Thriller: The Incitement to Speed

The spirit of the time shall teach me speed.
—Shakespeare, spoken by the bastard in *King John*

The term "thriller" came into vogue in the 1890s.[1] In one racy, titillating new coinage, it encapsulated the immediacy, excitement, and intimate interface between the body's nerves and the machine's propulsion that would characterize the new culture of speed. It brought into the open the new directness of experience that people felt they wanted—and wanted now. It also—in the thriller genre's use of shock, sensation, and gore—brought into the discourse of literary fiction radical new protocols for the expression and the handling of fear. The thriller demanded that readers let down their guard, lapse into being terrified, to enjoy the richest thrills from the shocks being offered. Compare it to the roller coaster, that early, awkward, creaking, but completely thrilling premonition of speed culture, which was invented at almost the same time: the first was opened for business by La-Marcus Thompson in Atlantic City as the Oriental Scenic Railway in 1886.[2] The roller coaster, you might say, put gravity at speed's service. It offered a simulacrum of what it would be like to drive recklessly at full acceleration: it incited people to speed. The thriller, as pulp novel with its shocks, jolts, and terrors, its trail of clues and streetwise private eye, trained people, as it thrilled them, in the new kinds of alertness and mind-eye coordination that speed culture demanded. Incitement on the one hand, education through terror on the other: this approach from both ends characterized the cultural impetus that rendered seemingly inevitable the world of cars and traffic, speed limits and speed records, instant communication and instant gratification, that constitutes the twentieth-century culture of speed.

Engineers may have invented the machines that made the new speeds possible, but it was in the cultural sphere that these machines and the experiences they offered were cast as intensities of desire. High culture was slow to catch on to these new velocities (Futurism is the exception that proves the rule here): although both *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and *The Waste Land* are threnodies to the thump-shuffle of pedestrian traffic in London, T. S. Eliot wrote no poems about the joys of fast driving. Rather, the task of introducing speed culture *in advance*, before it even existed, was taken up by popular culture genres. The detective story, with its origins in the French *policier* and its evolution into the American thriller, performed the role of rendering fear exciting in the context of the street. The gumshoe thriller hero is the first literary character to go everywhere by car, and his Holmesian predecessors in hansom-cab-clogged London are first and foremost traffic navigators. For them, the notion of "street smarts" might have been invented. In a fiction machine wound tightly to strain every nerve and manipulate every clue to heighten suspense, readers were taught the street smarts and the task list of rapid-response moves that speeders needed in traffic. Suspense is the literary mechanism that in the very act of reading induces the desire for speed. In public mass entertainment, the cultural forms that best incited people via pleasure toward speed culture were the most popular, subliterate of all. Welcome to the roller coaster, to which add the world of escape artists, strongmen, acrobats, and the new sports star breakers of speed and endurance records.

The mass culture of modern speed turns out to have been fostered in the fairground. Take as an example the extraordinary popularity of Houdini, the magician turned escape artist who specialized in self-release from locked trunks and chains, in precisely this period. The fairgrounds for the masses—as in Coney Island or Blackpool, or urban fairgrounds such as the Prater in Vienna—were a novelty of the new mass leisure industries of these years; their carnivalesque attractions presented the potential joys of the new speed culture—escape, new sensations of freedom, and newly perceptible sensations of *vitesse*, literally of being newly alive—as the finest of the joys of a life that grasped the opportunities of the new leisure. Both the thrillers and fairground attractions manipulated the terrors and the excitements surfacing at the first moments of twentieth-century speed culture. Only in some wayward flashpoints of high culture, and soon in the new movement-images of film and the movies, was the nexus of fearful thrill and carnival excitement elaborated with equal quality. The implications of

unleashing these newly intense thrills and spills were at first obscure. However, the real meaning of detective fiction, of fairground speed tricks like the roller coaster, and even of the lonesome flânerie of modernist fiction becomes evident in the first movie car chase.

Watch this chase: in it, the raw thrill of speed is churned up—and screwed tighter by the social fear of being caught by the police, so that state repression matches techno-modernity. The emergence of twentieth-century speed culture was made possible by the development and management of an insidious kind of fear. This fear was propagated gleefully by the emerging genres of pop culture. Pop genres have always betrayed an unscrupulous transnationalism: enjoyed, condemned, or impolitely ignored at home, they can reemerge in unlikely locales abroad, easily taking on other lives, influencing other histories. Thus it has been with detective fiction, perhaps the preeminent pop form developed to exacerbate and assuage the mass terrors of modernity: the form's fluid and, in terms of conventional, nation-bounded histories of genres, unlikely transnational lurches from mid-nineteenth-century France to new-century Britain and hence to the West Coast of the United States in the 1930s prove the permeability of national barriers where it really counted. By the time that Walter Benjamin, at his desk at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, was coming to understand the crucial role of Eugene Sue's detective fiction for the education of the city masses in suitable forms of flânerie in nineteenth-century Paris,[3] the meticulous high-camp detective story of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and the late-empire horrors of R. L. Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* had become classics, and urban terrors were being revamped as gumshoe thrillers and the beginnings of film noir in and around Los Angeles, California. Here, then, is a cultural offering from the greatest nineteenth-century experiment in the reorganization of modern urbanism, Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann's Paris, to the greatest twentieth-century experiment in a radically new and exploded urban form, Los Angeles, tempered by a period of development in the world capital of modern imperialism, London. This transnational cultural transmission of proto-thriller fiction from metropolis to metropolis implies that this emergent pop culture form grasped the answer to a key problem of the newly vast city: in brief, that traffic needs management. The relatively choreographed and personalized carriage and foot traffic of the Parisian boulevards merited plodding police work compared to the ingenuity required to even envision the symphonic complexity of motor traffic in L.A. The earliest photographs of urban streetscapes, for

example, those by William Fox Talbot in London and Dublin, show half-empty streets where there were not even rules about traffic needing to keep to the right or left;[4] as traffic grew more dense and public transport developed, the urban detective story offered to the individual a sense of her place in the increasingly ordered but apparently chaotic traffic-scape.

Traffic is the grammar of mass movement. It is governed by the conglomeration of rules, explicit and implicit, enacted to ensure the smooth flow of information, goods, and human beings. The elements in the flow must achieve a certain uniform speed, the rate of speed must be maintained, vehicle collisions must be prevented. In retrospect, one can see that every device to move traffic and to calm it had been practiced for centuries; customs barriers and toll gates, from medieval city gates to C. Nicholas Ledoux's elegant pavilions strung along the customs wall around Enlightenment-era Paris, were principally state-controlled mechanisms for the regulation of traffic. It was only with the massive expansion of the metropolis in the nineteenth century, however—by 1880, four European cities, London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, had a population of more than one million, and all of them had vast suburbs for the working, lower-middle, and upper classes[5]—and the arrival of new modes of transport, the underground railway, the bicycle, the electric tram, and soon the motor-tram and car, that traffic became a political issue as well as a logistical problem. Within decades it had become a science and a profession with the advent of traffic engineers. Noted as a problem, seen as a teeming, unruly mass, this newly visible traffic gave rise to intense anxieties.

The crowd, as in Matthew Arnold's mid-Victorian fear of the Chartist rioters, had been a bogey and familiar bourgeois horror: the crowd was assumed to be the proletarian mob, ripe for revolt. By the first years of the twentieth century, this class-bound distaste had developed into a more fundamental kind of despair at the spectacle and implications of mass-moving people. The seeds of the strangeness in individual psychology that Edgar Allan Poe had marked in his story "The Man of the Crowd" were being elaborated on by the sociologist Georg Simmel, who wrote about both the "heightened awareness, a predominance of intelligence," of people in urban crowds and, more darkly, of "a structure of the highest impersonality . . . the *blasé* attitude [which] results from the rapidly changing and closer compressed contrasting stimulation of the nerves."[6] This blasé quality would soon be recast by a spate of modernist writers as a grim anomie, and the lonely flâneurs of Joyce's *Ulysses* (both Leopold Bloom and Stephen

Dedalus), Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (Prufrock himself) and Robert Musil's *The Man without Qualities*, as well as the heroine of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Kafka's Gregor Samsa, would all discover the grotesque depths of alienation possible in the lonely urban crowd. This dismay at the crowd,[7] however, begins to seem like a classic case of practical bourgeois political fear transformed at the aesthetic level into personal angst, especially when one places it over against, on the one hand, the ominous philosophies of the crowd being dreamed up by figures such as Gustave Le Bon and Georges Sorel in the same period and, on the other, against a countercurrent that relished the excitement of mass, anonymous, and fleeting crowd contacts and the opportunities they represent. This latter tendency runs from Baudelaire, with his paeans to "love at last sight" in *Les fleurs du mal*, to Benjamin, and includes all kinds of low genres, from holiday ballads and later holiday postcards in Britain to boulevardier songs in Paris. Between crowd loathing and crowd relishing hovers the reading matter of the new commuter, which uncannily arouses mass fears and assuages them at once: the detective story, the crime novel, the thriller.

Even if high literature often seems repulsed by traffic while popular literature revels in it, it would be a mistake to imagine either that these categories can be fixed or that the different genres inevitably served different ideologies. Nevertheless one can credibly claim that the embrace of traffic and its opportunities was somehow inimical to the sense of fixed territoriality on which the state, with its massed cultural capital, had built its power. It is tempting to contrast the state, which worked to control, "calm," and take note of traffic, and a nebulous countermovement of the masses to literally move and, by moving, escape state control. The state (in its national form, a largely nineteenth-century ideological apparatus) has, however, historically been engaged in the fostering as well as the control of traffic: encouraging traffic may even be the state's principal function. When we think we discern, in the cultural sphere, the ideological interpellation of citizen audiences into attitudes toward traffic that appear to run counter to the state's interests, these incitements often turn out to have a paradoxically opposite effect. A maudlin immigrant song, for example—every nineteenth-century European nation had a number of examples—may call on its audiences to deny themselves the horrors and opportunities of one of the massive new international kinds of traffic that began in earnest in this period: taking the immigrant ship. Listened to in another place and time, however, such a song may be drawing its listeners into just such traffic by

providing them with a moving—if tearful—affective narrative with which to justify their desire to become part of a transnational labor market. In the same way, the horrors of high-modernist anomie in the face of the crowd shown by Musil or the German painter Otto Dix may be read either as explicit lessons in the dangers of immersing oneself in the moving masses, or as a covert call to experience a new intensity of anguished sensation, and sensational anguish, in the monotonous callousness of the traffic-beaten street. Countering such melancholy, new high and popular forms which emerged from the experience of being part of traffic celebrate possibilities and assuage anxieties that arise moment by moment in the new rhythm of urban movement—how to judge the stranger who jostles you, how to nod and move on your way with the minimum knowledge and politeness, how to spot and make snap judgments about the surface signs that emerge from the flow, how to hold your own in this kinetic environment to whose rate of speed you are only beginning to become accustomed.

Note how many people, even when immersed in the new traffic, keep in touch with pop culture: reading on trains, reading and watching films on airplanes, listening to car radios, all are being educated by these popular forms into the speed culture in which they participate. Nowhere is this more evident than in the detective story. There are three striking features of a Sherlock Holmes story (and by extension of every urban detective fiction, a staple of the railway or airport novels, since): the blithe manner in which the hero-detective considers urban violence (speaking of the mugging that precipitates one plot, Holmes says that it is "one of those whimsical little incidents which will happen when you have four million human beings jostling each other within the space of a few square miles");[8] the assurance they offer throughout that one *can* read the surface signs as clues successfully and, thinking it out, know what caused the disturbance, robbery, strangeness, or murder; and, finally, the way in which fears are whipped up only invariably to be assuaged. This popular world of urban traffic and its culture offers an epistemology of surface appearances, snap judgments, quick studies, and (as Simmel understood) heightened or sharpened perceptions—all leading to fewer collisions, incidents, horrors, and accidents and the resumption of traffic's smooth flow. The detective's mannered urbanities offer a playbook of the traffic lessons taught by the new popular forms. These forms made possible mass acceptance of traffic and its culture.

The first successful urban mass genre, the detective story, faced the new

phenomenon of mass traffic in the early years of this century by raising anxieties to assuage them, by denigrating the notion of home as fixed structure or refuge, and by indulging in escape fantasies which marked movement and participation in mass traffic as a gesture of freedom. These pop narratives avoided direct celebration of the new speed culture: this was carried out, as it were, locally, in the magazines for cyclists and early car enthusiasts, in advertising for tourist travel, in the technological boosterism surrounding the world's fairs, in the celebration of speed heroics by the winners of early motor races such as the annual Gordon Bennett Cup, and after 1909 in the more highbrow polemics of the Futurists and their popularizers. Before these scattered signals coalesced, however, the resounding note was one of anxiety that could be assuaged by quick-witted action. What occurred was a configuration of the mass perception of spatial organization to the point where, to quote the architect Bernard Tschumi in another context, space itself came to be seen as inseparable from action.[9]

With the new mass traffic, the prestige of fixed static spaces and structures as (apparently) immutable totems of power and authority waned. As a result, the monumental aims of buildings became uncannily evident, and their very solidity produced anxiety. The contradiction between, on the one hand, a building as a signifier of immutable power and, on the other, its function as a node of circulation grew apparent. Take the train station, temple of the greatest Victorian innovation in speed technology. By the end of the nineteenth century, the station had become a starred and anxiety-provoking space, and in the strong, overdressed architecture of the last great metropolitan railway stations (Milan, Los Angeles), as well as in the terrors named and soothed in the humblest travel guide or cheap novel in these buildings' bookstalls, we can trace the forms that this anxiety took. At the same time there were fewer spaces to retreat to: the idea of space as refuge, and in particular of the home as sanctuary and guarantor of personal prestige and identity, was coming under attack. The detective novel's plot makes the privacy of the home available to the inspection of the stranger-detective to render it safe for habitation. This was the era too of the haunted house (*Dracula* was published in 1897; its finest film adaptation, F. W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*, appeared in 1922). Here the notion that "even in the home one is not safe" was supplanted by the idea that the home was invariably haunted, a place in which to be tripped up by uncanny memories and a Pandora's box of personal history from which one could only free oneself by escaping. The new century saw the motif of escape become one of the driv-

ing forces of popular fantasies: remember, again, that stoker of fantasies of mass audiences at this moment Harry Houdini, who won fame for repeatedly escaping, against all odds, from locked trunks, straightjackets, multiply padlocked chains. Claustrophobia—the fear of entrapment in closed, locked spaces—can be read as a dominant pathology of this period; the escape artist is popular culture's riposte to the nostalgia for home and fireside that can be traced in some middlebrow Edwardian fiction.

The varied horrors of fixed, static, enclosing, or monumental spaces were accompanied by a new aversion to what came to be perceived as slowness. With speed came a new phase in the history of impatience. Only as speed became conventional could slowness become perceptible. Before the celebration of speed, a pervasive and profound aversion to slowness became a noticeable cultural tic. Flânerie, the phenomenon of the pedestrian wandering the city pavements, had been a rich motif of nineteenth-century urban culture; now the figure of the flâneur or flâneuse was abandoned, although he lingered on in high literary locales such as *Ulysses* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, a wistful, past-his-sell-by-date kind of character—and in effect unceremoniously plumped into public transport or his new car. (The unctuous Fr. Conmee, who climbs on the tram at Newcomen Bridge to avoid the rough streets of Fairview, leads the way in *Ulysses*. Even Sherlock Holmes is forever hailing hansom cabs, and Leopold Bloom dreams of a bicycle outing to visit his daughter fifty miles away, in Mullingar. Clarissa Dalloway's daughter rebelliously takes a tram up Fleet Street.) It was, however, around the image of the ship that the horror of slowness was most provocatively painted. Along with a frenetic and heavily publicized drive to produce faster and faster oceangoing ships in these years, which was brought to a sudden halt by the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912, the seafaring narratives of this period betray an increasing impatience at the impossible slowness of ships. The great writer about ship life as monotony was Joseph Conrad: his elegies to the life of the sailor are also all treatises on killing time. *Heart of Darkness* has retained its striking hold over generations of readers neither because it is a great liberal text berating colonial cruelties, nor because it exactly mirrors the deep racism of its Western readership, nor because it is a deeply moving account of humanist despair (although it bears traces of each of these elements), but rather, more fundamentally, because it registers on every page an almost allergic reaction to slowness and the perceived lack of liberating movement and efficient speed. Slowness, in *Heart of Darkness*, is the true horror.

With Conrad's eerie tale, we can see how the new horror of slowness never exists outside political realities. If what is happening at this point is that the perception of space is being reorganized, so that built spaces seem less a static stage for the projection of power and prestige and more a permeable space where action and movement are possible, then older notions of a hierarchy of spaces and places, of the powerful and monumental center and the minor, unembellished periphery, become less tenable. The Enlightenment dualist organization of space that Foucault describes in "Of Other Spaces," with its real, lived, and "present" spaces and its other, heterotopic, quasi-sacred marked-off spaces (prisons, holiday resorts, desert islands, brothels, libraries, museums), begins to break down. In the late nineteenth century, the ultimate, as-yet-unknown heterotopia, the one that validated and lent its spectral aura to all the rest, was the unknown, as-yet-to-be-colonized territory of the unmapped parts of the globe, the white spaces on the map that, as Conrad notes, had so exercised the imagination of the young Marlow (see chapter 1). Once these had been occupied and the spaces unknown to Western cartographers had become an all-too-actual "heart of darkness," then the overall organization of earthly, global spaces into real spaces versus heterotopias had begun to be dismantled. This was a new step in what Henri Lefebvre characterizes as the modern abstraction of space, its reduction to the single common denominator of its usefulness. With the latest and most voracious stage of this abstraction, the possibility of the efficient movement to and across all spaces on the earth becomes the locus of new possibilities of pleasure, supplanting dreams of new heterotopias as yet uncharted and unseen.

So it is that at the very moment of the end of colonial expansion, slowness gets to be perceived as the new horror. Then, with endocolonization, this comes to apply not only to the colonial hinterland limned by Conrad but to the home space as well, as both are now equally known and abstracted. What has happened is that *place* — either as known, culturally loaded center of memory, affect, and identity or as heterotopic, fantasy-imbued, and even feared peripheral locus of otherness — has been rationalized and abstracted into *space*. In the use of this newly instrumentalized space, a space denuded of fantasies either of identity or of strangeness, it is movement and speed that count and must be made exciting. Slowness gets notated pejoratively as the temptation to linger in the haunted home or to wander in search of the heterotopic other space, the dream world that no longer exists; slowness is more and more often in these years rendered as something to be feared,

to induce horror. Through a cultural regime that instilled a deep-seated aversion to slowness, rather than any desire for the proactive pleasures of speed itself, the culture of speed was installed in its participants in the early twentieth century.

The Rise of Non-Place

Double Indemnity (1936), James M. Cain's novel about insurance, murder, and means of transportation, begins as follows:

> I drove out to Glendale to put three new truck drivers on a brewery company bond, and then I remembered this renewal over in Hollywoodland. I decided to run over there. That's how I came to this House of Death that you've been reading about in the papers. It didn't look like a House of Death when I saw it. It was just a Spanish house, like all the rest of them in California, with white walls, red tile roof, and a patio out to one side. It was built cock-eyed.[10]

California gumshoe fiction makes evident what had been perceptible in British detective stories of thirty years earlier: these tales have no respect for, and a definite anxiety about, the residence, the house, the home. On the one hand we have a detective, and his alter ego, the criminal, who occupy the street and deftly negotiate its traffic; on the other, the solid, immovable house, home of the victim and scene of the crime, about which will always hang the stain of a crime that has been committed, or the anxiety about an entry that is always about to be forced. Cain's Spanish house, home of Mr. and Mrs. Nirlinger, their stepdaughter, and their maid, is both "House of Death" and nothing special, utterly conventional "like the rest of them," and, he implies, a kitschy fake, Spanish but in California. He gazes at it and it cannot quite gaze back, for it is "cock-eyed," twisted, askew. Moreover, in its very prosaic quality lie the seeds of its grotesquerie. This is how detective fiction and related genres such as the "true crime" reports invoked by Cain's narrator have always dealt with the houses that are nevertheless crucial to such stories: they are ordinary yet seem to contain some mark of the horror that has occurred or will occur within. These houses are *anomalous*: that is, not precisely or radically different, utterly comparable to every other ordinary dwelling, but still uncannily marked as disreputable. Other examples include the door to which the reader's attention is drawn in the opening paragraphs of Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, unremarkable

in every way except that it is "neglected," which nevertheless "is connected in my mind," says Mr. Enfield, "with a very odd story."[11] Or consider the innumerable suburban villas of the Sherlock Holmes stories or the depressingly ordinary yet minutely described seedy inner-suburban London terrace houses in the fiction of Ruth Rendell.[12] The focus on the house in detective fiction is so insistent that one might wish to see it in psychoanalytic terms; this fiction's interest in secret rooms, sealed spaces, and dark corners relates it to earlier folk forms such as the fairy tale. Why, then, does the detective story's interest in the house's strangeness go hand in hand with an insistence on its ordinariness?

The answer lies in the house's diminishing affective role as home in the period. Readers, ensconced in their homes, read detective fiction and relish the attitude to houses in it, because they see that it mirrors their own fears that the privacy of their home, valued as refuge from an inundating modernity, can likewise at any moment be invaded and destroyed. Yet this does not account for the contempt with which, for example, Cain considers and dismisses the "House of Death." Detective fiction suggests to its readers, as it stokes their fears, that the house as home has already been evacuated of all significant meaning and affective content and that the chance of its association with a gruesome crime will offer the only, last-ditch opportunity of reinjecting it with a trace of the aura it has lost. For the reader in search of suggestions of homeliness, the detective story invariably offers only false pleasures: it induces an aftertaste of the old aura of the home, but an aftertaste only in the form opposite to that which the aura originally took. Whereas the home stood for security, the detective story portrays it as the locus of insecurity. It reminds the reader that the desire for this security is wistful thinking, better abandoned.

In the same years that waves of detective story writers in France, Britain, and the United States were making evident their contempt for the home place as aura-laden space in the Western metropolis, anthropologists from the same nations were busy following a set of disciplinary procedures that led them, in far-flung colonial villages, in the opposite direction. The first anthropologists were eager to see what Westerners had previously taken to be empty or raw space as a terrain composed, instead, of starred, intriguing, and interesting places—as villages with names, customs, kinship patterns, histories, and unique microcultures. The work of the anthropologist was to cite and confirm, in the authorizing language of Western scholarship, the uniqueness of places. These places occupied space which it had suited

an earlier stage of colonial conquest to read as banal, undifferentiated, and empty. Popular genres were busy dismantling the affective aura of home in the metropolis; anthropologists were busy inventing multiple auras for places discovered in the colonies. Anthropological work can thus be read as a displaced nostalgia, on the part of the Western occupiers of the very spaces they are in fact radically abstracting through industrial and consumerist imperatives, for an archaic sense of place. It shows a triumphalist fascination on the part of the West with inhabitants of spaces who as yet refuse to surrender their affective attachment to their (invariably doomed) place. The colonies and former colonies have been nominated by the Western science of anthropology to hold the world's last places: that is, spaces which are given meaning by their affective ties to communities united by shared histories. However one reads the politics of this disciplinary turn, it has led to anthropology being the discipline, more than urban studies or architectural theory, most conscious of the lack of differentiation between places as a metropolitan problem. Whereas the detective story held up this issue to mass Western audiences as a mirror of its lingering anxiety, it is in anthropology that the end of place and homeliness has been at last read as a theoretical issue. A brief look at how the discipline deals with these concerns will illustrate what is at stake for the consciousness of Western subjects when they grow anxious about the untenability of the home as fixed, feeling-laden place.

A prime example: the work of the French anthropologist Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to a Theory of Supermodernity* (1995). Augé sees two kinds of lived spaces: the first are "places," sites susceptible to anthropological description, that is, rich with a communally held history, markers of a dense web of power relations, and signs of a set of beliefs embodied in monuments and markers. Then there are "non-places," the increasingly common stark zones stripped of such meanings, histories, associations, signs of community activity or history: freeways, airports, malls, car parks, chain hotels. Augé speaks of a place as "the one occupied by the indigenous inhabitants who live in it, cultivate it, defend it, mark its strong points and keep its frontiers under surveillance, but who also detect in it the traces of ancestors or spirits which populate and animate its private geography."[13] Non-places, in keeping with their name, are as yet for the anthropologist only to be defined against those richly lived-in places: "If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space

which cannot be defined as relational, historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place" (77–78).

For Augé, places will be marked by stability, devoted to a long view that allows the site each occupies to develop a physiognomy of its own that is readable by the traditional anthropologist. He sees the strangeness of the anthropologist's disciplinary mode of operation: she gambles that the materiality of the signs in the designated site guarantees the permanence of the community they mark and, implying the gamble won, allows them, for her, to signify "place." Still, Augé continues to feel a nostalgia for these kinds of places; inevitably, his most memorable example of such a place is the French village from which he implies he comes himself. Now, in the new world of dominating non-places, this village is bypassed by a motorway, and merely indicated by a historical marker which you glimpse as you speed by: speed has no time for "place." Augé's best example of the preponderance of non-place in contemporary life comes when he imagines a business traveler at the cash dispenser, on the auto route, in the parking lot, in the departure lounge, on the plane, planning to stay in an anonymous business hotel in Bangkok. For speedy travel, "non-place" proves efficient. In a world where homes are often uncannily present only as "houses of horror," this description of the new proliferation of non-places is utterly credible. Augé's division of lived space into these categories needs to be interrogated, however, if the implications of the nostalgia for places are to be overcome.

First, Augé's history of the phenomenon he implies—the rise of non-places—is open to question. He sees such spaces as characteristic of "supermodernity," a recent stage of geopolitical history which corresponds to Baudrillard's or Jameson's postmodernity but with a key difference: whereas for Baudrillard the postmodern spectacle means an explosion of appearances as a simulacrum that is more pleasurable than the real, Augé's supermodernity, *au contraire*, has given rise to zones that appear to have been emptied of all signs of meaning. There is no *Blade Runner* glamour in the "non-place." The freeway, unlike the gaudy postmodern corporate headquarters, does not push a fake façade before our eyes. It is a modernist invention of clean utilitarian lines, not a postmodern pastiche. Augé's non-places have existed longer than he implies: the division of which he speaks (like modern anthropology) is keyed to the modernist rather than the post- or supermodern period. The first autobahn was inaugurated in 1933; the first airport lounge at least a decade earlier. The first years of the twentieth

century mark a prehistory of such non-places. This was also the period of the ideological work which persuaded people used to the stable comforts of reassuring place that such havens, as types of communal and spatial organization, were stifling. Both high modernism, with its half-glamorous angst, and the new pulp genres, with their half-titillating high anxieties, taught people to find comfort in the apparent freedom of unencoded non-place. The glorification of the minimalism of modernist architecture by its practitioners from Adolf Loos to Walter Gropius, too, can be read as an aesthetics of non-place.

Second, because Augé avoids historicizing the discipline of anthropology, he is blind to the impetus which has produced his categorization. Anthropology's work of naming and describing places was almost always the humanist arm of the late-nineteenth-century colonialist project, work that continued as the empires began to be dismantled. Colonial locales were being denominated by Western anthropologists as places with a (now) recorded culture and communal life at the very moment when large swaths of Western space were being redirected from places to the sorts of anonymous non-places that have become such a prominent feature of urban and suburban life. Leaving aside the geocultural implications of this,[14] we may surmise that the Western anthropologist's desire to demarcate place in colonial settings was a response to the laying waste, in different ways, of many such places in both the imperial metropole and the colony. Note in the same years a fascination with the slum life of London and Paris, as in Jack London's *People of the Abyss* (1903), a fascination mined in early detective fiction such as Conan Doyle's opium den tales; and also in "country places." This was the golden age of local historians and folklorists, which absorbed high art from Hardy and Yeats to Cézanne and found a popular outlet in romance and nationalist fiction. These nostalgic turns in the first decades of the twentieth century, when anthropology was still enthusiastic about its ability to demarcate place where the cartographers had merely mapped territory, and when the new non-places were sufficiently new to be presented as wondrous, suggest that the disgust at life in rationalized spaces, inaugurated by the romantics a century earlier, was now a cultural given. It led to a backlash of antiquarian nostalgia, and the fascination with exotic places that drove most advanced tourism. At the same time, the Grand Concourse in the Bronx was considered as wondrous in its day as Haussmann's Avenue de l'Opéra had been deemed half a century earlier; "marvels of engineering" had not yet come to seem as soulless or banal.

Anthropology's search for place, then, in the sense Augé defines it, has been propelled by nostalgia. Place in this sense — particularly with its validation of permanence and stability — has in modernity always been an illusion, a golden mean promoted by the relatively new discipline to underpin the logic of its village ethnographies. It might be more useful to consider, as the author Italo Calvino put it, that "home is where one's parents are buried" — that is, in part, a setting that is invariably in the past, the creation of memory, susceptible to dreams. In Augé's work, the terms of Foucault's similarly dualistic division of lived space into real and heterotopic sites seems to be reversed. For Foucault, space was divided into real spaces and heterotopias, homes, streets, and factories versus institutions, cemeteries, holiday camps, brothels, honeymoon hotels, and jails scattered on the periphery of real space, but where our fears and desires can dwell. For Augé, real dwelling occurs in relatively enclosed and demarcated places, while all around rolls the novel vacuity of non-places. If places themselves, however, are archaic and illusory, then they become the heterotopic repositories of what Foucault saw as the residue of the sacred in modern culture.[15] Non-places become those in which we live the vital moments of our daily lives.

Note that Augé's non-places are all sites, nodes, or modes of transport, traffic, movement, speed. From his first definition, he makes this clear: "The installations needed for the accelerated circulation of passengers and goods (high-speed roads and railways, interchanges, airports) are just as much non-places as the means of transport themselves, or the great commercial centers, or the extended transit camps where the planet's refugees are parked" (34). This does not mean that ethnographies within the older tradition cannot be carried out regarding specific cultures or subcultures inhabiting such zones; one of Augé's own previous works is *Un vie dans le metro*. Nor does he speculate on why it is at intersections of traffic that this new blankness of non-place has developed. Yet it is around this issue that he articulates an implied history, for he associates the "spectacular acceleration of means of transport" (34) with a global world order of shifting populations, emigrants, international movements of capital (the reference to refugees in the last quote is characteristic), in short, to the transnational geopolitical milieu that succeeded the imperial phase of colonial expansion.

Augé's work implies that a new version of the relation of spaces and communities has been needed in Western anthropology since the moment

when imperial colonization gave way to the globalist geopolitical order. He calls for a new anthropology to explicate these new spaces: a booster for his discipline, he declares that given changes in scale (by which he means that a global gaze is now necessary, and that a focus on one place is impossible), "we are poised to undertake the study of new civilizations and new cultures" (35). This is still the lingua franca of the liberal humanist branch of imperialism, but it launches a new stage of inquiry into lived spaces; Augé courageously begins the task. He comments on the fashionable new words associated with non-places—*interchange*, *route*, *communication*, *transit*—and considers the solitude that such spaces engender, the coincidence of the plainest functional space and the surprising proliferation of written notices about them (road signs, airport screens, departure and arrival boards), and the way in which such signs encourage the idea that different spaces can be consumed, as in tourism. He stresses the need to remember that "what is significant in the experience of non-place is its power of attraction, inversely proportional to territorial attraction, to the gravitational pull of place and tradition" (118). We will follow that injunction. We need also to historicize and locate in geopolitical realities the emergence of this new global constellation of non-places to which he refers.

And so, again, to home. The home is the most "emplaced" locale in Western bourgeois consciousness, and the space that in the Western nineteenth- and twentieth-century imaginative literary tradition has most closely corresponded to that occupied by the colonial village in anthropology. The ideological work of persuading people that non-place is indeed deeply to be desired, in inverse proportion to the degree to which the home place was to be feared, was carried out in the early twentieth century by the new reading matter for commuters and emergent popular culture.

"House of Death"

Detective fiction, prime reading matter for the transient occupiers of the new non-places, offered early lessons in successfully negotiating the new eerily unmarked spaces of mass movement common by the early twentieth century. It gave lessons in traffic management to commuters. It did this, suggesting the pleasures of non-space, by arousing fears of its opposite, the anthropologist's place, which most commonly, in late-Victorian bourgeois fiction, was signified by the house as family home itself. The amateur detective, self-proclaimed policeman, patrolled the streets for miscreants,

a flâneur with a purpose and a plot. He scanned the traffic for deviations—missed trains, the impossibility of getting from point to point in a given time—and ordered them under the aegis of a logic that created a convincing counternarrative to the criminal's alibi. Moreover, he demanded the right to intrude on the privacy of home spaces; in "A Case of Identity," Holmes tells Watson how wonderful it would be "if we could lift the roofs off every house and peer down into the rooms of their inhabitants."[16] Ever alert for clues—that is, signals from surface appearances that the keen passerby must discern in an instant—the detective offers a way of useful knowing in non-places that has replaced the extended acquaintance common to the village place. Clue reading becomes a method for an amateur epistemology of any non-place and its occupants. Detective fiction portrayed the street as a turbulent, ever-changing conduit of activity and its monitoring, while the house, robbed of its affective power, was again and again portrayed as a sinister relic of corrupted forms and archaic desires. To show how fear of home met engineering flow in early-twentieth-century pulp fiction, consider a story which dwells on the claustrophobic terror of the house as prison, Conan Doyle's "The Engineer's Thumb."

Detective fiction, poker faced, lacks humor; it compensates by serving up large doses of camp. (Camp goes hand in hand with the suspense that the thriller genre works to create, for, like suspense, it demands a suspension of belief). In "The Engineer's Thumb," otherwise a somber tale, the camp element is supplied by the all-too-obtrusive phallic imagery of the misadventures of the gimmick thumb of the title. In the story, a handsome young engineer has his thumb whacked off ("It gave even my hardened nerves a shudder to look at it. . . . It had been hacked or torn right out from the roots") when he goes one night from London to inspect a large mechanical press in a country home inhabited by two men and a young woman.[17] She saves him, he takes the train back to London, he notifies Holmes. So far, it is a case of the castration anxieties of young men who confuse their careers with a life at home and how these fears are proved true. Yet there are complications. If the camp symbolism is self-consciously (but, as always in detective fiction, as in other camp genres, never overtly) comic in its obviousness, nevertheless its vividness produces a flash point—the exposure of the wound, the revelation of a lack—that alerts the reader to be ready for further flash points in the story. The correspondingly vivid, equally terrifying moment turns out to be a gruesome evocation of the terror of claustrophobia.

What happens is this: the young hero, brought at night to the mysterious house, is invited to inspect the hydraulic press, which the owners claim is a device to press fuller's earth into bricks. Led upstairs along narrow corridors, he inspects the press and solves its mechanical problem. The press turns out to be a room in the house, with timber walls, but with a roof and floor of metal: the metal ceiling can be lowered hydraulically and "comes down with many tons upon the metal floor." With this room, in a Conan Doyle story of the early 1890s, the house as "a machine for living in," which Le Corbusier would a quarter century later describe as the end-all of modernist architecture, is dreamed of in advance; moreover, it is revealed as a nightmare. There follows the inevitable: the engineer is inside the machine-room, inspecting it a little too curiously for his own good, when the owner steps out, closes the door, and turns the lock.

> "Hallo," I yelled, "Hallo, colonel! Let me out!" And then suddenly in the silence I heard a sound which sent my heart into my mouth. It was the clank of levers, and the swish of the leaking cylinder. He had set the engine to work. The lamp was still upon the floor where I had placed it when examining the trough. By its light I saw that the black ceiling was coming down upon me slowly, jerkily, but, as none knew better than myself, with a force which must within a minute grind me to a shapeless pulp. I threw myself screaming against the door, and dragged with my nails on the lock. . . . The ceiling was only a foot or two above my head, and with my hand upraised I could feel its hard rough surface. Then it flashed through my mind that the pain of my death would depend very much on the position in which I met it.

Only with Kafka's Gregor Samsa is the horror of incarceration in the bedroom of the family home so morbidly advanced, and only there, through Kafka's leap from the paranoid night-city logics of detective fiction into surreal symbolism, is the effect equal parts po-faced comedy and visceral anguish. The detective story, at such moments, achieves the heights of its avatar, Victorian mass sensation fiction, and becomes very literally a thriller. It wrings the last resources of realism into physically palpable agony and short-circuits an emotional appeal to tap into the reader's visceral desire for self-preservation. In the case of the torn thumb itself, the effect is mainly unconscious. Evoking the terror of claustrophobia, the text appeals directly to the reader's sensations. This reader is invited to cower along with the hero-narrator: not to weep over his tragedy but to experience, as he does,

a knotted stomach. In the image of a physical body about to be crushed by an ever-smaller closed room, the complex notes of realism's moralistic threnody are flattened, so that the effect is intensified: we experience the actual physical sensations along with the hero. The suspicion of the home that had been building throughout nineteenth-century realist fiction, and became explicit in the numerous dreams for escape from that home that litter the fin de siècle bildungsroman (Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* may be the bitterest example), and had found its outlet in the haunted houses of the horror fiction in the same period (*Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*) is concentrated in a thriller moment where the detective names the home as crime scene. This home is not vilified because it is too richly a place in the anthropologist's sense, some haunted repository of family memories; even if its passages and thresholds seem to him "hollowed out by the generations that had crossed them." The engineer sees very little of the house, and by the end of the story it has burned down, with few regrets expressed by the narrator, and only a tangle of machinery and a human thumb notable among the ruins. Whether haunted family home for generations or modern machine for living in, this house merely stages, first, the castration anxiety of the young male professional of the new motor order, the engineer, and second, the claustrophobic nightmare that any home, with its conspiratorial family, represents in the cosmology of this new order.

Moreover, the setting of these two thriller moments, the deftly spun web of the detective story plot which shows Sherlock Holmes connecting the clues and nabbing the criminals, analyzes the shock of the two images flashed before us of the victim's torn, endangered body. This detective story plot is a kind of machinery itself, and it enacts a set of substitutions: the vulnerable body is replaced by the alert mind; the meditative, professional engineer who sees little is replaced by the snap-judging amateur detective who notes all; the claustrophobic house is replaced by the free and open railway, road, and street. The story itself is a narrative machine, not for living in, but for moving along inside. It is a story about timetables, times spent in travel, speeds of transport. Focused on rates of traffic flow, it was ideal for reading in traffic, especially on the train itself. (The length of a Sherlock Holmes story is nicely calibrated to the time necessary for it to be read on a suburban train commuter's trip.) The engineer is ordered to arrive on the "train from Paddington which would bring [him] in there at about 11.15" (197), to change "not only [his] carriage but [his] station," so that he was on time to be met by his client in a closed carriage. Distance and

speed, correctly calibrated, are the keys to solving the crime: "It was only seven miles, but I should think, from the rates that we seemed to go, and the time we took, that it must have been nearer twelve" (200). Afterward Holmes spots the ruse: the engineer had simply been driven in a circle; the house abutted the station. The point of the interminable timetable lore and the calculation of speeds by the vehicle's passenger is to allow Holmes to describe the devious confusion that criminal elements can sow in traffic. Holmes solves the mystery by understanding speed.

The criminal, to put the engineer off the scent, is a would-be modernist: self-consciously circling, he celebrates chaos, whips up confusion. The sleuth demonstrates that such cubist antics before their time can be neutralized if the discerning passenger uses a battery of traffic-checking procedures. (These are the very procedures that would later become the tasks of a new profession, the highly responsible one of traffic controller, who holds our lives in her alert eyes as she guides airport traffic from the control tower. The detective is a traffic controller without the visual clues, after the traffic facts.) Holmes collates the timetables and the times, adduces comparative speeds, monitors landings and departures, and in this way solves the mystery—that is, what exactly had been going on in the home. This mystery turns out to be what a materialist reader considers the most fundamental kind of circulation, that of money: the house is a hideout of forgers, the hydraulic press revved up to mint debased coins. The home is a fake, a cover for fraudulent circulation. Its occupants, keepers of the nightmarishly claustrophobic room-machine, had colluded to render road traffic seem chaotic in order to keep their house hidden, but Holmes triumphantly succeeds in rationalizing that traffic—and in doing so comes upon their house as a burned ruin. At the tail end of the realist narrative tradition, the house as home, which that tradition had begun by celebrating, is, in the new social economy of circulation and traffic, revealed as ruin and fraud.

This pattern repeats itself in countless detective stories. The detective is either a flâneur, stalking his prey on foot, or, in noir thrillers, a cool-handed driver, barging into traffic patterns with a deadpan verve. The thriller not only warns its readers of the archaic fraud that the home has become; it encourages them instead to consider traffic's excitements and usefulness. The thriller trains them in the logics of a kind of traffic hermeneutics, a typology of ways to exist in traffic in a manner that serves their own ends. If, as Augé points out, the trafficked non-place is a featureless concretescape punctuated with written signs (for example, the freeway, or even the

junction of two streets in what Joel Garreau has christened the contemporary "edge city"),[18] then every Sherlock Holmes story constantly tells us to stay alert amid the dullness, read the signs, and do so with sublime care. The thumbless engineer, for example, had noticed that the horse which had pulled the carriage to the station in Eyford to collect him was fresh—he tells Holmes so in reply to the detective's query—but he had failed to *read* this sign and thereby to realize that the horse could not already have traveled the seven or more miles that supposedly separated the station and the house. Such readable signs scattered on the traffic concourses are clues which, the detective story assures us, when arranged in the right sequence, will be reconstitutable as a viable, if unlikely, realist tale.

If realism, since the 1830s, had been the literary form that had soothed anxieties about the joys of the hearth, house, and bourgeois home, one successor of the form, the detective story or thriller, found itself at odds with its origins. As the genre that, recasting realist logic as hyperacute observation, would represent the new order of circulation and traffic in satisfying ways, it discredited the static home. Sensing now that the home's solidity was a bourgeois dream, it nevertheless toyed with that dream, and organized its plots so that they were premised on the bourgeois impulse to reduce potentially uncontrollable movement to static surety. Thus the realist plot outcomes that close detective stories and "solve" the mystery are always tainted by a sense that they are arch: this is the outcome of the whiff of camp in all these texts. The camp element is the symptom of the text's attempt to reconcile its realist roots' allegiance to defending the solidity of the home, with its new allegiance to the new, exciting disorder of circulation and traffic. Detective fiction is a straining form of realism that finds itself determined to master the new order. Its scattered clues and liberally floated red herrings partake richly of the arch quality: they are the thriller's points of contact with the new traffic order. And, in their method of textual revelation, where the author acts as fairground magician and tells the reader in effect, "There, you see it, but you don't see it," they constantly cajole the reader to look harder, to see better (the village where the engineer should have looked harder is called Eyford), to be more alert, to "use those grey cells," as Poirot would soon chime endlessly. They offer the outline of a method for reading the grammar of traffic to those still wistful with memories of home.

This cognitive aesthetics of clue reading is the literary acknowledgment of the pioneering sociologist Georg Simmel's assertion that the urban

dweller was more likely to have a "heightened awareness and a predominance of intelligence," which, however, is undercut by "an inconsiderate hardness and . . . general blunting of sensibility."[19] The detective story educates the mass of drivers, passengers, and pedestrians in this new kind of alert cognition. It does so not merely by instilling fear of the scene-of-the-crime house as a delectation of shivering pleasure but also by generating the half-fearful, half-enjoyable frisson of kinesis to be derived from moving smoothly in traffic. Or rather, it simulates this frisson through its strategy of moving the reader through the story, the arousal of suspense. Suspense has always been integral to the history-mimicking temporal schemata of realist narratives: we form expectations about subsequent events based on our judgment of what has gone before. Detective fiction dismantles the temporal primacy of this structure of suspense and reassembles it in resolutely spatial terms: the crime has happened, and a scouring of the spaces surrounding the crime, or more accurately, of the use of the traffic patterns in these spaces, will solve its mystery. By flattening suspense into an issue of understanding spaces and the speeds within them, what is achieved is an extraordinary distillation of the experience of suspense itself. Why does the turn from time as duration to space as crime scene distill suspense? Once again, space annihilates time even as (in the scattered clues) it renders it real.

The detective story plot promises that no longer will events follow each other in lugubrious order; they have already occurred, and the sole focus on where the perpetrator *is*, "out there," and on who he is, turns suspense into a totalized experience — the assumption that the reader, for the duration of the story, is to accept the notion that this suspense is all that matters, and accept it to the extent, one might say, of becoming (imaginatively) addicted to it. (The thriller, likewise, is the genre that has succeeded in rendering reading addictive.) This experience of distilled, gnawing, more or less physical suspense, built up from a narrative which details the canny reconnoitering of a space, represents the thriller's brilliant abstraction of the more dissipated and fragmented forms of suspense built around sequences of time familiar from realist fiction. It presents the reader with a visceral sensation, an extended thrill, which is *the* pleasure of detective fiction. This thrill, this distillation of suspense in the thriller genre, is manufactured through fast, keen looks while moving through a given space "against time"; thus it corresponds quite accurately to the sensation of fearful pleasure to be derived from being a passenger or, more particularly, a driver in traffic oneself. The

thriller simulates for the reading commuter the very pleasure that might be derived from the traffic of which she is a part. This is the true pleasure of reading thrillers on trains.

One final point on new-century images of hearth and home as fearful dwelling. This was not merely the provenance of thriller and detective writing, even if the trope's sharpest expressions came from this popular quarter. Images of the fearful dwelling can be seen too in the strange twists in the architecture of that relatively new mass genre of building, the suburban bourgeois villa. At the very moment when this kind of building for the "personal client" was becoming an acceptable benchmark or first notable work by ambitious young architects, these villas were turning in upon themselves in unprecedented ways. Villa architecture had throughout the nineteenth century provided structures where the most kitsch historical allusions and excesses of decorative additions had been encouraged, whether in the "painted ladies" of North America, the mini-châteaux of the Parisian suburbs, or the crenelated chimney pots and drawbridge of the clerk's castle, the villa satirized by Dickens in *Great Expectations*. By the century's end, such badges of sentimentality were being dispensed with in favor of what might seem like the stirrings of modernist minimalism but turn out to be yearnings for suggestions of the villa as bunker. Here the work of the prolific and gifted British architect Charles F. A. Voysey is typical. His country houses might appear to be more accurate, academic imitations than heretofore of large rural farmhouses, but their mostly small and low windows and broad expanses of bare wall, heavily overhanging roofs, lack of discernible major entrances, and interiors awash with long, low corridors and beams often suggest, rather, a determined bunker architecture. It is as if Voysey felt that the client would need suggestions of the fortress, or even of the prison, all dressed as Arcadian manse, to make him feel patriarchal and at home. Consider the final "country house" commission of Voysey's contemporary Edwin Lutyens, never completed and barely lived in, Castle Drago in Devon for the tea merchant Julius Drew,[20] where the broad, smooth stone walls, slit windows, and monolithic massing show an abandonment of rustic trimmings in favor of a home-as-bunker that seems inspired by Vauban's seventeenth-century fortress engineering. Only Lutyens's cardboard mock-ups exist of the unbuilt parts.

Such fortress homes, moreover, were not only the fantasies of eccentric and reactionary late-imperial Edwardians. The villas of the famously antidecorative Viennese architect Adolf Loos, for example, such as his star's

residence for Tristan Tzara on the Avenue Junot in Paris, or the famous unbuilt house he designed as a publicity stunt for the jazz dancer Josephine Baker, were replete with imprisoning sight lines within (as if the famous dwellers inside would be seen and oversee, and hence play at control and being controlled),[21] and blankly near-windowless and fortresslike without. By the time the modernist Le Corbusier had reversed all of this, with his stunning (but unlivable) drawing room open to the sky in the Apartment Beistegui (1929–31) or the glass-walled airiness of his Villa Savoye (1929) (of which Le Corbusier himself said, "A home is not a prison"),[22] the zeal of the pioneer modernists' manifestoes and polemics might have obscured the fact that the prison-villa had, in some strange cultural transformation, itself become unlivable anyway, the subject of half-wistful surrealist satire in *Les Mystères de Château du Dé*, a film made by Man Ray with settings by the modernist architect Mallet-Stevens.

By the late twenties, as J. M. Cain's dismissal of the "House of Death" in *Double Indemnity* makes clear, the era of the bunker house as perceived threat was over, and the era of traffic and circulation as the prime space of action had arrived. When Le Corbusier made a film about his early villas, *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* (1929), he opened evocatively with a shot of the architect himself *in his own car* driving up to the entrance of the Villa Garches (figure 5).[23] The glass wall in the typical Le Corbusier house signified the downfall of the house as a bunker; even more telling in his work is the concrete ramp which climbs inside a number of his buildings and smoothly cuts through others. A simulacrum in miniature of the concrete freeway, this ramp eloquently bespeaks the takeover of the dwelling by the traffic route.

The Agony of Slowness: Bunker Culture

Angst about home, a fear of dwelling, was in this period the counterthrust to learning the lesson of the potential pleasures of traffic and speed. It stood, however, for a broader cultural turn: from the pleasures of place as Augé defined it and the reassurances, nostalgias, evocations, and allegiances that place as totemic guarantor of identity could provide, to the more flimsy, ungrounded, but thrilling pleasures of movement and speed. Given nationalism's hegemony in twentieth-century ideologies of community, this might seem a strange claim to make, especially about the period leading up to the mass sacrificial effort to defend one's nation that was the First World War.

FIGURE 5. Le Corbusier drives up to his recently completed Villa Garches. Still from *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui*, 1929, directed by Pierre Chenal with Le Corbusier. Courtesy of the artist's estate.

A deeply embedded affection for the homely in its various forms — whether house, village, country, nation, tribal territory, or even football team — persisted, even becoming magnified. The ideologies of homeliness, however, whether implying allegiance to family or nation, are constantly mutating and evolving. The change, around 1900, altered an old relation between "home" and "away."

I agree with Jameson's suggestion in "Cognitive Mapping" that a structural relation exists between the cultural forms broadly definable as realism and modernism on the one hand and the sociopolitical forms of nationalism and imperialism on the other. I disagree, however, with his claim that modernism's alienating strangeness, its ability to baffle, results from a subconscious cultural awareness in the early twentieth century that the life being lived in the West was removed from the space of the production of wealth that made that life possible — that is, the work of exploitation of native peoples and resources in the colonies. This is to place an altogether too sincere (and modernist) faith in the geopolitical social acuity of modernist shock tactics and experimentation. Nevertheless, since notions of home and away are interlinked, and since the idea of home shed much

of its aura in fin de siècle Western writing, so that increasingly raw and strange forms of realism, such as the thriller, had to be fabricated to represent it and to inject it with at least a whiff of the authority to which it had been accustomed, one can be sure that a profound change occurred in the imaginary of the other place also. In late Victorian fiction, this other place might have been the slum, the brothel, or even the imagined underground or aerial worlds of post–Jules Verne science fiction; most often, however, it was the colonies. In the thriller, the home was feared; other genres reexamined those worlds of terror and desire that Foucault termed heterotopias. As the notion of home lost its power, the other place, and in particular the colony also, I suggest, lost its fascination for the Western imaginary—its power to arouse terror, excitement, fantasies, and fear. We shall consider the reasons for this change in a moment. First, to my proposition: despite scattered exceptions, the colonies ceased to be imaginatively decisive *for Western representations* of the West itself after about 1900. This is the point at which colonial spaces and colonial "native" actuality became explicit in Western texts and artworks about the West itself, from Picasso's images of African masks to E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. But this availability for overt Western representation, and integration of colonial elements into texts primarily concerned with representing Western social or psychic realities, meant precisely that the absolute otherness of the colonies for Western imaginations was over—and hence its unspoken and until then unspeakable effect on Western representations of itself, of its home, and of mass ideologies of homeliness such as nationalism was nullified also. Versions of home, then (on which the badge of selfhood, as ideologies such as nationalism had claimed, were imprinted), had to be radically reconstituted. It was in the era of nationalist realism that the unspoken imaginary of the savage colonial heterotopia was implicated (but unconsciously, as a symptom) in every text that demarcated the national version of homeliness; this is what readings of the troubled homeliness of *Jane Eyre* have proved. By 1900 the colonies had become too fully known to the West, so that their imaginative power faded, was neutralized.

Replace Jameson's argument, then, with what follows from that of Augé: the formerly other, exciting, and fearful empire territories became, in the new century, the first real non-places for the Western imaginary: merely sites, in Western terms, without enough features to fear. The work of anthropology, busy describing places in the European empires, which

emerged as a respectable discipline at this moment, might seem to disprove this; but it is precisely anthropology's disciplinary premise that it can discover place in a waste of non-place. By not being systematic and totalizing but rather appearing to follow the old missionary-colonist logic of working from the village upward, anthropology enhanced, rather than contested, the new Western logic of a global wasteland of non-place beyond the tenuous homeliness of the European homelands. This vast change in the Western imaginary of global relations occurred at the moment when the whole of the globe had finally been mapped and claimed. While truly an other place exercising imaginations fundamentally committed to home, colonial territory had had an imaginative hold. Because it was still unmapped, knowledge of it seemed potentially limitless. Once the colonial world's borders had been determined, the imagination of the colonies in the West fundamentally changed.

For Western culture, this change was traumatic. Once Western imaginations realized that their unmanageable fantasies and fears could not be relocated to the imaginative heterotopic space of the colonies "on which the sun never set," these fears returned to haunt the space of homeland and home in, for example, the surge in invasion narratives and gothic writing in the 1890s.[24] The genres that had nurtured the fantasies of colonialist heterotopias were doomed; imperial adventure fiction, such strange dreams as H. Rider Haggard's *She*, which had played a significant role in developing young mass popular audiences, in a stroke came to seem passé. Once the "affiliative versus heterotopia" model of conceptualizing known place by countering it with the mass of the unknown broke down and the other territory was shorn of its capacity to be demonized, the home place's emotional hold as a place of refuge turned out to be nebulous also. There was a shift from a sense of space as places, whether loved or loathed, toward the beginnings of a sense of everywhere as non-place. Twentieth-century culture signaled a new acceptance of the idea that the rationalization of space, the breakdown and leveling of its peculiarities in favor of its more efficient use for exploitation and ease of circulation, had entered an important new geopolitical phase. Already, for example, the modern notion of tourism, as travel devoted to the nostalgic search for sites that retain a residue of their sense of place, had become wildly popular, and the "travel book" as we know it today was born. More important, no new version of otherness was found to demonize colonial space (although versions of the old one,

particularly around tropes of "savagery," certainly persisted), so that a representational crisis in relation to the colonies arose, and this crisis not only presented an opportunity to colonial peoples to represent themselves but had profound implications for the representation of the West to itself of its own home places.

The contradiction in the old territorial imperative, which underpinned the very notion of colonial expansion, was at this moment exposed. As the territorial potential for the expansion of the empires reached its limits, the process of empire making — movement, voyages, travel, speed — came into its own and was recast in new ways as a new locus of power. The ship, the ancient, myth-encrusted floating dreamscape that had always been in the West the epitome of the voyages (itself a mythic term by now) that had upheld and developed imperial power, at this moment lost the power of romance. In the strangely gripping *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad, who turned out to be the writer of moving elegies for this romance of the ship, offers a grim testament to this new inability of Western imaginations to render Africa as a heterotopia in the final instance, and the trauma that results. This trauma at being unable to render Africa as exotic heterotopia then transforms itself into a narrative about frustration — about all the frustrations of being slow.

Heart of Darkness is a detective novel. Marlow, cold, shrewd, honest, is the classic detective investigator, even if his movement along the world's highways is conducted in ships and boats rather than in hansom cabs or on foot. Anticipating the private eye, he is in his own way hard-boiled, in a tale that is steeped in a glowering noir quality. Here is a story that wants to be an imperial adventure novel, celebrating the successful traversal of heterotopic unknown territories by undaunted colonist men, which finds it cannot help but be instead a detective fiction in an unlikely locale. This first African detective novel treats the colonial space much as the Sherlock Holmes story treats the British home: it shows it as traumatic, even similarly claustrophobic. Its massed terrors serve both to accentuate what it shows as Africa's traumatic quality and to inject into this space a whiff of the aura, which, the story itself implies, it thinks the place no longer projects. In other words, Conrad's story has no respect for Africa, which is not to say simply that it is racist — as the famous intervention by Chinua Achebe has amply proved — but rather that it is not ultimately interested in the specificity of any African place, no more than Conan Doyle is interested in the specific aura of the London home.[25] Instead it is in the journey, and in

the speed of the journey, that our interest is implicated and our excitement and desire for thrills elicited. *Heart of Darkness*, then, is an apt title here, as it would be for any noir thriller: it implies the fear to be faced at looking, perhaps for the first time, at non-place. It forgoes the pleasures and cultural assurances of a world whose places could be divided into, on the one hand, a home deeply loved and, on the other, an alien place hated and feared.

Heart of Darkness is the imperial fiction which shows that the split between home and colony that had characterized the territorial mentality of imperialism is clearly no longer valid, now that there are really no new places to be discovered in the world.[26] The Victorian empires had represented themselves, whatever their political reality, through the simple imagery of territorial aggrandizement borrowed from the wars of Alexander the Great and the Roman Empire: the modern empire, in this mold, was simply a matter of one territorial unit taking over numerous others. In this schema, the nation's claim to territory, to land—that is, to space—was what made an empire large, and hence notable. This simplistic but predominant vision of empire tended to diminish all the nonterritorial kinds of political power—of exploitation, trade, cheap labor use, and strategic use in defense—that the empire brought, but it fitted perfectly with the sociocultural vision of spatial organization that divided spaces into home versus heterotopia. Conrad's novel, however, suggests that this vision of empire, being an imaginary construct, needed as an enabling half fiction the possibility that the empire could expand its territory indefinitely to sustain its power. At the story's outset, in a passage which seems to invariably draw readers, he underlines Marlow's discovery of how the globe's total colonization led to this crisis in the Western imagination of an older construct of world space:

> Now when I was a young chap I had a passion for maps. . . . At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all looked that), I would put my finger on it and say, when I grow up I will go there. The North Pole was one of those places, I remember. Well, I haven't been there yet, and shall not try now. The glamour's off. Other places were scattered about the Equator. . . . I have been to some of them, and, . . . well, we wont talk about that. But there was one yet—the biggest, the most blank, so to speak, that I had a hankering after. True, by this time, it was not a blank space any more. It had got filled since my boyhood

> with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery — a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness.[27]

"The glamour's off": in this thoroughly modish observation, Marlow registers the demise of a previously evocative form of thinking about home and away. This phrase decrees the demise of the John Buchan–or Karl May–style imperial adventure novel. With the colonization of all spaces comes the unsustainability of the tropes of exploration and adventure, although both were so imaginatively powerful that they went on in the succeeding decades to have eerie, twilight afterlives in a rash of travel writing by figures such as Freya Stark and T. E. Lawrence, whose increasing eccentricities helped them retell, and resell, the now defunct fiction of exploration. Both travelers and explorers were being supplanted by a new generation of "adventurers," whose achievements were not now concerned with discovering the sources of African rivers but had mostly to do with encounters with machines — for example, the British aviators Alcock and Brown, and Charles Lindbergh — the new adventurers of speed.[28]

Such traces of the increasingly foolish-seeming explorer, however, merely underline the prescience of Conrad's novella. In its early pages, when a brooding chiaroscuro is swathed about both London and Brussels in the text,[29] the point is not simply to render another fin de siècle account of urban alienation but rather, it turns out, to present these Western cities in the same light as that in which the Congo jungle will soon be shown. When London is described as one of the places that also had once upon a time been colonized, the novel again announces its determination to cast all spaces, both home and colony, in the *same* terms. *Heart of Darkness*, with its suggestion of a new genre of imperial noir, then presents us with a radical version of what Henri Lefebvre termed a rationalized world space. The novel is at pains to point out that it perceived this capitalist reduction of all space to use value not in the industrialized, trade-intensive (London), or bureaucratic (Brussels) West but rather in the formerly heterotopic territory of Africa itself.

Further, a large part of the book's descriptions of Africa is taken up — as in the account of the Central Station — with, in fact, eerie representations of an industrialized Africa, one where industry, the blasting through the hills to build a railway, is presented as perverted but is shown as a version of tin-pot Western utilitarianism nonetheless. The "other" Africa, the one that

presumably exists beyond the wall of the jungle, is presented to the reader not, even remotely, as the potential space of exotic and pleasurable strangeness. It emerges as a blankness whose possible value as a nature reserve of the primitive is relayed to us in tones whose blandness, and whose bleakness, can make them seem reverential but which betray no real interest. A typical account of the as-yet-unknown Africa speaks of how "the silence of the land went home to one's very heart—its mystery, its greatness, the amazing reality of its concealed life" (37). These sonorous abstractions ("amazing reality") bespeak no fascination for any possible particularities of this as an "other" world—so that when Kurtz, the only figure here who still adheres to the old spatial divisions of home versus colony, therefore finds the jungle a fascinating heterotopia, his dualism and his resulting "going native" can only be judged by the novel as dementia. Kurtz is much like the foolhardy adventurer Scott, who in 1912 would freeze to death after reaching the South Pole; the native woman of the novel occupies much the same role that the Sherpa guides played in Western representations when the British climber Sir Edmund Hillary became the "first man" to climb Mt. Everest. Seeing Africa, even at a remove, through the eyes of Marlow, as blankly abstract, and refusing to see particulars in the anthropological mode, make possible the novel's critique of the older style of territorial imperialism. Where the novel becomes radical, however, is in pointing out the newer style of colonialism, epitomized by the Central Station and its manager, which cares nothing for and indeed despises the archaic sham of the older form and is instead dedicated to trade, ease of transport, communication routes, and exploitation. It is an even nastier form of exploitation in that it does not care about the actuality of Africa even enough to despise it but rather would reduce the whole world to routes useful to the pursuit of trade. This is Conrad's sobering picture of the beginnings of global transnationalism. It is a featureless world, where the only real feelings swirl around the smoothness or otherwise—usually the latter—of the traffic that constitutes trade.

The trauma of the novel's exposure of the colony as a non-place abstracted by Western capital is concentrated in one uncanny image—that of the ship on land. In *Heart of Darkness* this role is taken by the biscuit-tin steamer in Marlow's charge, sliding through jungle grasses, always about to run aground. Whenever this image of the breakdown of what had been the natural division of traffic for centuries occurred, it had portended a crisis. As such, it has often been associated with colonialism (a late-twentieth-

century version is Werner Herzog's film *Fitzcarraldo*, in which a ship is carried across a Peruvian isthmus).[30] Subtly, Conrad's steamer, putt-putting its way up the Congo, chugging between the tall riverbank jungle, is a version of the ship-on-land, an unsettling symbol of the transportation uncanny. Foucault, in his paean to the ship as itself a heterotopia, declared that "in civilization without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates."[31] This turns out to be an excellent summary of the plot of *Heart of Darkness*. At the moment when the ship itself, like the Africa to which it sails, stops being the heterotopic vehicle of exploration and adventure, an unruly image of heroic voyage since the time of the *Odyssey*, it is turned into land transportation to signal the full effect of its degradation. Around this uncanny image, the uneasily modern pleasures of the narrative of *Heart of Darkness* assert themselves. These turn out to be the masochistic pleasures of the repeated experience of frustration.

The massed pyrotechnics of "native savagery" around Kurtz's station at the climax of *Heart of Darkness* are a Colonial Exposition–style diversion derived from the evening shows put on with "native villagers" at the expositions of this period, such as the Greater Britain Exhibition's enormously popular Kaffir Krall of 1899.[32] The doomed, exotic, heads-on-stakes world of Kurtz's trading post is countered by the real world of the Central Station, and the most vivid and continuous pleasures of the text are provided not by the caricatured sideshow of native dances and rites but by the day-to-day frustrations of malfunctioning technologies of transport. This is signaled as soon as Marlow lands at the coastal station: even before he has a chance to witness the shameful enslavement of Africans in scenes reminiscent of, and influenced by, Roger Casement's reports on Congo atrocities in his British Government Report of 1903,[33] Marlow spots "an undersized railway truck, lying there on its back with its wheels in the air. One was off" (22). Soon he is drawn to "more stacks of decaying machinery, a stack of rusty nails" (22). Marlow's own task, to pilot the boat upstream, is sabotaged some months later when, on finally reaching the Central Station, he finds that after a stupid accident the boat had been sunk in the river. Once he retrieves it, he discovers that, far from being shipshape, his command is "like a Huntley and Palmers biscuit tin kicked along a gutter," and that he must wait some months for rivets to arrive to repair it. This is a world not of terrifying tribes in heterotopic spaces but of inferior technology bedeviled by gross (Western) inefficiency.

We readers are asked to collude in disapproving of such an apparently dull subject as the underuse of technologies of transport, even African transport, because Marlow's sense of what is honorable, and his high-minded attack on the very colonial exploitation in which he is a salaried participant, get subsumed to his practical sailor's discourse of efficiency and frustration at the lack of all due speed. Moral outrage gets expressed as traffic rage. Efficient speed becomes synonymous with moral authority. Those who are careless about boat accidents and finding rivets to fix them are corrupt; those who strive to make repairs and to keep on schedule, like Marlow himself, the ship's mechanic, and even the native engine stokers he employs on the journey upriver, are admirable. This slippage from the abstract virtue of the idea to the practical efficiency of mechanical engineering is the novel's crucial ideological shift of gears. Read this way, the darkness of the title seems to elucidate frustration in the face of colonial inefficiency, a frustration brought on by adherence to modernist progressive optimism of the Fordist or Bauhaus type—a faith that technology, exercised at efficient speed, will foster a virtuous, if featureless, world—rather than any nebulous alienated modernist pessimism. Conrad, through the character Marlow, transforms an old-style imperial explorer, the last colonist as pirate leaving home in search of heterotopias to plunder, into the new worker-as-mechanic oiling the cogs of the non-place world order of efficient traffic and enriched trade. The heroic sailor is reengineered as dependable manipulator of transport and machines.

This literary reengineering is effected by a genre shift from explorer travelogue to the strategies, if not the locale, of a detective novel. At the Central Station in particular, Marlow becomes a canny private eye: time and again we see him lying quietly on the boat deck, behind a levee, or in his darkened room as he overhears muttered conversations that allow him to piece together clues about what is rapidly emerging as the mystery of the arch-trader in ivory at the Inner Station, the marvelous Kurtz. Soon every sign—that upturned railway locomotive, the starched collars of the accountant, the wry painting of Justice in the brick-maker's hut, the drums sounding in the night air—acquires an uncanny, aura-murky status as clues to an overall mystery, and Marlow as efficient, would-be-honorable amateur detective sets out to solve them. (A striking reading of the complex array of nuances emanating from just one of the more uncanny clues, the "extraordinary find" in a deserted riverside hut of a book, *An Inquiry into Some Points of Seamanship*, is given by the postcolonial critic Homi Bhabha in his

essay "Signs Taken for Wonders.")[34] Since Africa as a place in the anthropological sense will never be the focus of readerly fascination in *Heart of Darkness*, the pleasure of the text must be implicated in the investigation conducted as a trail followed, a detective story chase. What Conan Doyle did for the home in detective stories such as "The Engineer's Thumb"—that is, made us disdain it, and then reminded us that it once had a powerful aura by injecting it with a perverse residue of such affect in the shape of fear—*Heart of Darkness* as detective story does for the heterotopic space of "away"; that is, it refuses any interest in the specific differences of the African locale, but we are made to vaguely fear it in a reminder of its former power to fascinate. By rendering Africa as a site of detective investigation, the text again implies the continent's comparability to London or Brussels. In this new global non-place, abstracted for capitalist use, the proper citizen is again the regulator of traffic, aiming for maximum speed. In the new order of non-places, the taxonomy of alert behaviors and ways of knowing that have been borrowed from the policeman to be imaginatively reworked as the ideal behavior of the individual subject becomes not merely, as in a Sherlock Holmes story, a blueprint for an epistemology. More, this police-like alertness becomes, in Conrad's text, the basis of a new ethics: the sailor turned engineer and good driver redeems himself by accelerating and rendering efficient the movement of the traffic that makes the colony work, while by piecing together the clues along the route, he triumphantly comes to know the truth of Kurtz's possible transgression for the society and himself.

Nevertheless, the invention of this new-model hero, the ethical technician, bends the newly assured strategies of the detective genre as well. For one thing, detective stories usually proceed from a point where a general sense of uncanniness is discerned rippling across the social fabric, to the point where the blame is placed on a single figure who is thereby unearthed as a criminal. (In "The Engineer's Thumb," blame devolves to two or three figures: a conspiracy.) This blaming of a single subject makes the detective story inherently antipolitical, prone, rather, to explanations which amount to conspiracy theories: social problems are reworked as aberrations of an individual. *Heart of Darkness* likewise focuses on a single individual, Kurtz, but blame is attached much more ambiguously. The implicitly ethical disclosures of the narrator imply a continuous indictment of "the system"—especially the unnamed apparatus of colonial exploitation which stretches from a northern European city to the Congo basin. However, because this

ethics is articulated by the figure of an avid, alert, and capable technician-engineer, and because in his terms ethical judgments get to be articulated as discussions about efficiency of speed and movement, the ethical critique which suffuses the book gets articulated as a continuous low buzz of frustration with real colonial machines and the world in which they so slowly move. The complaint is that imperialism is in practice inefficient, jarring, impatience generating, unsmooth.

The old imperialism, in other words, is too slow. At the point where the text might be expected to rev up as a sensation novel, therefore, where, like a good detective story, it short-circuits appeals to our emotions to appeal directly and viscerally to our sensations and converts its ethical trajectory into the generation of sensations that we as readers can imagine we experience and so empathize with the implications of the text—at that point, the novel itself frustrates us and refuses to be a thriller. Instead, climactic moments such as Kurtz's famous death scene are shored up with a barrage of abstractions ("I saw on that ivory face the expression of somber pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror—of an intense and hopeless despair" [99]) that purport to appeal grandiosely to our emotions via our intellect and thus cannot but appear portentous too. The thrill is missing: "The glamour's off." The refusal to thrill us directly is palpable throughout; palpable, because what we as readers experience is a steadily administered dose of the frustration experienced by Marlow himself. The glumness of this frustration spreads like traffic haze over the various and diverse locales named in the text: the very listeners to the overall narrative (in the famous framing device) are, literally, stalled on a yawl in the Thames: "The only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide," concludes the novel's opening sentence. Marlow's frustration at slowness is the novel's palpable evidence of its ethical point, and it seeps like radioactivity through the entirety of the text. *Heart of Darkness* is an anatomy of the modern horror of slowness.

The novel scratches the itch of slowness at every opportunity. The tale's listeners, already on the opening pages, in wait, are deeply bored, a sensation exacerbated, as any denizen of queues and lines knows, by their implicit group acknowledgment that their frustration should go unnoticed. When, on the second page, the novel tells how "and at last, in its curved and imperceptible fall, the sun sank low, and from glowing white changed to a dull red without rays," and so on, the reader is well aware that here is impressionist writing at its time-passing best, both yawn inducing and frus-

trating in a novella which, being short, we expect to be "fast-paced." This frustrating languor spreads, and Marlow's frustration at it becomes explicit: so much so that any character operating at speed, in contrast, seems threatening, as when the notoriously emblematic Brussels doorkeepers "knitted black wool feverishly" (15). Innumerable accounts of the implied and overt enormous levels of frustration at the colonizing companies' slowness follow. The steamer to Africa keeps stopping pointlessly at every port: "We pounded along, stopped, loaded soldiers, went on . . . nobody seemed particularly to care" (19); the shameful chain gang at the first station moves with deathlike lethargy: "They were dying slowly — it was very clear" (24); soon "I had to wait at the station for ten days — an eternity." Then the walk to the next station is interminable — fifteen days, two hundred miles — to be succeeded by the months-long wait for the infamous rivets. The trip upriver itself is, fittingly, the most grimly slow of all; it culminates in a magnificent scene of ethereal, otherworldly, fogbound stillness. Stationary in the fog, at dawn in the river eight miles from Kurtz's station, the party is attacked. This perpetual sense of slowness is a version of suspense so diffused through the fibers of the text and rendered so constantly tangible in the experience of reading that it becomes the spirit of the book.

To the extent that this constantly invoked frustration with the pace of activity — of travel, of movement, of technical work on the boat, of the steamer journey on the river — fosters standard-issue narrative suspense (about "what will happen next"), this is dissipated once Kurtz's station is reached and he is found and brought away. Yet although the novel's quest narrative concerns Kurtz and the gist of the detective story elements in the novel concern the quest to find him and to know him, nevertheless, as he is not branded the criminal within the standard framework of the thriller, this pervasive impatience in the face of slowness represents more than keeping the reader hooked. Clearly it is a dramatic condemnation of, and display of impatience with, the speed of yawls, cruisers, and steamers by a sailor. The ship is the symbol of the old colonialist mind-set; in this newly revealed featureless space of the modern colony, the ship is too creaky, too thoroughly colluding with the rank inefficiency of the colonial endeavor, too maddeningly slow. More, this slowness — and impatience with it — is sharply directed at the old idea of empire. The Congo, presumed site of the story, occupied an anomalous role between the archaic "territorial" idea of empire as aggrandized territory and the stirrings of a less sentiment-ridden geopolitical order. It conformed to the heterotopic idea of empire, but with

a modern twist: in a caricature of the old vision of the ruler conquering an empire, the Congo was *owned* by King Leopold II of Belgium as a private fiefdom. Choosing the Congo as setting, Conrad, in focusing on this anomalous case, avoided directly critiquing the British Empire, of which he had, after eight years in the British merchant navy, become a citizen. He exposed for his readers the futility of heterotopic fantasies that perversely mirrored the aura of home. He also had them experience secondhand the way in which the trauma of moving from that older, more dreamy version of a bifurcated world order to a new one where all spaces, home and away, were equally abstracted for exploitation would only be overcome by those who demanded efficient speed and excellent transportation. The masters of the abstracted global world would show a properly ethical (and "manly") impatience at the inefficient slowness of those trapped between visions of empire, old and new.

Conrad's curiously frustration-driven, curiously resonant text responds to a change in geopolitics with an ethics derived from thinking about technology. He convincingly ties the political issue of new ways of imagining empire and the division of the globe under late imperialism to the material issue of the arrival of a speed culture. In caring more about fast turnaround time and better boats than about the particular strangeness of Africa, Conrad's work may well be the first, embryonic account of what became the globalist world order. He shows that if the home is an illusion (as the novel's closing, defiant kick, the chilling account of Marlow's visit to Kurtz's intended, back in a Brussels drawing room, proves), the colony as exotic heterotopia is also a sham. What is left, he insists, is a technology-driven ethics for this new world of instrumentalized, featureless, and exploitable non-places. This is based on principles of efficient engineering and transport — a scientist's ethics of beneficent speed. Whereas the pure detective story pleases by generating and assuaging fear, the deployment of detective story strategies in *Heart of Darkness* works its effects by generating frustration at slowness. This brilliant, subtle strategy of negative inference posits speed and a smooth journey as a global badge of effectiveness, "good work," achieved desire, and even (as Kurtz's case shows) a necessity for the maintenance of life. Speed culture in the West, the novel implies, would surmount the slowness of an imperial geospatial idea that is petering out in entropic inefficiency.

This lesson learned in the colonies could be realized in the West, the novel implies, because in the end Marlow does return home. In the city that

at the book's outset had reminded him of whitened sepulchers, he visits Kurtz's intended and feels trapped waiting in a very white room—once again we witness an engineer experiencing claustrophobia. In this return to the West, the novel plants the suspicion that the venality conducive to the slowness characteristic of the imperial hinterland is embedded even more relentlessly in the closed air of the home-infested West, where slowness is replicated and caricatured in a horrible sense of stasis and stillness. Jameson, in his periodization of literary genres and the corresponding political stages of imperialism, would have it that people like the "intended," who didn't know or refused to heed the truth of the colonies, soon became modernists, and intuited colonial exploitation in the jarring and grating of their defamiliarizing prose. Marlow, however, the sailor turned detective, and by the end as cool as Sam Spade himself, returning to a city even more dank and static, purports to already know the reality of colonial exploitation and suggests that the colonial reality already exists in a more vehement form back in the home nation than it does in the colony. He suggests that the stasis signifying this reality is evidenced by the inefficient, excruciating slowness of the colonizing endeavor and that the only ethical basis for action in the circumstances is a vivid impatience with, and detestation for, such stasis. When he tells his lie about colonial reality and the Intended accepts it ("The last word he pronounced was your name" [110]), he says, "It seemed to me that the house would collapse before I could escape, and that the heavens would fall upon my head" (111). (At least he escapes with both his thumbs.) With this image of the collapsing Western home, the novella's focus shifts at the end from the grimness of the featureless colony to the grimness of the enclosing quality of the Western home and state: they are shown to be two sides of the same coin. Conrad's text decries the hypocrisy of home, felt, while again he waits, as a sordid, claustrophobic stillness. His ending becomes a critique not only of a newly utilitarian version of colonial exploitation but also of the territorial and bunkerlike quality of the Western state that had sponsored colonialism in the first place.

If the Sherlock Holmes stories show us how to fear the house as home, and Conrad's novel shows us in the end how to fear the state, and its colonies, as similar kinds of bunkers, then just as we saw a suspicion of the dwelling space reflected in a crisis of domestic architecture in the period, likewise we can detect the uneasiness with the state's bunker qualities in the hyperbole of the era's monumental national buildings. The nation-state, as Paul Virilio points out, has during its history struggled with the same

contradictions that would soon dictate the contrary ways in which it envisioned its colonies: on the one hand, the state was, one might say, a color covering a specific, clearly bordered territory on a map, that is, a relatively vast imagined community that derived its identity in the final instance from the specific territory — the portion of global space — that a group occupied and defended, while on the other hand, the state operated as overseer and director of movements of people, goods, and money, both among its own people and between them and others. When new transport technologies meant that global and local movement increased, so that traffic became a science and its management a dominant national function — national passports, for example, were made compulsory in Britain only with Regulation 14.c of the Defense of the Realm Act (DORA) of November 30, 1915, as a wartime emergency regulation — the state's traffic-policing function increasingly contradicted its dominant self-imagination as static territory.[35] The uncertainty this generated is evident in the almost comically histrionic scale of some of the vast transport projects and transport-related buildings undertaken at the start of the twentieth century by state or by national companies. The last of the great urban European railway stations are the most grandiose. The railway terminus building of the Ferrovie dello Stato in Milan, the largest city of one of the last nation-states to emerge in western Europe, for example, shows in its extraordinarily hyperbolic façade the state's overbearing assertion of its power over national transport; a bravura last cheer, perhaps, for the great era of rail travel. The contradiction that had characterized all such structures is more evident than ever: in the front, a massively monumental building; at the rear, a series of light metal sheds covering the tracks — where the real work of moving vast numbers of people was quickly carried out. In Milan, the facade with its massed arches is so solid that it might be taken for the plinth of some gargantuan, never-undertaken statue. Within, the *pièce de résistance* is a fantastically high, impractical flight of stairs. A hymn to national grandeur, it resembles the vast marble monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, the first king of Italy, in Rome. That structure, designed in 1895, is wholly and only a monument: it backs on to the Forum, proclaiming the history of the Roman Empire as precedent for the new state. The Milan station backs on to the train tracks: aiming to imply the state's power over its transport networks, it suggests, rather, that, with its awe-inspiring power to monumentalize, the state is locked into a commitment to stasis, the static, fixed space of its national territory. Its power to impress applies only to the fixed facade of the terminus, fool-

ishly beside the point for a structure dedicated to traffic and the movement of people. When Degas painted his impression of the Gare Saint Lazare in Paris, he chose to represent not the gravitas of the building's facade but rather that point — full of the expectation of speed — where the iron-framed shed opens to the tracks that lead outward and beyond. If we read the vast station's pretensions after seeing Degas's picture, the state's intervention is a pitiable kind of facadism. A railway terminus is effective to the extent that it can be efficiently traversed; decked out as a monument, it betrays a state unconsciously aware that its power, based on the prestige of its static territoriality, runs counter to the new fluidity of movement and traffic. The stage is set, in architectural symbols, for the era of speed to be at odds with the state.

In 1929, the same year as *The Maltese Falcon* celebrated the night traffic on the streets of San Francisco and helped inaugurate a genre in praise of chaotic Pacific Rim traffic that would reach its apogee years later in Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner* (1982), the French surrealist Georges Bataille articulated a critique of all architecture, all static immobile structures, as territorializing edifices that counter the people's own traffic, their potentially revolutionary movement:

> Architecture . . . is the expression of . . . the physiognomies of official personages (prelates, magistrates, admirals) [with] . . . the authority to command and prohibit. . . . Thus great monuments are erected like dykes, opposing the logic and majesty of authority against all disturbing elements: it is in the form of cathedral or palace that Church or State speaks to the multitudes and imposes silence upon them. It is in fact obvious that monuments inspire social prudence and often even real fear. The taking of the Bastille is symbolic of this state of things: it is hard to explain this crowd movement other than by the people against the monuments that are their real masters.[36]

Here statist bunker culture is attacked with utter directness. Bataille's two other entries in the *Documents* series are on abattoirs and museums — the first he sees as centers of modern sacrifice which nobody visits, the second as reminders of death set up by the powerful to which the bourgeoisie sheepishly troop. Written two years after the proportion of U.S. families owning automobiles had reached 55 percent,[37] at the moment when the construction of the German Autobahn was about to be publicized internationally as a major plank of the Nazi empowerment of Germans,[38] in the year of

the Wall Street crash in which the international circulation of money in the modern wireless era suffered its first major upset, and almost twenty-one years after Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto extolling speed as a new aesthetic virility, Bataille's bravura surrealist piece makes explicit both the fears of house and home expounded in the now familiar thriller and detective novel and brings to their logical conclusions the frustrations embroidering texts like those of Conrad, where the stolidity of exotic territoriality, the other side of the coin of monumentality at home, exasperates the engineer who sees goodness in efficient speed.

With surrealist panache, Bataille makes clear how high modernism—of which surrealism can be taken as a culmination—simply shocked by openly naming the implications of the fears and frustrations which the more popular forms had merely implied. (Proto-modernist high fiction such as Conrad's had deployed lowbrow forms to imply them too.) Yet Bataille goes further. First he impugns all architecture—by which he means any humanly built structure, any human modification of space, and, by implication, any human imaginative manipulation of spaces—both as home and as heterotopia. He connects the state to grand architectural and monumental structures and, by implication, accuses the state itself, with its justification for its existence in the last instance the fact of its static demarcated territory, as perhaps the most vicious and oppressive of such structures of all. Finally, in his image of the attack on the Bastille, he sees movement by the people—that is, the people's access to speed in the public thoroughfares not blocked by monuments—as potentially revolutionary and as the beginning of their emancipation. (Ironically, the Place de la Bastille, where the prison stood, has become a great traffic circle.) With the example of the French Revolution, he implies that this movement, this seizing of speed, is itself integral to the democratizing impulse of modernity. Thus he literalizes the metaphor of velocity implicit in the first key word of modernity, *progress*. His analysis is nevertheless—like that submerged in the detective stories and in Conrad's last, highbrow example of the colonial adventure yarn—still confined to critique. Beyond the destruction of awe-inspiring, fearsome monuments, what is the crowd to do with its seizure of speed? How will it enjoy speed's pleasures?

In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the people's speed was reharnessed by the state to wage a war fueled by an ideology of conquest. "La Marseillaise," as has been pointed out, became, like every national anthem, a tune to mark the rhythm of the marching soldier's speed, a martial road

song.[39] It was only in the twentieth century, once the ideology of territorial expansion that sustained empire building in the classical sense became untenable, that the era of mass speed could at last be unleashed for the benefit and pleasure of the masses themselves (although national regimes always stood ready to reharness it for territorial wars). How new forms of subliterary mass culture grasped speed as a possibility for popular entertainment, how high modernist writing made the new unfamiliarity of non-place comfortable and even desirable, and how, above all, the newly invented entertainment media cast the new medium of speed as an individual pleasure will be the topics of the final section of this chapter. In it, we trace an arc from the fairground roller coaster to the demolition of the melancholic flâneur in literature, on to the first movie car chase.

Experiencing Speed: First Phase

A reimagining of the significance of particular kinds of spaces, both local and geopolitical, is discernible in both mass and high culture around the beginning of the twentieth century, achieved by the arousal of intense emotions about spaces, ranging from frustration to fear. In the late nineteenth century, the detective story endowed the city with a curious noir quality; it demonized the house and home, highlighting instead the pleasures of a lonely flâneur existence. It appropriated the staid aura of the home, recycling it as danger and replacing it with a sense of the glamorous danger of the thoroughfare. In the same years, the brash and jingoistic hymns to adventure of the popular colonial novel grew hollow. The genre literally lost its nerve, to be recast in higher literary form as a dryer and bleaker elegy to imperial adventure by Conrad. Adventure fiction discovered its own insubstantiality in the face of the knowledge that geopolitical space was finite. Exotic fantasies of otherness were replaced by stories about trajectories of exploitation and routes of transport. Sherlock Holmes stories replace the newly nightmarish aura of the home with the more obscure glamour of the policing of the street; Conrad's novella replaces the heterotopic delights of exotic other spaces with a cool, ever-murmuring, barely restrained frustration that the thoroughfares of the empire are mismanaged, unsmooth, don't let business run on time. Staging his as a narrative of a failure, Conrad goes further than Conan Doyle (and all detective fiction), whose golden rule is that the story must always be narrated as a success. Conrad instead incites us, by sharing Marlow's frustration, to presume that smoother, speedier,

more efficient movement ("progress," but literally, by barge or train) might somehow equate with a more honorable use of the colonial space. That space is now undifferentiated, except to the degree that its profit potential is assessed. Whereas Holmes, traveling in the open streets, shows us how to be careful and alert, Conrad's novella implies an engineer's ethics where efficient movement—good driving—itself renders us honorable. In tandem, each announces the old aura-filled perception of space to be obsolete: Conan Doyle's stories demonize the home; Conrad's novel implies the unsustainability of the fantasy of the heterotopia. With Conan Doyle and Conrad, each side of the dualist equation is demolished. Why was it at this historical moment that the older dualist conception of space as home versus heterotopia became obsolete?

The Western discovery of the finitude of the knowable world, the realization that all the white spaces on the map had been filled in, merely precipitated the sense that the home-versus-heterotopia vision of space was obsolete: it should not be mistaken for its cause. For this we need to search further, to the spatial imperatives of modernity itself. As David Harvey explains in detail, space in modernity has been viewed primarily in utilitarian terms: that is, its specific and particular features have been increasingly abstracted to make space a matter of better surfaces for the more easeful creation of wealth. In this world of increasingly abstracted space, Foucault points out in "Of Other Spaces," residual islands of "sacred space"—spaces that were once significant and full of aura and now linger on or are preserved as monuments—still intrude. I suggest that for much of modernity these islands still exerted the awesome power of their presence on people's entire view of spatial organization, so that increasingly a spatial order that was more and more abstracted and turned into what Augé terms non-place was still being seen, anachronistically, in the now mythic terms of the older, hierarchical, center-periphery, home-heterotopia version of the spatial imaginary. At some point the divergences between the archaic imaginary constructions and the reality of the more rational new spatial organization were bound to become apparent. The limits of colonial expansion, once reached, provided such a moment. This was so because imperialism's rationale of territorial extension—that a nation could take over heterotopic spaces and make them its own possessions—operated in parallel with the older sense of spatial organization, but it supported a reality that had more to do with trade and exploitation, in short, with traffic, than with territories drawn on any map. Once this became clear and the geopolitical spatial

order was seen as relatively abstracted, then the belief in home as its center was likewise laid bare. (The notion of the nation, the home territory that sustained the empire abroad, was then liable to be seen as archaic also.)

To grasp this is to begin to understand why frustration at slowness, scratched like an itch by Conrad's prose, became important in most high modernism. It comes close to explaining why flânerie, walking on foot through the city, became a modernist obsession at the very moment when new speeds were being achieved. It also complicates, but preserves, Jameson's intuition of the centrality of colonial-metropolitan relations for explaining high-modernist obscurities.[40] For example, Eliot's langours in "Prufrock" become an index of the contrast between the efficiencies of the arriviste empire (that of America, where Eliot was born and raised) and the frustrations of the worn-out one (that of Britain). Likewise, Joyce's Irish stop-and-go flânerie in *Ulysses* indexes the clash between metropole and colonial city as the rhythm of a setting (Dublin) where home and heterotopia were entities whose status was deeply unsure. If, however, the world was now to be considered as an abstracted non-place, with every place equally featureless and robbed of its particular auratic points and centers, then how was this space to be navigated, crisscrossed, used, even enjoyed? Conan Doyle and Conrad, distilling distaste for the old, had only hinted at the pleasures of the new. Non-place for them is still dark, misty, murky, fraught with dangers, surprises, and evil purposes—and so it was for even the most optimistic high modernists who succeeded them. It was an enormous task for culture, both high and low, to construct discourses in which this new version of an apparently featureless spatiality could be described, celebrated, and made culturally ready for use. This turned out to be the work of the lowest genres of culture and of the most rarefied forms of the high, and as new technologies were harnessed to create new cultural forms, such as the phonograph and film, these new forms proved utterly adept at developing representational strategies where the new non-place could emerge as the most exciting of all. This excitement centered on the ease of movement in abstracted space: that is, it centered on speed.

What occurred, and what is brilliantly captured in Augé's division of all spaces into place and non-place—that is, into spaces that can be represented and spaces that cannot within current protocols be represented at all—is that there was a massive crisis in the representation of spaces, so that for a moment space ceased to be credibly representable. This led in part to what critics have noted as the obsession with time in the various

modernisms, from Joyce's stunning compression of *Ulysses* into a single day to Proust's baroque of nostalgia and remembrance. It meant too, however, that there was a new attention to the means by which space was in fact experienced. This experience was seen to exist in the kinds of *movement* possible through newly abstracted, utilitarian space. This movement was cast as necessarily efficient, profit making, and maximally exploitative of all the resources of any space encountered. Movement, however, could also be pleasurable in itself; this maximum extraction of use value could be cast as pleasurable. Hence speed. Maximum efficiency meant maximum speed—but this drive for speed, at speed, had to be cast as the greatest pleasure. The work ethic and the pleasure ethic could be deemed not merely to coexist but to become one. Capitalism, as the French critic Jean Tissot has written, did not invent speed, but the experience of speeding could rightly become the physical and experiential co-equivalent of the pleasure of capitalist competition. Further, such human speeding, as befits the era of mechanics and engineering, was not merely to be an attribute of the human body, even if it had its basis there; it is certainly no accident that the era of modern international competitive sports, with running the thousand-meter dash at their highlight, began at precisely this moment. The Olympic games were about human speed, and they celebrated, above any one place, the whole world. They were, however, a spectacle for all except the competitors: they showed, rather than granted the experience of, the wonders of unaided human speed. What was needed was that people be given the experience of it en masse—and this was accomplished with the aid of machinery. As the first Olympics were being run, the first mass-produceable car was going into production. The opening of the experience of unheard-of speeds for individuals had now begun.

The precedents were the fast oceangoing liners and the trains, which were traveling at a respectable speed by the beginning of the twentieth century. In *Harmsworth's Magazine* in 1901, J. W. Wintle, in an article titled "Life in the New Century: The Most Striking of New Inventions," noted that "quite a sensation has been caused in nautical circles, by the performance of H.M.S. *Viper*, which travels at the rate of forty-three miles per hour. This extraordinary speed has been obtained by fitting her with steam turbines."[41] The crucial development was to move the masses from being passengers in boats and trains to being drivers. People could be transported quickly, but to actually experience that movement as physical pleasure was another matter. Here the simple fairground attraction of the roller coaster

works as an example of the way in which mechanics would, with the simplest device, render speed not as an image of others' momentum but as a taste of a new experience that would be one's own. It did not allow driving, but it offered speed as physical thrill. One of the earliest roller coasters was built by LaMarcus Thompson as the Oriental Scenic Railway in Atlantic City in 1886;[42] in 1901 Edward Prescott built the famous Loop-the-Loop at Coney Island.[43] Here, at the beginning of what Jean Baudrillard would later term the age of simulation, we have an icon of modern mass enjoyment that is thoroughly committed to raw physical experience, celebrated among holiday crowds and in public. (The first modern amusement park opened in Coney Island in 1895.) In the very years of the flowering of mass consumer culture as we now know it, when the mass image and the spectacle were asserting their nebulous but vastly seductive powers in areas from state pageantry to the mass advertising of soaps and powders,[44] controlled and commercial access to actual experience centered on speed. Speed was offered as a sensation, a contrast to the simulations — such as advertising — of contemporary capital.

Yet speed and capital were always intimately combined. This speed experience, however visceral, was also only a game in a fairground — it too was controlled, regulated, lively and invigorating but not really dangerous, granted without risk, or very little. (The advertisements for the Loop-the-Loop claimed "No danger whatever.")[45] It was conducted in public: bodily pleasure of the speed sort could and should, the roller coaster implied, be public, and this separated it from the private bodily experiences being explored in psychoanalysis and avant-garde literature in the same period. (Freud was dividing private sentience into two spatial fields, the conscious and the unconscious, at the same moment when such dualist divisions were breaking down in the perception of real space.) In the fairground show, destination for the urban working masses on Sunday outings to Coney Island, speed became the sensation which could be experienced publicly by everyone. It marked the point at which the new enveloping order of spectacle and mass consumption gave way to a taste of experientiality that could be enjoyed and still met with the approval, even the encouragement, of the authorities and the powerful.

Key to the fairground's roller-coaster thrill is that it was a physical *experience*, at the very moment when experientiality itself was beginning to give way to spectacle as the medium that ruled individual lives. This particular managed experience should be read in detail, as the roller coaster

provides the strategies that would, in automobile culture, organize the pleasures of the next, more widespread, version of the sensation of speed. First, notice the simplicity of the mechanical device that propelled the customer toward her pleasure: with its scaffold structure and creaking rollers, it was primitive in a way that drew attention to the unsophisticated haphazardness of its technology. This might seem the opposite of much technological self-representations since, where ergonomics and aerodynamics often hide under a streamlined skin, versions of machine design that arrived in the 1930s or before. Early automobile design, however, likewise prided itself in its rough-and-ready quality.[46] Exposed rods and joints in early autos suggested improvisation and encouraged automobile customers to look to the future when surface appeal would improve. The roller coaster's thrown-together look also implied that function — and the experiential enjoyment that came from following function — came from form. In its naked functionality, the roller coaster, as design, anticipated the modernist architects' rhetoric of honesty and transparency: with its exposed girders, it anticipated Richard Rogers's and Renzo Piano's Centre Georges Pompidou, whose outside escalators provide a ghostly memorial, a trace, of the roller-coaster experience. This rickety machine, scaring and thrilling the masses, taught them, and celebrated the idea, that a vivid experience demands the engineer's minute attention to functionality. It arrived, paradoxically, at the same moment when design, packaging, and advertising were all getting into their stride, and the age of the appeal of surface glamorous appearances was also being born.

Next, note that this machine that sold speed solely as pleasure did so by using the simplest of forces — that of gravity. Speed, the lesson went, was a force of nature — enunciated, evidently, by the technical know-how of structural engineering. This was an engineering-aided version, with a vengeance, of back-to-nature. It was to be experienced best of all in that sinking feeling you endure in the fell swoop when the car goes over the precipice and *falls* — when all sense of control must be surrendered and nature as pure force of gravity takes over. Consider that downhill skiing was initiated as a mass, if elite, sport in this period too, when various speculators, among them an entrepreneurial author, saw the potential popularity of speeding downhill on skis and began to import them from Sweden to Switzerland. (One skiing entrepreneur was A. Conan Doyle, he of "The Engineer's Thumb.") The downhill thrill — whether on skis or in a roller-coaster car — is all about how the ration of personal control and personal

surrender to the force of speed conjured by nature must at all times be calibrated. You give in to nature's force, and then experience speed as pleasure with an undertow of fear. You begin with a certain control, and that control (as in revving an engine, propelling oneself faster) brings one level of pleasure, along with a sense of purpose; but it is the moment of surrender to a force of nature larger than oneself, along with the fear of loss of control that comes with it, that deepens the pleasure. This heady interdependence of surrender and willpower, calibrated continuously and by means of split-second decisions, is what makes up the modern machine-enhanced but utterly natural and gravitational experience of speed.

This sense of surrender is enhanced by the relatively minimal safety precautions built into the machine. Constrained merely by a bar, you learn that the force of gravity, nature itself, will protect you from the machine's dangers. At the same time, not strapped in or restrained, one's personal responsibility—to be a good consumer of speed—is made evident. The lack of restraints and of cover accentuates the fear. This fear, accepting and overcoming it, the ride implies, is the absolute basis of, and a prerequisite for, the pleasure. The pleasure feeds on the fear—of an accident, of nature's power, of the technology's crash. Pleasure, the machine implies, comes when a willing rider overcomes the fear of these possibilities. This fear must be present, but it must be disregarded. The depth and complexity of the pleasure are thus intensified, and it appeals to a whole spectrum of sensations and emotions. This thrill is better than that of the detective story, as it is absolutely physical. It carries the rider along by appealing first to fear, then to her sense of her personal power. This power is underlined in the freedom the rider is given to disobey the simple rules: allowed freedom of movement, the rider, it is implied, is responsible for the speed—even if, in the case of the roller coaster, this is an illusion. In the coming culture of the automobile, just this onus on the individual to control her fear and to exert her personal responsibility within a firmly established rule system will be the ground rules for the people's accession to the pleasurable experience of fast cars, fast lives.

Next, notice the ratios of public participation to private pleasure embodied in the experience of a roller-coaster ride. The machine marks, you might say, the demise of the era of the passenger: it is the last vehicle in which being a passenger for its own sake is presented as a really enjoyable experience. (In the airplane, the passenger's pleasure was to be based mostly on recognizing one's class.) The roller coaster marks the moment in

the history of passenger travel where photographs of late Victorian revelers enjoying their seats on a charabanc outing gave way to images of glum commuters, or of airplane travel that had to be photographed glamorously if it was to be seen as exciting. Like the coming car culture, however, the roller coaster offers speed as a mass experience, to be enjoyed in public. The enjoyment itself, nevertheless, is private, individual, and essentially selfish. This division, which neatly instills a modernist version of the gap between community and individual, puts the thrill experienced by the lone individual at the heart of the fulfillment of desire. It implies, however, that the consummation of one's pleasure can best be experienced in public view, so that it orchestrates a breakdown in the conventional split between public and private lives, refusing the notion that private pleasure must retreat to the home. This has been replayed again and again in the anomalous status, at once very private and absolutely public, of car travel. In the world of streets and of mechanical trajectories of speed like the roller coaster, privacy would be deemed the enemy of personal pleasure. At the same time, killing the chance for a politics of this new speed pleasure, no sense of community was necessary to enjoy it; on the contrary, the individual alone in the crowd of strangers was the ideal candidate for this thrill of technology and speed. The more technology thrilled, the more you felt the thrill alone.

All of this, moreover, took place at a funfair, often at the seaside. Modern speed technology was born in a popular carnival atmosphere of excess, enjoyment, leisure, and abandon. The innocence and the simplicity of the pleasure, the sense of license, of holiday, the sense of wagering, all combined to make the roller coaster a hilarious, as well as riotous (if very controlled), experience. Carnival pleasure, which in Mikhail Bakhtin's terms might have been harnessed as a force with the potential for limited communal opposition to the status quo, was managed, diverted, and channeled into a form of intense personal pleasure that could be deemed instinctive and certainly cut off any of the contemplative positions possibly useful for imagining significant social action. This was an invitation to physicality, to a fast physical thrill, at the service of the coming revolution in transport. The holidaying masses were shown how potentially disruptive carnival antics could be bettered by a technological fix that offered each individual in the crowd a better thrill, a physical experience at once so general and so intense that it exceeded anything a game with one's peers could provide: individual lonely pleasure proved to be best. When people step off the roller coaster, they are laughing, terrified, excited, exhilarated, thrilled: enticed

in advance into the coming car culture. This pleasure corresponded, like a gambling win, to the essential characteristics of capitalist competition, where the greatest thrills appear depoliticized and the greatest achievements, it would seem, are experienced alone.

At the opening of this chapter, I suggested that mass culture genres and forms inducted people into the new culture of speed by altering the ways in which they registered the spaces that mattered to them. The thrillers of pop culture, like detective fiction, did this by arousing fear—fear of the spaces, especially the home, where the older spatial certainties had once found shelter. Others, like the well-modulated colonial yarns of Conrad or, later, the flâneur stories of the high modernists, represented the frustrations of slowness. The incitements to leisure of the new amusement park, such as the rough-and-ready technology of the roller coaster and Ferris wheel, offered excitement by giving their customers an early taste and primitive rundown of the coming pleasures of speeding itself. These forces of terror, frustration, and excitement, in the new era, were never distinct. What speed promised to do, and what the fairground attractions foretold, is that it would only be in this mix of what appeared to be contrary impulses, in a straining, taut, and unending effort to keep all three impulses in operation at once and to calibrate the ever-shifting relation between them, that one could achieve the optimum pleasure of the new speed culture. In calibrating the ratio of fear, frustration, and excitement, the thrill, already represented in mass sensation fiction and the shrill advertisements for the fairgrounds, could now be realized by every individual as personal experience. The vicarious thrills and spills, accidents and emergencies, successes of vigilance and frustrations of the slow, to be read about in the popular forms of sensation fiction could now be experienced as physical, immediate, and personal when, with car culture, the promise of speed seemed open to everyone.

Through technology the masses were about to be offered the means to increase the speeds they would experience and to take personal control of speed's rate and power. The new avalanche of pop culture worked hard in advance to ensure that speed's customers had established a desire for speed's pleasures. The old-order pleasures of dreaming about more or less imaginary fixed spaces were made to appear quaint, even dangerous, out of date, both in the colonies and by implication in the "real world" of home. (It was the arch-modernist Gertrude Stein who said of the California city of San Jose, "There's no there there": the true joke is that, given the world's new spatial order, she could, increasingly, have been speaking of anywhere.)

Flowing along the new featureless routes of ruthlessly abstracted spaces would be the new task, and with speed it was guaranteed to provide a new and hitherto unknown intensity of pleasure. Experiencing extraordinary new speeds on these routes and controlling one's experience of them would become a pleasure that only in the twentieth century would vast numbers of people come to know, and to know it, as Huxley claimed, as one of the only truly new pleasures of modernity. Car culture was about to begin, and the masses had been indoctrinated in the complex of sensations that need to be calibrated to enjoy speed. At the dawn of the society of the spectacle, people were being offered an extraordinarily intense *experience* of such pure private physicality. This was an innovation of which modernity's alliance between technology and the human could be proud. Technology, still sticking to its utilitarian strengths, was now poised to profoundly impact the subjective realm of personal pleasure. Modernism would be marked by a new symbiosis between the technological and what it felt like to be human. Speed would be the symptom of this symbiosis, and also its selling point. When speeding, the modernist citizen of the world would feel in her body the thrill of modernity's energy. The years of incitement to speeding were over, and with the new century, the opportunity to seize speed had come.