## 1AC

#### Observation 1: Inherency

#### Current infrastructure ideas and policies are structured around the car. Though the government has mandated more cycling infrastructure, states continue to ignore this and spatially organize for the automobile. The metropolis has become the autopolis, forcing out the bicycle.

Zack Furness, Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies in the Department of Humanities, History, and Social Sciences at Columbia College Chicago, 2010, One Less Car: Bicycling and the Politics of Automobility, Chapter 3: Vélorutionaries and the Right to the (Bikeable) City, Project Muse, <http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9781592136148>, TB

It is more than a little ironic that Dwight Eisenhower, Nazi fighter extraordinaire, was impressed by the efficiency of the autobahn and at once incapable of recognizing its deep implications in totalitarian logic.20 While the autobahn project began prior to Adolf Hitler and was not solely reducible to the tenets of National Socialism, it was nonetheless ideological in its effects.21 Historian Anne-Katrin Ebert recalls that Hitler’s 1934 traffic law made the promotion of the car the highest goal of the Reich chancellor despite the fact that the estimated 16 million bicyclists outnumbered cars by roughly 8:1 in 1935. Thus, the priorities of Hitler’s traffic edict asserted the rights of the wealthy minority at the expense of the rest of the people, who were later sold affordable cars built by slave workforces.22 What Eisenhower called the “wisdom” of Germany’s traffic plan was, in fact, a form of technological and spatial authoritarianism used to reposition the automobile as the exclusive focal point for urban mobility—a task largely achieved by coupling automobility with the promise of jobs (road building), economic prosperity, and the nationalist/expansionist mythos of Lebensraum, or “living space.” Drawing comparisons between American automobility and Nazism—or Italian fascism, for that matter—might seem like a cheap way to build a case against the former, something akin to damning antiwar protesters for being un-American. However, this comparison is instructive inasmuch as it speaks to the similarly intertwined militarist/capitalist logic at work in the development of the U.S. highway system under Eisenhower:23 that is to say, a comprehensive political project buttressed by the ideological articulation of mobility to nationalism, public defense, job creation, economic growth, and a technologically updated version of the frontier thesis—a uniquely American version of Lebensraum informed by the ethos of modernity, the mythos of the Wild West, and the corporate/religious philosophy embodied in Henry Ford’s appeal for drivers to experience “God’s great open spaces.”24¶ Massive postwar expenditures on highway infrastructure cemented the automobile’s centrality in U.S. mobility with over $55 billion in Highway Trust funds spent on the interstate system alone between 1956 and the end of 1972. Federal financing for mass transit was virtually nonexistent until money was set aside in the Housing Act of 1961, followed by the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, a piece of legislation providing roughly $375 million over a three-year period—a figure paling in comparison to the billions devoted to highway construction.25 It was not until 1973 that the Highway¶ Trust fund was tapped for mass transit expenditures (minus funds for the actual operating costs, which were dropped under the threat of Nixon’s veto), and the creation of an analogous Mass Transit Account was similarly postponed until 1983. Another eight years would pass before the federal government signed off on the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), one of the first pieces of comprehensive legislation to call for the inclusion of national pedestrian and cycling plans in state transportation planning. In other words, the first time walking and bicycling were seriously recognized as national/federal priorities, in terms of funding and the scope of the policy, was more than a century after the invention of the automobile. Yet according to the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, more than¶ 40 percent of all state Departments of Transportation had not even complied with ISTEA’s most basic requirement as of 2003: to develop a statewide, longrange plan for bicycles and pedestrians.26¶ The postwar redevelopment of the United States was problematic not only because it helped transform the metropolis into an autopolis but also because simultaneously it facilitated both mass suburbanization at home and the geopolitical policies necessary to ensure steady supplies of oil from abroad.27 Tragically, these processes occurred almost immediately following a period when public transportation and walking were common, when more than half of U.S. car owners claimed they could do without their cars, and when there were more than 12 million bicycles in use by 1948, up from 9 million in 1940.28 By contrast, cycling continued to find a place in everyday European life, particularly in England, where the cycling industry thrived and bicycles were widely used for both transportation and recreation prior to, and following, World War II.29 Lewis Mumford was among those who spoke to the problem of U.S. automobility as early as the 1950s, seeing cars not as the end result of technological Darwinism but as a problem to be remedied. In addition to penning books on the subject, he used his “Sky Line” column in the *New Yorker* to wage a public battle against auto-centric planning and, more specifically, Robert Moses’s catastrophically myopic vision of New York City as a driver’s paradise.30 In 1963, he stated:

#### Plan: The United State federal government should substantially increase its investment in bicycle transportation infrastructure in the United States.

#### Advantage: automobility

#### This network of infrastructure kills space as a living area, dividing and hierarchizing it and making us further rooted in automobility in an attempt to spatially fix these cracks.

David Campbell, professor of cultural and political geography at Durham University in the U.K., 2005, *American Quarterly* 57.3 (2005) 943-972, ‘The Biopolitics of Security: Oil, Empire, and the Sports Utility Vehicle’, Project Muse, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html>, TB

The concept of automobility—or that of the "auto social formation" or "car culture"—calls attention to the hybrid assemblage or machinic complex that the apparently autonomous entities of car and driver compose.[88](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT88) In the "automobilized time-space" of contemporary society we can observe a networked, sociotechnical infrastructure that is in process, an infrastructure in which there is "the ceaseless and mobile interplay between many different scales, from the body to the globe."[89](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT89) Automobility thus is one dimension of empire, in the sense proposed by Hardt and Negri.¶ The relationship between the auto and the urban has always been at its strongest in the United States. The beautification of cities through the construction of avenues, malls, and parkways in the early twentieth century coincided with and furthered the rise of the automobile.[90](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT90) While the development of technology was obviously important, a transformation in American urban culture—wherein streets came to be viewed as traffic ways rather than recreational social spaces—was fundamental to the creation of the auto social formation.[91](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT91) Most obvious in the urban planning of Robert Moses, whose bridges, expressways, and parkways transformed New York City and its environs, these infrastructural developments came to be the leitmotif of modernity.[92](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT92) National highway systems became the centerpieces of utopian plans—as in General Motors' "Futurama" in the 1939 World's Fair in New York—and were realized in the cold war years as a consequence of the Interstate Highways and Defense Act of 1956.[93](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT93)¶ Although constructed as a means to achieve the unification of social life, the web of traffic routes that permeate urban space have in practice furthered the fragmentation of the urban and its peri-urban and suburban spaces, creating in the process new borderlands (which in turn require new capsules of security).[94](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT94) The distanciation of life elements (home from work, family from friends, haves from have nots) that are part of this urban fissure in turn promotes further reliance on automobility as people seek to overcome, traverse, or bypass these divisions. Importantly, this partitioning of the urban world has been codified in and encouraged by planning legislation. Embodying a functionalist view of the city as an organized machine, American urban planners from the 1920s on relied on a system of zoning controls that separated uses and imposed homogenous criteria on specified areas. Hostile to mixed usage or hybrid formations, these uniform zoning codes (known as Euclidean zoning after a 1926 Supreme Court decision in favor of the village of Euclid) have produced urban sprawl and the elongation of travel routes.[95](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT95) In the absence **[End Page 965]** of public transport systems, these urban forms have further increased reliance on the car. For residents of the border zones known as "edge cities," there is little choice but to rely on private transport for mobility. Contemporary urban life is both sustained by oil in the form of the car and requires increasing oil consumption through the use of the car urban life promotes. Citizens are thus coerced into a limited flexibility, creating a situation that is "a wonderful testament to the ability of a sociomaterial structure to serve its own reproduction."[96](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v057/57.3campbell.html" \l "FOOT96)

#### We experience nothing between our starting point and destination, using this space as only a means to achieve our travel, making it into a dead zone.

John Urry, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Centre for Mobilities Research, Lancaster University; Edited by Steffen Böhm, Campbell Jones, Chris Land, and Matthew Paterson; “Inhabiting the car,” in “Against Automobility,” The Editorial Board of the Sociological Review 2006, p.21-22

Simmel makes points relevant to the nature of this inhabiting. Contra much contemporary social theory he considers that the eye is a unique ‘sociological achievement’ (Simmel, 1997: 111). Looking at one another is what effects the connections and interactions of individuals. Simmel terms this the most direct and ‘purest’ interaction. It is the look between people (what we now call ‘eyecontact’) which produces extraordinary moments of intimacy since: ‘[o]ne cannot take through the eye without at the same time giving’; this produces the ‘most complete reciprocity’ of person to person, face to face (Simmel, 1997: 112). The look is returned, and this results from the expressive meaning of the face. What we see in the person is the lasting part of them, ‘the history of their life and . . . the timeless dowry of nature’ (Simmel, 1997: 115). He further argues, following notions of the possessive gaze, that the visual sense enables people to take possession, not only of other people, but also of diverse objects and environments often from a distance (Simmel, 1997: 116). The visual sense enables the world of both peoples and objects to be controlled from afar, combining Inhabiting the car detachment and mastery. It is by seeking distance that a proper ‘view’ is gained, abstracted from the hustle and bustle of everyday experience. Automobility precludes both of these achievements of the eye. Especially for the non-car user roads are simply full of moving, dangerous iron cages. There is no reciprocity of the eye and no look is returned from the ‘ghost in the machine’. Communities of people become anonymized flows of faceless ghostly machines. The iron cages conceal the expressiveness of the face and a road full of vehicles can never be possessed. There is no distance and mastery over the iron cage; rather those living on the street are bombarded by their hustle and bustle and especially by the noise, fumes, tastes and relentless movement of the car that can never be mastered or possessed (Urry, 2000: ch. 4). To inhabit a road full of cars is to be in an environment where the visual sense is overwhelmed by other senses. More generally: ‘Modernist urban landscapes were built to facilitate automobility and to discourage other forms of human movement . . . [Movement between] private worlds is through dead public spaces by car’ (Freund and Martin, 1993: 119). Large areas of the globe now consist of car-only environments – the quintessential non-places of super-modernity (Augé, 1995). About one-quarter of the land in London and nearly one-half of that in LA is said to be devoted to car-only environments. And they then exert an awesome spatial and temporal dominance over surrounding environments, transforming what can be seen, heard, smelt and even tasted (the spatial and temporal range of which varies for each of the senses). Such car-environments or non-places are neither urban nor rural, local nor cosmopolitan. They are sites of pure mobility within which car-drivers are insulated as they ‘dwell-within-the-car’. They represent the victory of liquidity over inhabiting the ‘urban’. One such non-place is the motel that ‘has no real lobby, and it’s tied into a highway network – a relay or node rather than a site of encounter between coherent cultural subjects’ (as would be found in a hotel) (Clifford, 1997: 32). Motels ‘memorialize only movement, speed, and perpetual circulation’ since they ‘can never be a true place’ and one motel is only distinguished from another in ‘a high-speed, empiricist flash’ (Morris, 1988: 3, 5). The motel, like the motorway service stations, represents neither arrival nor departure but the ‘pause’, consecrated to circulation and movement and demolishing particular senses of place and locale. This ‘sense of sameness and placelessness’ is accompanied by a ‘social organization of space that helps to further auto-dependence and to mask any realistic alternatives to automobility’ (Freund and Martin, 1993: 11). Morse describes the freeway not as a place but as a vector, as direction, as ‘inbetweens’ where magnitude is measured in minutes rather than miles (1998).

#### The separation and depersonalization of the car causes a state of diremption in which the world is seen as dead or foreign. This separation is internalized to prevent social interaction and understanding that in turn forms the basis and meaning of life.

(Joshua Fischel, Senior Project Manager at Thomson Reuters, 2011 “EDUCATION AFTER MODERNITY: DEWEY, DAVIDSON, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR OVERCOMING DIREMPTION”)

But let’s take a closer look at what happens when we emerge from a condition of diremption to a condition of love. Friedrich Hegel’s early essay on love can help us do so. According to Hegel (1948), in the state of diremption, an individual exists and understands itself in a state of opposition to an objective world or “dead matter” that is distinct from itself (p. 304). Still, however, ones own identity is itself caught up in there being an objective world in opposition (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). “Thus his thought of self must transcend his own consciousness, for there is no determinant without something determined, and vice-versa” (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). Nothing, if you will, stands alone. Everything gains its identity through the other. “Nowhere is any independent existence to be found except in an alien being . . . ” (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). But in the state of diremption, Hegel continues, there is an imbalance in power between one side of the relation and the other. When this happens, one part of the relation is objectified and turned into dead matter. Hence, any exploitative relationship is one not based in love. True love, on the other hand, can only occur “between living beings who are alike in power and thus in one another’s eyes living beings from every point of view; in no respect is either dead for the other” (Hegel, 1948, p. 304). Hegel (1948) concludes, therefore, that in love: Life is present as a duplicate of itself and as a single and unified self. Here life has run through the circle of development from an immature to a completely mature unity: when the unity was immature, there stood over against it the world and the possibility of a cleavage between itself and the world. . . . finally, love completely destroys objectivity and thereby annuls and transcends reflection, deprives man’s opposite of its foreign character. . . . In love the separate does still remain, but as something united and no longer as something separate. (p. 305) Life, for Hegel, was always a unity, always in relation, even at the stage of immaturity (diremption), when it was not in love. Love is realized when the self no longer sees the world as an alien other than it turns into an object. No longer, in the state of love, is the other person or nature seen as a threat or a competitor who could possibly weaken me by acquiring what I have that they want or what it has that I want. Rather, the world is seen in reciprocal terms. “The lover who takes is not thereby made richer than the others; he is enriched indeed, but only so much as the other is” (Hegel, 1948, p. 307). In this sense, the relationship between a young child and her mother or caretaker is paradigmatic of a love relation, not the relation between self and world that one finds in the self-image of Modernity that is scrubbed of all contextual features in its attempts to gain proper theoretical distance. Noe (2009) nicely describes it this way: As I have suggested, the child has no theoretical distance from her closest caretaker. The child does not wonder whether Mommy is animate. Mommy’s living consciousness is simply present, for the child, like her warmth or the air: it is, in part, what animates their relationship. . . . Like the baby in relation to her mother, we are involved with each other. It is our joint cohabitation that secures our living consciousness for each other. We live and work together. (p. 33) In addition, the more I look into myself, the more I find the other and the world. And conversely, the more I see the world the more I see myself. Relations based on love, for Hegel, are never detached or impersonal ones. Nor can they be commodified, since to commodify the world or another person, is to turn oneself into a thing. Similarly, to turn another person or the natural world into a resource is to turn oneself into a resource. As such, in relationships based on love there is no attempt to control or dominate the other. Hegel’s conception of love, then, puts Dewey and Davidson’s relational self, argued for in Chapter 2, in a new light. The relational self is a self-image whose foundation is in love. If the self is to gain its identity as a person, it must understand its personhood to be emergent from other persons and the world. This spawns a gratitude, appreciation, and responsibility one has for oneself (self-love) and for the other, be it in another person or the natural world. The gratitude and appreciation for our interconnectedness, then, is expressed in a relation based on love. And in as much as it is a relation based in love, it seeks no control over the other. Without love, there is diremption. Of course, even a self in a state of diremption is still related to the world, but it’s related in such a way that the world is seen as standing in opposition to it. And to the extent that it is, the diremptive self seeks to remove those barriers. But in the process of attempting to dominate and remove what is seen to be in opposition, the self loses itself and becomes alienated from itself. “Life without meaning, hope, and love breeds a coldhearted, mean-spirited outlook that destroys both the individual and others” (West, 2001, pp.14-15). Only when the self comes to realize that the perceived separation and opposition between self and world is illusory, will it be able to overcome this alienation.

#### The subject of automobility is liquidated, the organization of space gives them no choices and takes them away from life.

Kari Hensley, doctoral candidate at New York University in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication, master's degree in that program as well as an undergraduate degree in the history of art from the University of California, Berkeley, March 2010, American Quarterly, Vol. 62 No. 1, One Nation Behind the Wheel Automobility in U.S. Culture, Project Muse, <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly/v062/62.1.hensley.html>, TB

The liberal ideal of the "open road" has been further troubled by the ubiquity of racialized violence and discrimination. Through an analysis of midcentury guidebooks written for black drivers—*Travelguide* (bearing the telling subtitle *Vacation and Recreation Without Humiliation*) and the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, which directed African American drivers toward safe, nondiscriminatory hotels, restaurants, and car repair shops—Seiler explores the "high stakes, pleasures, and perils of African Americans' driving and car ownership, claims to the public space of the road, and general participation in an expanding culture of automobility" (106). Such publications exhibited an immense desire among blacks to participate as equal citizens in the U.S. automotive and democratic processes, though often in the contradictory terms of "communal racial uplift and liberal individualism" (106). In this sense the guidebooks, published from 1936 to 1957, facilitated a type of cultural citizenship for African Americans, who were in the proto-stage of the civil rights movement. "It was in this historical context that African Americans' desire and fitness for citizenship were tethered to and divined in their participation in automobility, a practice that fused self-determination and self-representation, mobility, consumption, and social encounter" (106). Here Seiler examines how some persons are granted personhood, while others are not, and similarly shows that the corollary to mobility is immobility—that the former of each pair actually relies on the latter.¶ Since the onslaught of mass automobility, mobility has been at the crux of American personhood. Yet, paradoxically, it can also make the subject disappear. Seiler asserts that while the highway is not outside racial and gender dynamics, for nonwhites and women it can provide fleeting moments of respite from identity and its hindrances. The aesthetics of speed are often blurry, and **[End Page 178]** the decorporealizing powers of speed and the isolation of the automobile offer the possibility of erasing the markers of identity, if only ephemerally. For Seiler, "the self-obscuring speed and procedural regulation of highway driving provides a metaphor for the abstraction of the subject in the liberal public sphere" (126). The "liquidation of the subject," through the blur of the speeding car or other means, is similarly the effect of modern consumer society and life in the age of governmentality. Individuals in consumer society have a propensity toward withdrawal and privatization that is only reinforced by a weak social contract. And yet, the effacement of the individual's particularities actually pushes one in the direction of the Habermasian ideal type: the blank liberal subject who is supposed to check his or her identity "at the door." Automobility gives a sense of variety and mobility, but the choices are prescribed and mass-produced, the routes already mapped. The paradox of automobility is that it disciplines as it liberates.

#### Observation 2: Solvency

#### Bicycling reconnects us with this space – time and space are balanced and speed is restrained enabling us to keep up with our movement and experience travel for what it is.

Zack Furness, Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies in the Department of Humanities, History, and Social Sciences at Columbia College Chicago, 2010, One Less Car: Bicycling and the Politics of Automobility, Chapter 3: Vélorutionaries and the Right to the (Bikeable) City, Project Muse, <http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9781592136148>, TB

Contributing to this paradigm shift were a number of interrelated, or at least intersecting, factors, including the growth of the appropriate technology (AT) movement and its popularization through E. F. Schumacher’s *Small Is* *Beautiful,* published in 1973.96 Schumacher, one of the primary theorists of AT, elaborated a holistic critique of industrialism and the logic of progress implicit to technological development. The book resonated with the technological anxieties many Americans experienced as a result of the Vietnam War, the energy crisis, and a growing awareness of the lethal hazards posed by environmental pollution. For better or worse, the AT movement directed attention to issues of scale, specifically the correlation between the size of technological systems and their effects on societies, which Schumacher describes as inversely proportional, hence smaller being beautiful. This line of inquiry is significant because it closely paralleled critiques of urban planning and transportation in the same general period. Jane Jacobs was among those who challenged not only the size and scale implicit to orthodox urban planning but also the spatial tensions between the needs of pedestrians and those required of automobiles. Ivan Illich similarly bemoaned modern transportation, though his critique dealt less with the size and scale of automobility than its high energy demands and its speed: “A true choice among practical policies and of desirable social relations is possible only where speed is restrained. Participatory democracy demands low-energy technology, and free people must travel the road to productive social relations at the speed of a bicycle.”97 Schumacher, Jacobs, and Illich formed something of a holy trinity for bicycle advocates who used their theories to create a more philosophically informed analysis of cycling in the 1970s. Illich’s ideas understandably took on a prominent role because he mapped an entire politics of technology around the bicycle itself, writing in *Energy and Equity:*¶ Bicycles let people move with greater speed without taking up significant amounts of scarce space, energy, or time. They can spend fewer hours on each mile and still travel more miles in a year. They can get the benefit of technological breakthroughs without putting undue claims on the schedules, energy, or space of others. They become masters of their own movements without blocking those of their fellows. Their new tool creates only those demands which it can also satisfy. Every increase in motorized speed creates new demands on space and time. The use of the bicycle is self-limiting. It allows people to create a new relationship between their life-space and their life-time, between their territory and the pulse of their being, without destroying their inherited balance. The advantages of modern selfpowered traffic are obvious, and ignored.98¶ If the bicycle became a prominent metaphor for the benefits of “small” and “slow” it was not simply because it made for a good argument on paper. Rather, bicycling played a distinct role in the everyday lives of its proponents, not only as a transportation device but also as an extension of the counterculture from which many bike advocates emerged.99 As Arthur Asa Berger wrote of the newly popularized ten-speed bicycle of the early 1970s, it symbolized “the whole, counter-culture, self realization, nature syndrome.”100 Indeed, the counterculture in Europe and North America played a distinct role in the emergence of modern bike advocacy, perhaps more so than many of its current lycra-clad exercise advocates would care to admit. The eventual anxiety over cycling being too associated with the counterculture is nicely previewed in 1974 interview with former cycling champion John Allis: “Sponsors don’t want some scruffy jeaned hippy going around waving their name in front of the public. They want somebody who represents them in a respectable way and I think bike riders are going to have to change their image that way.”101 This is not to say that all racers or utilitarian cyclists in this period were scruffy-jeaned hippie activists, or that environmentalism, anti-authoritarianism, and technological skepticism—three common dispositions of the counterculture— necessarily compelled every cyclist’s desire to ride. But even the most cursory glance at the protest strategies and theatrics embraced by these bike advocates indicates their prior, or concurrent, relationships to the social movements and/or counterculture(s) of the period. This is clear enough with the Dutch Provo, Alternative Stad, and Le Monde a Bicyclette, but run-ofthe- mill cycling enthusiasts also had somewhat of a fringe relationship with mainstream society. Charlie McCorkell, Transportation Alternative’s second executive director and a thirty-year bike advocate/builder/educator, recalls that cyclists in the early 1970s were “much more outside the system then today,” and Steven Faust, another longtime bike advocate and planner in New York City, says that cyclists were considered “sociologically marginal people.”102 Rivvy Neshama speaks clearly to the correlation between biking and the counterculture in describing the motivation for TA’s 1974 Bike-in:

#### A lack of adequate infrastructure prevents widespread adoption of bicycling

(Zack Furness, Columbia College Chicago Department of Humanities, 2010, one less car chapter 1)

Bicycling is not only a fringe mode of transportation in a country with more vehicles than licensed drivers; it is a form of mobility rendered virtually obsolete by the material infrastructure and dominant cultural norms in the United States. navigating a U.S. city by bicycle is for the inexperienced cyclist or casual rider a seemingly daunting challenge if not a completely undesirable task. Of course, people can and do ride bikes in any urban environment, and the health benefits alone far outweigh the actual risks of doing so. But statistics are somewhat meaningless when one is faced with the actuality of sharing the road with an almost ever-increasing volume of automobiles, driven by a growing number of aggressive drivers, with shorter tempers, in bigger vehicles. 22 if and when one is capable of assuaging concerns over their safety (real or perceived), there are a slew of other issues for bike riders to contend with, the least of which is simply finding a safe place to park one’s bike. For example, outdoor bike racks are generally scarce or inconveniently located, indoor parking facilities are almost nonexistent in U.S. cities, makeshift bike racks like parking meters are gradually disappearing from urban spaces (replaced by digital boxes), and most employers do not allow employees to bring their bicycles inside their place of work, much less provide facilities to shower and/or change clothes. 23 One can add to this any number of issues, including the prevalence of road hazards, a decreasing number of independent bike shops nationwide, and a relatively hostile street environment in which it is not uncommon for male drivers to sexually harass women on bikes and to intimidate, taunt (getting called “faggot” is all-too-typical), and occasionally kill male cyclists. 24 Even seven-time Tour de France champion lance armstrong is not immune from these general trends; he was threatened and almost run over by a vengeful driver following a verbal exchange on the road in the late 1990s. 25

#### Politicizing the bicycle and its infrastructure as a tool for spatial and cultural reform rejects the current mindset of transportation.

Zach Furness, Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies in the Department of Humanities, History, and Social Sciences at Columbia College Chicago, 2010, One Less Car: Bicycling and the Politics of Automobility, pg. 8-10, TB

Against these odds, support for bicycle transportation is growing in the United States, and so are the ranks of those drawing critical attention to the intersecting problems of auto-supported sprawl, oil reliance, and “car addiction.”43 Indeed, there is a distinctly political impetus spurring many of today’s bicycling advocates to challenge the institutions and practices of automobility as well as the spaces in which the automobile is materially and ideologically constructed as the king of the road. One can see this ethos at work in Critical Mass, but it is a disposition similarly embraced by a legion of bike enthusiasts, environmentalists, cultural workers, tinkerers, and a variety of “small-scale, autonomous groups” whose objectives are not part of the “dominant transport or leisure cultures.”44 The emergence of what Paul Rose calls a bicycle counterculturebegan in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when pro-bicycle advocacy groups and anti-car environmental protests sprouted in the Netherlands, England, Sweden, France, and, most strikingly, the United States, where the ubiquity of the automobile has constistently thwarted both the viability of bicycle transportation and the development of cycling traditions common to Asia and Europe. Spurred by the urgency of the 1970s oil crisis and a passion for human-powered transprotation, these bike activists, or *biketivists,* sought to address not only the everyday challenges and dangers facing cyclists on the streets but also the social, ecological, and spatial benefits of a radically efficient and otherwise sustainable technology: a “vehicle for a small planet,” as Marcia Lowe puts it.45¶ In voicing their support for utilatarian cycling as an immediate and/or long-term alternative to the automobile, a growing number of Americans are beginning to see the bicycle as much more than just a utilatarian collection of metal tubes, wheels, chain links, pedals, and a saddle (seat). The bicycle is variously seen, and in many cases actively reconceptualized, as a source of self-empowerment and pleasure, a pedagogical machine, a vehicle for community building, a symbol of resistance against the automobile and oil industries, and a tool for technological, spatial, and cultural critique. Formal advocacy, independent media, and the creation of grassroots cultural practices are some of the tools with which people simultaneously convey their aspiration for human-powered mobility and their intense frustration with a car culture in which the rhetoric of the freedom of the road often replaces the actual right to freely use the road. Bicycling, in other words, is seen as a symbolically powerful gesture capable of signifying, for example, “support for alternative energies,” or somewhat differently, a desire to not “spend life inside of a box.”46 Crhis Bull, an independent bike maker and founder of Circle A Cycles in Providence, Rhode Island, indicates that biking is also part of a wider cultural shift that beings at an individual level, with people “pushing themselves in all areas of life to consume less, pollute less, live differently.”47 Indeed, many bicyclists are drawn to the idea of opting out – as much as possible in a petroleum-based economy – from constributing to the ever-increasing profits and power of oil and gas corporations. Sheldon Brown, the recently deceased guru of U.S. bike tinkerers, similarly alludes to oil-related wars as a reason why people cyle: he says he went from being an off-and-on bike commuter to a full-time devotee (with few exceptions) on the day Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.48 Claire Stoscheck, a feminist bike advocate in Minneapolis, puts emphasis on the material simplicity of the bicycle and on the way riding fosters open-air connections with one’s surroundings. More emphatically, she sees biking as a means of literally and metaphorically “subverting the dominant isolationist, individualistic, over-consumptive car culture,”49 Bicycling, as an antiviolence educator in California so eloquently puts it, is fundamentally political because “it bears witness to a commitment to change and the possibility of changing the way we think and act.”50¶ The bicycle, like the automobile, is an object that becomes meaningful through its relationship to an entire field of cultural practices, discourses, and social forces. These linkages, or what cultural theorists call *articulations,* are not naturally occurring, nor are they due to the essence of the bicycle itself.51 Rather, they are made: people construct, define, and modify these connections by writing about bicycles, displaying them in museums, documenting them in films, representing them on T-shirts and posters, singing about them, fixing them, and, of course, riding them. The intentionality of a specific rider, advocate, or documentarian can extend only so far, however, because the process that collectively fix meaning around the bicycle, the act of cycling, or even the cyclist him- or herself are historically rooted, geographically and contextually specific, and shaped by dominant ideologies and everyday habits. Put simply, a bicycle means something much different when used by an RNC protestors in 2004, versus a Chinese schoolgirl in 1968, a Swiss chemist in 1943, or a Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) graduate student in 1999 – all the more so if one accounts for the reasons they are riding, the directions they are going, the speeds at which they are traveling, and the types of bicycles they are pedaling. People can and do make bicycling meaningful, in other words, but not within a context of their own making.52 Indeed, just as the physical movements of an urban cyclist are influenced by the presence of cars and framed by a road designed for cars, the processes with which we make sense of bike riders, bicycle technologies, and cycling are similarly framed by the norms and assumptions bundled up with automobility. The power of this regime, in other words, stems from its coercive spatial and temporal organization of bodies and machines, but also from its capacity to structure meaning: to mold the ways we think about, engage with, struggle over, and ultimately make sense of both transportion and mobility itself.53 By “renovating and making ‘critical’ an already existing activity,” bike activists politicize bicycle transportation and in doing so reveal the extend to which bicycling – like all forms of mobility – is also made politica lin the context of “socia land power relations that are systematically asymmetrical.”54 This dialectical tension is fundamental to the politics of bicicyling with which this book is concerned: a set of issues that are in some ways “not about the bike.”55 Or should I say, they are not only about the bike. The politics of bicycling encompasses everything from the most pragmatic affairs of the urban bike commuter, to the rhetorical limits of bike advocacy, the the representation of bicycle transportation in mass media. More specifically, it encapsulates a set of complex questions about the role of technology in society, the importance of mobility in everyday life, and the broader struggles over how public spaces are used and disciplined, segmented and unified, celebrated and stolen. By focusing on the intersection of these issues and the myriad ways they play out through the contestation of automobility, this book not only pieces together a cultural and political map of the bicycle in the United States; it also uses the bicycle as an object with which to analyze and critique some of the dominant cultural and political formations in the so-called Western world.