the century, Britain will not be worth living in. (Nor any other country, for that matter, except "backward" ones.)

This, by the way, is not a havenot's moan. I have been driving cars without accident for 40 years. In that time I don't suppose I have blown the horn as often as many selfish and incompetent drivers blow it every day. These free and uninhibited people are turning this island into a mechanised hell. I beats me why Major Stewart should come to their defence.

Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR DOWNES,
London, N.W.3.



Truffle country near Patcham, in Sussex, referred to below

Truffle Hunting as a Business

SIR—Mink, tiaras, champagne and...? Surely truffles, "the black diamonds of the kitchen," are also in the romantic picture of opulent high life? Truffle hunting was some weeks ago the subject of a BBC television programme, photographed in Northern Italy. Stay-at-homes may be interested in the following passage written of Patcham in Sussex about 125 years ago:

The beechwoods in this parish and its immediate neighbourhood are very productive of the Truffle (Lycoperdon tuber). About forty years ago William Leach came from the West Indies, with some dogs accustomed to hunt for truffles, and proceeding along the coast from Land's End, in Cornwall, to the mouth of the River Thames, determined to fix on that spot where he found them most abundant. He took four years to try the experiment, and at length settled in this parish, where he carried on the business of truffle-hunter to his death.

The photograph above was taken (in the parish of Patcham, in possible truffle territory) just two years ago. Two years earlier I had been to Winterslow near Salisbury, once famous for truffles because of Eli Collins and his half-bred poodle-terriers and their activities in late Victorian and Edwardian times. Members of the Collins family still lived in Winterslow. It would be interesting to know if anyone in England now harvests truffles.

Yours faithfully,
J. D. U. WARD,
Minehead, Somerset.

G.C.E. Passport to Academic Europe

SIR—In your excellent article on the Atlantic Certificate of Education, you mentioned that it is obtained in agreement with the entrance with the educational authorities in West Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Holland. The next paragraph explains that this is on the basis of three good-advance level passes.

My son attends a school in this country from which a Dutch boy two years ago entered a Dutch university on the basis of his advance level passes. A West German boy there at present plans to do the same; G.C.E. equivalent to the German Abitur being well established. Danish boys have already been to the school and then gone on to university.

I admire all educational enterprises such as the Atlantic Certificate but I think it would be worth an impression to be given by some new and exclusive movement about university in Europe had been initiated.

Yours faithfully,
(Mrs.) P. J. L. HOLR
Hampton, Middlesex.

BLACK MARI

Sir—Would Mr. Edward Robb please explain why a Bolton ticket should not be valued at 15 pence if that is its market value.

Yours faithfully,
C. G. PRIMMER,
Ilford, Essex.
Other Letters—P12

DEAR MOTORIST

In the world as a whole there are about 265 000 dead per annum (5) and a good 10 million injured (5).

Car ownership is not as universal as it pretends. In the UK 35% of households have no regular use of a car (1) compared to 48% in 1970. 38% of eligible British adults have no driving license (1). That's 22% of men and 53% of women. The biggest car firm in the world is General Motors which makes 16.1% of the world's cars.(10)

SOURCES (1) Department of Transport. Transport Statistics Great Britain 1979-1989 HMSO. London 1990. (2) John Adams. "Car Ownership Forecasting." Traffic Engineering and Control. March 1990. (3) AutoExpress. 28 September 1989. (4) US Motor Vehicles Manufacturers Association. 1989. (5) European Conference of Ministers of Transport. Paris 1989. (6) Mad Car Disease. Greenpeace UK. Feb 1991. (7) BBC TV. Public Eye. 10 November 1989. (8) JJ Mackenzie & MP Walsh. Driving Forces: Motor Vehicle Trends and their Implication for Global Warming. Energy Strategies and Transportation Planning. World Resources Institute. Washington DC. 1990. (9) Motor Industry of Great Britain. Automotive Statistics. Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. London 1990. (10) World Motor Vehicle Association of United States Inc. World Motor Vehicle Data. 1990. (11) Richard Askwith. "The Transport Crisis" Observer Magazine. 15 April 1990. (12) Stewart Boyle & John Ardill. The Greenhouse Effect. Great Britain. (13) Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva). Statistics of Road Traffic Accidents in Europe. United Nations Publications. New York vol. xxxv 1990.

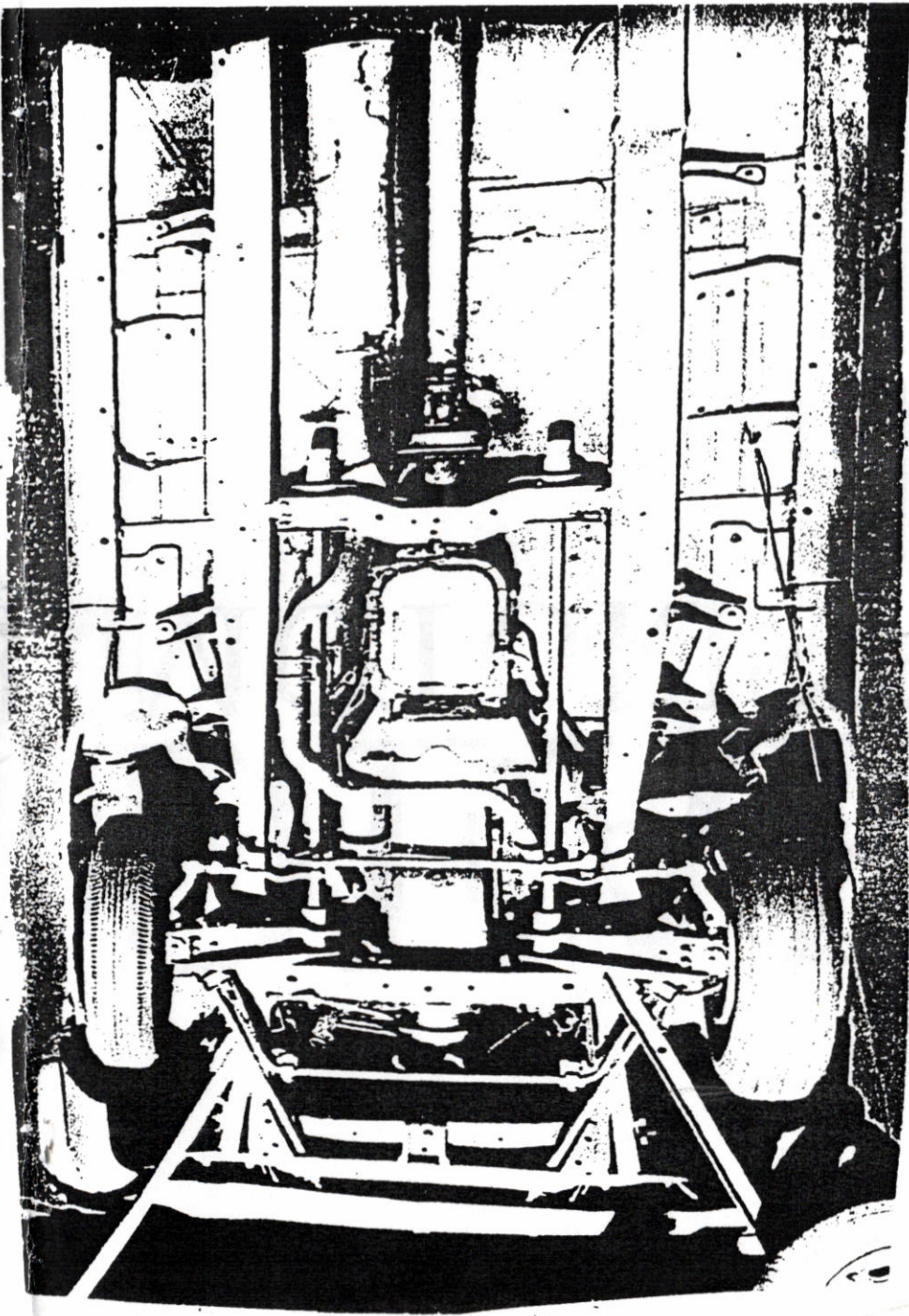
THE CAR-HATER'S BOOKSHELF

"Autogeddon", healthcare Williams. Jonathan Cape 1991. Coffee table anticar book. Interesting quotes section but the poetry's dreadful. The gratuitous Holocaust metaphor is particularly crass and offensive. People were driven into the ovens they, didn't drive there of their own volition.

"Gridlock". Ben Elton. MacDonald 1991. I've been told this isn't as cheesy as you might think.

"The Automobile Nightmare". Alistair Aird. Hutchinson 1972. Starts off from the drivers' point of view complaining that insurance is a ripoff and that technically the car hasn't been really improved for about 50 years, and gradually expands its consciousness to the point of deciding that cars are rubbish and should be got rid of. Unfortunately he seems to think that planned obsolescence is the special province of the car industry, rather than a general property of capitalism. In fact his main objections are on the grounds of efficiency he keeps harping on about how "we" should provide a proper transport system for "our society". It doesn't really address the problem of how such a monstrosity could have come about if it wasn't a means of social control.

"The Life Of the Automobile". Ilya Ehrenburg. 1929. Reprinted Pluto Press 1985. This is a sort of dramatised history a bit like that "fall of Mrs. Thatcher" programme. Lots of horrifying industrial accidents, lives of grinding poverty in factories and rubber plantations, big industrial belches from Monsieur Citroen and car crashes.



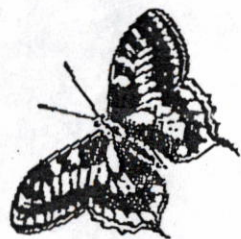
THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PLANET

ALISON REYNOLDS is 26, a Cambridge graduate and has always worked for environmental organisations. She is currently administrator of the Greenpeace direct actions unit. Reynolds reckons she is paid about one-third less than she would be in the private sector. (After a period of difficulty in attracting good people to the non-campaigning areas, Greenpeace adopted a policy of paying reasonable salaries.) "I've never really considered working in the private sector and I don't have a mortgage or dependants, so I don't need to earn more. But people seem to manage."

5.1 And as if this is not bad enough, it is getting worse. This traffic system can only exist in a state of perpetual expansion. It increases the distances over which goods and people must be transported. Then, ingeniously, it offers a solution to this problem: the car and the truck. It creates unsafe, empty, hateful streets, then offers the car as a form of safety. It creates a rich world greedy for status lifestyles and endless raw materials, then offers itself as an index of the degree of "development" of the poor world. Just as it is transforming the city it is transforming the rest of the planet.

5.2 Mining ores for raw materials carves great opencast scars in the landscape, often dispossessing native pedestrians of their lands and livelihoods at the same time. The ores are processed in huge plants. The metals, components and fractionates are shipped across the globe in leaky hulks. Lives are warped in factories that assemble components, on plantations that grow rubber, in the mines and in the refineries, in the forges and the crippling foundries. And at every stage, up until throwing the burnt out wreckage of the finished product into a concrete ditch, heaving the used tyres out to sea by the bargeload and chucking the acid-leaking batteries into a river, pollution is pumping out into the atmosphere, seeping into the hydrosphere and being buried in the mud.





5.3 On top of this, cars need petrol which pollutes at its points of production and consumption and at every point in between: the supertanker, the filling station and the engine of your car. The fumes from burning petrol are the largest artificial source of atmospheric carbon in the world. The main carbon sinks which take carbon out of the atmosphere are the rainforests and the plankton of the southern seas. Unfortunately the rainforests are being destroyed and the plankton threatened by ozone depletion (a process itself accelerated by car fumes). Even without this destruction, the sinks would be unable to cope with the current number of cars. What is actually at stake here is the habitability of the entire surface of the planet.

5.4 The Earth is not in itself amenable to human, or to any other, life. Its current surface temperature and atmospheric composition have come about through interrelations between organisms over the last three thousand million years and are even today sustained solely by the continuance of those interrelations. It is totally obvious that killing enough of those organisms and pumping enough shite into air, sea and soil is likely to interfere with these delicate feedback loops. The surface of the Earth could easily be made as hostile to life as the surfaces of Mars and Venus. The extinction of our species does not necessarily follow from this. If Moon and Mars bases can be contemplated, if artificial orbital biospheres can be devised, then life could still continue on a devastated Earth. Cities framed by geodesic domes or buried in caves of steel are no less feasible in purely engineering terms than, say, the channel tunnel. It is this very feasibility of life in a completely artificial environment that belies the idea that the classes responsible for the Earth's current malaise will eventually be thanked for its recovery.

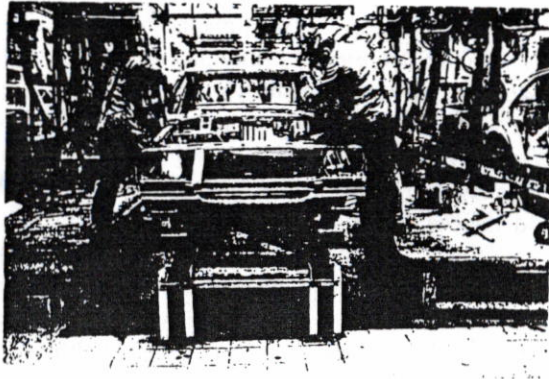
4.2 But the car can only take you where the car has already been. Driving is like shopping in a big supermarket. You are in a little bubble of your own and accountable to no-one. You can buy (drive to) any product (prefabricated destination) you like, but you can only choose from what is on offer. You are isolated and at the same time reincorporated into a grand scheme of domination. You feel privileged but you are being used. The powers that be prefer roads to streets because a busy highway is just a prison with mobile cells. A driver can leave the road but can no more influence others to do likewise than a corpse can start an insurrection in a cemetery. A car is an accident looking for somewhere to happen and the more people have cars the more similar everywhere becomes, so the less meaningful is your "freedom of movement".

4.3 By arranging the space in which human activity takes place, the road network prearranges our movements. Even a "holiday" is nothing but one long journey, a linear sequence of experiences with no connecting structure but "what's next?". Ultimately the prescribing of experiences, prescribes emotions. You have no more power to influence the pictures on the windscreen on your way to work, than those on the television screen at home, so you feel powerless. Separation makes us feel lonely. Endless repetition of the same little rituals, enforced by the intractability of urban geography, makes us feel bored.

4.4 We can observe our boredom, just as we can observe a car park and feel as little empowered to do away with one as the other. The boredom is the consequence of the carpark and the carpark is the reification, the translation into the material world, of the boredom. This boredom is nothing less than the boredom of the Market itself. It takes place within our tiny bubbles. It is a secret and lonely misery, as hidden as the misery of the widows of the motorcar, dreaming every night of their husbands burning helplessly to death, strapped to a plastic seat on a motorway.



THE NECESSITY OF DRIVING



4.1 In a way though, driving has been forced on you. Many suburbs of Los Angeles do not even have pavements. Milton Keynes is little better. Life for many people is now impossible without a car. In order to either earn or spend money, the car has become a necessity. What is this doing to people? Advertisements claim that driving is a form of freedom, a kind of power. The ads are telling the truth but at the same time they're lying. Because cars are expensive, and speak of the physical control of space, they have become emblematic of wealth. Because male sexuality has been constructed as mechanical and thrusting, and because the car is a scale model of the nuclear family, cars have come to represent male power. As a driver you have power over pedestrians and passengers and urban space; so the car represents its own reality: motor power.

5.5 Green experts assure us they know what they are doing, and hurry up with the next 25K wage packet please, but the assertion that the holders of planetary power are not crazed enough to really, really do it is no more convincing now than it was in the days of Mutually Assured Destruction. It does not matter which are psychotic and which benevolent, because the holders of power are always beholden to power itself. In a world governed by stock prices the buck stops nowhere. It passes from Tokyo to London to New York and back to Tokyo again. Why should they care if the whole world is turned into a radiation soaked desert? If no human being can ever see the light of day with their own eyes? What does it mean to them if every beautiful and useless creature in the world is exterminated for ever? If we are reduced to drinking our own piss miles underground, dependent on them for every breath of oxygen we take? And if they are willing to save the biosphere at this late hour then why do the greenest amongst them proclaim that the rainforests should be rescued only in order that the plants be used to make herbal shampoo? If they care about the quality of life that their underlings lead, then why are millions starving in the south of the world to feed the debts imposed by the banks in the north?

5.6 The truth is that ecological disaster would be a stroke of luck for those that benefit from the domination of our lives. The car is an effective device for representing and extending power over space. Yet it is still vulnerable. While our air is still just about breathable, while the experience of sunshine on one's face still remains; then anyone can torch a car, pull a statue, burn down a bank or knock five terraced houses together to make a rambling commune. On the other hand the destruction of the atmosphere, would entail a massive centralisation of political power. The retreat into the silvery domed cities would make physical attacks upon the superstructure of urban life and economic power not only difficult but suicidal. In effect we'd all be living in one huge car and you can't set fire to one when you're sitting in the back seat.



