### 1ac

#### The history of transportation infrastructure is structured by everyday practices of consumption – post-World War II growth was made possible by mobilization of demand for consumer goods – the distribution and production of those goods required highways, canals, bridges, and airports, both to transport goods to people for sale, and people to goods for purchase

#### These networks of transportation organized the identity of the “American consumer” around a single commodity: oil – petroleum provided both a cheap base material for the goods themselves, and the energy to make transportation possible – everyday American life is literally structured by oil

Huber 9

(Matthew, Asst Professor, Syracuse University School of Public Affairs, The Use of Gasoline: Value, Oil,and the “American way of life”, Antipode 43:1, 465-486, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00683.x)

Understanding gasoline as a use-value within the value of labor power requires understanding the historical process of motorization and suburbanization in the United States (Gonzalez 2005; Newman and Kenworthy 1999; Rutledge 2005). Harvey (1989:17–59) describes the post-World War II urban process in the United States as a historically contingent response to capitalist crisis tendencies manifested in the 1930s. In short, John Maynard Keynes (1980 [1936]), and others, recognized this as a crisis of “effective demand”, and, therefore mobilized an economy wherein “social, economic and political life [was] organized around the theme of state-backed, debt financed consumption” (Harvey 1989:38). The social struggles of the 1930s and immediate post-World War II era erected institutional and political arrangements conducive to a “social consumption norm” able to absorb the specifically Fordist regime of mass production (Aglietta 1979:71). This was not simply a matter of state policy, but became imbricated in space. Specifically, the urban form was organized more and more around the spatial division of consumption promulgated by the great suburban dispersion of both the residential and industrial sectors (Beauregard 2006; Florida and Feldman 1988; Gonzalez 2005; Jackson 1985; Walker 1981). The mass democratization of suburban housing and the automobile—backed by debt-financing through the state alongside the political manipulation of the auto and oil industries (Black 2006; McShane 1995; Yago 1980)—made the spatial dispersion of the post World War II urban form possible (Florida and Feldman 1988; Jackson 1985; Muller 1981; Urry 2004). Harvey (1989:39) describes these dynamics in succinct fashion: The means of dispersal—the automobile—had also been on hand since the 1920s. But it took the rising economic power of individuals to appropriate space for their own exclusive purposes through debt-financed homeownership and debt-financed access to transport services (auto purchases as well as highways), to create the “suburban solution” to the underconsumption problem. Though suburbanization had a long history, it marked post-war urbanization to an extraordinary degree. It meant the mobilization of effective demand through the total restructuring of space so as to make the consumption of the products of the auto, oil, rubber, and construction industries a necessity rather than a luxury. Thus, the “total restructuring of space” could only be achieved as a result of the “mobilization of effective demand” achieved through the reconfiguration of class relations between capital and labor.8 Social struggles to redistribute a greater share of the total social product gave some (but not all!) workers social power to appropriate space in particular ways—a house, a car, and a yard. As Harvey indicates, one of the most “necessary” use-values marking this emerging sociospatial arrangement was oil. Without the energy to power internal combustion machines propelling worker consumers through the vast spaces interlinking home, work, shopping center, and school, such an arrangement would be impossible (Gonzalez 2005; Rutledge 2005). Predictably, in the postwar period demand for gasoline rose astronomically—rising 409% between 1946 and 1980 (Carter et al 2006:Table Df473). Therefore, the mass consumption of oil has as much to do with the postwar reconfigurations of class relations as it does with “urban spatial form” as an asocial determinant (Newman and Kenworthy 1999)9 or, even a political conspiracy of auto-oil capitals to force internal combustion motorization on an unsuspecting consumer public through the destruction of public transit and electric vehicles (Black 2006; Yago 1980). Although our focus is gasoline here, it is important to note that the vast number of ways in which oil facilitated the cheapening of all use-values composing the value of labor power—from the lowering of transportation costs for all goods to the petrochemicalization of large- scale agriculture; from plastics to asphalt. As the fluid lubricating the flow of capital and labor alike, cheap and sustained access to petroleum resources represents a contingent factor facilitating the remarkable accumulation of capital in post-World War II USA; a contingency that become more and more buried in the reproduction capitalist society itself.

#### **This relationship has created an *entitlement discourse* surrounding oil prices – because it structures contemporary American life, consumers feel they have a right to cheap oil – the failure to confront this consumption describes and produces all modern state violence, motivating resource wars and financing state repression globally**

Huber 9

(Matthew, Asst Professor, Syracuse University School of Public Affairs, The Use of Gasoline: Value, Oil,and the “American way of life”, Antipode 43:1, 465-486, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00683.x)

How have critical geographers and other social theorists conceptualized this dynamically changing political economy of oil? Because of the highly volatile and sometimes overtly imperial relations that shape control over petroleum reserves, most of the critical literature almost exclusively focuses upon the geopolitical economy of petroleum production (see Bina 2004; Bromley 2005; Harvey 2003; Hiro 2007; Klare 2004; Le Billon and El Khatib 2004; Retort 2005; Vitalis 2007; Watts 2005). Conflicts over oil arise precisely because of the fragmented geography of low-cost reserves (Labban 2008), that is, most low-cost, “valuable” reserves1 lie within specific nation-states distant from oil intensive industrial societies in the US, Europe, Japan, and now China. The history of conflict over this particular geography of low-cost oil is—to borrow a phrase (Marx 1976 [1867]:875)—“written in . . . blood and fire”. This history contains not only the politics of conflict and compromise over the distribution of value (and rent) between oil capitals and what Coronil (1997:8) calls “landlord states” (see Emel and Huber 2008), but also how petroleum is seized through what Harvey (2003) calls “accumulation by dispossession” accompanied by war, violence and theft (see also Jhaveri 2004; Le Billon and El Khatib 2004). Moreover, Watts (2005), along with Retort (2005), demonstrates the insidious links between petrodollar wealth and the arms trade in the Middle East—or, the “Weapondollar–petrodollar coalition” (Nitzan and Bichler 2002). In crucial ways, oil is not only an object of military conflict; it not only literally fuels the war machine (planes, tanks, hummvees); it also finances war and conflict. Although Retort sits in uncomfortable proximity to Nitzan and Bichler’s (2002) conspiratorial explanations of the trajectory of oil prices (Balakrishan 2005:12–15)— suggesting that US policy consciously destabilizes the Middle East to keep oil prices high and appease a host of financial, military and construction interests2—it is crucial to understand how oil’s “liquid” qualities (in the financial and physical sense) are not a boon to Big Oil alone, but also, wider circuits of petrodollar investment. The value of oil, however, cannot be realized through the control over reserves and the process of production alone. As Karatani (2003:223) put it, “regardless of what happens in the process of production, surplus value is finally realized in the process of circulation”. What Harvey (2003:25) calls “the global oil spigot”—referring to the Middle East— can only be realized in markets for exchange. In order to conceive of capital as a process of value in motion one must understand production, distribution, exchange and consumption as “not *. . .* identical, but *. . .* members of a totality, distinctions within a unity” (Marx 1973[1857]:99). In the emerging literature, the massive oil consumption market within the United States is often treated as a taken-for-granted backdrop to the dramatic geopolitical conflicts over oil reserves. This focus persists despite the fact that this consumer market constitutes just under 25% of the global total and nearly more than China, Japan, Russia, Germany and India *combined* (EIA 2006).3 These massive patterns of petroleum consumption are not given, but co-constitutive of C \_ the historical specificities and sociospatial relations embedded within what Watts (2004:195) calls “petro-capitalism”.4 This demands not only a critical geography of oil value production, but also of circulation. The politics bemoaning the price of gasoline sits precisely within these geographies of value circulation. The brutal geographies of oil production need to be seen as inextricably linked to political claims inherent in “pain at the pump” discourse. It is not enough to state that these geographies are linked through exchange relations—the money one pays to “fill’er up” fills the coffers of international oil capitals, repressive petro-states, and the bloody conflicts over petroleum reserves. More significantly, the US relation with gasoline and its price invokes a sense of entitlement fused with deeply felt meanings of nationhood. This entitlement is negotiated through a kind of *livelihood discourse*—or mobilizing a cultural claim to resources as crucial in sustaining a morally righteous way of life.5 These claims—whether coming from indigenous peoples or nationalist popular culture—create moral economies around resource practices (eg McCarthy 2002), and consequently rationalize the use and/or abuse of such resources.

#### **The end-point is runaway globalization – the creation of citizens as oil-consumers has produced massive environmental feedbacks, creating a cascade of destruction – alternative energy can only be successful in a society that modifies its levels of consumption**

Ehrenfeld ‘5,

(David, Dept. of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources @ Rutgers University, “The Environmental Limits to Globalization”, *Conservation Biology* Vol. 19 No. 2 April 2005)

Among the environmental impacts of globalization, perhaps the most significant is its fostering of the excessive use of energy, with the attendant consequences. This surge in energy use was inevitable, once the undeveloped four-fifths of the world adopted the energy-wasting industrialization model of the developed fifth, and as goods that once were made locally began to be transported around the world at a tremendous cost of energy. China’s booming production, largely the result of its surging global exports, has caused a huge increase in the mining and burning of coal and the building of giant dams for more electric power, an increase of power that in only the first 8 months of 2003 amounted to 16% (Bradsher 2003; Guo 2004). The many environmental effects of the coal burning include, most importantly, global warming. Fossil-fuel-driven climate change seems likely to result in a rise in sea level, massive extinction of species, agricultural losses from regional shifts in temperature and rainfall, and, possibly, alteration of major ocean currents, with secondary climatic change. Other side effects of coal burning are forest decline, especially from increased nitrogen deposition; acidification of freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems from nitrogen and sulfur compounds; and a major impact on human health from polluted air. Dams, China’s alternative method of producing electricity without burning fossil fuels, themselves cause massive environmental changes. These changes include fragmentation of river channels; loss of floodplains, riparian zones, and adjacent wetlands; deterioration of irrigated terrestrial environments and their surface waters; deterioration and loss of river deltas and estuaries; aging and reduction of continental freshwater runoff to oceans; changes in nutrient cycling; impacts on biodiversity; methyl mercury contamination of food webs; and greenhouse gas emissions from reservoirs. The impoundment of water in reservoirs at high latitudes in the northern hemisphere has even caused a small but measurable increase in the speed of the earth’s rotation and a change in the planet’s axis (Rosenberg et al. 2000; Vo ̈ro ̈smarty & Sahagian 2000). Moreover, the millions of people displaced by reservoirs such as the one behind China’s Three Gorges Dam have their own environmental impacts as they struggle to survive in unfamiliar and often unsuitable places. Despite the importance of coal and hydropower in China’s booming economy, the major factor that enables globalization to flourish around the world—even in China—is still cheap oil. Cheap oil runs the ships, planes, trucks, cars, tractors, harvesters, earth-moving equipment, and chain saws that globalization needs; cheap oil lifts the giant containers with their global cargos off the container ships onto the waiting flatbeds; cheap oil even mines and processes the coal, grows and distills the biofuels, drills the gas wells, and builds the nuclear power plants while digging and refining the uranium ore that keeps them operating. Paradoxically, the global warming caused by this excessive burning of oil is exerting negative feedback on the search for more oil to replace dwindling supplies. The search for Arctic oil has been slowed by recent changes in the Arctic climate. Arctic tundra has to be frozen and snow-covered to allow the heavy seismic vehicles to prospect for underground oil reserves, or long-lasting damage to the landscape results. The recent Arctic warming trend has reduced the number of days that vehicles can safely explore: from 187 in 1969 to 103 in 2002 (Revkin 2004). Globalization affects so many environmental systems in so many ways that negative interactions of this sort are frequent and usually unpredictable. Looming over the global economy is the imminent disappearance of cheap oil. There is some debate about when global oil production will peak—many of the leading petroleum geologists predict the peak will occur in this decade, possibly in the next two or three years (Campbell 1997; Kerr 1998; Duncan & Youngquist 1999; Holmes & Jones 2003; Appenzeller 2004; ASPO 2004; Bakhtiari 2004; Gerth 2004)—but it is abundantly clear that the remaining untapped reserves and alternatives such as oil shale, tar sands, heavy oil, and biofuels are economically and energetically no substitute for the cheap oil that comes pouring out of the ground in the Arabian Peninsula and a comparatively few other places on Earth (Youngquist 1997). Moreover, the hydrogen economy and other high-tech solutions to the loss of cheap oil are clouded by serious, emerging technological doubts about feasibility and safety, and a realistic fear that, if they can work, they will not arrive in time to rescue our globalized industrial civilization (Grant 2003; Tromp et al. 2003; Romm 2004). Even energy conservation, which we already know how to implement both technologically and as part of an abstemious lifestyle, is likely to be no friend to globalization, because it reduces consumption of all kinds, and consumption is what globalization is all about. In a keynote address to the American Geological Society, a noted expert on electric power networks, Richard Duncan (2001), predicted widespread, permanent electric blackouts by 2012, and the end of industrial, globalized civilization by 2030. The energy crunch is occurring now. According to Duncan, per capita energy production in the world has already peaked—that happened in 1979—and has declined since that date. In a more restrained evaluation of the energy crisis, Charles Hall and colleagues (2003) state that: The world is not about to run out of hydrocarbons, and perhaps it is not going to run out of oil from unconventional sources any time soon. What will be difficult to obtain is cheap petroleum, because what is left is an enormous amount of low-grade hydrocarbons, which are likely to be much more expensive financially, energetically, politically and especially environmentally. Nuclear power still has “important. . .technological, economic, environmental and public safety problems,” they continue, and at the moment “renewable energies present a mixed bag of opportunities.” Their solution? Forget about the more expensive and dirtier hydrocarbons such as tar sands. We need a major public policy intervention to foster a crash program of public and private investment in research on renewable energy technologies. Perhaps this will happen—necessity does occasionally bring about change. But I do not see renewable energy coming in time or in sufficient magnitude to save globalization. Sunlight, wind, geothermal energy, and biofuels, necessary as they are to develop, cannot replace cheap oil at the current rate of use without disastrous environmental side effects. These renewable alternatives can only power a nonglobalized civilization that consumes less energy (Ehrenfeld 2003b). Already, as the output of the giant Saudi oil reserves has started to fall (Gerth 2004) and extraction of the remaining oil is becoming increasingly costly, oil prices are climbing and the strain is being felt by other energy sources. For example, the production of natural gas, which fuels more than half of U.S. homes, is declining in the United States, Canada, and Mexico as wells are exhausted. In both the United States and Canada, intensive new drilling is being offset by high depletion rates, and gas consumption increases yearly. In 2002 the United States imported 15% of its gas from Canada, more than half of Canada’s total gas production. However, with Canada’s gas production decreasing and with the “stranded” gas reserves in the United States and Canadian Arctic regions unavailable until pipelines are built 5–10 years from now, the United States is likely to become more dependent on imported liquid natural gas ( LNG). Here are some facts to consider. Imports of LNG in the United States increased from 39 billion cubic feet in 1990 to 169 billion cubic feet in 2002, which was still <1% of U.S. natural gas consumption. The largest natural gas field in the world is in the tiny Persian Gulf state of Qatar. Gas is liquefied near the site of production by cooling it to−260◦ F (−162◦ C), shipped in special refrigerated trains to waiting LNG ships, and then transported to an LNG terminal, where it is off-loaded, regasified, and piped to consumers. Each LNG transport ship costs a half billion dollars. An LNG terminal costs one billion dollars. There are four LNG terminals in the United States, none in Canada or Mexico. Approximately 30 additional LNG terminal sites to supply the United States are being investigated or planned, including several in the Bahamas, with pipelines to Florida. On 19 January 2004, the LNG terminal at Skikda, Algeria, blew up with tremendous force, flattening much of the port and killing 30 people. The Skikda terminal, renovated by Halliburton in the late 1990s, will cost $800 million to $1 billion to replace. All major ports in the United States are heavily populated, and there is strong environmental opposition to putting terminals at some sites in the United States. Draw your own conclusions about LNG as a source of cheap energy (Youngquist & Duncan 2003; Romero 2004). From LNG to coal gasification to oil shale to nuclear fission to breeder reactors to fusion to renewable energy, even to improvements in efficiency of energy use (Browne 2004), our society looks from panacea to panacea to feed the ever-increasing demands of globalization. But no one solution or combination of solutions will suffice to meet this kind of consumption. In the words of Vaclav Smil (2003): Perhaps the evolutionary imperative of our species is to ascend a ladder of ever-increasing energy throughputs, never to consider seriously any voluntary consumption limits and stay on this irrational course until it will be too late to salvage the irreplaceable underpinnings of biospheric services that will be degraded and destroyed by our progressing use of energy and materials.

#### **The terminal impact is extinction – runaway globalization is unsustainable and creates feedback loops that will take down the planet, transformation of our perspective on consumption is a pre-requisite to transition**

Ehrenfeld ‘5,

(David, Dept. of Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources @ Rutgers University, “The Environmental Limits to Globalization”, *Conservation Biology* Vol. 19 No. 2 April 2005)

The known effects of globalization on the environment are numerous and highly significant. Many others are undoubtedly unknown. Given these circumstances, the first question that suggests itself is: Will globalization, as we see it now, remain a permanent state of affairs (Rees 2002; Ehrenfeld 2003a)? The principal environmental side effects of globalization—climate change, resource exhaustion (particularly cheap energy), damage to agroecosystems, and the spread of exotic species, including pathogens (plant, animal, and human)—are sufficient to make this economic system unstable and short-lived. The socioeconomic consequences of globalization are likely to do the same. In my book *The Arrogance of Humanism* (1981), I claimed that our ability to manage global systems, which depends on our being able to predict the results of the things we do, or even to understand the systems we have created, has been greatly exaggerated. Much of our alleged control is science fiction; it doesn’t work because of theoretical limits that we ignore at our peril. We live in a dream world in which reality testing is something we must never, never do, lest we awake. In 1984 Charles Perrow explored the reasons why we have trouble predicting what so many of our own created systems will do, and why they surprise us so unpleasantly while we think we are managing them. In his book *Normal Accidents*, which does not concern globalization, he listed the critical characteristics of some of today’s complex systems. They are highly interlinked, so a change in one part can affect many others, even those that seem quite distant. Results of some processes feed back on themselves in unexpected ways. The controls of the system often interact with each other unpredictably. We have only indirect ways of finding out what is happening inside the system. And we have an incomplete understanding of some of the system’s processes. His example of such a system is a nuclear power plant, and this, he explained, is why system-wide accidents in nuclear plants cannot be predicted or eliminated by system design. I would argue that globalization is a similar system, also subject to catastrophic accidents, many of them environmental—events that we cannot define until after they have occurred, and perhaps not even then. The comparatively few commentators who have predicted the collapse of globalization have generally given social reasons to support their arguments. These deserve some consideration here, if only because the environmental and social consequences of globalization interact so strongly with each other. In 1998, the British political economist John Gray, giving scant attention to environmental factors, nevertheless came to the conclusion that globalization is unstable and will be short-lived. He said, “There is nothing in today’s global market that buffers it against the social strains arising from highly uneven economic development within and between the world’s diverse societies.” The result, Gray states, is that “The combination of [an] unceasing stream of new technologies, unfettered market competition and weak or fractured social institutions” has weakened both sovereign states and multinational corporations in their ability to control important events. Note that Gray claims that not only nations but also multinational corporations, which are widely touted as controlling the world, are being weakened by globalization. This idea may come as a surprise, considering the growth of multinationals in the past few decades, but I believe it is true. Neither governments nor giant corporations are even remotely capable of controlling the environmental or social forces released by globalization, without first controlling globalization itself. Two of the social critics of globalization with the most dire predictions about its doom are themselves masters of the process. The late Sir James Goldsmith, billionaire financier, wrote in 1994, It must surely be a mistake to adopt an economic policy which makes you rich if you eliminate your national workforce and transfer production abroad, and which bankrupts you if you continue to employ your own people.... It is the poor in the rich countries who will subsidize the rich in the poor countries. This will have a serious impact on the social cohesion of nations. Another free-trade billionaire, George Soros, said much the same thing in 1995: “The collapse of the global marketplace would be a traumatic event with unimaginable consequences. Yet I find it easier to imagine than the continuation of the present regime.” How much more powerful these statements are if we factor in the environment! As globalization collapses, what will happen to people, biodiversity, and ecosystems? With respect to people, the gift of prophecy is not required to answer this question. What will happen depends on where you are and how you live. Many citizens of the Third World are still comparatively self-sufficient; an unknown number of these will survive the breakdown of globalization and its attendant chaos. In the developed world, there are also people with resources of self-sufficiency and a growing understanding of the nature of our social and environmental problems, which may help them bridge the years of crisis. Some species are adaptable; some are not. For the non- human residents of Earth, not all news will be bad. Who would have predicted that wild turkeys (Meleagris gallopavo), one of the wiliest and most evasive of woodland birds, extinct in New Jersey 50 years ago, would now be found in every county of this the most densely populated state, and even, occasionally, in adjacent Manhattan? Who would have predicted that black bears (Ursus americanus), also virtually extinct in the state in the mid-twentieth century, would now number in the thousands (Ehrenfeld 2001)? Of course these recoveries are unusual—rare bright spots in a darker landscape. Finally, a few ecological systems may survive in a comparatively undamaged state; most will be stressed to the breaking point, directly or indirectly, by many environmental and social factors interacting unpredictably. Lady Luck, as always, will have much to say. In his book *The Collapse of Complex Societies,* the archaeologist Joseph Tainter (1988) notes that collapse, which has happened to all past empires, inevitably results in human systems of lower complexity and less specialization, less centralized control, lower economic activity, less information flow, lower population levels, less trade, and less redistribution of resources. All of these changes are inimical to globalization. This less-complex, less-globalized condition is probably what human societies will be like when the dust settles. I do not think, however, that we can make such specific predictions about the ultimate state of the environment after globalization, because we have never experienced anything like this exceptionally rapid, global environmental damage before. History and science have little to tell us in this situation. The end of the current economic system and the transition to a postglobalized state is and will be accompanied by a desperate last raid on resources and a chaotic flurry of environmental destruction whose results cannot possibly be told in advance. All one can say is that the surviving species, ecosystems, and resources will be greatly impoverished compared with what we have now, and our descendants will not thank us for having adopted, however briefly, an economic system that consumed their inheritance and damaged their planet so wantonly. Environment is a true bottom line—concern for its condition must trump all purely economic growth strategies if both the developed and developing nations are to survive and prosper. Awareness of the environmental limits that globalized industrial society denies or ignores should not, however, bring us to an extreme position of environmental determinism. Those whose preoccupations with modern civilization’s very real social problems cause them to reject or minimize the environmental constraints discussed here ( Hollander 2003) are guilty of seeing only half the picture. Environmental scientists sometimes fall into the same error. It is tempting to see the salvation of civilization and environment solely in terms of technological improvements in efficiency of energy extraction and use, control of pollution, conservation of water, and regulation of environmentally harmful activities. But such needed developments will not be sufficient—or may not even occur— without corresponding social change, including an end to human population growth and the glorification of consumption, along with the elimination of economic mechanisms that increase the gap between rich and poor. The environmental and social problems inherent in globalization are completely interrelated—any attempt to treat them as separate entities is unlikely to succeed in easing the transition to a postglobalized world. Integrated change that combines environmental awareness, technological innovation, and an altered world view is the only answer to the life-threatening problems exacerbated by globalization (Ehrenfeld 2003b). If such integrated change occurs in time, it will likely happen partly by our own design and partly as an unplanned response to the constraints imposed by social unrest, disease, and the economics of scarcity. With respect to the planned component of change, we are facing, as eloquently described by Rees (2002), “the ultimate challenge to human intelligence and self-awareness, those vital qualities we humans claim as uniquely our own. *Homo sapiens* will either. . .become fully human or wink out ignominiously, a guttering candle in a violent storm of our own making.” If change does not come quickly, our global civilization will join Tainter’s (1988) list as the latest and most dramatic example of collapsed complex societies. Is there anything that could slow globalization quickly, before it collapses disastrously of its own environmental and social weight? It is still not too late to curtail the use of energy, reinvigorate local and regional communities while restoring a culture of concern for each other, reduce nonessential global trade and especially global finance (Daly & Cobb 1989), do more to control introductions of exotic species (including pathogens), and accelerate the growth of sustainable agriculture. Many of the needed technologies are already in place. It is true that some of the damage to our environment—species extinctions, loss of crop and domestic animal varieties, many exotic species introductions, and some climatic change— will be beyond repair. Nevertheless, the opportunity to help our society move past globalization in an orderly way, while there is time, is worth our most creative and passionate efforts. The citizens of the United States and other nations have to understand that our global economic system has placed both our environment and our society in peril, a peril as great as that posed by any war of the twentieth century. This understanding, and the actions that follow, must come not only from enlightened leadership, but also from grassroots consciousness raising. It is still possible to reclaim the planet from a self-destructive economic system that is bringing us all down together, and this can be a task that bridges the divide between conservatives and liberals. The crisis is here, now. What we have to do has become obvious. Globalization can be scaled back to manageable proportions only in the context of an altered world view that rejects materialism even as it restores a sense of communal obligation. In this way, alone, can we achieve real homeland security, not just in the United States, but also in other nations, whose fates have become so thoroughly entwined with ours within the global environment we share.

#### Our method for this debate is consumption analysis – focusing on the everyday use of oil wipes the slate clean and allows us to transform the human relationship to nature directly

Princen 2

(Thomas Princen, Associate Professor of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy in the School of Natural Resources and Environment at the University of Michigan, where he also co-directs the Workshop on Consumption and Environment, 02, "The Consumption Angle," Confronting Consumption, p. 41-2)

By making consumption more visible analytically, certain activities become more prominent. From a production angle, the simple-living movement, home power, and local currencies (part III) are trivial instances of protest; they are of little political or economic consequence. From a consumption angle, however, they are concrete expressions of concern and resistance. They represent a Sense that too much of what is important in day-to-day life is lost through the lens of ever-more production meeting the (presumably) insatiable desires of people as consumers. These cases not only give meaning to consumption, but they give meaning to economic activity as being more than that which ascribes value only to what is produced and sold in the open market and that assigns people the role of consumer, not producer and certainly not citizen. If simple living, home power, and local currencies are trivial by conventional (read, production) measures, they are not trivial representations of the widespread discontent with consumerist society. In short, the consumption angle is a means of "rethinking how humans relate to nature." It is a way to, in effect, wipe the slate clean with respect to how analysts, policymakers, and citizens understand social organization for resource use. It puts aside, or goes back to the origins of, the neoclassical economic model and asks what model would have been most useful given ecological constraint, given the lack of unending frontiers and infinite waste sinks, and given the inability to find a technical substitute for everything from petroleum to the ozone layer. The consumption angle not only allows for consideration of "full-world," ecologically constrained conditions, but places ecosystem functioning up front and central. It does so by generating questions that ask what is consumed, what is put at risk, what is lost. And it does so without restricting the questions to consumer products or even industrial inputs but by going all the way back up the decision chain to organisms and ecosystems and biochemical processes. It also does so by drawing attention to behaviors and movements that otherwise tend to escape those who hold the production angle sacrosanct: restraint and resistance with respect to ever-increasing demand, simple living, home power, and local currencies with respect to lifestyle and economic life. Finally, the consumption angle lends itself to explicit assignment of responsibility for excess throughput. This stands in marked contrast to the production angle, where actors routinely escape responsibility via distanced commerce and the black box of consumer sovereignty.

#### Within this method we advocate a massive increase in the price of oil – high gas prices puncture American resource entitlement and cut to the core of US reliance on consumption to generate freedom

Huber 9

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No matter what side of the political spectrum, the “outrageous” price of gasoline appears to represent the apex of everyday oppression; a symbolic barometer of everything wrong in the United States—from the sub-prime housing crisis to the Iraq War. What is it about gasoline that—as the *New York Times* reported—“inspires intense emotion?” (Cave 2008). Political scorn for high gasoline prices in the United States is not new. Yergin (1991: 211) asserts that since at least the 1920s, gas price increases have been an endemic “source of rancor, a subject to be reported on by the press, discussed by governors, senators and even presidents”. The contemporary furor, however, reveals an interesting contradiction. As the social and ecological contradictions of the US “oil addiction” express themselves in ever-more tangible mediums (war, sprawl, climate change) there persists a cultural and political sense of entitlement to the very low gas prices that allow for the continuation of mass oil consumption. When gas prices rise, all we hear is a discourse of “anger”, “pain” and “gouging”. Any price other than the traditionally low price—which in real terms, apart from the second oil shock in 1979–1980 has always been under $2.00/gallon (EIA 2008b)—is seen as above its real “value”. In this paper, I employ a value-theoretical approach to examine the politics of gasoline prices as a particular moment in the larger structure of relations between petroleum and capitalist society in the USA. While the existing critical literature has focused on the geographies of petroleum production, I posit that the cultural politics of gasoline prices emerge as a considerably undertheorized realm in which the logics of domination over petroleum geographies are reproduced. While my focus on the *price* of gasoline might suggest a discussion of the totalizing subjugation of abstract value relations under capitalism, my aim is quite different. I seek to understand how the abstract forms of domination embedded in the value-form constantly stand in dialectical tension to historically and geographically situated usevalues. As I will show, current outrage over gasoline’s exchange-value should be understood in relation to historically sedimented use-values produced through a particular sociospatial form predicated upon cheap and abundant petroleum. The use-value of gasoline is not simply about the instrumental need to move from point A to point B, but has become entangled within wider imaginaries of work, home, mobility, freedom, and a specifically “American way of life”; in short, ideas that go to the heart of capitalist ideology in the USA. In the context of higher oil prices, “pain at the pump” discourse reveals how these socially produced use-values constantly intervene to make efforts to curb patterns of petroleum consumption cumbersome at best, and ineffectual at worst. More optimistically, these interventions expose the purported “law of C \_ value” as an open and discontinuous process that must always confront the social pivot of use-value as an open site of cultural and political struggle.

#### **Our intervention is key – transportation infrastructure has become hegemonic, infiltrating public policy with a “need for speed” – failure to press the pause button on continual expansion and re-organization of space produces massive violence**

LeMenager 12

(Stephanie, Assoc Prof of English @ U of Cal Santa Barbara, “The Aesthetics of Petroleum, after Oil!”, *American Literary History* January (2012), http://alh.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2012/01/16/alh.ajr057.full)

The inescapability of petroleum infrastructures in the twentieth century has entered literature in the form of both dystopian and utopian imagery. This imagery became of particular literary interest in the 1950s and 1960s, when petromodernity reached its classic phase within the US-built environment. I use the term “petrotopia,” signifying petroleum-utopia, to refer to the now ordinary US landscape of highways, low-density suburbs, strip malls, fast food and gasoline service islands, and shopping centers ringed by parking lots or parking towers. My inclusion of the term “utopia” in a description of a far from ideal environment draws upon David Harvey's critical assessment of utopianism as a hegemonic “spatial ordering” (160). Harvey recognizes the implementation of utopianism to result in political systems that “strictly regulate a stable and unchanging social process,” such that “the dialectic of social process is repressed” and “no future needs to be envisaged because the desired state is already achieved.” The building of the auto-highway-sprawl complex has been a utopian project. We can recognize its origins in the Radiant City of Le Corbusier or the massive highway projects of Robert Moses—disasters on the human scale, for the most part, born of what Corbu called the “rapture of power … and speed” (xxiii), often racially inflected schemes to eliminate urban “blight,” and more broadly the potential of traffic, né commerce, to expand the band-width of information and pleasure.8 As utopia, petrotopia represents itself as an ideal end-state, repressing the violence that it has performed upon, for example, south Bronx neighborhoods leveled for freeway development or the wetlands below New Orleans which were filled to build suburban homes. While petrotopia represses the dialectics of social and ecological process, it foregrounds a temporal schema that serves its goals. Sprawl and spread suggest movement outward, in time, but minus an ethical imperative that ascribes notions of consequence to time. In its amoral, monstrous reproduction of itself in its own image, petrotopia resembles the species of utopia Harvey describes as the processual utopia of free market ideology, which, when it “comes to ground,” produces space to restlessly destroy and reorganize it in the service of (petro) capital (177). This relentless production of space creates problems of scale that, in turn, invite the return of repressed consequences, irreversible damage. The points at which utopian imagining, “the infinite work of the imagination's power of figuration,” in theorist Louis Marin's terms, meet a discrete unit of narrative time, something that happened and cannot be undone, can be instructive of how petrotopia betrays itself, tipping back into the more solid proposition of socio-ecological disaster (413). Temporally discrete “event” produces rents in the petrol screen. This essentially formal problem of narrative structure challenging an ideology reliant upon iconicity and image has been discussed in philosophical terms as the bad faith of technocractic modernity. Environmental philosopher Barbara Adam names the fantasy of temporal “reversibility” as a fundamental principle of the technoscientific optimism growing out of the Cold War (41). The damage wrought by technoscience can be undone, in other words—that is the fantasy. It is my purpose here to consider a few events in cultural history where the specter of the irreversible interrupts petromodern ebullience, and the media environments sustained by petroleum infrastructure break to static. This static, the brief interruption of the message, may be the closest analogue to hope that we inherit from the twentieth century.

#### That makes their framework args irrelevant – hegemonic approaches to public policy continually re-confirm themselves and are zero-sum with alternative approaches – only re-posing the question of the resolution outside traditional debate practices can avoid dogmatism and produce valuable education

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The hegemonic network, or bloc, initially shapes the debates and draws on appropriate policies of desired success, such as the needs of bohemians, knowledge clusters, or talented knowledge workers, as to what constitutes *their* desired enjoyment (cobblestones, chrome and cappuccinos at sidewalk cafes) and what is therefore lacking in local competitiveness. In turn, this defines what is blighted and dysfunctional and in need of economic, spatial planning, or other, remedy. Such an argument is predicated on a logic, or more accurately a rhetoric, that a lack of a particular defined type of enjoyment, or competitiveness (for surely they are one and the same) is inherently unhealthy for the aggregate social body. Lack and its resolution are generally presented as technical, rather than political issues. Consequently, technocrats in partnership with their 'dominant stakeholders' can ensure the impression of rationally seeking to produce happiness for the many, whilst, of course, achieving their stakeholders' specific interests (Gunder and Hillier 2007a, 469). The current 'post-democratic' milieu facilitates the above through avoidance of critical policy debate challenging favoured orthodox positions and policy approaches. Consideration of policy deficiencies, or alternative 'solutions', are eradicated from political debate so that while' token institutions of liberal democracy are retained, conflicting positions and arguments are negated (Stavrakakis 2003, 59). Consequently, 'the safe names in the field who feed the policy orthodoxy are repeatedly used, or their work drawn upon, by different stakeholders, while more critical voices are silenced by their inability to shape policy debates' (Boland 2007, 1032). The economic development or spatial planning policy analyst thus continues to partition reality ideologically by deploying only the orthodox 'successful' or 'best practice' economic development or spatial planning responses. This further maintains the dominant, or hegemonic, status quo while providing 'a cover and shield against critical thought by acting in the manner of a "buffer" isolating the political field from any research that is independent and radical in its conception as in its implications for public policy' (Wacquant 2004, 99). At the same time, adoption of the hegemonic orthodoxy tends to generate similar policy responses for every competing local area or city-region, largely resulting in a zero-sum game (Blair and Kumar 1997)*.* In the race for global competitiveness, city-region authorities continue toprioritise economic development and supporting spatial planning policies. Theymaintain the dominant *status quo* by appearing to increase the happiness of material well being for all. The state, its local government and its governance structures, must be seen to be doing something to justify their existence. In addition, andperhaps more importantly, public sector actions, which give the appearance ofdoing something to improve the local economy and the city-region's amenity,actually address the (primal) desire of most people in society for at least the illusion of a safe and assured happy future of security and prosperity. Even if practitionerscan only deliver this as a fantasy-scenario by providing the potential of a limitedmaterial increase in happiness for some, even when this may not really be whatis actually wanted, this type of response is more acceptable to politicians and thevoting public than is the truth that to sate the wants and desires of everyone is an impossibility (Gunder 2003a, 2003b).