

This is a pre-print version of the Madison Jones and Jacob Greene webtext “Augmented Vélorationaries: Digital Rhetoric, Memorials, and Public Discourse” published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 22(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/22.1/topoi/jones-greene>.

“Alienation”

Voice-over narration: “There is perhaps no other form of transportation more emblematic of American progress and individualism than the automobile. In cities like Detroit, the birthplace of the modern car industry, the automobile is celebrated as a form of cultural expression and uniquely American technology. The automobile redefined the infrastructure of the United States. In the post-WWII boom of the 1950s and 60s, the federal government subsidized the Interstate Highway System, forever linking concepts like American progress and exceptionalism with images of the ‘open road.’ However, automobiles shield us from their most immediate effects upon our lived environments. When we drive down a busy highway on a blistering summer day, we don’t feel the heat from the pavement or hear the sounds of the engine as we drive along in our comfortable, air-conditioned cabs.”

Ulmer Interview: “Some commentators date the Anthropocene from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. As we start to burn coal, that’s when we start to act at a planetary level and change our own environment. After the Industrial Revolution, we invented a transformative scale of technology and machinery. This machinery requires human beings to change their behaviors. This goes by Taylorism, Fordism, ultimately, the assembly line. Our philosophers call the effect of this on people ‘alienation.’ As people are alienated, the world is reified and objectified and we lose our sense of agency. Individuals working in factories having their behavior correlated to fit with the machine no longer recognize the consequences of their own actions. This is a kind of psychosis. At a civilizational level, people can’t see the results of their own behavior. This is called fetishism in commodity culture.”