**Anti-auto policies don’t decrease car use – empirically proven**

Wilson 97, James Q. Wilson, a veteran contributor to COMMENTARY, is the Ronald Reagan professor of public policy at Pepperdine University in California, July 1997, *Commentary*, “Cars and Their Enemies,” http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/cars-and-their-enemies-1/

Would they? Charles Lave, an economist at the University of California at Irvine, has pointed out that most of Western Europe has long had just these sorts of anti-auto policies in effect. The result? Between 1965 and 1987, the growth in the number of autos per capita has been three times faster in Western Europe than in the United States. Part of the reason for the discrepancy is that the American auto market is approaching saturation: we now have roughly one car in existence for every person of driving age. But if this fact helps explain why the car market here is not growing rapidly, it does not explain the growth in Europe, which is the real story. Despite policies that penalize car use, make travel very expensive, and restrict parking spaces, Europeans, once they can afford to do so, buy cars, and drive them; according to Lave, the average European car is driven about two-thirds as many miles per year as the average American car. One result is obvious: the heavily subsidized trains in Europe are losing business to cars, and governments there must pay an even larger share of the running cost to keep the trains moving. In fact, the United States has tried to copy the European investment in mass transit. Relentlessly, transportation planners have struggled to find ways of getting people out of their cars and into buses, trains, and subways (and car pools). Relentlessly, and unsuccessfully. Despite spending about $100 billion, Washington has yet to figure out how to do it. New subway systems have been built, such as the BART system in San Francisco and the Metro system in Washington, D.C. But BART, in the words of the transportation economist Charles L. Wright, “connects almost nothing to little else.” The Metro is still growing, and provides a fine (albeit expensive) route for people moving about the city; but only 7 percent of all residential land area in Washington is within a mile of a Metro station, which means that people must either walk a long way to get to a stop or continue to travel by car. Between 1980 and 1990, while the Washington Metrorail system grew from 30 to 73 miles of line and opened an additional 30 stations, the number of people driving to work increased from 980,000 to 1,394,000, and the transit share of all commutes declined. The European experience should explain why this is so: if people can afford it, they will want to purchase convenience, flexibility, and privacy. These facts are as close to a Law of Nature as one can get in the transportation business. When the industrial world became prosperous, people bought cars. It is unstoppable.

**Auto fatalities are at the lowest levels they’ve ever been – squo solves.**

NHTSA 11, “DOT Estimates Three Percent Drop Beneath 2009 Record Low,” National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 4-1-2011, http://www.nhtsa.gov/About+NHTSA/Press+Releases/2011/ci.Traffic+Fatalities+in+2010+Drop+to+Lowest+Level+in+Recorded+History.print

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today announced that the number and rate of traffic fatalities in 2010 fell to the lowest levels since 1949, despite a significant increase in the number of miles Americans drove during the year. "Last year's drop in traffic fatalities is welcome news and it proves that we can make a difference," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "Still, too many of our friends and neighbors are killed in preventable roadway tragedies every day. We will continue doing everything possible to make cars safer, increase seat belt use, put a stop to drunk driving and distracted driving and encourage drivers to put safety first." According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) early projections, the number of traffic fatalities fell three percent between 2009 and 2010, from 33,808 to 32,788. Since 2005, fatalities have dropped 25 percent, from a total of 43,510 fatalities in 2005. The same estimates also project that the fatality rate will be the lowest recorded since 1949, with 1.09 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, down from the 1.13 fatality rate for 2009. The decrease in fatalities for 2010 occurred despite an estimated increase of nearly 21 billion miles in national vehicle miles traveled. A regional breakdown showed the greatest drop in fatalities occurred in the Pacific Northwest states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska, where they dropped by 12 percent. Arizona, California and Hawaii had the next steepest decline, nearly 11 percent. "The decrease in traffic fatalities is a good sign, but we are always working to save lives," said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland. "NHTSA will continue pressing forward on all of our safety initiatives to make sure our roads are as safe as they can possibly be." The Department of Transportation (DOT) has taken a comprehensive approach to reducing roadway fatalities by promoting strong traffic safety laws coupled with high-visibility enforcement and through rigorous vehicle safety programs and public awareness campaigns. In 2009, Secretary LaHood launched a national anti-distracted driving campaign modeled on other successful NHTSA efforts to reduce fatalities, such as its "Over the Limit. Under Arrest." and "Click It Or Ticket" campaigns to curb drunk driving and increase seat belt use. The U.S. DOT has launched a dedicated website, Distraction.gov, to provide the public with a comprehensive source of information on distracted driving. DOT has also hosted two national summits devoted to the issue, crafted sample legislation which states can use to adopt distracted driving laws, and initiated pilot law enforcement programs in Hartford, Conn., and Syracuse, N.Y. NHTSA has also taken action to improve vehicle safety. The agency has urged automakers to swiftly and voluntarily report safety defects to keep the driving public safe. NHTSA has also encouraged the development and use of technologies to prevent crashes, such as electronic stability control, forward collision warning and lane departure warning systems. The agency also unveiled an updated 5-star rating system in 2010, which established more rigorous crash-test standards and began providing consumers with improved information about which cars perform best in collisions. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has also been encouraging the use of Safety Edge technology -- which reduces drivers' risk of running off the road by shaping pavement edge -- on new road and highway projects. FHWA has also promoted the use of rumble strips and cable median barriers to separate opposing directions of traffic to reduce the incidence of crossover head-on collisions.

Automobiles = inevitable

Wilson 97, James Q. Wilson, a veteran contributor to COMMENTARY, is the Ronald Reagan professor of public policy at Pepperdine University in California, July 1997, *Commentary*, “Cars and Their Enemies,” http://www.commentarymagazine.com/article/cars-and-their-enemies-1/

All this is a way of saying that the debate between car defenders and car haters is a debate between private benefits and public goods. List the characteristics of travel that impose few costs on society and, in general, walking, cycling, and some forms of public transit will be seen to be superior. Non-car methods generate less pollution, use energy a bit more efficiently, produce less noise, and (with some exceptions) are safer. But list the characteristics of travel that are desired by individuals, and (with some exceptions) the car is clearly superior. The automobile is more flexible, more punctual, supplies greater comfort, provides for carrying more parcels, creates more privacy, enables one to select fellow passengers, and, for distances over a mile or more, requires less travel time. As a practical matter, of course, the debate between those who value private benefits and those who insist on their social costs is no real debate at all, since people select modes of travel based on individual, not social, preferences. That is why in almost every country in the world, the automobile has triumphed, and much of public policy has been devoted to the somewhat inconsistent task of subsidizing individual choices while attempting to reduce the costs attached to them. In the case of the automobile, governments have attempted to reduce exhaust pollution, make roadways safer, and restrict use (by tolls, speed bumps, pedestrian-only streets, and parking restrictions) in neighborhoods that attach a high value to pedestrian passage. Yet none of these efforts can alter the central fact that people have found cars to be the best means for getting about.

Traffic fatalities have been steadily decreasing – improved DOT safety measures.

Zak 10, Michael Zak, AOL Autos, 4-11-2010, “NHTSA Says Traffic Fatalities Decrease for Fourth Straight Year,” http://autos.aol.com/article/NHTSA-2009-crash-data/

According to preliminary information released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the number of fatalities on American roads is declining. The data collected and analyzed by the NHTSA indicated several positive aspects from 2009: A decline in highway deaths of 8.9% from 2008 to 2009 The lowest fatality rate--1.16 deaths for every 100 million vehicle miles traveled--on record The lowest overall number of deaths--33,963 -- since 1954 15 straight quarters of decline in the number of overall roadway deaths “We've worked hard to make sure drivers are getting our ‘Click it or Ticket’ and ‘Over the Limit, Under Arrest’ messages,” noted Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood in his blog. "I have been on a personal tear to raise awareness about distracted driving." The overall number of deaths (33,963) is an 8.9% decrease from 2008 and is the lowest on record since 1954. The data is in line with a continuation of declining traffic fatalities since they hit a near-term high in 2005, in which there were 43,510 deaths. Traffic Fatalities Since 2005 2005 43,510 2006 42,708 (-0.8%) 2007 41,259 (-2.7%) 2008 37,261 (-10.5%) 2009 33,963 (-8.9%) Percentages indicate change from the previous year. Source: NHTSA The data also indicates that the national vehicle miles traveled (VMT) increased by about 6.6 billion miles, a 0.2% increase from the 2008 VMT. Though American drivers traveled more, the fatality rate per 100 million VMT decreased to 1.16 in 2009, the lowest on record. Comparatively, the number of deaths per 100 million VMT was 1.25 in 2008 and 1.46 in 2005. News of the decrease in traffic fatalities is an encouraging sign that the safety measures employed by the Department of Transportation, the automakers, and American drivers themselves are having a positive effect. Each new car sold in America is designed with safer materials, arranged in a safer way, to produce safer outcomes in case of accidents.

Becker 03, Gary S. Becker. Business Week. New York: March 17, 2003. , Iss. 3824; pg. 30. “Why War With Iraq Is Not About the Oil,” http://home.uchicago.edu/gbecker/Businessweek/BW/2003/03\_17\_2003.pdf

The developed economies are also considerably less dependent on oil today than after previous oil price shocks—when OPEC was formed in the 1970s and when Iraq attacked Iran in the 1980s. These economies have learned to economize on oil and other fossil fuels by developing new technologies, including more efficient automobiles and airplanes. As a result, the share of income spent on oil has declined by more than half in the U.S. and other rich economies. So an upward boost of oil prices of even 50% would have a significantly less disastrous effect on the U.S., Europe, and Japan than similar price jumps have had in previous decades.

**NB: this card gets**

**Automobility is essential to autonomy – key to value to life.**

Lomasky 97, Loren E. Lomasky, *Independent Review* 2.1, “Autonomy and Automobility,” Business Source Complete

The automobile, definitionally, promotes automobility. The complementarity of autonomy and automobility is only slightly less evident. In the latter part of the twentieth century, being a self-mover entails, to a significant extent, being a motorist. Because we have cars we can, more than any other people in history, choose where we will live and where we will work, and separate these two choices from each other. We can more easily avail ourselves of near and distant pleasures, at a schedule tailored to individual preference. In our choice of friends and associates, we are less constrained by accidents of geographical proximity. In our comings and goings, we depend less on the concurrence of others. We have more capacity to gain observational experience of an extended immediate environment. And for all of the preceding options, access is far more open and democratic than it was in preautomobile eras. Arguably, only the printing press (and perhaps within a few more years the microchip) rivals the automobile as an autonomy-enhancing contrivance of technology. No one who has been caught in rush-hour gridlock will maintain that commuting to and from work is an unalloyed joy. Competing with tens of thousands of other motorists for scarce expanses of asphalt reminds one of the Hobbesian war of all against all. For critics of the automobile this complaint is not a negligible point. But neither are its implications entirely clear-cut. Just as worthy of notice as the unpleasantness of stop-and-go commuting is how many people voluntarily subject themselves to it. Have they not realized how much time they are wasting in overly close proximity to their steering wheels? Such inadvertence is not plausible. Evidently, people who, individually and collectively, could have devised for themselves residential and occupational patterns not incorporating lengthy commutes chose to do otherwise. In their judgment, the costs of commuting are compensated by the benefits thereby derived. The more the critics emphasize the magnitude of the costs, the more these critics underscore, often unwittingly, the extent of the benefits. Commentators from the Greek philosophers to Adam Smith to Karl Marx have noted that **the nature of the work one does largely shapes the quality of life one enjoys.** For nearly all of us, to do work suited to oneself in a satisfactory environment is a great good, whereas to perform alienating labor under unfriendly and unhealthy conditions is a correspondingly great evil. Similarly, to reside in a comfortable and functional dwelling situated in a neighborhood one finds hospitable is also a considerable good. For most people throughout human history, neither occupation nor place of residence has afforded more than a negligible range of choice. One did the work one's father or mother did, or to which one had been apprenticed, or the kind of work available in that place. And one lived near the workplace. The increased affluence and openness of liberal capitalist society vastly expanded the range of choice. But the coming of the automobile essentially separated the choices. Previously one lived either near one's work or else on a commuter rail line. But the geography of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford tracks did not bind motorists. Depending on how much time they cared to invest in transit, they could live at a considerable distance from their workplaces, yet emancipated from the rigidities of mass transit. Cultured despisers of the idiocy of suburban existence can and do decry this circumstance, but millions of Americans (and, increasingly, the rest of the world) disagree. Even if one believes for aesthetic or other reasons that row upon row of bungalows or ersatz Tudor houses miles distant from the city or industrial area to which they are connected by roadways represent unattractive neighborhoods, one cannot deny that they are genuine objects of choice for those who live there. People, we might say, have a right to banality. To respect the autonomy of persons is to acknowledge that expanding their options for combining work and place of residence is as such a plus. Nineteenth-century socialist reformers decried the enhanced ability of industrial capitalism's factory system to exploit workers. Human labor, they charged, had become no more than an appendage of mill or machine. Although one could reasonably respond (as Friedrich Hayek [1954] famously did in Capitalism and the Historians) that workers who voluntarily abandoned their rural domiciles for the factory town did so only because they themselves regarded the move as a net improvement, one must nonetheless concede that their situation was not enviable. They may have enjoyed a higher standard of living than that available to them on the farm, but their work was grueling and their opportunities for self-directed choice minimal. Against the perceived oppression of industrial society, the reformers contrived various nostrums, one family of which, now mercifully defunct, oppressed millions of unfortunate souls throughout most of this century. No syndicalist scheme or string of workers' cooperatives remotely approaches the automobile as an emancipatory instrument. Insofar as it extended the feasible range of commuting between residence and labor, the coming of the motorcar augmented the bargaining power enjoyed by workers. A company town offers little scope for alternate employment opportunities. Changing jobs very likely requires changing place of residence, and exit costs of both pecuniary and nonpecuniary sorts may render that prohibitive. However, widespread automobile ownership dramatically extended the geographical radius of possible employment venues. Hence, the market for labor came more closely to approximate the economists' model of many sellers and many buyers. In theory, under a legal regime of free contract, workers always enjoyed the right to terminate their employment when they wished to do so, but in practice the exercise of this liberty often proved discouragingly costly. Automobility significantly lowered those costs. The country music song "Take This Job and Shove It" became something of an anthem for the disaffected at a time when car ownership had become almost universal. Musical aesthetics aside, those who value choice not only formalistically but as the existence of genuine live options must appreciate this alternative. **Detroit has done more for the liberation and dignity of labor than all the Socialist Internationals combined.** One can also observe liberation by viewing the employment-residence nexus from the other direction. The ability to choose where one will live makes a considerable difference in the exercise of self-determination. Life in the suburbs is not inherently better than life in the central city, but it is different. To the extent that one possesses a real opportunity to choose between them, one can give effect to significant values that shape the contours of a life. A city may offer ready access to arts and education, a succession of ethnically diverse neighborhoods, a feeling of drive and vitality, an ambience that "swings." But cities are often dirty, expensive, and dangerous. Exurban life may provide peaceful neighborliness, gardens and green spots, family-oriented activities that take place in the home or the mall. But exurbs are often antiseptic, provincial, and stultifying. To choose the one is to relinquish (some of) what the other affords. So which is the better alternative? People must answer for themselves based on their own conceptions of what matters most. To the extent that one has geographical mobility, the question is answered by an act of positive choice rather than through inertia or extraneous constraints such as the location of one's place of employment. Choice of residence serves as a major avenue for Americans to exercise their right to free association. Choosing a neighborhood is the macrolevel correlate to choosing one's friends. One thereby decides with whom one will live. And perhaps even more important, one decides with whom one will not live. In contemporary society, "leaving home" signifies a full coming of age and the concomitant entitlement to direct one's own projects as an adult. But then comes the necessity of finding and making a home in a neighborhood to which one has a fie at least in part because one has freely chosen to live there rather than somewhere else. This choice too signifies and gives effect to one's values. Some people prize a high degree of homogeneity of race or religion or age or economic class among those with whom they will most frequently associate. Others prefer a heterogeneous diversity of different ages, skin tones, and backgrounds from which casual acquaintances and intimate friendships will emerge. Considering whether one of these preferences deserves more admiration than the other carries us away from the theme of this essay, but even if one regrets that some people choose to segregate themselves from those who somehow differ--or conversely, that some defect from tightly knit ethnic communities--**an ethic that endorses autonomy must acknowledge that, the content of individual choices aside, it is good that people can make up their own minds and then act on their decision about where to live.**

Critiques of automobility are based in ivory-tower hostility to autonomy.

Lomasky 97, Loren E. Lomasky, *Independent Review* 2.1, “Autonomy and Automobility,” Business Source Complete

First, the cited ills do not support a general indictment of the automobile and attempts to roll back its use. Rather, the indicated remedy is to adopt policies that reduce spillover costs. Legislators should aim taxes and regulatory controls at the vehicles that pollute excessively or present more than normal dangers to others; differential pricing for peak and off-peak access to highways lies well within the capabilities of currently available technology; and so on.[11] Well-aimed attentiveness to particular avoidable costs is commendable; wholesale denunciations of automobility are not. Second, the balance sheet of instrumental values and disvalues ignores the intrinsic goodness of automobility in promoting autonomy and complements of autonomy--such as free association and privacy. Even if purely instrumental calculations did not unambiguously display a positive balance in favor of automobility, its autonomy-enhancing aspects are so pronounced both qualitatively and quantitatively that any plausibly adequate normative evaluation of the status of automobile usage must give them primary attention. Could the automobile's critics have failed to observe that cars support autonomy? If these effects were slight and subtle, that supposition might be reasonable. But when compared with alternate means of transportation the automobile stands out as the vehicle of self-directedness par excellence. To overlook this fact would be like visiting the mammal area at the zoo and failing to notice that the elephants are larger than the zebras, camels, and warthogs. I am convinced that the automobile's most strident critics appreciate that automobility promotes autonomy--and that is precisely why they are so wary of it. Public policymakers have a professional predisposition to consider people as so many knights, rooks, and pawns to be moved around on the social chessboard in the service of one's grand strategy. Not all analysts succumb to this temptation, but many do. Their patron saint is the philosopher Plato, the utopian architect of the ideal Republic, who embraces propaganda campaigns ("Noble Lie"), eugenic breeding, radical property redistribution schemes and--most tellingly--rule exercised by people just like himself, the philosopher-kings. If one sincerely believes that one knows what is best, and if one benevolently desires to gift one's fellows with this treasure, their obdurate insistence on continuing to do things in their own preferred way can be maddening. "I'll give you what's good for you," the policy specialist vows, first in the soft tones of a promise and then, after experiencing rejection, in the clipped cadences of a threat. People who drive automobiles upset the patterns spun from the policy intellectual's brain. The precise urban design that he has concocted loses out to suburban sprawl; neat integration of work, residence, and shopping within compact, multipurpose developments gives way to bedroom communities here, industrial parks there, and malls everywhere in between. If people rode buses and trains whenever they could, less oil would be burned and fewer acres of countryside would be paved over. Perhaps the races and classes would mix more. Perhaps communities of an old-fashioned sort, where everyone knew his neighbor, would return. Perhaps the central city would come alive again in the evenings. Perhaps...but why go on? These lovely visions give way before the free choices of men and women who resist all blandishments to leave their cars in the garage. They wish to drive, and by doing so they powerfully express their autonomy, but their exercises of choice also have the effect of rendering the planners' conceptions moot. So the intellectuals sulk in their tents and grumpily call to mind utopias that might have been. Although this essay was stimulated in the first instance by a conviction that the critics of the automobile had, at best, offered distinctly one-sided appraisals, my aim here has been to develop the positive case for the value of automobility, not to respond point by point to the items in the brief against the automobile. (And, of course, I staunchly agree with some of these points.) Many of the argumentative missiles launched at the automobile become more fully intelligible if one understands them as motivated at least as much by a disinclination to tolerate individual autonomy as by any particular facet of automobile technology.

Automobility is essential to privacy.

Lomasky 97, Loren E. Lomasky, *Independent Review* 2.1, “Autonomy and Automobility,” Business Source Complete

Privacy complements autonomy. Someone who is private has a life of his own. That is, he is not entirely defined and constrained by a public persona. The capacity to be self-determining requires some quantum of privacy, whereas being an adjunct to a greater whole or an organic part of an organism does not. Individuals are private only to the extent that some part of their personas belongs primarily to them and not to the world at large. Being inappropriately viewed during a moment of intimacy or vulnerability constitutes one of the most basic encroachments on privacy. In an extended sense, privacy incorporates limitations not only on perceptual access but also on the knowledge or control others may have over oneself. What constitutes an invasion of privacy is not fixed by our nature as human beings but is relative both to more or less arbitrary convention and to the far-from-arbitrary conditions that govern the possibility of forging an identity that is distinctively one's own. "A man's home is his castle" expresses one early manifestation of this impulse. The king is powerful and the king reigns, but in one little corner of the realm the commoner, not the king, enjoys (quasi) regal prerogatives. A right not to be subject to search and seizure without due process of law and a right not to be obliged to incriminate oneself are further manifestations. They express the conviction that personal dignity imposes limits on mandatory subjection to the scrutiny of others. Some ancient conceptions of privacy endorsed a radical withdrawal from one's fellows. We should view the hermit or anchorite not as essentially a misanthrope but rather as someone who by separating himself from other human beings thereby draws closer to his God. (For Christians, Jesus in the wilderness provides the paradigmatic instance; there are many others.) Monasticism constitutes a slightly less radical version: voluntary sequestration with a few like-minded others away from the main crossroads of urban life. From Qumran by the Dead Sea to David Koresh at Waco, sectarians have acted on the belief that they could achieve a greater inner and external freedom by isolating themselves from the majority culture. When that majority culture nonetheless forcibly impinges on them, results typically are tragic. Previously I have focused on the value to individuals of the capacity to approach and enjoy particular goods. The concern for privacy underscores the concomitant importance of the capacity to distance oneself from threats. If too many eyes are on me where I am, then I shall enhance my privacy by moving out of the spotlight of public scrutiny. For most of us the relevant degree of privacy rarely involves isolation from all others but usually does require the ability to exercise a significant degree of discretionary control over who will have access to one's body and mind. Adolescents who go out to "do nothing" thereby claim a measure of privacy vis-a-vis their parents; a fishing trip may have less to do with baiting fishhooks than with taking oneself off invasive social hooks. For twentieth-century American society, the automobile serves as the quintessential bastion of privacy. For many of us the Honda, not the home, is the castle. Ironically or not, those minutes between home and office on a freeway clogged past capacity with multitudes of other cars may be one's most private time of the day. (I do not mean to slight the benefits of the other great solitude-enhancing device of our culture, the bathroom.) Even those who love their spouse and children, delight in the company of friends, and work compatibly alongside colleagues may nonetheless relish a short time each day to be alone. Such interludes do not indicate an antisocial impulse. Intermediate periods of solitude can fuel bouts of gregariousness and sociality just as an astringent serves to clean the palate between sumptuous courses. Social planners are wont to gnash their teeth at the number of motorists who could arrange to commute by car pool but instead "inefficiently" take up roadway space with solitary-occupant cars. Diamond lanes and other inducements have only a limited effect on the average occupancy. This outcome may be viewed as a failure of policy, but it can also be seen as a reasonable and in some ways estimable response to the valid human desire for privacy. "It is not good for the man to be alone," says Scripture, but for those who live among a surfeit of others, it is sometimes very good indeed to be alone. The closing of the car door can provide a welcome shutting out of the rest of the world, allowing a recapture of the self by the self--as opposed to its usual embeddedness in an array of intersecting public spaces. Car pools are not necessarily a bad thing; in demonstrable respects, we might be better off if more people doubled and tripled up before taking to the roads. Privacy in virtually all its forms, including that afforded by the automobile has significant costs. (Think of the private room versus the hospital ward.) I shall not inquire here whether the costs of automotive privacy exceed the benefits; my point is simply that driving solo has genuine benefits that go beyond merely instrumental facility in getting from here to there. Any unbiased cost-benefit analysis must acknowledge that privacy has a positive value and proceed from there. Being alone is one aspect of privacy but not, I believe, the most central. More salient to privacy than the distancing of oneself from others is a (re)gaining of control over one's immediate environment. I may be surrounded by other people, but if I can determine to a significant degree what they shall be allowed to perceive of me and know about me and impose on me, then to that extent I have retained a private self. Surely one reason for people's fondness for their cars and for automobility in general is the control afforded over one's immediate environment. Drivers make choices by turning the wheel clockwise and counterclockwise, determining the external environment to which they will move themselves; by other manipulations they arrange the internal environment to their liking. Pushing one button turns on the radio. Pushing others changes the station, lowers the volume, turns off the radio and switches to the tape player. Individuals choose for themselves whether to listen to news reports, Beethoven, the Beatles, or nothing at all. Next to the switches for the stereo are those for climate control, windshield washing, blinking one's lights, and perhaps a cellular phone. (Because the last item supplies incoming as well as outgoing calls, an assessment of whether it extends or diminishes privacy is double edged.) The vehicle's make, model, style, color, and options are more permanent objects of one-time choice. Automobile reviewers write about "responsiveness." This has a limited meaning in the context of evaluating how a vehicle performs, but automobiles, unique among all forms of personal transportation, have a larger responsiveness. Individuals exercise control over the internal environment of their cars in a manner not possible with any alternate mode of getting around.

Automobility enhances local knowledge –essential to individual value to life.

Lomasky 97, Loren E. Lomasky, *Independent Review* 2.1, “Autonomy and Automobility,” Business Source Complete .

Automobiles enhance mobility, and mobility enhances knowledge. Recall the discussion of the relationship between self-moving and perception in Aristotle's biological theory. As the area in which people can direct their self-aware movements increases, so too does the range of their knowledge-gathering capacities. The knowledge in question is, in the first instance, local knowledge. By traveling through, around, and within a place, one comes to know it in its particularity. This kind of knowledge has no very close substitute. I may have read a score of books about Paris, but if I have never visited the City of Lights, if I have never traversed its streets and bridges and marketplaces, then I could not truly claim, "I know Paris." One can no more reduce knowledge of a place to possessing many facts about that place than one can reduce knowing another person to having read a very detailed resume. Philosophers often distinguish between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance. To acquire the latter, one often needs mobility. Of course automobiles are not the only form of transportation that serves to increase local knowledge, and for some types of local knowledge they may serve poorly. One such case is that described in the preceding paragraph: for acquiring up-close knowledge of a city like Paris, shoes serve better than tires. All forms of transportation--from walking to bicycling to trains, buses, ships, and airplanes--enhance knowledge. But with the possible exception of the motorcycle, another means of transportation assailed by no shortage of critics, none combines local maneuverability with extended range to the degree that the automobile does. The train can move me from one city to another at intermediate distance and afford me the opportunity of viewing the terrain in between. But it allows only a limited number of stops along the way, the speed may be slower or faster than one would wish for optimal information gathering, and the route will be exactly the same on the thousandth trip as on the first. Airplanes excel for speed, but everything between points of departure and destination is indistinct. Walking is a wonderful way to observe a neighborhood, but inadequate to take in even the opposite end of a village, let alone a state or country. For genuine exploration at long or intermediate range, the car dominates all alternatives. How much weight should one give this sort of knowledge? The question deserves an answer. Few of the automobile's critics have a word to say about the knowledge-enhancing aspects of automobility, either because they have never considered the automobile from the perspective of information gathering or because they implicitly suppose that what one learns while behind a steering wheel is trivial. But these critics do not represent the population at large. They are intellectuals and information processors of one stripe or another, most comfortable with information that can be synthesized in books or graphs or computerized databases. They tend to depreciate information that can't be measured, quantified, and represented symbolically. But the information to be gained from reading a history book or running a regression is not the only sort that individuals can use effectively in their pursuits. Knowledge need not be grand or profound to have value in itself and to complement choice. By driving north along the lake to see how the autumn leaves have turned and whether the Canadian geese are still milling or have flown, I may gain an inherently worthwhile experience. Driving through the various neighborhoods of a city reveals where the bakeries, hairdressers, and Thai restaurants are located; who is having a garage sale this week; and which parts of town are becoming distinctly seedier. Teenagers cruising the "main drag" are conducting an epistemological mission motivated by the hope of sniffing out the whereabouts of others of a desirable age and gender. And even the stereotypically boorish Bermuda-shorts-clad tourists with their vans, videocams, and surly children in tow may actually be uplifted by the sights of the Civil War battlefield or seaside to which they have driven. When the range within which one moves about becomes extended, so too does the range of one's potential knowledge. The automobile is the quintessential range extender, not only by lengthening the trips one can take but also by multiplying the number of available routes. Knowledge by acquaintance has been emphasized in the preceding discussion, but automobility also extends one's ability to acquire other kinds of knowledge. Cars go not only to malls and theme parks but to libraries, universities, and museums. Cars provide regular access to urban centers of learning to those who live many miles distant. The traditional derogatory image of the unlettered "country bumpkin" has been rendered increasingly obsolete by new technologies--telephone, television, computer and, not least, the automobile.