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Every time that a human driver heads out onto the road, they are faced with instances in which they are forced to make ethical and moral decisions regarding their safety and the safety of others. These decisions have spurred multiple debates recently, regarding whether or not autonomous cars -an invention that has recently emerged in today’s technological world- should be allowed to share the road with other cars. An autonomous car is a car that navigates through sensing its environment without human input. This type of vehicle uses numerous techniques to detect its surroundings, such as a GPS, radar, etc. Although the phenomenon of autonomous cars has surfaced lately, it may be wise to step back and look at both the positives and negatives that accompany them.

Adam Cohen, author of *Nothing to Fear* and professor at Yale Law School, writes about the numerous positives that autonomous cars offer. He argues that normal cars are very inefficient and the average human spends around “250 hours a year” (Cohen) behind the wheel. If everyone had autonomous cars, there would be a significantly less amount of cars on the road, since families would now only need one car to fit the needs of every family member. This would then lessen the amount of carbon dioxide that is emitted from the cars, creating a better environment. Also, autonomous cars are much safer than regular cars. Cohen’s research has shown that in the first 300,000 miles of driving Google’s autonomous cars, they have “not had a single accident,” (Cohen). Car accidents have become one of the leading causes of death for Americans, but with these self-driving cars, human error and distracted driving can be eliminated.

Despite the fact that there are some advantages, there are also many disadvantages that are associated with autonomous cars. Patrick Lin, director of the *Ethics and Emerging Sciences Group,* argues that we should not trust autonomous cars to share the road just because they are designed to obey the law and avoid crashes. Lin asserts that the laws that we have are “ill-equipped” (Lin) to manage the increase of these types of vehicles. Autonomous cars are programmed to follow all of the existing laws and policies, but programming a car to do this could possibly be very dangerous. These types of cars will face many no-win situations while driving and will be expected to make a fast and moral decision. One would hope that the car would choose the best situation, but that might not always happen. Programmers still need to construct a plan for these cars on what to do for the “entire range of foreseeable scenarios” (Lin) and also “unforeseen scenarios,” (Lin). There are many times when human drivers are forced to make difficult decisions, and autonomous cars need to be prepared to do the same thing.

Overall, there is no doubt that autonomous cars could be very beneficial to our world, but also have some drawbacks that need to be carefully considered. These types of cars create an environmentally friendly environment and are very safe, but also are not equipped to make split-second decisions that could possibly mean life or death for someone else.

Works Cited

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