§ EPISODE—ODE TO MICHAEL DOUGLAS

In the film, *Falling Down* (1993), Michael Douglas gets out of his car in a traffic jam and fires a bazooka into a roadwork. His character represents a rebellion against the everyday conformity that traffic jams and car crashes can produce. We all feel this rebellion ebb and flow through us as we watch the spectacle on TV or are stuck in traffic jams. Yet the act of getting out of our cars and abandoning everyday life is anticipated for us through the regimes of economics in which we are now enmeshed. How will we pay off the mortgage or afford the rent if we don’t go to work? What is the future of society if we stay in our homes, or only operate on foot? The wholesale non-use of cars or oil-driven public transport, or the switch to electric cars, is currently not possible, unless the means to work from home through networked jobs is more fully realised, and everything that we do is reorganised accordingly. Until that time in
future history, we are consigned to the lives of commuters and the petro-citizenship that seeps into all we understand about social organisation. Michael Douglas’ character represents a type that should not be emulated; yet his drives exemplify the ways in which petro-citizenship is embedded in our behaviour. He turns to violence to sort out a traffic jam and deal with his frustrations at work in his domestic life. We should understand how this breaking point between petro-life and affect can be articulated through art and philosophy. Such articulation also constitutes survival narratives and escape routes from the plateau of the petro-citizen. For example, we should resist the depletion of planetary resources without reciprocity. This stopping point is a break from the past, and involves the integration of ecological mythology with pragmatic and sustainable ways to transform society and habit. I hope that immanent materialism could be part of this integration, as it recognises that art and creativity have a vital role to play in changing everyday life.