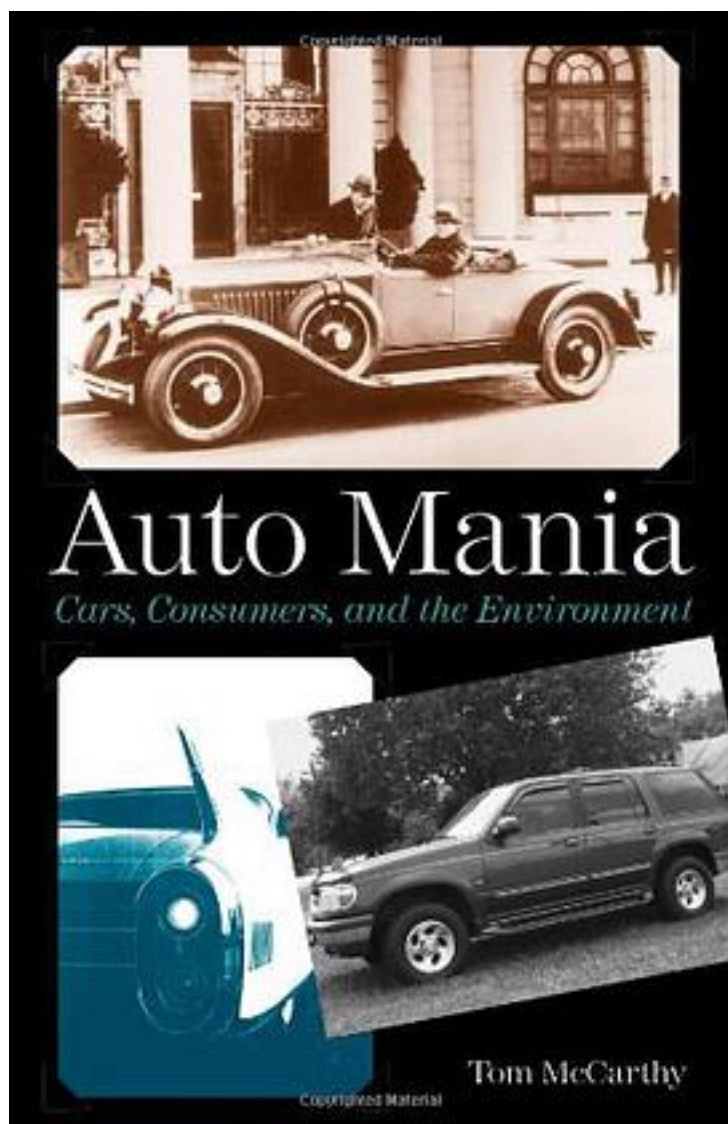


Auto Mania



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The twentieth-century American experience with the automobile has much to tell us about the relationship between consumer capitalism and the environment, Tom McCarthy contends. In "Auto Mania" he presents the first environmental history of the automobile that shows how consumer desire (and manufacturer decisions) created impacts across the product lifecycle, from raw material extraction to manufacturing to consumer use to disposal. From the provocative public antics of young millionaires who owned the first cars early in the twentieth century to the SUV craze of the 1990s, "Auto Mania" explores developments that touched the environment. Along the way McCarthy examines how Henry Ford's fetish for waste reduction tempered the environmental impacts of Model T mass production; how Elvis Presley's widely-shared postwar desire for Cadillacs made matters worse; how the 1970s energy crisis hurt small cars; and why Baby Boomers ignored worries about global warming. McCarthy shows that problems were recognized early. The difficulty was addressing them, a matter less of doing scientific research and educating the public than implementing solutions through America's market economy and democratic government. Consumer and producer interests have rarely aligned, and automakers and consumers have made powerful opponents of regulation. The result has been a mixed record of environmental reform with troubling prospects for the future.

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