

# **In Praise of The Unabomber**

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## Part One

The Critics Agree:

“A fireworks exhibition of fantasy, sexual love, and moral awareness.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“The essay’s devastatingly sustained black irony stands comparison with Swift’s *A Modest Proposal*. It is, I think, the Unabomber’s finest achievement to date.”

—*The Financial Times*

“One of the ten best works of the decade...dazzling... fantastic and poetically convincing... The Unabomber has managed to seize the strands of actuality and transform them into a fabulous tale.”

—*Time*

“... enormous fun... The Unabomber has found a fresh way to orchestrate the themes of American innocence, energy, and inchoate ambition... A remarkable achievement.”

—*Newsweek*

“The effect is a cross between a long scream, a nervous breakdown and a Tacitean indictment of a regime.”

—*The London Times*

## Part Two

There are, of course,  
easier ways to get  
published  
but few quite as innovative

The Times and the Post are nothing  
to scoff at and  
he was the only writer  
to be on People’s 25  
most interesting list  
that year

His friends and relatives

often wondered  
about him  
so concerned with letters  
What a strange character  
they would say  
an even stranger sentence to pronounce  
  
Beneath the sagging roof  
the stylist has taken shelter  
in the unlikely  
guise of a bitter  
failure in order  
to elude the FBI  
and other censorship agencies  
  
Now tried and convicted  
for beliefs so dangerous  
not even PEN International  
dare write letters  
on his behalf

## Part Three

### FBI Profile of the Disgruntled Scribbler:

He would most likely be a loner with few ties to family or loved ones. Probably has travelled extensively in the country of his origin but rarely outside of it. Would travel alone and avoid open, crowded areas, almost always preferring movement after nightfall. Uncomfortable in the glare of headlights. Excessively jealous and possessive, and highly demanding of acquaintances and lovers. Likely to have come from a broken home with uncertain, or illegitimate, parentage. Severe anti-establishment tendencies. Talks to a presence who is not there and frequently complains of voices or other people living in his head. Overactive imagination with a tendency to hyper-focus. Better at division than multiplication. Plagued by feelings of uselessness masked by an excessive, almost comic, egotism. Severe feelings of persecution allow him justification for his actions. Devours the world with the senses, a state where everyone is a part of the search for wholeness, for balance, for order, and rebirth. Is attracted to images of women in jeopardy. Picks his targets on the basis of their usefulness to him. He seeks to own them, ingest some parts of them so as to claim their spirit, or essence, as a trophy. Does not believe in coincidence but is willing to exploit it. Most likely, he is a failure.

## Part Four

Under his hands things take shape  
pieces put together  
connections made  
forms found  
tight and intricate

The smaller he makes it the bigger it breaks  
the better it scatters

He hears an engine all around him  
chugging out a juggernaut mantra  
makeitnewmakeitnewmakeitnewmakeitnew  
and he digs in futile heels  
    against it  
demands that we go beyond modern  
by burning backwards  
into the past

It is essential contra-diction  
to use such stunning technique  
to protest technology like writing  
words to reveal the instability  
of language

Theory driven, university driven  
out, a mind warped by perception  
before observation; the cart before  
the horse, roof without foundation

It is easy then  
to become the sort of writer  
who sees the world  
as a series of targets

Rarely, he would think  
of how all this might  
be received, how people  
will react (new ideas  
always finding resistance)  
and if his works will  
earn him a part of history  
from a time that passed him  
by, before addressing  
his latest piece of Black

mail and sending another  
small package of chaos  
into an orderly world.

The Ted K Archive

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From the book *Larger Than Life*, published by Black Moss Press (Windsor, Ont.).  
The title is satirical and the quotes fictitious.

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