

Goodreads Reviews of Ted Kaczynski's Books

2023

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Industrial Society and Its Future

Theodore J. Kaczynski

3.88

8,035 ratings

1,197 reviews

The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life-expectancy of those of us who live in "advanced" countries, but they have destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation. It will certainly subject human beings to greater indignities and inflict greater damage on the natural world, it will probably lead to greater social disruption and psychological suffering, and it may lead to increased physical suffering even in "advanced" countries.

Genres: PhilosophyPoliticsNonfictionSociologyEssaysHistoryTechnology

149 pages, Paperback

First published January 1, 1995

1,178 people are currently reading

14.2k people want to read

About the author

37 books

540 followers

Theodore John Kaczynski (/kə'zɪnski/; born May 22, 1942), also known as the Unabomber, is an American mathematician and anarchist who moved to a remote cabin to live as a recluse, having concluded that industrial revolution is root cause of collapse of society.

Kaczynski was born and raised in Evergreen Park, Illinois. While growing up in Evergreen Park he was a child prodigy, excelling academically from an early age. Kaczynski was accepted into Harvard University at the age of 16, where he earned an undergraduate degree. He subsequently earned a PhD in mathematics from the University of Michigan. He became an assistant professor at the University of California, Berkeley in 1967 at age 25. He resigned two years later.

In 1971, he moved to a remote cabin without electricity or running water, in Lincoln, Montana, where he lived as a recluse while learning survival skills in an attempt to become self-sufficient.

He was a mathematics prodigy, but abandoned his academic career in 1969 to pursue a more primitive life. Between 1978 and 1995, Kaczynski killed three people and injured 23 others in a nationwide mail bombing campaign against people he believed to be advancing modern technology and the destruction of the environment. He authored *Industrial Society and Its Future*, a 35,000-word manifesto and social critique opposing industrialization, rejecting leftism, and advocating for a nature-centered form of anarchism.

Ratings & Reviews

Community Reviews

3.88

8,035 ratings

1,197 reviews

5 stars - 2,692 (33%)

4 stars - 2,819 (35%)

3 stars - 1,682 (20%)

2 stars - 576 (7%)

1 star - 266 (3%)

5 stars - 280 reviews

Leigh

6 reviews2 followers

February 12, 2008

Quite possibly the best piece of literature ever written. By my boyfriend. Teddy. Contains a chapter titled: Why Revolution is Easier Than Reform. Indeed.

Shane

55 reviews

June 1, 2008

Yea so the guy went a bit to far, the ideas he presented in this work (the full version, unlike the ones published in the newspapers), show a man of compassion(?) fed up with the direction he believed the world was heading and wishing to make things better. It has been said the extreme makes an impression, and while I do believe what he did was wrong, I can not question the idea's for which he did them.

Ugh

175 reviews81 followers

January 18, 2018

Kaczynski argues for nature and a return to natural ways but cant it be argued technology and technological progress is natural in of itself? If there is a return to nature do we persecute those with technology advancing ideas EX: Witch hunts. Wouldnt we in large be putting self restraints on our own freedom of thought? If this is true Kaczynskis contradicts the arguemnt of freedom because if one is free they have freedom to think up new technologies to better life. Where is the line drawn on acceptable technologies and unacceptable technologies?

I also agree that corporations, govt., etc. manipulate people into buying technologies (look at ipods) and affect society with this technology. However I think you can keep that manipulation going to a point until people become aware that it affects them personally. It is wishful thinkin to say people wont reject technologies that hinder their money, freedom, etc. Sure minor money loss, freedom is a sacrifice but the techonological benefits outweigh the loss of insignificant freedoms, money, etc. When people are personally affected GREATLY by a something they will respond, it will not be subtle and insignificant anymore. EX: Vietnam war and rejection of the war once draft started. Affected people personally and their freedom of choose. Result was the abolishment of the draft.

There is alot of talk about surrogate activities and a presumption that everyone yearns to be goal oriented and replace physical goals (seeking food, shelter, etc.) with artificial goals. I find this to be a vast generalization (a common theme). I think it can be argued most people tend to be apathetic more so then goal oriented (Look at the voting polls).

Global unification against industrial society requires a huge event to occur that has never been seen before to convince people worldly that technology is not progression. This is absolutely impossible. We cant even agree on a transcontinental global warming policy. Plus do you know how many countries love the idea of industrializing? Look at the nuclear arms race and countries currently entering their industrial revolution. If this global destruction of the industrial society did occur hypothetically, some country would take advantage of industrializing and enslave the world which would be more extreme then the current situation because they would be the sole operators of technology (therefore superior weaponry).

Kaczynski somewhat blames the public for accepting the ad industry. But doesnt college combat the ad industry by educating people on the industries motives? Isnt this contradict Kaczynskis distaste for surrogate activities including college professors?

This part is Random thoughts, open ended questions, rants, quotes,etc.:

Sure there is manipulation tactics the army uses, but in the end dont people still have to choose to go into the army or not.

I agree with society built on fueling the system, but arent people content with that right now?

I find it funny that he carried this out by himself, shows his detachment from society. He speaks of huge change and revolution, yet did not have one single follower in his "FC", it was all him. No one bought into his ideologies no matter how interesting and thats pathetic. Shit, even the scientologists have more followers and their beliefs are way crazier!?!
I agree with his separation of classes: The power holding elite and the general public
I thought this a good quote: Nationalism is a great promoter of technology
"Industrial complex attacked in all nations simultaneously"..Impossible, we cant even organize something as simple as world protest.
"Non-industrial society people prefer over democracy" really?!

Kaczynski loves making statements with no examples, or citing specific historical events. I also think in some cases in the book things are taken out of context to further his arguments.
Also, he puts the responsibility of those who do surrogate activites to be the same to be involved in the revolution.
Interesting analysis about liberal psychology
This guy can actually be funny at times, which is surprising
Book is great for opening up discussions
At points I thought this guy should just stop bitching and get a job
At times he can be cold, calculated in his analysis.
Thorough analysis of technophobia
Loss of freedoms exaggerated, most people are willing to sacrifice very minor freedoms for benefits
Not balanced view; technology offers no benefits?; sure loss of kind of freedom but benefits outweigh these minor freedoms. EX: Cures for diseases
Agree people are docile and getting more docile
At times, tell written by a antisocial recluse
Written with basic language, easy to understand
Thought dangers of leftism was one of the best chapters
Isnt the unabomber manifesto written out of Kaczynskis own surrogate activities?
Hypocrite!

GOOD QUOTES:

If you think that more effective law enforcement is unequivocally good because it suppresses crime, then remember that crime as defined by the system is not necessarily what YOU would call crime. Today, smoking marijuana is a "crime," and, in some places in the U.S., so is possession of ANY firearm, registered or not, may be made a crime, and the same thing may happen with disapproved methods of child-rearing, such as spanking. In some countries, expression of dissident political opinions is a crime, and there is no certainty that this will never happen in the U.S. since no constitution or political system lasts forever. If a society needs a large, powerful law enforcement establishment, then there is something gravely wrong with that society; it must be subjecting people to severe pressures if so many refuse to follow the rules, or follow

them only because forced. Many societies in the past have gotten by with little or no formal law enforcement.

Also:

Conservatives efforts to decrease the amount of govt. regulation are of little benefit to the average man. For one thing, only a fraction of the regulations can be eliminated because most regulations are necessary. For another thing, most of the deregulation affects business rather than the average individual, so that its main effect is to take power from the govt. and give it to private corporations. What this means for the average man is that govt. interference in his life is replaced by interference from big corporations, which may be permitted, for example, to dump more chemicals that get into his water supply and give him cancer. The conservatives are just taking the average man for a sucker, exploiting his resentment of big govt. to promote the power of big business.

Conclusively he fucked up by killing people. He could have had far more impact in spreading his beliefs to others through his writings. Like scientologists...

Antiloquax

70 reviews2 followers

September 2, 2011

Essential reading for all who want to destroy civilization as we know it. He explains why!

politics revolution

Kat

7 reviews1 follower

May 31, 2012

"History is made by active, determined minorities, not by the unthinking majority, which seldom has a clear and consistent idea of what it really wants."

Zoe

4 reviews

February 10, 2013

Absolutely fantastic. His views are so very amazing and I can totally understand them. Although I don't appreciate his actions so much the mind ideas and driving force behind them was incredible and in my opinion wonderful.

Ian Madewell

2 reviews7 followers

April 1, 2013

While I personally disagree with a variety of statements and arguments made by Theodore, I admire his willpower and cold determination in regards to his beliefs. Theodore writes with great urgency, for the ideas and associated fears he bears are dire. Mr Kaczynski theorizes that technological growth will inevitably lead to the diminishing of the rights of the individual. While I do agree with this central idea, idea I disagree with his reaction. Where he sees that the only way to free ourselves is violent reaction to our societal system, I see a chance to manipulate technology with a newfound consciousness and focus on human freedoms. Regardless of my personal disagreements, I strongly encourage any all of humanity to read this eye opening manifesto, and examine a prime example of modern anarcho-primitivist theory.

Christian Almonte

3 reviews11 followers

May 17, 2013

This book speaks the truth, unfortunately. Unfortunately it takes a maniac to explain the truth.

Heather

85 reviews

December 4, 2013

Amazingly insightful and surprisingly well written. Definitely don't think that the ends justify the means and can't help wishing he had taken a few short more years to write this manifesto. Had he used his own uncanny foresight on on our rapidly advancing technological society and waited a little longer, his ends could have come to fruition via much less violent means (self-publishing, etc) than it did. One wonders though, without in any way trivializing the heinousness of the tragedies he inflicted, if the ends would or could have been any more effective in accomplishing his objective than his way did?

favorite-books non-fiction online-borrowed-reads

Jason

1 review

August 22, 2013

Many reviews have already summarized Ted's main points so I won't repeat them here. Rather I would like to clarify assumptions made by both the author and the reviewers.

A large discrepancy comes from an apparent misunderstanding of what Ted considers "ideal living." Many assume he's suggesting reverting to a lifestyle similar to the Middle Ages. As reiterated in his 2010 novel *Technological Slavery*, this is not the case. The Middle Ages involved serfs laboring vigorously in agriculture to not only provide for themselves but for their lords. His "utopia" involves hunter-gathering; a general absence of agriculture altogether and certainly not feudalism. Hunter-gatherers dominated for most of human history and were slowly weeded out beginning several thousand years ago with organized society. *Industrial Society and Its Future* emphasizes how the industrial revolution rapidly accelerated this and the restrictions on everyday lives, which I cannot disagree with.

But Ted's greatest potential weakness lies in his assumptions. His belief in the power process where only tasks that involve autonomy in our own survival provide true fulfillment is the pillar for his whole argument. If it isn't universally (or nearly) true, then everything that follows is irrelevant. It certainly applied to him, but even his anthropological studies cannot confirm it applies to everyone. Personally I cannot deny that there is something wrong with the scenario of children sitting all day in a classroom for example.

The "Unabomber Manifesto" is very well-written. It's organized, not a narcissistic rant, and occasionally portrays an awareness of the author's own limitations of knowledge. And yet, Ted was certain enough about his beliefs to mail people bombs... Putting the author's history aside, it's a great philosophical piece.

Yage

29 reviews

September 10, 2013

Highly enjoyable structured essay painting a gruesome picture of our civilization in 200-some paragraphs. The message is clear yet not deeply thought and analyzed (if at all possible). Will leave you with a lot to think about.

Darogi86

14 reviews4 followers

December 13, 2015

Much more worthwhile than the pipe dreams and statements of the obvious in the *Communist Manifesto*.

Elena Hexthorn

Author

4 books17 followers

March 17, 2016

It's jam-packed with interesting observations about society. It has opened up a lot of lines of discussion. It's very intelligently written, but still overshadowed by the direction in life he chose to take as the Unabomber.

Ääro

2 reviews

November 21, 2016

Rare is a book that changes my everyday view on life and surroundings so dramatically in general and the new view stays. Even after making my own conclusions about the content of the book, it managed to do the previous.

I would highly recommend this. The main point there can sound a little bit alien first to some readers, but if one takes a closer look to it, he/she will realize that there indeed is solid and honest logic in it. Be sure to read an unabridged version.

Constantine

5 reviews

December 7, 2022

extremely intelligent and 'real'. he knows what he is talking about. the failure is that he is clearly consumed with anger. needed to learn forgiveness would have been an invaluable aid to christianity

Arthur Meursault

Author

2 books21 followers

August 13, 2017

These are not the mad jottings of a lunatic but a clear and rational explanation of the causes behind the problems of modernism. Probably one of the most illuminating essays I have ever read; it deserves a wide readership but won't due to its author's bombing campaign. There is a great deal of truth within this 35,000 word essay, and like all truths, it makes uncomfortable reading.

Roberto Musa Giuliano

18 reviews12 followers

August 25, 2017

A book so eerily prescient that I find it hard to believe it was not written this year. The diagnosis was accurate, the foresight was on spot. Still, as a partial techno-optimist, I can't curtail a strong inner resistance all the while the string of paragraphs draw from me a "true, true, true". But then again, how could I? It is too late to play deaf to the flautist, and no mast strong enough will be found to keep us from the sirens. Of course, the dismissal of the pursuits of scientists as mere surrogate activities is overly simplistic and grossly glosses over a serious pondering of what it is that makes us human. But we really can't fault the author for it, as such a fine-grained debate would run contrary to the stated, urgent aims of the book. Go ask Goethe and Herder yourself.

Agung

95 reviews21 followers

September 9, 2017

When I started reading it after learning the context of how it was published, I expected the Unabomber Manifesto to be a rant of an unhinged man—drivelling on about the virtue of nature and the evils of technology. Instead, I found an articulate and intelligent man who was disenchanted by the industrial society.

Although I find the price of this book—the lives of three people—to be outrageous, it won't simply do to dismiss Kaczynski's idea only as the droning of a madman. He had, after all, graduated from Harvard at age 20 and his PhD dissertation was at such a high level that even the professors on the board didn't understand it.

I find the same thing lacking of this manifesto like that one written by Marx. Namely, an excellent identification of a problem, but poor suggestion of a remedy. Marx posited the problem of wealth inequality and the remedy being the abolishment of private property; while Kaczynski found the problem of accelerated dehumanization and political oppression by technology, to which he proposes to accelerate technological development even further in order to accelerate the collapse of society so that a new one can be built from the ashes.

Thing is, where do we go from the ashes of the ruined industrial society? Did Kaczynski expect that humans will live their lives peacefully without technology? Did he really thought that hunter-gatherer people will continue their peaceful lives when they encounter another 'tribe'? Has it not ever occured to him how much suffering humanity has to go through without the technology of modern medicine? Kaczynski spent two hundreds paragraph dissecting the flaws of industrial society and how to bring its' fall, without offering his thought of the post-industrial society he dreamed of.

All in all, the conclusion he drew was most certainly the wrong way to progress, but his premises were valid criticism of our current society. We should rather take his valid criticism and pick apart his conclusion rather than dismissing this manifesto outright.

(As an aside, I find it funny that he spent ~50 paragraph deriding the Left, whereas only on one sentence did he address the Right—that is, to dismiss them as outright fools who are simply not worth considering)
political

Donovan

12 reviews2 followers

October 10, 2017

Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes, Amazing.

Paul Rawlins II

34 reviews1 follower

January 2, 2018

Hard to read, like reading a research paper, but it's good. It's amazing how it applies to today's society and the issues we're faced with. Worth the read, for sure.

ZAINAB

86 reviews2 followers

January 15, 2018

It have been said that “ nothing is more creative nor destructive than a brilliant mind with purpose “. - Inferno, Dan Brown-

I watched the series “ ManHunt : Unabomber “ and I loved some of his quotations. Therefore, I decided to read his Manifesto.

Ted is genuinely a brilliant guy. Although he killed three people and injured 23, this fact doesn't change my opinion about his book. I'm nothing like who I used to be before reading this remarkable essay. It's truly a masterpiece.

Ted tends to clarify his ideas leaving nothing for others to infer nor to twist. For that I honestly adore his style. It's easy and straightforward.

The part where he talks about “ Genetic engineering “ makes me think twice about it! Nowadays people can make their babies with blue eyes or green ! As if people are no longer created by God! Moreover, it is now considered as an optional thing but soon will be a necessary one! Because parents won't let their children be different from the rest.

Keep in mind that's am not completely agreeing to many of his ideas.
*HIGHLY RECOMMENDED *
wortheverypenny

Chanse
2 reviews

January 17, 2018

Keith Ablow wrote "Kacyzinski was reprehensible for murdering and maiming people, but precisely correct in many of his ideas." Ablow is precisely correct in this description.

The Power Process plays a large role in his essay. The Power Process consists of 4 stages distinct stages. Goal, effort, attainment of goal, and autonomy. Human's have a biological need for the power process. Kacyzinski argues that human life has become too easy and that obtaining the bare physical necessities of life has become too easy, and no longer leads to a sense of satisfaction, resulting in the widespread unhappiness that plagues the land today. Because fulfilment of our basic needs takes next to no effort in our Industrialist society human's have taken up surrogate activities in an effort to feel fulfilled. Surrogate activities consist of any activity directed towards an artificial goal that people set up for themselves merely to have somethings to work towards in an effort to feel fulfilled. Surrogate activities are NOT bad, however they are less satisfying than the pursuit of real goals. Lack of autonomy is why we turn to surrogate activities in an effort to feel fulfilled, we satisfy our biological needs by functioning in parts of a social machine with no autonomy over our work. Contrast this with surrogate activities where one is fully autonomous.

He argues that as human life continues to become inundated with technology, our level of freedom, and happiness can only decrease. He continues to argue that our relationship with large scale technology (technology that cannot be created or cared for on a grassroots level) must be completely severed.

He speaks candidly of the propaganda inflicted upon us from a young age. Government's goal is to make everyone a well oiled cog in the great beast that is society. To do this we are forced to endure a seemingly limitless supply of propaganda. My favourite quote from his propaganda passages "If someone approves of propaganda it is called education".

Kacyzinski's essay on the degradation of society paints a bleak picture for our future. He believes returning to nature is the only way we can go to lead happy, fulfilling ways of life.

Ben Clark
1 review16 followers

January 29, 2018

While it's history may seem taboo, if one chooses to open their mind, they will see there is a lot that is eerily correct about Mr. Kaczynski's analysis of our lives, post industrial revolution.

Bill

36 reviews1 follower

March 12, 2018

He's definitely not wrong

Gustavo Euclides

18 reviews3 followers

March 16, 2018

although the model presented is utopian, I share the vast majority of the concerns, indignation and anger towards technological development. smartphones, smart tvs, smart cars, smart fridges, smart watches, smart shoes, smart underwear. all means of greater surveillance and control. nowhere to hide.

>posted via computer using www

nonfiction

Martin Andrlé

7 reviews36 followers

March 27, 2018

Very interesting book. Don't need to mention the author's story behind it. On the personal as a supporter of technology, it was very helpful to read someone else opinion. The text is well structured so it keeps you wondering about thoughts you don't necessarily agree on and the ones you find correct.

Example which resonated with me the most: It comes down to the motivation of people. The ones who work for the government and the ones who are passionate about technology. Yes, the second group will be always at least one step ahead (Uber, Airbnb, etc.), which creates a dangerous space for misuse of created technology. Then the question is, what we can do in order to pretend us, right? How we can be sure that the leaders will have the right values.

Anyway, I must read it at least once again.

Josie

32 reviews

November 7, 2018

To be honest, I agree with basically everything in this book, and this guy is a genius. The only thing i disagree with is his critique of leftism.

Shortsman

190 reviews20 followers

November 25, 2020

Just as great as when I first read it.

american bokcirkel deep-ecology

Karthik

26 reviews2 followers

August 8, 2018

The Unabomber's Manifesto can be what is called a foresighted prophecy on the advent of Technology and its aftermath. But how the original mind behind this manifesto has turned out is very tragic. The methodology of enactment became clouded with his own delusions. The world just lost a brilliant and insightful mind for the way it insinuated and alienated this gem of a person. Haven't read anything powerful and insightful like this.

Ryan McCarthy

262 reviews18 followers

January 15, 2021

The best response I've heard to this is "he's obviously a Luddite, but that doesn't make him wrong."

Peter

2 reviews

August 30, 2018

Ignore naysayers and low ratings. Most people will rate it 1 or 2 stars because they're triggered from the on point criticism on Leftism in the book.

Despite the aforementioned, and the wrong course of action Ted chose to spread his accurate point of view (mail bombing), this manifesto will tear you apart. Written about 20 years ago, Ted's writing is critical of how technology affects Man and the

many subliminal controlling schemes behind the ever controlling Industrial System. I highly recommend watching the Netflix show and once you're done, read the manifesto. It will awake you.

Ajay Jangir

9 reviews

June 20, 2019

Very well and straightforward written. Some paragraphs in this book applies today as well and is true. Others seems just rants from a very depressive and oppressed person.

But I like the book.

Colophōn

47 reviews14 followers

March 25, 2021

I know Kaczynski thought it was a necessity, but he should've talked about leftists after having talked about technology and its harmful outcomes. And maybe, he shouldn't have used the word "leftist", but rather "progressive" or "over-socialized". Overall, I was pleasantly surprised by how logical and well argued this was. Anarco-primitivism now seems like a sensible ideology and not an insane hermit's illusion.

favorites

M J

56 reviews24 followers

November 11, 2018

I was going to read this book like most people read Mein Kampf: as a crap piece of writing, but fascinating because it provides a peek into the author's mind and thoughts.

And boy, was I wrong. The writing is amazing. I found myself agreeing with Kaczynski and admiring his genius many more times than I had thought I would. This is not to say that I agree with his main points – I obviously don't, since I'm currently typing this on a piece of technology that I use for far more than destabilizing the technology-obsessed society, as Kaczynski would probably call it.

Here is the author's main argument in my own words:

"Technology and industrialization are changing the power process. The evolution of technology is automating many of the challenging and fulfilling tasks that used to exist. Hence, for people to feel challenged, they take on superficial tasks that don't affect them – like whites fighting for the rights of blacks, straights advocating for homosexual

rights, males advocating for females, and majorities fighting for the minorities. They take on these superficial tasks because society has taken away many of the old ways by which people would feel empowered, and they want to somehow feel empowered. Our lifestyle is becoming more and more superficial due to the leftists who want to impose on us those values of their own whose attainment makes them feel fulfilled. These leftists are created due to the progression of technology, so technology is bad and we should get rid of it.”

He then carefully notes what procedures have to be followed for the anti-technology revolution to be successful.

This is clearly not the ramblings of some crazy man – it is the brainchild of an extremely intelligent person who has thought extensively about the topic at hand.

Kaczynski echoes a lot of the main points in Huxley’s *Brave New World*. For example, he states that in the future, since machines will be able to do most of all work, humans will only be given unimportant tasks (why the machines don’t do the unimportant tasks is beyond me) like polishing shoes and driving taxicabs. This is obviously not very fulfilling work, so society has to program people to somehow find it fulfilling, and therefore has to essentially *create* humans how it sees fit.

He also says that the more technology progresses and the more advanced our medical technology becomes, the more the genes of sick people will spread throughout society. Therefore, advancing medical technology will create problems that can only be solved by further advancing medical technology, to the point that humans will be a byproduct of technology rather than that of nature.

I wanted to read this manifesto a while ago, but was deterred by a review that quoted something that Kaczynski stated near the end of the manifesto: something along the lines of “not all statements in this article will be precise and we have all sorts of reservations attached to any assumption that we’ve made.” What the reviewer didn’t mention, however, was that he justifies it by saying that there was not enough information available to support many of the presumptions of the article. Whatever the case, I didn’t find any presumed fact in the book to be problematic or plainly false.

The manifesto left me in a state of “WOW” many more times than I’d have expected.

I don’t agree with a lot of what he says, but he has made extremely good arguments that have completely changed my way of thinking about a lot of things. Our main disagreements stem from the fact that our ideas of an ideal society are vastly different. His being one that is the most thoroughly fulfilling to everyone, and mine being... well, not one where people die incessantly so that humans will be completely *natural*.

If you want to approach this book, approach it with an open mind. Don’t just call it bad because you disagree with the points – judge it by the merits of its arguments.

The arguments were, in my opinion, quite fascinating.

crime politics

Joseph
112 reviews
August 3, 2019

went into it as a meme, right off the bat was surprised by how much of what this guy said made sense, obviously I don't agree with it all but as a whole Ted was a really smart guy.

favorites

David
7 reviews2 followers
January 20, 2019

Really changes your perspective of the world and how we live our lives
my-books

Jorge Rodighiero
Author
3 books45 followers
January 25, 2019

I can't believe it took me this long to read this. A keen analysis of our society and ourselves -including our political movements, scientific endeavors and other surrogate activities- that is surprisingly up to date even if written almost 25 years ago.

Diego Souza
12 reviews
January 29, 2019

This manifesto made me look to society, the system and technology from a totally fresh point of view. How dystopian our present day might look from the perspective of a human living in the pre-industrial era?

Ted starts his manifesto introducing us to the problem: we are slowing becoming slaves of our technology. Our society is being shaped by the needs of the system, which is dominated by the elites; politicians, scientists, corporations, etc. As a society we are more powerful, but as individuals we delegate our power to the system. And all of this will get worse to a point where there is no return.

Then he points to what he believes are the root causes of the problem: we replaced our natural 'power process' for the 'surrogate activities'. His premise is that these 'surrogate activities' aren't able to fulfill all of our psychological needs, we need to participate in the 'power process', which are the meaningful actions that are essential

for our own survival. The disruption of the 'power process' in the post-industrial society makes us feel impotent, depressed, with no control over our own lives. We are not truly free. And this leads to the ever-increasing psychological suffering of the modern human.

Finally, he presents his solution: a global revolution with only one goal; to obliterate the industrial system.

I had never heard such good arguments against technology. This essay is very thought out and well written. A profound insight into our relationship with technology.

Kaczynski is brilliant when he is describing the problem. But to believe in his radical conclusions, you have to agree with his premises. And there is where I will disagree.

His concepts of freedom and the 'power process' are the foundation of his argument. These premises are closely tied to the solution he proposes. These concepts are sound, and I do believe they have a significant influence on the psychological suffering. But I don't think they are essentially the root causes of all the problems he is presenting. So I cannot agree with his radical conclusion, that the only solution would have to be a revolution.

One of the main scenarios that he proposed to solve the problem is a worldwide revolution that should take place after a severe collapse in society, and he highlights that every revolutionary should have the same ideal, to end the industrial system. That's insane.

I had a lot of issues with his solutions, and although he addresses most of my criticism in his notes, I'm not satisfied with his answers. But it's not like he didn't consider the criticism, it shows that he knew the limitations of what he believed... I respect that.

In the end, an impossible solution is not a solution. I believe the hopelessness of expecting such a revolution is what made him a domestic terrorist, which is reprehensible and ironic; a man that was so keen to the concept of freedom will spend his whole life in prison.

4.525 stars.

Constantino Casasbuenas

103 reviews1 follower

March 11, 2019

Chía, 11 March 2019

Kaczynsky Ted, FC

Manifesto

New York Times, Washington Post, 1996

A few weeks ago I watched on Netflix a film about the UNABOMBER. I had a few ideas about the juridical process held against someone who killed, some years ago,

3 individuals and injured many others through bombs that were transported by the postal service. I thought that it was interesting to watch it and so we did.

Ted Kaczynski was a very intelligent boy, one of the brightest students at school and university; he was a teacher, and he preferred to go "into de wild" (living a simple life in a small hut in the mountains) where he wrote the Manifesto. He is now 76 years old. When he was detained by the FBI, he got 8 life sentences and he has been in jail since April 3, 1996. I am not going into the details of who he was. You can read them in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Kac...

When he knew about the Harvard Alumni Association's directory inquiry for the fiftieth reunion of the class of 1962, he listed his occupation as "prisoner" and his eight life sentences as "awards".

Though the Manifesto had as key reference the USA, I was surprised to find that many elements of his statements corresponded and still correspond to the situation that has developed in the USA, and also is happening in those countries that the Manifesto considered to be in the "Third World". I think that this is a very good text, giving many relevant points to think about. It is interesting to see that he expresses his doubts about his own writing, apologising about the simplicity of his analysis. His text has been translated to several languages (including Spanish) and he has been writing since he launched in jail.

Though he gives some links that the reader could connect with (ozone layer, thermal isolation, etc.), I didn't see any substantial connection with how science and technology has been developed in Europe and with the threats caused by Climate Change as we see it today? It seems important to read the text that he wrote from jail: "Anti-tech revolution – why and how", written in 2016 and sold by Amazon.

I liked a lot how he made a critical analysis of leftism (feelings of inferiority, over-socialization), at the same time that he indicates that what he is proposing has nothing to do with a political revolution, but about confronting the Industrial Society and its effects. I loved the way how he expresses the need that we have of gaining some power and the role played by surrogate activities. "For many if not most people, surrogate activities are less satisfying than the pursuit of real goals (that is, goals that people would want to attain even if their need for the power process were already fulfilled). One indication of this is the fact that, in many or most cases, people who are deeply involved in surrogate activities are never satisfied, never at rest. Thus the money-maker constantly strives for more and more wealth. The scientist no sooner solves one problem than he moves on to the next. The long-distance runner drives himself to run always farther and faster. Many people who pursue surrogate activities will say that they get far more fulfilment from these activities than they do from the "mundane" business of satisfying their biological needs, but that is because in our society the effort needed to satisfy the biological needs has been reduced to triviality. More importantly, in our society people do not satisfy their biological needs AUTONOMOUSLY but by functioning as parts of an immense social machine. In contrast, people generally have a great deal of autonomy in pursuing their surrogate".

Autonomy - "Technology exacerbates the effects of crowding because it puts increased disruptive powers in people's hands. For example, a variety of noise-making devices: power mowers, radios, motorcycles, etc. If the use of these devices is unrestricted, people who want peace and quiet are frustrated by the noise. If their use is restricted, people who use the devices are frustrated by the regulations. But if these machines had never been invented there would have been no conflict and no frustration generated by them".) There is no stable framework.

DISRUPTION OF THE POWER PROCESS IN MODERN SOCIETY - "... the power process is disrupted in our society through a deficiency of real goals and a deficiency of autonomy in the pursuit of goals". ("We live in a world in which relatively few peoples, maybe 500 or 1,000s make the important decisions - Philip B. Heymann of Harvard Law School, quoted by Anthony Lewis, New York Times, April 21, 1995.)"

"The individual's search for security is therefore frustrated, which leads to a sense of powerlessness."

HOW SOME People adjust "So they always feel hard-pressed financially even if their income is large, and their cravings are frustrated".

The motives of scientists - "If the chemist and the entomologist had to exert themselves seriously to obtain the physical necessities, and if that effort exercised their abilities in an interesting way but in some non-scientific pursuit, then they wouldn't give a damn about isopropyltrimethylmethane or the classification of beetles. With possible rare exceptions, their motive is neither curiosity nor a desire to benefit humanity but the need to go through the power process: to have a goal (a scientific problem to solve), to make an effort (research) and to attain the goal (solution of the problem.) Science is a surrogate activity because scientists work mainly for the fulfilment they get out of the work itself. Thus science is not a PURE surrogate activity. But it is in large part a surrogate activity.

The nature of freedom - By "freedom" we mean the opportunity to go through the power process, with real goals not the artificial goals of surrogate activities, and without interference, manipulation or supervision from anyone, especially from any large organization. It is not permissiveness. Take us (FC) for example. If we had never done anything violent and had submitted the present writings to a publisher, they probably would not have been accepted. If they had been accepted and published, they probably would not have attracted many readers, because it's more fun to watch the entertainment put out by the media than to read a sober essay. Even if these writings had had many readers, most of these readers would soon have forgotten what they had read as their minds were flooded by the mass of material to which the media expose them. In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people.

Industrial-technological society can be transformed by revolutionaries, not reformers.

RESTRICTION OF FREEDOM IS UNAVOIDABLE IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY "If

human needs were put before technical necessity there would be economic problems, unemployment, shortages or worse. The concept of "mental health" in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress".

TECHNOLOGY IS A MORE POWERFUL SOCIAL FORCE THAN THE ASPIRATION FOR FREEDOM – "Motorized transport. In many cases the new technology changes society in such a way that people eventually find themselves FORCED to use it.). 129. Another reason why technology is such a powerful social force is that, within the context of a given society, technological progress marches in only one direction; it can never be reversed. 130 Success can be hoped for only by fighting the technological system as a whole; but that is revolution, not reform. 133. No social arrangements, whether laws, institutions, customs or ethical codes, can provide permanent protection against technology. 133 Any illusions about achieving anything permanent through social arrangements should be dispelled by what is currently happening with environmental legislation."

SOCIAL PROBLEMS HAVE PROVED INTRACTABLE 136 "Among other things, the system has failed to stop environmental degradation, political corruption, drug trafficking or domestic abuse".

REVOLUTION IS EASIER THAN REFORM - "140 The only way out is to dispense with the industrial-technological system altogether. This implies revolution, not necessarily an armed uprising, but certainly a radical and fundamental change in the nature of society. 142 This was clearly shown in the French and Russian Revolutions. It may be that in such cases only a minority of the population is really committed to the revolution, but this minority is sufficiently large and active so that it becomes the dominant force in society."

Control of Human Behavior – "Without the entertainment industry the system probably would not have been able to get away with putting as much stress-producing pressure on us as it does".

Human race at a crossroads – "166. Therefore two tasks confront those who hate the servitude to which the industrial system is reducing the human race. First, we must work to heighten the social stresses within the system so as to increase the likelihood that it will break down or be weakened sufficiently so that a revolution against it becomes possible. Second, it is necessary to develop and propagate an ideology that opposes technology and the industrial society if and when the system becomes sufficiently weakened".

Human suffering - "168 To many of us, freedom and dignity are more important than a long life or avoidance of physical pain. Besides, we all have to die some time, and it may be better to die fighting for survival, or for a cause, than to live a long but empty and purposeless life".

The Future – "178. Whatever else may be the case, it is certain that technology is creating for human beings a new physical and social environment radically different from the spectrum of environments to which natural selection has adapted the human

race physically and psychologically. If man is not adjusted to this new environment by being artificially re-engineered, then he will be adapted to it through a long and painful process of natural selection. The former is far more likely than the latter.
179. It would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences”.

D

1 review

March 14, 2019

Radical for sure, but shockingly clairvoyant about the impacts of technology on society. Keep in mind this was written in the mid 1990’s (prior to the advent of social media and still very much in the early days of the internet), the predicted impacts and maladies of ”technology” continue to ring true. Almost upsettingly so.

Jesse Hammond

3 reviews2 followers

April 5, 2019

He has some very smart things to say, but he is often twinged with biterness.

Flybyreader

665 reviews161 followers

April 15, 2019

I have recently watched ”The Manhunt” series and I’m still under the spell. I decided to read the much-speculated article of the Unabomber, one of the most famous and intelligent killers of all times, who wrote a profound essay on the evolution of society after industrial revolution and became a worldwide hit.

This is a brilliant piece of work coming from a psychopath, cold-blooded murderer. I do not have to suffer from Stockholm syndrome to like his views and I was quite surprised and impressed. It is obvious that he is a broken and pissed-off man, who isolated himself from society and all of its conventions but it does not change the fact that he was an intelligent Harvard-graduate and an insightful human being. Come to think of it, as I consider Hitler, who still has a great many admirers and followers, I can understand why Kaczynski has that many fans all over the world, who still write to him and cherish him in prison, whose ideas more universal and relatable.

I was especially struck by his approach to the question why humans feel the existentialist emptiness and question the meaning of life. They (we) create surrogate activities and artificial goals to fill that void as real physical goals that we starve for are easily fulfilled by the technology that primitive people did not have (we have a lot of time

and energy to burn as we do not hunt for food, create a home from scratch, try not to get killed by nature and procreate to sustain life).

Great book to be purely enlightened and devastated at the same time.

nonfiction

William Jiang

22 reviews5 followers

December 24, 2019

Environmentalist Manifesto!

Thomas

8 reviews25 followers

August 12, 2019

The smartest "terrorist" out there.

Matt

2 reviews

August 18, 2019

He was crazy, but some parts are spot on in the current time.

Ryan Stoner

1 review

September 17, 2019

The guy really is a magnificent genius. He predicted the technological mess we're in.

Jesse Van Der Kolk

6 reviews

September 20, 2019

An action must be differentiated from someone's ideas and ideals, although it advocates no violence in a direct sense I think it's not unreasonable to say the strategy part of the book is provoking to say the least. Nevertheless it gives solid insight into the Motives of the UNAbomber and his personal beliefs.

What struck me the most is how accurate it is on subsurface problems already noticeable in our society through the onset of behavioral control caused by technological progress. After three decades now more than ever does it relate to questions about genetic engineering and the abolishment of privacy together with an alarmingly increasing societal censorship in social media under the name of Political correctness.

All and all, a controversial somewhat confrontational and mind opening book. Despite of the somber tone of the technological trends in society a new form of living with nature is already being formed and accepted by more and more people.

A must read for anyone interested in Political Philosophy

Blake E

122 reviews3 followers

October 11, 2019

The single greatest self help book i've ever read

Nick Youngstein

1 review1 follower

November 4, 2019

This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

Lee McGeorge

Author

13 books87 followers

November 14, 2019

Brilliantly insightful, Ted was 30 years ahead of his time.

It's terrifying to think that this crazy and insane man was not only the smartest guy in the room, but was thinking longer and harder about difficult problems than the people that should be doing it.

David Harestad

166 reviews5 followers

December 17, 2019

Read exclusively on industrial-technological screens, such hypocrisy!

Mustapha

42 reviews4 followers

April 15, 2020

An incredibly important text surrounded by controversy for obvious reasons. Many of Kaczynski's predictions have eerily come true or are playing themselves out on the grand stage of civilisation today. It is too late to pay heed to many of his warnings and, indeed, there are flaws in his criminal methods and it may appear that there is no solution to the problem of modern industrial society. Humanity may continue to circle the drain in an inevitable fashion. Either way, these are the writings of a lucid, sane man.

Joshua Brown

7 reviews

January 14, 2020

Perhaps the most important book I have ever read. His solution was insane but his diagnosis was spot on.

Strom

1 review

January 17, 2020

You could do it, if you wanted. If you are reading this to get inside the mind of a killer, it's not the book for you. Although Ted Kaczynski wanted to use the publicity of his killings to promote his work, the work itself is about something else entirely. I enjoyed the book, and the stance on modern society.

Howard Li

7 reviews

January 22, 2020

His critiques on leftism is generally true. His insights on technology scarily accurate. I was initially drawn by his high IQ and CIA involvement. First time I have really heard critiques of technology as there is usually only good prescribed with technological advancement, he also claims that something that may be good may have some disastrous consequences. The future does look bleak and in my conclusion dictatorial countries combine with technology and human engineering will be hellish. America seems to be the place for the best well being.

White Rose

175 reviews64 followers

January 26, 2020

This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

Harvey

40 reviews

February 12, 2020

A relatively short, and easy read. The author is a bright guy who graduated from Harvard with a mathematics degree, and has an IQ of 170. This gives him credit for the analysis he makes in this book. In the book, the author analyses the current industrial society that heavily relies on technology and explains how you cannot have both technology and freedom. There is a whole part dedicated on one aspect of the great comfort that brings more technology and more modernism, it is leftism.

A must read.

Alex Gruenenfelder

Author

1 book3 followers

March 17, 2020

This work is, by its very nature, controversial. It is a book written by a domestic terrorist and serial killer, Ted Kaczynski. If one leaves this aside, the book is snappy, smart, and filled with intellectual critiques of society. It is especially in Kaczynski's references to "surrogate tasks," the hobbies we take up when we no longer must worry about our survival (watching sports, hunting for sport, golfing, etc.), that he is most brilliant.

But this is not to say that one should leave aside what Kaczynski did. He justifies his violence and his crimes multiple times in the book and, though he writes the book from a first person "we," he lived alone in the woods committing violence when he penned it. The book only became public when he forced major newspapers to publish it under threat of continued violence, and then continued the violence despite its publishing.

There is a growing movement around this book of people who consider themselves "TedPilled." It's a movement of largely internet conservatives who are attracted to Kaczynski's barrage of attacks on leftism. There is something uniquely dangerous in alt-right young men fetishizing a domestic terrorist, which cannot be ignored. I bring up these criticisms because this book must be read from this lens. Although I found the book brilliant, and would recommend it, part of the reason I would recommend it is that it is a window into the dark mind of a mathematics prodigy – one of the most brilliant men in America – who turned to violence, terrorism, and fear. It will appeal

to the political theorist the same as it appeals to the true crime fan. With all this in mind: five stars.

Joel Sorsby
7 reviews7 followers
March 23, 2020
kill all robots plant more trees

Raavi
4 reviews
April 7, 2020
Difficult not to see some sense in his thinking, especially while in quarantine.

Billy
64 reviews1 follower
May 5, 2020
Learning about the power process and how surrogate activities are playing a role in our lives is a major help to anyone struggling to figure out meaning. I'll likely be looking at life differently now.

Ryan Furtado
16 reviews
May 9, 2020
A fantastic analyzation of the severe problems of our modern technological society and how they can be solved for good with drastic action, before it is too late.

Jyotirmoy Gupta
74 reviews11 followers
June 6, 2020
Giving this a 5-star rating would probably put me on some government watch list. Although I don't support Theodore Kaczynski a.k.a The Unabomber for killing all those people, his image of a mass murderer vilified the message he wanted to send. Ironically he sent out a lot of mails but his message never got delivered. I decided to read this book after watching the Netflix series *Manhunt: Unabomber* . I wanted to

know what he exactly had to say. Although I half expected it to be a mad man's rant about how fucked up the society is, in some parts it does sound like a rant.

Ted's message is difficult to digest, he says we don't need to change governments to lead a healthy fulfilling life. The industrial and technological society is responsible for our ills, and any change in political ideology or economic policy will not solve our problems, they will only bring in short term reforms. He calls for a shift in lifestyle and asks us to live a primitive lifestyle. He says most jobs or passions are a surrogate activity and believes it should be replaced by real struggles like foraging for food, firewood, etc. It sounds absolutely ludicrous and completely unattainable but it did make some sense. What I liked is that unlike other people he doesn't get lost in jargon. He simplifies his message but doesn't oversimplify that it sounds like trash. His Ph.D. training was very useful in writing this manifesto, like a true mathematician he tells the reader if he assumed something, and also agrees that his analysis might be wrong.

I am sure 90% of the people gave this book a low rating is because of his crude and profuse criticism of the Leftists. But I believe people are missing the point, he is criticizing the leaders or the power positions of the Left, and not everybody who believes in a Leftist ideology. Being a close on the ground observant of the Left oriented parties, I believe Leftists are themselves as bigoted and hypocritical as the government they are opposing.

Daulton Lermons

3 reviews6 followers

June 9, 2020

had me tedpilled for about a month but now i am Nazbol so fuck this book

Sumit Ghosh

61 reviews15 followers

February 21, 2021

Based and Tedpilled. I just hope that the FBI doesn't notice this review XD.

Jokes aside, it was surprising how coherent and well-presented his arguments were. And most of it makes a lot of sense, sadly his method of bombing acted as a very bad PR for his philosophy.

non-fiction politics

-

1 review1 follower

June 18, 2020

Based ☑
Redpilled ☑
Put me on the FBI watchlist ☑

Dina
458 reviews36 followers
June 18, 2020

He might have been "insane" by our society definition that accuses a single person committing murders of crime but praises governments sending thousands of soldiers to kill people from other countries. But insane genius is nonetheless a genius.

Funny, how his prediction of technology taking over our lives is coming true. Funny, how his description of human overpopulation the earth with no concern for anything but himself is true. Funny, how the only way he sees out of this mess is destruction of all "industrial" society and technology.

Once again, I am asking myself - why are we humans so insane, that we can't solve a problem without it either exploding on us or complete and utter destruction.

Alex Lake
12 reviews
June 30, 2020
We're fucked.

Grace
12 reviews
July 2, 2020

One of the best written materials I have ever had the pleasure of reading, thought provoking and life changing.

Ian
14 reviews
July 6, 2020
Quality
simplybased society

Michael Ó Duibhir

31 reviews

July 16, 2020

This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

Ben Aguilar

12 reviews

July 18, 2020

A brilliant work. Really appreciated the humility, which is particularly direct in the final note section. One of my "qualms" though is the use of the word "power" which seems to get thrown around a lot, especially with any diagnosis of leftist movements. I think motivations for success are much more complicated than this word suggests, even if they're all ultimately self-interested.

That said I appreciated the attention given to denotations of leftism and progressivism, ex:

"We use the term "leftism" because we don't know of any better words to designate the spectrum of related creeds that includes the feminist, gay rights, political correctness, etc., movements, and because these movements have a strong affinity with the old left"

Personally, I am skeptical of many of these trends (not gay rights though come on), but still believe that WITHIN a "system", many "left" policies are the only rational chance at harm reduction (environment legislation & something like the Scandinavian system which is working relatively well - also I could be wrong but citizens in these countries seem the most "happy"/satisfied and are not descending into endless leftism... even if they sometimes go overboard w/ experimenting)

Ruben Klaassen

12 reviews

August 1, 2020

Gave this a second read and it's just bizarre how accurate it still is in the world we live in today

Bryan Oliver

121 reviews5 followers

August 3, 2020

wow, its a realistic nonfictional account of 1984 in the years prior to thought police implementation and all the other leftist tools meant to subjugate and control a population. Fascinating read.

I can't say I agree completely with the author's view of technology's role in the future, but it does seem relatively inevitable. His insight 25+ years ago is astounding and more or less accurate.

Rex Hurst

Author

12 books37 followers

August 12, 2020

Kacynski writes in the third person and under the pseudonym FC (Freedom club) to, presumably, deceived the FBI into believing the manifesto is part of a larger organization and not just one man in a shack pounding away on his manual typewriter.

Now that modern industrialized man has, by sheer routine, dealt with the basics of survival - food, water, shelter - he had become a lesser creature, perverted from his natural purpose. To that end he becomes wrapped up in the power process of modern industrial society- which is A) Identify goal, b) Make effort, C) Achieve goal. This process takes up most of our time, which we also supplement with surrogate activities.

The surrogate activities are one which are set up merely for the sake of having a goal to work towards. These give the person a sense of achievement without actually getting something substantive from the exercise of effort. This is often mostly seen in people's hobbies, people obsessed with video games, or any sort of collection of non-essential goods.

Freedom is thus naturally suppressed by any industrialized system, since said system needs everyone involved to play their part as a cog. The only freedoms left untouched are the ones which don't matter. Religion, speech, entertainment types don't really matter as long as everyone goes to work the next day.

In the struggle between technology and freedom, technology will always win because we quickly become dependent on that new technology. Freedom will always be taken away under the guise of altruistic means. Ie. for child protections, social justice, national security, etc.. Thus it is impossible to balance technology against the individual. And the answer is to stop trying and dismantle (or escape from) said society.

This is an individualistic call rather than a plan of action for a movement. He is stating his beliefs in form, but seems to have little delusions that his actions will have much of an effect on the greater society. As for what he wanted, as the author himself points out, societies cannot be planned but evolve naturally like species. As such, he states the only escape from the freedom crushing weight of any industrial country is to retreat into a naturalistic state.

Victor

4 reviews1 follower

August 29, 2020

It is hard to judge whether I should give it 5 stars due to the uncertain nature of the latter part of it. It seems that Kaczynski didn't have enough space and references to support his arguments for the execution of demolishing industrial society, so the arguments are weak at a glance. However, I found the first half of the book to be extremely insightful. Understanding Ted's take on the power process and surrogate activities strengthened ideas I already had about the nature of humans beings: we don't fulfil ourselves by acquiring any particular thing, but by staying in the power process.

bla favorites

Haytham

3 reviews4 followers

August 18, 2020

The way he back his ideas with solid arguments is ver impressive I'm really surprised by how intellectual he is, definitely I'll read more of his work in the future.

Richard Zhu

79 reviews40 followers

August 20, 2020

It's a real banger

marcin

163 reviews4 followers

August 20, 2020

I may not agree with the methods the author states and his concept, but it's an interesting food for thought.

Ryan Walsh

18 reviews7 followers

August 27, 2020

Read it.

Kevin Jones

1 review

September 3, 2020

Awesome

Very enlightening and a great read! One of the best books I have read in awhile. Be ready to read this because its a ride!

Calyn Valhoun

3 reviews1 follower

September 3, 2020

TK was a genius. That's not hyperbole. It's evident in his writing that he was acutely aware of the future of our nation. Although his methods leave much to be desired, he hit the nail on the heads with his predictions of the grasp social media and MSM have on our country.

A must read for anyone who mistrusts our corrupt system of governance.

Alex Todoran

2 reviews1 follower

July 20, 2023

This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

Hazel Snodgrass

25 reviews4 followers

October 5, 2020

Uncle Teddy is a modern day prophet and you can't change my mind

Luke Ingalls

40 reviews

October 14, 2020

Remarkably accurate prediction of the current state of society. I found this text thought provoking in that the issues Ted addresses are all in need of urgent solutions but it would seem that at this point his proposed solutions are untenable (and realistically never were). It would seem Andrew Yang is the modern (and much more rational) embodiment of this ideology.

Joe

21 reviews4 followers

October 14, 2020

Ted is Based

Great read, gonna go live in the woods now. Leave me alone. Reject leftism, reject technology and have a bunch of kids.

favorites finished-in-2020

Rinstinkt

184 reviews

June 13, 2023

Unambiguously deep observations.

The author is not just the crazy terrorist killer most people think he is. Even though it's true he committed terroristic acts, he is more than that. He is an intellectual, an important one - thats my opinion after reading this book.

Few points.

Talks about the power process. Don't know if he knew about evo psych (the field was just consolidating back then). Huge part of the social problems, suffering, psychological/mental, when not genetic, can be traced to environmental factors of today, totally different from those that shaped and in which the human species lived for the majority of its history. Evo psych use the "mismatch" when talking about mental modules that seem to behave erratically in a modern, "non natural", environment.

Pg 89. Talking again about "leftists": "...when leftists were a minority in our universities, leftist professors were vigorous proponents of academic freedom, but today... leftists have become dominant, they have shown themselves ready to take away everyone else's academic freedom...

The same will happen with leftists and technology: They will use it to oppress everyone else if they ever get it under their own control." - He sort of predicted how social media would fall into the hands of leftists. See Twitter, Fb etc censorship of views opposed to some of the core dogmas of the progressive Cathedral.

Overall, when reading this book, you have a feeling that the book was written 1 day ago.

This and How Dawkins Got Pwned (read recently) both impressed me a lot and are making me reconsider a few things.

I shared quotations/highlights during the reading.

book-audiobook book-e-book favorites

Beatrice

15 reviews7 followers

October 19, 2020

Very well written, and thought provoking!

Gabriel Tamaş

122 reviews7 followers

October 27, 2020

Read it yourselves...

Nuno

11 reviews4 followers

November 7, 2020

Wonderful insight into what makes humans happy and unhappy and why. The first time I read it, it gave me a small existential crisis as I pondered on whether I'd ever be truly happy in this world. It's unfortunate that Mr. Kaczynski turned out to be a domestic terrorist and is in prison for it, because I would have loved hearing more from him in the present day.

Vivekanand Mishra

56 reviews1 follower

November 9, 2020

Gave this book a second read today and could relate to it a lot given the current mood of the world order. Some compelling arguments are made and the book leaves me with a slight sense of dread and hope and more questions than I started reading. All those who want to bring in Game B into play must read this.

Olaf hugh Hardoomed

1 review

November 10, 2020

Unless you have an IQ over 150, your opinion is merely cute. He was right. You are all doomed. I'll be ok, I can live off of the land. Thankfully, I am 1 day closer to living off the grid. I hope this election pushes all of you barely average intelligence sheep to their political wits ends until you are murdering each other in the streets over a candidate that doesn't give a fuck about you. Then, when the likeminded people come out of the hills in about 10 years. We will be free to live in peace on a clean planet that is rid of Kardashians, and Trumps, and whoever that dude is with the tattoos all over

his face wearing a tie. That's what he meant. Thank you for your interesting opinions concerning a prophecy you think is novel. And take off the masks, y'all look retarded.

M. Conway

Author

1 book3 followers

November 11, 2020

Aside from all the blowy uppy stuff, he's right about a lot of things.

Jordan Blevins

5 reviews

November 13, 2020

This book changed my life. Before I read this book, I went through life in pity of myself, but no longer. I'm taking control. I understand everything now.

Jack

1 review

December 2, 2020

A great book written by a great man. Excellent criticism of the industrial system and how it has made modern life empty and vapid.

rovhul

7 reviews3 followers

December 9, 2020

A must read for the disillusioned and angry, giving those something to believe in and fight against.

favourites

Eliade Weismann

63 reviews21 followers

December 18, 2020

Based. Best "I reject your reality and substitute my own" move.

Gilbert

106 reviews33 followers

December 31, 2022

Sometimes it takes a madman to speak the truth

“It would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences”

4.5

2020 based philosophy

Joshua Allison

241 reviews

May 25, 2023

My hero

conspiracy-truth-reality fillasofee own

Vladivostok

105 reviews11 followers

January 3, 2021

”All that defies natural order stands on weak footing. Kick the legs out or apply additional pressure. You can cause a lot of problems with an extension ladder and a good set of tools. I don’t condone it.” -Mike Ma

philosophy sociology

Adam Austin

14 reviews

January 5, 2021

A great read tainted by the Author’s crimes

His critique of Industrial society and leftism is depressingly prophetic. I don’t know that I agree with the Author’s solution. I definitely don’t agree with the author’s methods.

Gian Andrea

Author

7 books35 followers

January 7, 2021

ESSENTIAL READ.

It’s just mind blowing that this book was written in the early Nineties, and yet here

we are, thirty odds year later contemplating the madness we live in.
Absolutely on point on all the major issues our society is facing, and will keep facing,
in the near future.
Highly recommended.

Stink

5 reviews

January 14, 2021

interesting ideas, not all good ideas, but a good reflection on how shit things have
gotten

runyon

25 reviews1 follower

January 14, 2021

I used to have a copy of New York Times this was originally published in back in '96,
but I lost it, or it was taken, back in college. Hadn't reread the manifesto in decades,
but it's every bit as interesting to me now as it was all those years ago in high school.

Anton Tkalich

148 reviews3 followers

November 7, 2022

After reading this book, there is a bizarre dual feeling. On the one hand, the guy
is 100% a terrorist and a villain and seems to be some strange fool. But after reading
each paragraph and especially after his statements about liberalism and its supporters
(the author calls them "leftists"), everything falls into place. This historical event is
worth considering if you are interested in the history of the modern world. Despite his
eccentricity, Kaczynski at least states his thoughts and ideology of the FC movement
competently. Of course, there are many contradictions in the manifesto itself, and the
book likely won't appeal to many people, but my recommendation remains the same.
You should read it!

Silvi Simberg

Author

1 book6 followers

January 20, 2021

Other than the way he chose to market this manifesto - he brings up very good points.

Anne Fox

Author

25 books50 followers

January 22, 2021

I chose this book to read as part of research for a book I'm writing. The book has always impressed me as an oddity, because it talks of social ills as ostensibly (according to Theodore Kaczynski) being caused by industrialization. Yet, Mr. Kaczynski isn't a sociologist, psychologist, or any similar expert—he's a mathematician. Still, his views on the topic of the effect technological advances have on society are interesting, as much as I might disagree with his conclusions that the effect is entirely negative and am more inclined to lean in the other direction. And, of course, one cannot condone his methods for bringing these views before the public eye: the maiming and killing of people he saw as contributing to what he questionably relates is the eventual downfall of human society.

Still, this is an interesting look into the mind of a madman-genius (he has an IQ of 167) that perhaps should be read by more people, even if the man and his methods cannot be appreciated.

Thomas B. P.

1 review

January 29, 2021

We live in a society.

René

96 reviews50 followers

February 4, 2021

I'm probably on a watchlist now.

PNW Thinker

7 reviews

February 21, 2021

Extremely logical and well thought out on many points.

The two main ones are:

1. Technology/AI/machines control aspects of every part of our lives, we are dependent on them, and the inevitability that as technology advances we will relinquish more control of decision making to them (leading to the concentration of power to a very select few humans OR the machines themselves).

2. The biggest danger to your way of life are leftists — more specifically leftist activists who seek to control every aspect of your life from birth until death. The never ending complaining, protesting, and fighting to make everyone else match their views on any topic. The high probability that in the event they gain full control, all of your perceived freedoms will be eliminated unless they conform to leftist ideology.

You can be totally against the terrorist actions which Ted released upon the nation, which almost everyone (including me) is in agreement of I'm sure — however that does not eliminate the validity of his thought process in this book.

From the outside looking in, it seems that he felt no one would read this “in time to do anything”, so he essentially forced its publication through the threat of continued terrorism — however, now many years later, it seems that the predictions have not all fully come true, and no followers have been able to enact the suggestions in this book on a large enough scale to be noticed.

Interestingly enough, he never considered (in this book) the possibility of nature itself causing some catastrophe which would meet the goals he lays out, being the destruction of technology and the industrial/digital life as we know it.

For example, I think a large 24+ hour long meteor shower could knock out all/most satellites in orbit, pummel the earth with enough force to destroy many roads/power lines, and raise enough dust into the atmosphere to cause a years-long cooling trend — sending us into another ice age.

If that happens, the biggest killer would be mass starvation in the short term — followed by the inability to obtain basic medication or treatment for relatively benign illnesses, which in turn would become fatal (lowering the overall life expectancy as well as birth rate).

Also he doesn't mention (perhaps due to the date of publication) the inevitability of war with China (or another hostile super power) which could easily destroy undersea internet cables, satellite destruction, GPS failure, utility failures for electrical grids and water supplies, food/medication rationing, etc. This is by far the most likely scenario (vs natural catastrophe), and would send the entire planet into the dark ages with no realistic way to rebuild quickly.

Overall, I think that the points he makes are worth considering, and should be discussed and planned for in the event that a person or group of people decide to try and pursue the suggestions which are made.

Had he never decided to act out through terrorism, and simply wrote books such as this, he would have been unknown in the short term — but viewed as a prophet in the long term — in line with George Orwell (1984) or Aldous Huxley (Brave New World).

If you are drawn to logical thought and reasoning, I would suggest reading this book.

Danny Mindich
86 reviews3 followers
March 16, 2021
Read #93-139
Damn. Lots to think about.

Willy D
77 reviews2 followers
July 6, 2021
Ted how I have failed. I bought a Kindle man I'm so sorry. If I didn't hate bugs and need WIFI, I would move into a secluded cabin like lord Ted did.

Gavin Bodnar
59 reviews
March 20, 2021
This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

Sam
90 reviews2 followers
March 27, 2021
radical political thought from a man too brilliant to brush aside.

Angelina
6 reviews2 followers
April 3, 2021
Very Based Kazinsky
Read in 2020

Alexander K

61 reviews16 followers

January 9, 2022

Excellent and insightful read, not for the faint of heart... thats for bloody sure

Gabrielius Blekaitis

5 reviews

April 3, 2021

A quite straight-forward and well structured critique on industrial society. How technology traumatizes human mind, pacifies, controls, limits freedom etc., but negates stress by providing escapism with various means (e.g. mass entertainment, drugs). Claims that technology disrupts a thing called power process, which leads to mental problems. Also critiques leftism as a movement, which is partly tied to that, as well as two factors - oversocialization and feelings of inferiority. I liked that some statements are more carefully explained, not to simplify or radicalize them. I guess more references to other sources would've been nice, especially to further prove his point, but the author acknowledges these shortcomings in the endnotes.

Christian D.

35 reviews1 follower

June 5, 2021

Ted breaks down many of the issues about todays society and and how to solve them. If you feel like somethings off, or are curious as to why todays generation has so many mental health issues, give this book a read.

favourites

Vladimir Gabriel

6 reviews4 followers

November 13, 2021

I went to read this book as a joke and ended up agreeing with him

Minäpäminä

383 reviews8 followers

April 6, 2021

Disturbing and lucid, like a manifesto should be. I only wish I had read this before. I'm a bit confused as to why Kaczynski included all the stuff about "Leftism", but it sure felt like it hit home 2021.

Will have to read again soon. Maybe move away from the city.

Chris Concannon

81 reviews3 followers

April 8, 2021

Best commentary on and critique of leftism I've read yet. Very valuable observations on technologies influence on society, especially in the hands of domineering elitists. Overall a fantastic read, just sad that Kaczynski felt he needed to kill people in order to have these ideas disseminated. A must read for an aspiring social reformer or commentator.

5 out of 5

2021-list

Louizzz

11 reviews

January 23, 2022

A must for everyone. Free my boy Ted, he did nothing wrong.

A

396 reviews43 followers

January 27, 2022

Although Ted did not have access to the most extensive academic resources, one can substantiate his ~150 page logical proof with much evidence. Take "the power process", the lack of which leads our society into more and more woe, which is then not manifested due to drugs ("mental health"), genetic modifications, etc. The "power process" is the exact same phenomenon that positive psychologists have been pointing to for decades as the key to psychological stability and health: one must have a feeling of control over one's environment. See Martin Seligman's books or any other positive psych survey. Great book; do not judge the book by the person: a mistake many leftists make when looking back into history. Take a Platonic view of the Ideas of Mr. Unabomber and contemplate their truth; do not repeat his actions and get a lack of resources (in jail) which then squash your intellectual endeavors (like Mr. Unabomber).

dlitt-recommendations

Matt Ferry

2 reviews

April 10, 2021

Sometimes reasonable men must do unreasonable things.

Shaun Phelps

Author

16 books9 followers

April 19, 2021

Kaczynski writes a solid work, here. It's hard to argue his logic, which is ultimately frustrating, because the conclusions are dire. Kaczynski's conclusions are similar to Bordosi's *This Ugly Civilization* with a call for revolution. Not the revolution action I would have expected, though. This is worth reading, at least for the thought exercise.

Lukasz Dygon

48 reviews2 followers

April 27, 2021

This manifesto presents a fringe perspective on why I shouldn't be able to write this review.

It is written eloquently and accessibly. The author makes convincing claims about the future and consequences of technology eventually leading to a dystopia. He is honest about consequences of the alternative he proposes.

It is conceded on multiple occasions that one should draw their own conclusions about history and society if their experiences do not resonate with those of the author. This sets this text apart from other ideological propaganda. This way, the manifesto can be treated more as a toolbox or a framework for analyzing the world through a wary lens.

Mehrzaad

191 reviews26 followers

April 30, 2021

Still a punch to the gut of our believe in society.

2021 audiobook

MP

19 reviews79 followers

May 8, 2021

Has technology made us really happy or healthy? Definitely not all technologies. Technology is means to an end not end in itself and if modern technologies like Social Media, AI, Mass production threat our wellbeing as well as of our planet then we must relook our relationship with technology.

This book converted me from a mindless supporter of Technological Advancement to a cautious critic.

A technology should only be adopted if it positively increases our health and happiness collectively.

Mike09

3 reviews

May 24, 2021

I will have to further research this topic but if the claims in this book are true I would have to change my worldview.

Anonymous1261

6 reviews

June 6, 2021

words flow like pure butter

Snade Snapper

58 reviews

June 15, 2021

Pretty cool guy.

Isaac Wheaton

1 review

June 18, 2021

This book is super poggers when i read it i cried it was that good. We love ted <3

FelixTheMonarchist

44 reviews4 followers

June 21, 2021

The guy was a murderer and I don't approve of his actions his Manifesto is good though.

Dávid Almási

3 reviews2 followers

June 23, 2021

This is a great read if you have low expectations. Of course, wholly coherent arguments and academic rigour cannot be expected, and his ideal an-prim society cannot be seriously considered, but the manifesto defo has some interesting points. What I find funny is that he seems to be more aware of his theory's shortfalls than many esteemed academics today.

Pavel

14 reviews

June 24, 2021

This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

Manuel Salgado

4 reviews

June 24, 2021

It's hard but Brilliant!

Jacob McD

3 reviews1 follower

July 24, 2021

Through my own observations of the world, I had essentially written this book for myself in a journal. My complaints from the meaninglessness of work to the weaponized and politicized psychology are all in this book. The biggest point I've had on my mind lately that isn't in this book is how labor used to contribute to a person's identity and social worth. Imagine a small town living on the US western frontier in the 1800s: the person who grows corn is immensely important because of their occupation. I work at a mail sorting facility with hundreds of people doing the exact same job at the same time in the same building. My job does not add value to me. But the corn grower? He matters to his community and that's immediately obvious. Also, when that corn grower wakes up, he doesn't lay and say, "oh what is the point." He wakes up and says,

"I'm hungry." That's an important dimension of being that I'll never know for myself. I can only speculate.

Aaron

1 review

July 26, 2021

The key to understanding why the world is in its current state.

Krista Napolitano

14 reviews

August 3, 2021

unfortunately right about a lot of things
favorites

Majid Al-Asseri

39 reviews1 follower

August 6, 2021

Written in the most impressive, cohesive, and logical way that follows premises and establishing reason. However, I disagree with him a lot.
philosophy

Edward

26 reviews

August 13, 2021

I can't help but feel the author is correct in everything he says. Though it is important to note that the author's beliefs stem from valuing absolute freedom over happiness (which he notes can be easily manipulated, even more so as tech progresses), but not everyone will agree with that to the same extent. I also find it hard to believe the proposed solution, an all-out revolution occurring roughly at the same time in countries around the world, is feasible. So for me, the value of this book comes from identifying the symptoms of the lack of a "power-process" and wondering how new technologies may eventually come to restrict human freedom.

favourites

Kaapo Korkala
7 reviews
June 16, 2022
one of the best diagnostic books I have read..

wulugurd
5 reviews
August 29, 2021
based.

Nathan Morrelle
30 reviews4 followers
September 2, 2021
I wish that some people would use they're cell phones less

Mario
1 review
September 20, 2021
Changes your perspective on life. This was way ahead of its time. It's scary how accurate he gets.

Samuel Puopolo
35 reviews
October 1, 2021
I know I'm on a watchlist now, but it was an interesting read that walked the fine line between philosophy and mania — it's closer to Nietzsche than Charles Manson. Just for the record — I am not an anarcho-primitivist, I'm just on theorygram too often.

Joseph Sneep
2 reviews
October 4, 2021
This just may be one of the best books I've ever read. I've had this on my backburner to read for a while and I finally got around to reading it and it's very good.

Spot on with his many assessments of modern leftism and the movements surrounding it and the mind of the modern leftist. I would know because before reading this I had the same mindset in a lot of ways, always believing we could reach some uber-egalitarian Utopian future. He also diagnoses many problems with society at large and problems as a result of industrialization. I definitely recommend checking it out if you like anything to do with philosophy, politics and that sort of thing.

Qais Zainon
2 reviews
October 7, 2021
Dangerously based

Michael Nguyen
167 reviews13 followers
October 19, 2021

This is an amazing text. It describes the problems with society so perfectly so succinctly. I only remember reading one book that does this, and it is Freud's Civilization and It's Discontents. This book posits the solution of the utter destruction of society in order to live in a simplified archaic and more primitive style of living. I don't think this is possible. And I don't think he's idea of internationalising it is realistic either. Using technology to destroy technology? In some ways, he is a crypto-proponent of accelerationism, despite never having mentioned it in his text. What the book does amazingly well is that it details the psychology of a left-wing person and the problems that this leads to in destroying the system, rather than revolutionising society, it reinforces the status quo through power dynamics and inferiority complexes - according to him. He doesn't delve deeply enough into right wing psychology unfortunately and the issues with conservatives. Simply put though, his writing style is incredibly straightforward, coherent, and is not full of platitudes, jargon. The are very logical arguments, and I found myself agreeing with 99%, the only thing I think he was wrong at was his ultimate solution that humanity will be for sure heading into this revolution through his methodology. I don't think this is realistic, and there will be no anarcho-primitivist utopia, regardless of how many nuclear bombs he wishes to implode onto society (not that he mentions this). Look at what happened to Japan, and Germany in WWII. Destroyed by War, and they ended up rebuilding. There is no going back to a state of Rosseuaian Purity. Nevertheless, this was a beautifully written, cohesive, and cogent book, despite being wrong in that one minor way.

Konrad

14 reviews

November 17, 2021

Eye opening, it really expands your awareness and points to things that you never thought of that are inhibiting the natural way that humans are meant to operate, versus the society which has been forced upon us. I'm not as radical as Ted but what he says really does make sense, it is not the nonsense rambling of someone crazy, like documentaries would like you to think.

Brett Stevens

Author

5 books39 followers

November 7, 2021

Another book full of great insights where I disagree with the conclusion.

Industrial society is gasoline on the fire that is the failure of egalitarianism, but this has helped accelerate the failure to the point where it might happen quickly enough that we recognize it and survive it.

His analysis of the psychology of modern Leftists as well as the bourgeois consumer and its intellectual laziness are spot-on.

I find that blaming technology for what is an old error – Athens and Rome – in the indirect system of power exhibited in democracy, individualism, and egalitarianism, despite being appealing, is an "easy answer" that is not the whole story.

Contrary to media reports, however, this book does not "ramble" at all and in fact is very concise, logical analysis that keeps the interest of the reader.

Jason

139 reviews24 followers

November 13, 2021

Disavow the terrorism, but other than that he was on the money.

Ronald Reagan

30 reviews1 follower

November 25, 2021

You absolutely need to read this book. The author questions Industrial Society and Its Future. It's amazing how he comes to the same conclusion many people are coming to, only he did so many years ago!

The Industrial Society will ultimately lead to a loss of freedom and autonomy. Our time will be filled by what T J Kaczynski calls "surrogate activities" in advanced industrial societies. T J Kaczynski sees that the only solution is to completely abandon industrial society and create a society where the role of technology is extremely limited. It is a good book, you need to read it.

Cora

36 reviews1 follower

November 28, 2021

I really wanted this book to seem like it was written by a crazy guy that made bombs to torment people. Reading it, I realized that Kaczynski was a smart guy. Definitely an interesting and worthwhile read.

(DO NOT TAKE THIS AS MY DEFENDING HIS ACTIONS!!!)

Sam Sneed

16 reviews

June 13, 2023

Re-read this again today in honor of your life, Professor. You will forever remain in our hearts.

Joshua Simmons

6 reviews

December 27, 2021

Thoughtfully crafted analyses and solutions to modern society that successfully predicted patterns that played out to become the world we're in today. Withstands the test of time and is an essential read.

unclesamsavage

33 reviews5 followers

January 1, 2022

Succinct in Sixteen

Here lie the ramblings of a crazy man marred by a largely perverted perspective on reality.

essay history

Andrew Standish
2 reviews
January 6, 2022
Shits the bomb

Yac
1 review
January 12, 2022
Absolutely rivetting

James Rogers
43 reviews
December 21, 2022

It seems to me that the task of modernity, or whatever is the term for the era in which we now live at the time I'm writing this, is to somehow prove Ted wrong about the possibilities of technological society. I hope we are up to the challenge.
sociology

Adam Ralph
100 reviews1 follower
February 1, 2022

Kaczynski hits the nail on the head with a lot of points, namely leftism and surrogate activities. Most of what he says in this book is completely true and written in well-reasoned and logical language.

Josh Mitchell
37 reviews
February 5, 2022

Surprisingly well-reasoned and well-written thoughts on how industrialization and the perpetual modernization of society by technology leads to various social ills. Kaczynski's beliefs about violence and his own use of it to achieve his political goals are reprehensible, but his thoughts as transcribed here come across as a well-educated thesis as opposed to the ramblings of madman turned murderer.

Worth a read from a true-crime/serial killer deep dive perspective, as well as a socio-political perspective.

2022

Shapur I
4 reviews
February 23, 2022
a True visionary.

Colin Jordan
20 reviews7 followers
March 8, 2022

AMAZING! STUNNING! FILLED WITH TRUTH! This book is simply amazing. It's message is true and aware of its purpose. It exposes what is wrong with the industrial society in quick, concise blows. Ted also perfectly predicts our reliance on technology and the mindset of Leftism. READ THIS BOOK! IT ACTUALLY CARES ABOUT NATURE! I **WILL** be re-reading this!

"Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them drugs to take away their unhappiness. Science fiction? It is already happening to some extent in our own society. It is well known that the rate of clinical depression has been greatly increasing in recent decades. We believe that this is due to disruption of the power process, as explained in paragraphs 59-76. But even if we are wrong, the increasing rate of depression is certainly the result of SOME conditions that exist in today's society. Instead of removing the conditions that make people depressed, modern society gives them antidepressant drugs. In effect, antidepressants are a means of modifying an individual's internal state in such a way as to enable him to tolerate social conditions that he would otherwise find intolerable. (Yes, we know that depression is often of purely genetic origin. We are referring here to those cases in which environment plays the predominant role.) - Page 61/2

favorites

Alejandro
30 reviews1 follower
April 4, 2022
The voices in my head are warning me about rating this book...
america history-politics-theory

ponternal

18 reviews

November 16, 2022

"Return to monke." - Theodore J. Kaczynski

Typing this review is just a surrogate activity that I am doing to distract myself from the power process and real goals like status, survival, and sex. 5/5 its a mastapiece.

Andreas Monoyios

2 reviews1 follower

July 6, 2023

This is the original manifesto of Ted Kaczynski also known as the Unabomber, a serial killer who terrorized the USA by organizing a mail bomb campaign. The work was published by Washington Post after Kaczynski's request and represents the ideological foundations of its author. In the middle of all that havoc unleashed by Kaczynski, the essay was used by the FBI to identify him and, ultimately, locate his isolated wooden cabin in Montana where he lived as a hermit. According to his manifesto, modern technological society has isolated man from his natural habitat and stripped him from his freedom, independence, and dignity. Kaczynski believed that words and ideas are not enough and that action needs to be taken in the form of a murderous crusade against certain individuals who represented, according to him, the industrial system. After reading it, I came to the conclusion that the manifesto is the work of an intelligent individual (Kaczynski has an IQ of 168 and a Ph.D. degree in Mathematics). In addition, I share many of the opinions expressed here by Kaczynski except for the ones that...usually come out of the blue such as: "In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people" as I believe that a brilliant mind like Ted's could have found other means to convey his message. Finally, I could not help but wonder how someone like Kaczynski sees the development of social media and the rise of personalities such as Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk.

Jacob Brown

2 reviews

May 4, 2022

I was surprised by how entertained I was by this book. It's a lot of hard-to-swallow pills. Sad he had to kill people to get anybody to read it. His ideas are almost impossible because all the self-reliant live in the woods types usually don't give a damn about the rest of society. Excelsior! and what not. Either way he's a smart guy. Fun to read when he gets angry.

Lucy
5 reviews
May 7, 2022
awesome and agreed

Moe Caster
6 reviews1 follower
May 10, 2022
This book is highly informative of our future. Teddy was onto something, here.

Teodor Georgiev
1 review
May 14, 2022
This work is raising more questions for modern life now then when it was written. Still keep in mind that it is close to Niccolò Machiavelli works because the author was very bitter about his social integration and life in general

Jason
5 reviews
June 2, 2022
A very good read and makes predictions of our society that have happened and will happen due to greed of individuals and people relying heavily on creature comforts.

Monty Montgomery
15 reviews
June 17, 2022
Bro was spitting
postmodernist

Paul Cyr
3 reviews
June 25, 2022

Excellent analysis of modern society and human psychology. Goes a bit off the rails at times but thought provoking at the least. Has insights that not only have held true to this day, but may have become even more true as technology has progressed.

Madison Lecher
2 reviews1 follower
June 30, 2022

Kaczynski articulated so many critiques of modern society that I have always had but could never fully render in my mind. Although a maniac, he truly has an incredible grasp on human psychology & I highly recommend this text. Even if you don't connect with the manifesto as a whole, at least read it to learn about "Surrogate Activities" & "The Power Process"

David Williams
44 reviews
July 4, 2022
Ted was right

Garman
27 reviews
July 6, 2022

Disclaimer to any friends, family, college admissions offices, future employers, and government officials: I do not, in any way support the actions taken by Theodore John Kaczynski, the Unabomber, Freedom Club (F.C.), or any other aliases. I do not support any of the actions he proposes in this article and merely believe that the ideas postulated are worthy of exploration and intellectual pondering.

I believe that everyone should read this book once. Because of the fact that every human, animal, plant, and organism is affected by the implications of industrial society, this essay can apply to everyone. There is no excuse not to as this book is publicly published, purposefully made accessible for free, and is also only 100 pages long. Because I believe this should be read firsthand by everyone, I will be brief.

This book was written almost 30 years ago, but could have been written yesterday. Every observation Kaczynski makes about the rise of technology and the effects that it has had on the freedom of humanity remains true if not more so and his analysis of human behavior is most accurate. His plan to implement a technological revolution, while extreme, is thought out and he draws many parallels to the successes and failures

of other historical movements such as the French and Russian Revolutions. It took me 4 months to finish this book because of how thought provoking it was. Every paragraph was worthy of meditation and when, not if I reread this book, I intend to give each even more than I already have.

must-reads

evie☒

83 reviews3 followers

July 9, 2022

certainly one of the greatest thinkers of our time. it doesn't shock me that he has gone the way he did, but he left a great lesson behind him.

I recommend this book to anyone. a great start to realize where our society is going

Sivil

2 reviews

July 11, 2022

Very engaging. Can't recommend this book enough.

Niall Cummins

15 reviews

July 12, 2022

This book will put you on the FBI watchlist. Its worth it

Scrungus

1 review

July 12, 2022

Thoroughly prescient, well thought out and well argued. Whilst I don't agree with everything and I think he hasn't thought of certain angles, but this book will definitely get you thinking and reconsidering your life

Lena Mears

1 review

July 12, 2022

changed my opinion on people having children and also told me why i have depression and anxiety and stuff so i like it a lot to be honest

DeepThinker

17 reviews1 follower

July 17, 2022

Worthwhile reading, although I must say, Ted, being a scientist, mathematician, and social scientist (I am too btw), lacked marketing skills (like myself). Clearly ending people's lives was an inferior approach to contacting journalists for a story.

This book is a must-read. Even Ray Kurzweil was influenced by, and wrote about him. Consider that most people (guys) today would rather farm or work outside in nature somewhere than have a corporate job. Consider that 85% of people today are not engaged at work. Consider that society is on the verge of breakdown today and robots + AI are about to hit the mass production lines, and you realize maybe there is something to all this.

On leftism: Do not let the leftists here fool you that leftism isn't wrong, because if they were true, then they would no longer allow themselves to be leftist (cognitive dissonance). Read enough about leftism and you discover a couple of things. It is about the power of society over the rest of society through force and/or intimidation, and the reduction of individual choice in the name of "progress."

I will try to add to my review later.

Anonymous Boi

3 reviews

July 25, 2022

Ignore all the lefties coping. This manifesto permanently changed my worldview and understanding of technology. This goes well when paired with something like can life prevail or siege. Saint Kaczynski does a good job at outlining the problems with technical and the oversocialized npc's we encounter daily. Read this book and Hail Holy Terror

Kämen

136 reviews4 followers

July 27, 2022

Eerily prophetic. The Unabomber blew my mind.
anti-communism dystopia slavery

Jeremiah

1 review

August 5, 2022

Excellent piece of literature

Mucius Scaevola

214 reviews24 followers

August 6, 2022

The idea that pipe bombs were going to upend the techno-industrial world order is absurd, but Kaczynski gets an A for his autism. His diagnosis of the perils of technology is good, was prescient. The Metaphysics of Technology by David Skrbina is a more thorough exposition.

Mandingo

11 reviews

August 17, 2022

On point pattern recognition

erp

27 reviews

August 18, 2022

A book for all environment lovers. Kaczynski's work never fails to blow me away. Unironically though, Teddy is a bit homophobic....

david coetzee

18 reviews

August 22, 2022

Hate the left.

Hate the right.

Hate the government.

Hate technology.

Love me trees.

Love me nature.

Love me family.

Simple as.
audiobook

Maggie Hannis
6 reviews1 follower
August 30, 2022

Despite the occasional lapses into deranged rants, this manifesto is genuinely so based.

Zarmeen Lakhani
50 reviews9 followers
September 6, 2022

Ted kaczynski is a genius. The verbosity and clarity in his thoughts earns my highest respect despite him being a bomber.
classics might-read-again thought-provoking

Ayub Abdisalam
20 reviews2 followers
February 8, 2023
genius.
favorites

T.
56 reviews1 follower
September 16, 2022

Very insightful. Thought provoking read. While I disagree that we should get rid of industrial Society he makes some good points. This book contains much truth. Almost too much truth. I could only read a couple chapters at a time because there is so much information in so little text.
favorites philosophy

Nathan Fowler
19 reviews
September 30, 2022

For legal reasons I disavow everything in this book

Phillip Hardy

19 reviews2 followers

September 28, 2022

This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

Sophia

1 review

July 6, 2023

“We therefore advocate a revolution against the industrial system... This is not to be a POLITICAL revolution. Its object will be to overthrow not governments but the economic and technological basis of the present society.”

If there is one text that everyone should read, it is without a doubt *Industrial Society and Its Future*.

While *Industrial Society and Its Future* is likely the most widely-read manifesto released in the past century, it is exceedingly rare to see any scholars, academics, or professionals seriously grapple with the subject matter at hand. If one is familiar with the contents of the manifesto then it isn't hard to see why: (1) the conclusions drawn here are no doubt very hard to swallow for the average individual, and (2) they pose a great threat to the existing social order. In his manifesto (and in his other works, *Technological Slavery* and *Anti-Tech Revolution*), Kaczynski argues that the path we are on now is headed towards inevitable disaster. This may be a disaster in terms of human dignity—in which human beings are reduced to the status of cogs in the machine—or this may be an ecological catastrophe in which only the simplest of life forms (such as bacteria) can survive. Either way, the technological system we live under is rapidly encroaching upon every last remaining bit of wild Nature—both wild spaces free of human intervention, and also human nature itself. Due to the fact that the technological system cannot be reformed in any way as to avoid a catastrophic outcome, or allow for true human freedom, Kaczynski calls for a world-wide revolution to bring about the complete collapse of the techno-industrial system—this being the only way to steer humanity off of the course of destruction that it is on now.

In addition to highlighting the reckless path we are on now, Kaczynski lays out plainly how the techno-industrial system has resulted in widespread psychological suffering, largely due to the fact that it does not provide individuals with the ability to meaningfully exercise individual autonomy. He describes the “power process” as the ability to exert serious effort towards—and successfully achieve at least some—survival (i.e., “life and death”) goals, theorizing that since humans evolved to live a hunter/gatherer lifestyle that we have an innate need to go through the power process.

Goals that are not directly related to survival, but are instead artificial goals that humans set up for themselves simply for the sake of fulfillment, are then categorized as “surrogate activities.” Kaczynski states that since the techno-industrial system provides most modern individuals with everything they need in order to survive—so long as they hold down a job and are an obedient member of society—people spend most of their time engaged in surrogate activities. This mismatch between how humans have evolved to live (largely pursuing meaningful, practical, life-and-death dependent goals as individuals or small groups) and how modern humans live (mostly engaging in artificial or “surrogate” goals as part of cogs in a large social machine) can account for the widespread psychological maladjustment and suffering that we are seeing now.

A common criticism of the manifesto is the fact that it opens with a section on the psychology of modern leftism, and this is largely because the critics do not see what the aim of this section was. Those who espouse this criticism fail to see that its purpose was to provide a concrete example of the type of psychological maladjustment that results in humans from living in technologically advanced societies. Furthermore, it aims to highlight how leftists are poison to any truly revolutionary movement. Given Kaczynski’s emphasis on the need to form a genuine revolution to overthrow the technological system, these warnings serve a vital practical purpose. The manifesto is worth reading even just for Kaczynski’s undeniable portrait of the average leftist alone. Anyone who has spent any amount of time on a college campus will have without a doubt met many individuals who embody the type of “oversocialized” leftist that Kaczynski outlines here. Kaczynski’s observations of leftism—particularly, how leftism actually serves to strengthen the techno-industrial system—are later expanded upon in his ingenious essay titled “The System’s Neatest Trick” (which you can read in his book, *Technological Slavery*).

Brilliantly argued, this is a must read for anyone that feels that there is something deeply wrong with modern civilization. The insights offered here are original, refreshing, radical, and not something you would find in any other text.

Not your bruh
3 reviews
October 10, 2022
Accurate

Lohengramm
39 reviews2 followers
October 12, 2022

Brilliant manifesto. One of the most scathing critiques of leftism and “the system” that exists. Required reading for any serious dissident. Really a great explanation

of society's deepest ills. Kaczynski's analysis is frighteningly accurate 27 years later. When you read this, you would never imagine the man to be "insane" or irrational. He is extremely rational, to a point that may upset some. He understands that suffering is humanity's fate, though the worst fate of all is a totally controlled and engineered society without any purpose or meaning or connection to nature. One cannot help but be frightened by the picture Kaczynski paints in this manifesto, that is, if they truly care about freedom and humanity.

owned

Dwayne Hicks

403 reviews5 followers

October 16, 2022

What will you do with the cognitive dissonance of seeing much merit to the Unabomber's worldview?

anya

16 reviews

November 28, 2022

"In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people"

Ted is not a madman. I don't know how anyone who read his manifesto could not agree with the points he made about the modern society (and 30 years later, it got drastically worse). Although the ideal society he presents is not ideal at all.

I personally have a pessimistic outlook on the whole thing: neither the primitive nor modern ways of living are ideal. And currently I cannot see any ideal middle ground (although Ted's ideas sound slightly better than the perspective of an even more developed technological society in the future).

Grace Varghese

2 reviews

February 8, 2023

phenomenal

Jay V

3 reviews

November 2, 2022

A must-read for all those unaware of what the current state of the world is truly caused by.

Maximilian Gustafsson

4 reviews

November 11, 2022

Thought provoking and well worded.

Sepehr

33 reviews

December 12, 2022

I recently read Ted Kaczynski's manifesto in its entirety. Throughout the discussion, the main point about how leftism strengthens the industrial-technological order was well defended. Often, leftism stems from feelings of inferiority and "oversocialization," which refers to following social norms to the point of feeling guilty for minor infractions. Additionally, Ted established the most fundamental claim of the "power process," which encompasses autonomous goal-oriented processes as a part of human nature (such as hunting and farming); however, after industrialization, man has disrupted the power process with surrogate activities such as highly specialized scientific endeavors, mass media, and so on, which has led to a loss of fulfillment, higher rates of mental illness, and a loss of connection with nature. Leftists see themselves as rebels, but they are actually the biggest supporters of the technological-industrial system since they treat their "activism" as a "surrogate activity" in their power process, and feminism and minority rights are merely pretexts for their insatiable totalitarian drive for power, always inventing new problems, strengthening the industrial order while increasing the loss of autonomy.

Ted distinguishes between small-scale technology and organization-dependent technology, with the latter requiring a massively interconnected technological system to sustain. A bronze shovel, for example, can be made by anyone, but a refrigerator requires an industrial system due to the manufactured components. Ted also spends a great deal of time analyzing how prior to industrialization, human life was organized to fulfill the power process (e.g., cattle herder, farmer). As a result of industrialization, man lost his autonomy by being forced to become "educated" in supporting an interconnected industrial system, disrupting the power process. The technological-industrial system cannot adapt itself to man, and man must change himself to adapt to the system. In consequence, we are moving toward genetic engineering of humans, which is concerning.

As a result of organization-dependent technology, these vast issues have arisen: breakdown of local communities, loss of autonomy, overcrowding, loss of privacy, lack of fulfillment, future genetic engineering, and so on. The following is only a rough summary.

occident-phil-rel

__void__

36 reviews3 followers

December 8, 2022

The Unabomber Manifesto: Industrial Society and Its Future, by the infamous Unabomber "Ted Kaczynski", talks about the ill fate of society's future if it continues on its current techno-centric path. Kaczynski argues that society as a whole is in a downward spiral due to technological events such as the industrial revolution and the rapid speed of development since then. He believes that man, now able to provide for his basic needs with ease, has lost all purpose and freedom as a result of the inability to partake in the power process.

And what is the power process? The power process is a cycle of struggle and reward in which a person decides on a goal, puts in the necessary effort, and accomplishes that goal. According to Kaczynski, modern society has deprived us of the opportunity to engage in this process, making us dependent on society instead of being self-sufficient. Instead, we have taken on surrogate activities which cannot fully satisfy our need for struggle and reward, resulting in psycho-social problems such as depression and suicide.

Kaczynski also delves into the dangers of pursuing surrogate activities and relying too heavily on technology. He argues that technology, regardless of its intentions, will ultimately lead to our downfall. He points out that opposition to technology never succeeds and that we continue to push the limits of development, further distancing ourselves from an ideal society. He predicts that this future society will include harmful advancements such as genetic engineering and an increase in the use of antidepressant drugs.

He talks about how technological progress always wins out against the fight for freedom. He explains how this progress tightens our sphere of freedom. We see this in the evolution of cars, which didn't start off as a necessity, but now are important for daily activities. Before, all of a man's needs were located close to his home, but with the rise of technology, his freedom has been reduced. We can see this in the case of a lot of modern technologies which we can hardly function without such as our phones and laptops. These inventions came in stealthily and as choices but grew into something much more. Imagine if this became the case for virtual reality and brain computer interfaces. Man's thoughts would not be his own again, even currently with tracking, data mining, and mass manipulation from big companies, we cannot even assert that

man's thoughts are his anymore.

Kaczynski believes that the only way to get out of this unending forward march into our ultimate destruction, is to rebel. He presents a logical and structured plan for this rebellion, explaining why it is the only option. He also stresses that small acts of rebellion will not be enough to disrupt society and that people will have to die for the cause (whether for or against). He proposes blowing up economies, industries, and even people in order to spread the message and continue until all technology and means of restoration are eradicated.

Despite the violent nature of his plan, Kaczynski's reasoning and actions appear rational. He seems trapped in the belief that rebellion is the only solution. I can understand his perspective and see parallels to the techno-dystopian futures he describes in his manifesto. In 1984, there is total surveillance and control of people's actions. Everything is regularly monitored and replaced, and children are brainwashed. Those who deviate from the norm are punished severely. In *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells, the genetic code of humans has degraded to the point where they have become tiny, helpless creatures who rely on the technology created by their ancestors. If humanity manages to overcome its current challenges and make it to the year 2200, I fear that these kinds of realities will become our reality.

favorites

Cam Netland

85 reviews

November 30, 2022

I have to specify here I don't agree with everything put forward in this manifesto. The sections calling for revolution and some of the generalizations on leftism had me furrowing my brows but even those spittled claims had some ugly salience to them. Overall, I rate this five stars not because I'm going to live off the grid anytime soon, but of the clarity of writing, argumentation, and madness. The guy was a genius gone mad, a real life villain, and his thesis on technology and autonomy is one that everyone should tackle in their lives, whether they agree with it or not. It will at least have you confront some ugly truths about how deeply you are affected by Industrial Society today.

Quique

1 review

December 6, 2022

very based. now it's time for the revolution.

Sebos
51 reviews8 followers
December 12, 2022
rereading this essay, still holds up of course

Erlalons
52 reviews1 follower
December 28, 2022
finished a week ago but forgot to log
hearing Ted died; rest in peace you fucking omega chad

Gwen Forsha
35 reviews
January 4, 2023
I loved this book!! I would so read this again. I loved the stories and all the unexpected turns in the book.
read-during-school

J Bryant
2 reviews
January 5, 2023
Decalcifying My pineal gland in Text form. Couldn't highly recommended highly enough.

Mustafa
1 review
January 5, 2023
This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

salma
14 reviews
January 10, 2023
I won't comment on the content. All I'll say is, this was an interesting read with interesting points

Benjamin Uke

254 reviews35 followers

January 14, 2023

This entire review has been hidden because of spoilers.

philosophy politics

dione koutras

11 reviews

January 17, 2023

it was a very intresting book and unfortunately it's the truth. he had good agruments, however i don't agree with everything he said.

2023

avid reader

1 review

January 22, 2023

What an amazing read! Ted lays out his arguments with such a gracious flow, it's very easy to understand despite reading the words of a 160 IQ man. His points about the double-edged nature of technology, about radical leftism, and about the state of man are extremely relevant. And dare I say some of his predictions are coming true such as the extreme atomization of society.

Overall, while I despise his horrible crimes, I'm simply reviewing the content of the book without taking into account the actions of the author. The book, on its own merit, is one of the greatest works I have ever read.

Tom

80 reviews1 follower

January 22, 2023

Aside from the fact that, by his own definition, the bombings and this manifesto were 'surrogate activities', this was an erudite essay of extreme interest, particularly in today's increasingly polarized society.

Jacob Larking

1 review

January 23, 2023

best predictive social commentary i've read. very applicable to modern life

Andrew

3 reviews

May 1, 2023

Eeeee

Heisenberg

24 reviews

January 29, 2023

I could've realistically finished this in like a week but I got brain washed by tiktok for a month or two there and my attention span was fried. Although there's a few contradictions, I am in complete agreement with Ted here. Not to mention how great of a writer he is. His point is so straight forward and well displayed that I'm left with no confusion whatsoever and you would never expect this man to be a terrorist if you didn't know who wrote it. There's no violence, and it's not a rant. It's a coherent essay. The industrial revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. 10/10.

Zach Lues

16 reviews

January 30, 2023

Although he chose violence as his path forward - which I couldn't never agree with - everything this man stood for, everything he has said in this manifesto 28 years ago holds merit with such shockingly apparent truth in our modern day industrial society, it almost seems impossible it was written so many years ago.

A must read for anyone who is seeking a very interesting perspective to the horrors and truths of the attitude and behaviours of modern man and the current trajectory in which all of humanity is heading towards at an alarming rate and the reasoning as to why it all came to be in the first place.

Cheers Ted. I hope you've come around to having a little bit more love in your heart in your long reflections.

Alexander

2 reviews

February 9, 2023

Interesting viewpoints, some of them extreme but some are spot on. Recommend owned

VladV27

14 reviews

February 18, 2023

Accurate review of society 2023

Allan

10 reviews

February 23, 2023

slightly dangerous certified hood classic

Hunter Lin

3 reviews

February 25, 2023

A very fun combo of psychological analysis and political theory. Its structured a lot better than I initially thought and his points/subtopics branch off of each other very tactfully. It's obviously a manifesto however he is self aware to the fact that his claims may not be entirely accurate as his attacks on certain groups are generalized. Aside from that, it's a very productive read and gives some good things to keep mind of that are prevalent in modern society.

Cheese Enjoyer

5 reviews

March 30, 2023

found out about this over the internet and read it on my laptop, however it did inspire me to go to the forest more

Laura Slusar

1 review

March 15, 2023

Incredible truths in here, damn.

Denis Lisunov

Author

1 book

March 16, 2023

This book shows you how much of a genius the author is. Industrial Society and Its Future, written many years ago, is now the Industrial Society and Our Present.

Cole Stanford

2 reviews

March 21, 2023

The genre of this book is informational. This book talked about how the industrial revolution has had a negative impact on the world, the human psyche, and the human experience. Ted also argues that because of these reasons the technological industrial system should be thrown out, and we should return to primitive/pre-industrial life, and explains why we should, all the benefits. Finally, he goes over how to carry out this revolution, what steps to take, and his way of revolution is the only way. I thought this book was very mindblowing, to say the least. He actually makes a good point with his critique of industrial society, however, I disagree with his solution of throwing it out. Instead of having a revolution to get rid of it, we have a revolution to get rid of the bad effects (Although keep in mind, I am not for a revolution Mr. FBI man, I am merely stating what I would favor). Also, there is this one quote in the manifesto that said in order to get their message out, they've had to kill people, and there's no way someone would read a sober essay, they had to get infamous to get attention. Although I disagree with killing people to get attention, Ted makes a good point, no one would pay attention to a sober essay.

Ofelia Gustafsson

88 reviews

April 1, 2023

Like so many other things recently this book sieged my worldly perspective and gave it a good shaking. As much as I love to challenge my world views this book was mentally hard to read. It made me really despair for the world we're living in and realize just how little freedom we have.

I've been against our current situation for a very long time; that is the structure of our society (the system) as well as how dependent we are on technology and how

far of course we're living compared to how it was before the industrial revolution. My thoughts on this subject may be a bit controversial but I believe that humans have become very disillusioned and believe ourselves to be superior compared to the other beings in the animal kingdom. Humans are essentially nothing more than animals, suppressed animals. We've gotten the notion that since we have "greater" intelligence and are more conscious than other animals we're no longer animals. But in my opinion that is just plain humbug. Just see what we're doing to ourselves and to our planet, pushing us further towards our own desolation. How intelligent can that be?

Plain and simple we are animals. Suppressed animals that are not allowed to be sexual or aggressive. As Kaczynski says we're oversocialized which has resulted in the fact that a lot of people can't even think controversial thoughts without getting a guilty consciousness. That's just plain stupid. Who is it that decides what one can or cannot think? The system. The system wants us to behave like one big "community" who "care" and "love" one another. However, that is simply impossible. Humans, like all animals, are essentially selfish. What we are supposed to care for is our own survival and the survival of our own, our family. Not the whole world's population. I think that is one of the reasons why we've gotten ourselves into this mess. Caring for everyone means that everyone believes that everyone should get decent conditions in order to live a good life. And that is how the world looks like now, the majority of the population have a decent existence. And people who were supposed to be sifted out since their genes are not ideal, are still living thanks to contemporary medicine. In other words: making people with bad genes able to live on, reproduce and pass on their bad genes. They become a burden on society. But that is not something we're supposed to question. Since we believe that every human is worthy of living. I don't agree. If I get sick then it's nature's way of saying that I'm not qualified to live in this world. Because of this (amongst other reasons) earth is highly overpopulated. Overpopulated with people who carry bad genes.

Additionally, bringing this review to another point, I find it so sad that we live so far from how we're supposed to live. Kaczynski talks about the Power Process, which initially is how humans have an innate characteristic that makes us want to strive towards our goals; further that this gives us a sense of control and power, contentedness. Back in time, when we lived according to nature's way, humans hunted and scavenged for food, as well as taking care of our family and finding a place where one could live. By doing these things, achieving goals that were hard yet attainable, we felt a sense of achievement; which therefore satiated our Power Process. Now-a-days getting food and finding shelter is something easily attainable (thanks to technology and the system). Therefore we hardly experience any satisfaction by achieving them; which leads us to striving, or conjuring up, other goals. Goals that are in fact just pointless. Its only "real" value is that it provides us with satisfaction when fulfilled. Something we need in order to feel satisfied with our existence. These activities or goals, Subjugate Activities (as Kaczynski calls them), are for example academic achievements, reading as many books as possible, science and scientific research, sports, career and so on.

However, these activities have no correlation with the way we should live our lives. Sure, we get satisfied for a while when we finish a book but there'll only be more books to check off of that list. Furthermore, since it's not crucial for our existence we won't feel completely satisfied even when we reach one of the goals of our subjugate activity. We're just fooling ourselves. This leads us to feeling like we always have to do something. We can't just sit down and relax since we never feel complete achievement. We have the urge to continually work towards new goals. Resulting in depression, stress and anxiety. With technology we've literally destroyed more than we've achieved.
favourites

Louis Alphons

7 reviews

April 2, 2023

Besides all the memes, all of Kaczynski's points are valid. Maybe his solution of returning back to Primitivism is not the right one, but all of his points regarding Industrial Society are 100% correct.

Serena Mello

16 reviews

April 5, 2023

Time to destroy everything now I guess...

Joseph Miller

5 reviews1 follower

April 23, 2023

Critics will point to mortality rates, quality of life, increased lifespan, and better medicine.

But is the only point of living to avoid death?

Ignoring the fact the author was a domestic terrorist and the manifesto was only released as an attempt to stop further attacks, it made good points.

Specifically the topics of FREEDOM and LEFTISM.

FREEDOM. Makes you think about why we work, the reasons now vs then. Surrogate activists and the overall roll they take so we can be slaves to the system (9-5) rather than working for ourselves and families.

LEFTISM: "The same will happen with leftists and technology: they will use it to surpass everyone else if they ever get it under their own control" Written in 1995 I can't see any scenario where that one HASN'T came true today (2016 main stream

media, 2020 election meddling through Facebook and Twitter: specifically the suppression of hunters laptop, Clinton's email/involvement with Russia, among other simply intentionally misleading headlines. Now in 2020-2023 companies have become COVID experts decided for us smooth brained commoners what is true and untrue.

As stated in the book the leftist (not liberal) gets off on the idea of "progress" and "helping other" only to satisfy their surrogate activity and to never be satisfied. Example: the slope from normalizing homosexuality to gay marriage to various genders to transgenderism to demolishing biological sex to eventually, as we are seeing now grooming kids through that ideology.

Martha Horvath

6 reviews

April 17, 2023

4.5 I feel like accepting your faith stoically could be applied to the modern industrial human aswell but besides that nothing to complain ab. I feel like it's a book that I'll personally have to read once or twice more to fully understand it and before I do that read other things like Ellul and Conrad. :^)

David Assouline

4 reviews

April 22, 2023

Just wow

Bakunin

223 reviews219 followers

April 23, 2023

"The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race."

Talk about an epic way to start a text. There is so much to this manifesto that it is hard to easily sum up. As a joke I let Chatgpt summarize the manifesto:

1. The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have led to the degradation of the environment, the erosion of human freedom, and the collapse of traditional societies.

2. The rise of technology and the scientific method have contributed to the decline of human dignity, individuality, and creativity, and have resulted in a culture of conformity and passivity.

3. The institutions of modern society, including government, education, and the media, are complicit in perpetuating the system of control and domination that has led to the current state of affairs.

4. The only way to achieve true freedom and individual autonomy is through a radical transformation of society, which would involve a rejection of technology, mass society, and the values of modernity.

5. The Unabomber sees himself as a revolutionary who is waging a war against modern industrial society, using violent means to draw attention to his cause and to force people to confront the problems that he sees as inherent to the system.

Technology cannot be controlled as it is a self-sustaining system where big companies have an incentive to keep evolving the technology without really having any final goal in sight.

He also doesn't believe that we can stop this development through reform and believes that technology is far more important than ideology. Reform of the system is impossible because society is an organic whole and therefore one small change will have repercussions which cannot be foreseen. Social changes mainly serve the people who initiated those changes and they will not become permanent unless they are part of some larger societal development (eg. the evolution of technology).

One of the most interesting aspects of this text is Kaczynski's views on human nature and what we humans need in order to live meaningful lives. We are driven by a will to power and achieve status. In order to do this we set up goals and try to achieve them. In more primitive societies it was possible to actually achieve some control over your own life but in the modern world we are dependent on machines. In the future the most important work will be done by thinking machines and therefore humans will become passive. We are learning how to be helpless which in turn causes depression and various other psychological problems. The system tries to cover these problems up by prescribing drugs so that people won't become too angry and rebel.

His characteristic of the leftist movement was quite on point. One would think that Kaczynski would join forces with them but he believes that leftists aren't really rebels. One of his theories is that modern man is oversocialized and that he therefore has completely internalised the morality of society. He therefore constantly feels ashamed when he tries to behave in a way which goes against societal norms. The leftist is someone who is so oversocialized that they are driven by an inferiority complex and therefore everything that can be seen as successful has to be destroyed (like Western civilization). Because of this feeling of inferiority they can never be content as an individual and instead find strength in being part of a collective movement. It should be noted that Kaczynski's concedes that these are gross generalisations.

I found the manifesto funny at times as it is clear that it is written by an angry person but one with a lucid mind. Kaczynski places too much emphasis on a certain autonomy, one which I don't think is possible unless one lives alone. It can also be shown in the work of recent anthropology that primitive cultures also had different forms of hierarchies/political structures. Who would want to live in those societies? Although the determinism contained in the unabomber worldview is seductive, I believe that individuals actually can effect society's development (although the degree can be discussed).

I too wonder what will happen once AI starts to take over more and more jobs. What will people do? The only solace I can find is that consciousness is something different from intelligence and in the end it is our conscious experience which is what really matters. I believe that because of this there will always be a demand for humans to create meaningful work for each other. But who knows?

history-of-ideas identity non-fiction

Durian Jaykin

75 reviews

April 24, 2023

He has a point.

lilkrucivert

2 reviews1 follower

April 26, 2023

i find it really weird that this essay was written in 1995 and literally tells so much relatable things about technology. this essay predicted future. even tho ted was a terrorist, he was a very smart guy. i am very happy that for some reason i decided to read this publication. my mindset has changed in a positive way. it has improved my life. i started using only essential tech that i need in day to day cases. this book literally helped me with my mental health. we as a whole; our society, should really reconsider how we use technology and where it is going. The AI development just proves the point of this book, where literally people that make money of AI want to stop it's further development for some time because they are scared of the outcome it may bring us.

Jed

16 reviews

April 26, 2023

i can finally stop pretending to have read this xD

Marwan Amrhar

16 reviews

April 29, 2023

A very controversial, yet interesting perspective on the industrial revolution and its consequences on our society. The predictions were on target. There is however an ethical problem, perhaps the moral bottomline he crossed.

Lova Rosengren

1 review

May 1, 2023

"Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy then gives them the drugs to take away their unhappiness. Instead of removing the conditions that make people depressed modern society gives them antidepressant drugs. In effect antidepressants are a means of modifying an individual's internal state in such a way as to enable him to tolerate social conditions that he would otherwise find intolerable."

Elle

9 reviews

August 2, 2023

Unbelievably based Ted K
favorites

Anomander Rake

178 reviews42 followers

May 8, 2023

I've read this a long time ago, but never added it to Goodreads since I don't really consider it a book. However, after reading it again today, I feel like it deserves to be added here, just so I could add some comments.

Living in a shack in the woods, making homemade bombs and mailing them without getting caught for such a long time... I cannot help but admire him. Sometimes, killing can be justified, after all, as the man himself has said it, how else would you attract attention?

I had similar thoughts long before first reading this, or any other similar works. A lot of the problems prevalent in the modern society would go away if people had to worry about survival. I'll stop here lest this turns into my own manifesto.

To me, the most fascinating thing is that manifestos like this one usually don't age well, yet this one is more relevant today than ever before. He's managed to identify leftists as a major problem while woke culture was still in its nascent stage; the recent years have only served to prove his point. The leftists have taken over and their movement seems to have reached the pinnacle, coinciding with the nadir of the civilization. Prophetic.

Kaczynski's observations in general are spot on, and while his conclusions and suggestions are questionable, it's pretty clear that the industrial revolution did have a

negative psychological impact on humanity. Obviously, he's not the first one to notice that, other great thinkers (e.g. Erich Fromm) had similar ideas, albeit with different reasoning, yet none of them have managed to attract as much attention from the public as Kaczynski. Probably a combination of his infamy and the readability of the manifesto - even an idiot could tackle this, unlike some more complex works dealing with similar topics. Some might point out the lack of arguments, but I will just go with what the author has pointed out on multiple occasions: trust your instincts. If we can all agree that the industrial revolution did damage us (and the evidence for that is overwhelming), does it really matter why and how, especially if we do have the option to try and do a reset?

Yago González
2 reviews
May 21, 2023
Ur so sexy Ted

Anastasia L
5 reviews
May 24, 2023
He was right. Unfortunately, the truth is very hard to take in.

Radu Marin
2 reviews1 follower
June 4, 2023
An interesting perspective that I never fully considered and don't necessarily agree with entirely but I feel like is worth considering and listening to. I think he could have published this without killing people though that was kind of a dick move.

Yog
34 reviews66 followers
June 7, 2023
Very eloquent. The only thing I would like to note is how most people mistake Kaczynski to be against industrialisation, when actually he was against environmental destruction and industrialization of society, and this is a critical distinction.

Jim Mylonas
8 reviews
June 10, 2023
oof

George Kettler
54 reviews1 follower
June 11, 2023
PUT PHONE DOWN

Randal
1 review9 followers
June 12, 2023
give 5 stars even though don't agree with everything that is said (as is the case with all books/everything) but that's not the point

Mauricio Garcia
166 reviews10 followers
June 15, 2023
Hard to disagree with most of Kaczynski's diagnosis of modern society and the path it will lead to... It's in fact amazing what already has come true in the few years (decades?) after he wrote this manifesto with social networks, AI development, and general late stage capitalism thralls.
Whether in the following hundred years from now there is a luddite revolution or not well... I don't think society could hardly value 'freedom' nearly as much as comfort (and lack of general despair / suffering). Specially when freedom is such an abstract concept that most people wouldn't even share the same definition as Kaczynski establishes.

Daniel
Author
20 books30 followers
June 20, 2023
Certainly feels challenging to give five stars to the manifesto of a madman. There's no doubt that this highly intelligent man was psychotic with the extreme choices he made in furthering his agenda. But then there is what he wrote. Not all of it is salient

- but a lot of it is - and quite a lot of that is downright prophetic as technology is more and more embedded in every aspect of the daily lives of billions of people. If I remember correctly, he just passed away - in prison, where he had been rightfully confined ever since the FBI caught him.

We cannot turn back the clock on technology, that time has long passed. Regulators are far too slow to stem the flow of AI-powered innovation that delivers more immersive tech seemingly every other day. These days, we have the Yuval Harari's of the world raising the finger of caution ... did his bombs make a difference? Do Harari's books make a difference? Read the manifesto - it is, all things considered, a thoughtful, unsettling and insightful read about humanity's development in a tech-driven world.

Robert King

16 reviews1 follower

June 24, 2023

Was this guy right about everything?

Alex Cleghorn

3 reviews

July 7, 2023

Just like many of you reading this, I originally only read the book as a joke in response to the spike in media attention around Kaczynski, largely through memes, with the iconic opening paragraph headlining on social media front pages during mid-to-late 2020. After reading it, I was shocked, views I had subconsciously held for most of my life started to make sense and began to look at society through a deeper lens.

The book itself gives a comprehensive outline of the ways in which the technological system controls us and how it functions. While it is neither the first nor only critique of technological society, it is certainly the most accessible, condensed (yet easy to read) and precise of the lot.

His critique of leftism has been heavily criticised (by leftists no doubt) as irrelevant, offensive, and out of place, yet Its position at the start of the text perfectly achieves the author's aim of deterring leftists for their property of leeching on and corrupting revolutionary movements. For a rough outline based off his limited available sources it is shockingly accurate, self evident in fact when looking at the response from leftists.

His unique concepts of the 'power process' and 'surrogate activities' are intriguing and lend the book a slightly more optimistic tone while he critiques modernity, by indicating the model of a free and autonomous society Kaczynski proves that he is just as capable of creating fresh ideas as he is at criticising outdated and flawed ones.

His elegant refutation of the claim "reformation of industrial society so that the 'bad' is separated from the 'good' is possible" shows definitively that while politicians and

supporters of the system claim technology can be reformed, they fail to solve even the simplest problems such as drug abuse, alcoholism, unemployment, school shootings, etc.

The strategy put forward by the author for a hypothetical revolutionary movement to end the global technological system is an optimistic outlook as well as, he denotes, a necessary one. A movement in his eyes must be optimistic. While he speaks a lot of the atrocities and horrors inflicted on man in the name of an infinite technological progression, you do not leave this book with sadness and fear, but hope, anger and optimism (perhaps some justified anger also)

Kaczynski makes the claim that revolution must occur sooner rather than later or else the consequences of the collapse of technological society will be more disastrous, no matter how necessary. And while the strategy aspect is relatively short in this book (unavoidable since the book itself is only roughly 200 paragraphs) he elaborates beyond his main talking points in a later book, *Anti Tech Revolution: Why and How*, which is highly recommended if you enjoy this book.

Grand Piano

6 reviews

June 29, 2023

I really agree with what he's saying!

laughing dog

2 reviews

June 30, 2023

RIP Ted

Ben

3 reviews

July 6, 2023

"Industrial Society and Its Future," or "ISAIF" for short, is a compelling read for anyone interested in examining the impact of social constructs and ongoing technological progress. The author does a remarkable job of shedding light on the insidious ways technology has become entrenched in our lives. Kaczynski's writing style is conversational and easy to follow, and his points are backed up with extensive research and evidence.

He argues that the technological system has an ability to subtly, and falsely, convince people that they are totally defenseless and that resistance to its power is hopeless.

This internalized belief is what allows the system to continue unchecked. The author also explores technological society's impact on our relationship with natural resources and the environment. He points out the ways in which this lifestyle has led to devastating environmental consequences, including the depletion of natural resources, global climate change, and pollution.

Kaczynski successfully demonstrates how industrialization has led to the loss of traditional values and weakened respect (or sometimes even a complete lack of regard) for the environment. He also shows how elites have used technology to their advantage. He offers various warnings on the many dangers of a technologically-advanced future where technology and industry become increasingly powerful and impossible to control.

Kaczynski also critiques the social and economic processes of industrialization, showing how it creates alienation, depression, and other mental health issues. By doing this, he encourages readers to take a critical look at the political and social structures that have enabled industrialization so they can better understand its consequences and, hopefully, work to fundamentally end the system.

One of the most thought-provoking aspects of this manifesto is its exploration of the revolutionary potential of the industrial-technological system. Kaczynski advances the idea that the system can be turned into an effective tool for facilitating revolution against it, rather than perpetuating the repressive status quo.

Kaczynski believes that revolution, while chaotic and damaging in the immediate and near-term, is a more effective way of restoring balance to a society that represses human freedom, and a biosphere that is suffering, in the long-term. He asserts that a reform is too limited, complacent, and incremental to make any lasting differences, especially when reforms can be undone with a simple pen stroke. These conclusions are explored further in his book, *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How*. Although his calls for a more ecologically-focused society have been rejected by many, it is impossible to argue that he is wrong on these facts.

Ari Paul

1 review

July 6, 2023

Industrial Society and Its Future, also known as the Unabomber's Manifesto, is without question the most important political and philosophical tract to have been written in centuries, and it should be required reading for all students of the humanities. More broadly, it is a must-read for anyone who wants to think seriously and critically about the nature and development of our society. These are bold claims, and given the abundance of misinformation and misrepresentation of the manifesto in the public sphere it's understandable if the reader is highly suspicious of them—or even finds them laughably ridiculous. I will offer this to the suspicious reader: I was just like

you. Several years ago, I was discussing the addictive and debasing aspects of social media technology with a friend of mine. We both acknowledged that we did not use Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram because, besides being a waste of time, they were fundamentally perverting human relationships and represented a highly undignified way to live. Then she said something that shocked me: “Everything is progressing exactly as the Unabomber predicted. Have you read the manifesto?” My first reaction was to laugh. After all this friend was known for her sardonic and dark sense of humor. But then she told me she was serious, and that I should read it in all earnestness. At this point there was a long pause. I began thinking that my friend was nuts. The Unabomber?! The guy was an insane psycho who was also a serial killer, I haven’t read it because no serious person has discussed it previously because—it was assumed—there was absolutely no place for it in any serious and sober discussion. Anyway, I forgot the whole episode, but came away thinking that my friend was a lot dumber than I thought she was—that, sadly, she probably fell for one of innumerable kooky conspiracy theories that mislead the weary in our turbulent and restless age.

It was only years later, after I heard some reference to Ted Kaczynski, that I came across the manifesto again. I decided, what the heck, I’ll read this crazy guy’s manifesto out of pure curiosity, and to refute anyone in the future who might cite it to me again. I read it all in 2 hours. It was the most intense, insightful, and revelatory 2 hours I’ve ever had reading anything. After re-reading it a second time I came away with the realization that everything pumped out by the mainstream media in representing Kaczynski and his ideas is deeply, insidiously inaccurate and flawed. In reality, the manifesto is an extremely cogent, concise, lucid extrapolation of the nature of our modern technological civilization, the material factors that are driving it, the dynamics of its growth, how it is impacting human freedom and happiness, and, most disturbingly, how it is impossible to reform.

I’d like to first deal with some of the common misrepresentations of the manifesto, and then I’d like to briefly discuss what I think is the most important aspect of the manifesto that has not been given adequate treatment by even the rare few who have read it seriously and discussed it openly.

First, the “criticisms” of the manifesto that exist are all extremely feeble. One such criticism is that it is “unoriginal.” This is false. The manifesto articulates several fresh perspectives on how societies evolve and the nature of human freedom. But aside from all of the individual insights, what matters is how they are systematically marshalled to argue overarching points. In this respect the manifesto is unquestionably original. No other social sciences tract so precisely strings its logical points together to yield a rationally valid whole that is both comprehensive and exhaustive. But aside from this, this criticism of the manifesto is utterly irrelevant. Even though it is undoubtedly original, that was never the point of the manifesto to begin with, its point was to place several highly complex arguments on the nature and development of industrial society in simple, concise, easy to read terms that is easily accessible to the average reader. In this respect, the manifesto is a great success. It covers a huge range of philosophical

ground, yet it is always grounded, always plainly spoken, and always direct. In this respect it's a great breath of fresh air. One will get more out of reading this relatively brief manifesto than reading the collected works of all the current "philosophers of technology." If there are any aspects of the manifesto that the reader thinks are not fleshed out enough, or should be expanded on in more detail, well, recognize that you are reading a manifesto. The whole point is to relay the major ideas in as concise a form as possible. If you want more elaboration on the arguments from the author, then he provides it in his two published books, *Technological Slavery* and *Anti-Tech Revolution*. In short, the criticisms of the manifesto are the result of a completely bankrupt academic establishment that is far too timid or too foolish to actually engage with it and thus desperately need some excuse so as not to, and an obviously hostile social establishment, where all the powerful interests in society, from government to the media, have a vested interest in maintaining technological civilization and a belief in the myth of technological progress.

I'll finish here with what I consider to be the most important and often overlooked part of the manifesto: the subsection titled "Some Principles of History." The reader would do well to reread this section carefully, and then, if interested, read Chapters 1 and 2 of the author's second book, *Anti-Tech Revolution*. In this section, the author identifies 5 principles of history that relate to how societies form and change. The principles are self-evidently true, but the author backs them up with evidence anyway. The point is that the main conclusion derived from the principles is that the rational prediction and control of society is fundamentally impossible. Societies evolve as systems in environments much the same as biological entities evolve over time through natural selection. It is this essential facet, this shocking yet irrefutable insight, that makes plainly clear the impossibility of directing the course of technological progress. More and more thoughtful and intelligent people are reading this manifesto these days. These ideas will not go away, the issues they address are not going away. Modern technology continues to progress at a massive cost to natural ecosystems and human freedom. Time will tell if this manifesto ultimately has as great (or greater) an impact on society than the communist manifesto had during the 19th and 20th centuries. But from my vantage point, it looks like that is a distinct possibility.

Nathaniel Wilkins

3 reviews

July 8, 2023

Industrial Society and Its Future is an analysis and critique of modernity and the industrial system that supports it that any person characterized by mistrust and distaste for the current system of things ought to read. One especially pressing topic which Kaczynski touches on in this work, and which I will take the time to briefly

outline here, is the theory of the “power process.”

The power process is the process of attaining survival needs that require a significant amount of effort in order to attain, as well as a reasonable rate of success in attaining these goals. The inability to properly experience the power process, Kaczynski argues, leads to unfulfillment in one’s life, and leads to the individual involving themselves in surrogate activities which, as the theory goes, fails to provide the same level of fulfillment as the attainment of evolutionary needs (i.e. goals that directly and immediately relate to life-and-death circumstances). As Kaczynski puts it:

“When people do not have to exert themselves to satisfy their physical needs they often set up artificial goals for themselves. In many cases they then pursue these goals with the same energy and emotional involvement that they otherwise would have to put into the search for physical necessities... For many if not most people, surrogate activities are less satisfying than the pursuit of real goals (that is, goals that people would want to attain even if their need for the power process were already fulfilled).” (“Industrial Society and Its Future,” Paragraphs 38-41)

Another aspect of the power process, which exists in varying degrees according to each individual, is the need for autonomy. Kaczynski states that modern society - a system which is dominated by giant organizations and systems - leaves little if any room for autonomy for individuals to pursue their own initiative, and therefore disrupts the power process.

Kaczynski rightly points out that, because of the low level of mental and physical exertion that is necessary to live in modern, technological society, the primary quality that one must have in order to exist in modern society is obedience. If one simply follows the rules of society and allows themselves to be controlled, they will have nearly all of their material needs taken care of for them. But this all comes at a cost to the mental (and often physical) well-being of the individual, who spends most of their life engaged in unfulfilling surrogate activities with little autonomy. This way of life prohibits the individual from going through the power process, which leads to great psychological suffering in most individuals.

In conclusion, Kaczynski makes the claim that the primary cause of psychological suffering in modern society is the lack of opportunities to meaningfully engage in the power process, which is a natural process in humans. This lack of fulfillment of the power process stems from society being organized in such a way so as to limit the individual’s ability to go through the power process.

M

93 reviews12 followers

July 14, 2023

I can’t name a single thing he was incorrect about. RIP

Wojtek Brożyna
3 reviews
July 16, 2023
changed my life forever ☒

Ford Cadman
3 reviews
July 28, 2023

“Industrial Society And Its Future”, (ISAIF), is an important facet of modern sociological study. The author, Dr. Theodore J. Kaczynski sets forth in this essay; decades of sociological comprehension in an attempt to paint a picture of the modern world. The depictions and conclusions maintained by his well organized and structural paragraphing show an eerie pre-cognizance of the modern quarrel of such degree that is seldom found in authors today. Kaczynski proves to have been well aware of the social happenings to come, not based on suspicion or approximation; rather, the foundation of his theses conclude on the grounds of sociological trend and observable degradations that have been well evident since the birth of Industrialization. Within the first few sections, one can observe that the justifications of Kaczynski’s conclusions are founded in unbiased apprehension of the human situation, stripping away much of the surface clutter that tends to fall into the words of other authors. With his analytical method of deconstructing sociological function, Kaczynski places well founded conclusions and brings forth means of contemplation toward the symptomatic outcry society will soon bear in the face of industrialization.

Within the opening line, “The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race,” the reader can promptly accommodate with themselves the trajectory in which this essay will lead them. Kaczynski does not exclude in his writings; the ability of the reader to assert themselves situationally into his findings, and he shows that the Technical Issue encompasses completely any of us exposed to its grasp. The identification of industrial consequence may be the root of ISAIF, but it is the underlying aspect of individual reprise that Kaczynski is often acclaimed for. The reader can gain from this essay an observation of their own integration within the society Kaczynski is analyzing, as well as a systematic approach to addressing this situation.

The struggle of cohabiting a world so thoroughly periled by an unsatisfactory compensation of the human will at the hands of technology, is often met with loose and awkward reasoning, or the hopes of technocratic encore as a means of ill-effective reform. Kaczynski completely disintegrates this idea and analyzes its faults, all the while providing a groundwork foundation for our society to reach a resultful and uncompromisingly positive end. Many authors of this field will provide only a fantastical, pseudo-apocalyptic depiction of society’s ultimate devolution into automated idiosyn-

cratic turmoil. Kaczynski acknowledges these threats but discerns that the ultimate threat at this moment; is the retraction of natural freedom that humanity is forced to endure at the hands of technical advance, and allows the reader to foresee viable routes of action in which society can find reprieve. Kaczynski does not bluff with regurgitated applications often proposed by many of those who are aware of the threats we are currently and will soon endure, rather, he condemns unsatisfactory application of “band-aid” fixes, and provides for humanity a true solution in his conclusions. All together, “Industrial Society And Its Future”, is not simply a generalization of future issues yet to come, in fact it is grounded in the present. We are already seeing the symptoms of industrial consequence, and Kaczynski’s awareness of this fact, as well as his sociological reasonings, provide a call to action; and the means to go about such a feat. These means are not a set-in-stone application for success, rather they provide groundwork needed to begin a further expansion upon Kaczynski’s ideas. Kaczynski shows us that we are capable, and provides for us the information crucial to understanding this peculiar situation we find ourselves in. It is hard not to see the issues highlighted within ISAIF as an ever expanding evidence of the real future to come, and Kaczynski allows the reader to pursue this information in sake of a proper betterment of the human situation.

Emphour

3 reviews1 follower

August 12, 2023

“Industrial Society and Its Future” (ISAIF) is not only a call to action, it is a call for revolution. Its purpose is not to be original or even a very elaborate and creative work of entertainment, though Kaczynski is undoubtedly original in his own right. Explaining the technology problem to the general population in the easiest possible manner, ISAIF is more than a mere critique. Because it is dealing with the single most important problem the world faces right now, the author also explains what has to be done to solve it.

His main points are simple: Technological progress will lead to an assured disaster in terms of human dignity. Only the collapse of modern technological civilization can avert this. The political left is the first line of defense against revolution. A new revolutionary movement has to be formed.

Humans evolved under primitive conditions to which they are psychologically and physically adapted. Modern society is radically different from these conditions. The gap between these two will only continue to widen in the future. Measures that are already being taken to make man fit into modern society will “improve” and become more thorough. These will include even more elaborate methods of physical and psychological manipulation and likely even genetic engineering of human beings in the future.

The author argues that the inability to go through the “power process” is a major cause of social problems. The power process consists of four parts: Goal, effort, attainment of goal and autonomy. In an ideal situation the physical necessities of life are the goal of the power process. In modern society these can be fulfilled without serious effort. This is where “surrogate activities” come into play. Because man has the need to work toward goals, and modern technological society is in control of all the practical areas related to physical necessities, modern man has to artificially create goals for himself in order to experience this power process. These artificial goals are never truly satisfactory. The weightlifter is never strong enough, the gamer is never done playing and the reader has never consumed enough books. When the author speaks of freedom, he means the ability to go through the power process with real goals—goals directly related to an individual’s life-and-death circumstances—and not surrogate activities. Freedom means being in control over the life-and-death issues of one’s existence. The author argues that the “freedom” in modern societies is mere *permissiveness*. A free man in modern society is a cog in a social machine free to make the unimportant decisions about his life. He can choose his favorite pastimes, which advertising induced craving to satisfy and, when lucky, which job to work. The important life-and-death issues are not under his control. This situation is not the result of arbitrary choice by elites, but instead are necessary for the industrial system to function. The system works even better when rules and regulations that are not necessary are abandoned. The result is that modern man becomes anxious, depressed, hopeless, apathetic, or worse.

Technological advances initially appear not to impair freedom, but turn out to do so later. Every single technical advance by itself appears to be advantageous, but all combined create a world where man is no longer in control of his own life. The author presents a nice analogy about how many good things add up to something bad: Mr. A and Mr. B play chess against each other. A chess pro points out the best moves for Mr. A, carrying him to victory. Each hint by itself is doing Mr. A a favor, but by telling him how to make every move he spoils the game.

The chapters about leftism are far too often dismissed as a mere conservative tirade against a political enemy. The author does point out that low self-esteem, depressive tendencies and defeatism are widespread in our society and that leftism today is an instructive manifestation of this phenomenon, though not restricted to the left. The situation has gotten much worse since ISAIF was originally written in 1995. Furthermore, since Kaczynski views revolution against the industrial system to be a serious priority and sees leftism as counterproductive to such a revolution, he felt it important to warn would-be revolutionaries of its danger (although he also clearly rejects rightism in the manifesto, he likely saw leftism as currently the greater danger to the formation of a viable revolution). This section of the text should not be skipped, even if readers are initially inclined to reject it.

The author already has some important points about revolutionary strategy in this manifesto that get expanded upon later in his book, *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and*

How. Among these is the insistence that revolutionaries must concentrate on the single, clear, and concrete goal of bringing down the industrial system. They must have no other aims.

ISAIF is more relevant today than it was when initially published. So far, no other work has explained the technology problem in such an easy to understand manner while also pointing readers to the only way to solve it.

Michael

1 review2 followers

July 21, 2023

best read with an open mind

Ruth

11 reviews

July 23, 2023

I believe everyone can take something from this book. If nothing else it helps the reader see how accurate the author was in his predictions when he wrote this manifesto. Very thought provoking. There were several lines in the book which stumped me. This one in particular:

"For them (he's talking about the leftists of the over-socialised type) the drive for power has only one morally acceptable outlet, and that is in the struggle to impose their morality on everyone"

Highly recommend this book.

Josh

16 reviews

August 23, 2023

When I grow up I want to be an ecological terrorist

Jay Dee

22 reviews

July 29, 2023

I approached this book expecting something crazy, but left with new understandings. Theodore Kaczynski is a very intelligent man whether you agree with his ideas or not. Looking at his full work where he has the official publication of this manifesto in, "Technological Slavery" it reinforces that statement even more IMO.

John

3 reviews1 follower

August 5, 2023

Through a meticulous analysis of the consequences of technological progress in "Industrial Society and its Future," Ted Kaczynski delivers a powerful and thought-provoking critique of industrial society showcasing how our world's blind pursuit towards the advancement of technology has put humanity on a precarious road towards disaster. As an advocate for a path towards true freedom for all of humanity, I wholeheartedly agree with many of Kaczynski's main points and applaud his courage for shedding a much-needed light on the neglected, darker side of progress.

Kaczynski masterfully exposes the ways the technological system prioritizes its own efficiency, consumption, and control over the well-being of mankind and the natural world. A major portion of his argument hinges on how man's natural desire to autonomously attain survival goals (physical necessities such as food, water, and shelter) through effort, which he dubs as the "power process," has been disrupted by the technological system. Furthermore, he goes on to mention how man's real goals have been subsequently replaced with artificial goals, which he terms as "surrogate activities." Consequently, this has led to detrimental psychological effects on humans, including severe depression and abnormal levels of anxiety, frustration, hostility, as well as other mental disorders. The manifesto astutely points out the erosion of fulfillment in modern life as technology continues to permeate through every aspect of our lives.

By challenging the notion that progress is inherently good for humanity, Kaczynski provides a much-needed counterbalance to the prevailing narrative that celebrates technological advancements without considering their unintended consequences. One such example of these technological advancements he gives is the modern road system. At first, during the time of its conception, the road was a boon to those who could afford vehicles and greatly improved a person's locomotion without any drawbacks for both pedestrians and drivers. However, as time passed and more roads had been built, there had been a need for increased regulations, which resulted in the creation of traffic signals, including stop signs and traffic lights. Additionally, people living in cities nowadays usually have to deal with other nuisances such as getting stuck in traffic and road rage. As a result, the invention's initial boon had turned into a bane, and had even introduced additional problems on top of that. Kaczynski courageously questions people's blind faith in technology and exposes the hidden costs that come at the expense of our collective humanity.

The proposed solution of dismantling the current industrial system is radical, yet it resonates with a growing number of individuals who recognize the urgent need for change, especially among the younger generations. The call to embrace a simpler, more sustainable way of life, untethered from the trappings of technology is an invitation to reconnect with nature and rediscover our intrinsic human values.

While Kaczynski's views may be perceived as extreme by some, his unwavering commitment to challenging the status quo is commendable. His vision of a pre-industrial society liberated from the chains of technology encourages us to question our current trajectory and consider prioritizing humanity and nature over mindless progress.

In conclusion, "Industrial Society and Its Future" is a powerful and radical manifesto that boldly confronts the taboo subject of anti-tech philosophy. It challenges the prevailing notion that technological advancement can ever be reconciled with human autonomy and freedom. It compels us to reevaluate our relationship with technology and to envision a future that prioritizes human values, freedom, and our harmony with nature. This book offers a lucid insight for critical thinkers who dare to question and challenge the current paradigm, offering a glimmer of hope for a truly free world.

caleb janssen

11 reviews

August 5, 2023

rip to my once-pen pal. if i'd read this in grad school, i wouldn't have dropped out. plays incredibly well with other eco critical texts and the idea of appreciating every small thing. reading this and ross gay back to back in the uinta wilderness was a life-changing experience

Mirco17

2 reviews

August 7, 2023

I highly recommend the books written by Kaczynski. His literary works are thought-provoking, and his writing style is captivating. Whether delving into fiction or non-fiction, Kaczynski's books offer a unique perspective on various subjects.

One of his most renowned works is "Industrial Society and Its Future" where he explores the negative effects of industrialization and technological advancements on society. Kaczynski's well-researched arguments make readers question the price we pay for progress and the impact it has on our individual freedom.

In conclusion, Kaczynski's books are essential reads for those seeking unconventional perspectives on societal issues and exploring the impact of technology on our lives. His thought-provoking arguments challenge readers to critically examine our collective path and reevaluate the consequences of our actions. Whether you agree with him or not, Kaczynski's books promise to ignite intellectual curiosity and stimulate meaningful discussions.

Raymond Nellis

8 reviews

August 15, 2023

A fascinating insight. Like many people I wasn't expecting something coherent but I was shocked to find deep insights and important questions asked. Before now I had never given too much thought to why we continued to push along into modernity, I appreciated nature but only for beauty, not for nurturing a way of life. I would call this book profound in the way it calls into question all the preconceptions we have about our ever continuing goal of advancing our lives through technology.

sociology

haroldp

1 review

August 15, 2023

based and tedpilled

Vicky

30 reviews1 follower

August 28, 2023

Eat cake or have cake? The choice is yours.

Niklas Kurucz

2 reviews

August 29, 2023

In my humble opinion, an amazing book, fantastically written, in a professional manner, yuo can follow his logic step by step, and try to formulate your own opinion.

Bryan Reo

5 reviews10 followers

September 8, 2023

Ted was a genius and the world should have listened to his warnings about the direction our civilization was heading. I don't condone his bombing campaign but I do understand the frustration he labored under and the sense of desperation he must have suffered as he tried to raise the alarm and stop the inevitable incoming tide.

Archit Sharma

14 reviews

September 13, 2023

So well written that you may find yourself agreeing with many radical ideas.

Werther

16 reviews

September 18, 2023

I may not leave believing that the Industrial Revolution and its consequences have indeed been a disaster for the human race, but Kaczynski shows us why this might become the case. His analyses of the modern leftist, reform & revolution, modern society and the power process are well thought out, well argued and often times sensible, logical and, dare I say, even correct. In the days of ecological disasters, slow deindustrialization and aging populations, this essay is a must read.

I will say that he is, of course, often wrong and especially his conclusions are not those of a rational, intelligent man, but a tortured (literally) and broken mind. His view on how a revolution against technological society could be achieved is definitely interesting, but fails to justify murder.

I have ordered Technological Slavery, but, as many others have done, would like to point out to any government agencies that I do not agree with his actions, or motives nor have I ever or will I ever plan to or do injure or kill people.

must-reads

Tristen Nichols

5 reviews

September 22, 2023

Wow! Ted is literally me!

Marco Strijker

3 reviews

September 26, 2023

While not necessarily fully accurate, it's a fascinating and thought-provoking read (in a way that is somewhat confronting as well). Whereas quite some parts of the problem analysis were very astute, some parts lacked major reasoning and the author's proposed solutions were unrealistic or unclear.

Displaying 1 - 280 of 280 reviews

4 stars - 305 reviews

June

280 reviews1 follower

September 27, 2007

Now I'm going to be on some sort of FBI list...

Cooper Cooper

Author

398 books38 followers

July 28, 2009

I expected this book to be a paranoid rant by a mad dog, but was pleasantly surprised—it is straightforwardly written, under control except for an occasional brief outburst, and carefully (though in some cases wrongly) reasoned. By the end of the manifesto I was convinced that Kaczynski is a fanatic but not crazy (unless you consider all fanatics crazy—a diagnosis worth considering).

Ted K's argument goes something like this:

*Man is dehumanized and disempowered by the complexity of civilization Though originally evolved to satisfy man's needs, as it becomes larger and more complex "the system" subordinates man, makes him dependent, and effectively reduces him to a slave (he may be better off materially, but to gain these benefits he must serve the system, the artificial demands of which make him unhappy)

*Runaway technology drives the system—the system will not (and indeed, without a radical transformation cannot) stop it. While ostensibly satisfying human needs, technology actually ratchets up man's dependence on an increasingly dehumanizing system

*Technology-corrupted to the core, the system cannot be reformed

*The only chance for real change is revolution—a complete overthrow of the system

*Revolution will be possible only when the system becomes vulnerable by collapsing into crisis

*When the system collapses into crisis (as it inevitably will), revolutionaries must be prepared to make their move—to do whatever it takes to create a back-to-Nature society of small, anti-technology communities in which man can re-empower himself through honest labor and simple, survival-oriented problem-solving.

This whole argument is based on a few simple psychological premises: that man can be truly happy only when he is empowered (i.e., dependent on his own labor and problem-solving ability rather than on the overlarge and depersonalizing "system"), and that this empowerment can take place only when life is lived on a small scale

(small communities) and when every man, dancing with Nature, faces the challenges of daily life through his own down-to-earth labor and ingenuity. The material advantages currently spawned by the technology-driven system primarily feed not real needs or pleasures but rather artificial needs and pseudo-pleasures, shamelessly hawked by advertisers—false needs and spurious pleasures that become insatiable monsters serving not man but a system which to survive must at all costs keep expanding (“Keep the gullible consumers consuming—whether or not they need the goods and services.”).

Ted K’s arguments obviously owe a lot to the voluntary simplicity movement and its notions of “small is beautiful” and “limits-to-growth” and “save Mother Gaia.” These ideas have some merit. The observation about artificially-created “needs” and “pleasures” (that do not really satisfy—think of the Xmas feeding frenzy of middle-class kids) also has merit, as does the notion that too often man serves the system more than the system serves man (consider two-income families struggling to balance child-rearing, home maintenance, exercise, rest and recreation with the demands of high-stress, overtime-imposing professional or entrepreneurial jobs that are driven by the “system’s” needs to increase productivity and maximize short-term profits).

For the most part, Ted K’s assertions are well-reasoned, poorly substantiated (for which he apologises—there wasn’t much reference material near his cabin in the boondocks), and based on questionable assumptions. Why questionable?

*Happiness—K assumes that man can be truly happy only when directly satisfying his daily needs—hunting and fishing for food, defending himself, maintaining his shelter, etc.—in other words, living in a simple relationship with Nature. This may be true of some, but for others (the more sublimated, perhaps) it’s quite the opposite: they find happiness precisely in minimizing the daily maintenance functions in favor of more interesting activities such as reflecting, abstract problem-solving, creating art, playing sports, pulling off business deals—you name it. For them, to be bogged down exclusively in highly repetitive survival tasks would constitute a form of slavery.

*Utopia—the utopia K espouses—small communal groups, close to the land, with low technology—has already been tried; it’s called the Dark Ages. In such conditions the small group and the individual tend to be victimized not only by natural calamities (sweet Mother Nature!) as drought and disease, but also by human marauders—the most successful of which, ironically, usually employ the best technology (iron vs. brass knives and spears and shields, composite bow or longbow vs. standard shortbow, guns vs. bows-and-arrows, etc.). Historically, to defend themselves such small groups have tended to seek the protection of more powerful groups—which of course leads to precisely the kind of disempowerment bemoaned by Ted K.

*Revolution—like many would-be and real revolutionaries, Ted K. makes it clear that to save mankind he’s willing to sacrifice much of mankind (he admits that the transition from a complex, technology-based society to a simple one will be extremely traumatic)—the typical ends-justify-means thinking of the fanatic, amply and sickeningly demonstrated in the twentieth century by the likes of Stalin, Hitler and Mao. In

Ted K's post-revolution "utopia" one can well imagine humorless Inquisitors ferreting out and happily roasting closet technologists.

*No Reform?—true, there's no guarantee that the system will reform itself in time to save mankind from itself—but there's also no guarantee that it won't. And realistically, of course, it's the only hope we have—it's difficult to imagine any circumstance (short of thermonuclear war or biological holocaust, which are not impossible) that would cause mankind to abandon science and technology and retreat to the Dark Ages. Typically, crises spawn more rather than less technology as mankind applies brainpower and resources to problem-solving.

Don't Ted K's bombs-through-the-mail prove that he's mad? Not necessarily. He considers himself a revolutionary who's out to save mankind from itself. And he states that he mailed the bombs not so much to kill off evil technologists as to call attention to his all-important manifesto. Revolutionaries must be alerted and rallied so that when the crisis comes they will be ready to pounce. Without some dramatic action, says Ted K, the manifesto would never have come before the public—would have been lost in the daily media glut of "information." So he self-advertised by bombing a few "bad" guys. And it worked, didn't it? How else would he have induced The New York Times and The Washington Post to publish his tract? How else would he have induced me to write this review or you to read it?

I found The Unabomber Manifesto more interesting than I expected. It represents a sort of extremist, militant version of the voluntary simplicity movement, and also probably articulates the kind of thinking typical of some of the country's militia groups. Interesting read..

Ashley

268 reviews13 followers

March 3, 2012

I was assigned a case study on Ted Kaczynski for my final paper in my abnormal psych class so I figured his manifesto would be a pretty good place to start. The entire time I was reading it I kept waiting for the sh*t to hit the fan and get totally crazy, but it never did. For the most part I was really in to this and found myself genuinely interested in a number of the ideas that he brought about. The bits on then power process/surrogate goals and activities were pretty interesting, as were the parts about putting an emphasis on the system, instead of individuals, and the various issues that arise/how they're dealt with.

Overall, this was a really worthwhile read. It's super short and it gives a more comprehensive understanding about where the guy was coming from.

read-for-school read-in-2012 social-issues

Daniel Munro

31 reviews30 followers

April 22, 2012

While written by a disturbed human being, he raises some ethical issues that should be something society is aware of: mans dependence on technology, modern medicine, and the system of education we use.

The authors solution was to overthrow the system and return to an agrarian society to maintain a healthy population and lifestyle. This plan is endorsed by those who have never set foot on a farm.

Aaron

12 reviews1 follower

June 10, 2012

This is a hard read, because Theodore Kaczynski is aggressive and harsh to say the least. That said, philosophically it offers some insight to the view of sans-society utopianism, and the belief that societal norms can be shackles inhibiting freedom.

While I have never considered myself a primito-anarchist, this book does outline the philosophical tensions that lead to such beliefs.

However, the aggressiveness of the author, and the "call to arms" mentality throughly detract from what could in itself be a strong philosophical piece.

Cameron McAvoy

22 reviews1 follower

October 29, 2017

It would be unfair and naive to review the Industrial Society and Its Future without also at least mentioning the author.

Ted K. is an American Mathematician, and was while in academia, a genius in his field. However, he became disillusioned with society and instead sought to seek a life living one on one with nature. He lived this way for several years - watching society encroach his small sanctuary. Eventually he realized that his life in the wild was unsustainable - society was expanding too quickly and would destroy it. This is when he began his bombing campaign.

If the story ended here, Ted K would not have been remembered, and would only made the long list of Eco-Terrorists. But it didn't. Ted K wrote his solution for what he saw as the driving factor behind societies constant expansion and destruction. Industrial Society and Its Future.

Ted K killed 3 people and injured dozens other in an (effective) effort to get his manifesto published. This is an important distinction. He didn't kill people and later justify it with manifesto. He wrote a manifesto, and used the publicity of killings to get

it published. The killings were secondary to his objectives, and had a better, nonviolent method of mass publication existed at the time, Ted K would have likely opted to use it instead.

Most people label Ted K a crazy killer. I view him a politician. Politicians influence public opinion about public policy. His killings appall me, but are not a valid reason in themselves to ignore his political theories.

Onto the review!

Industrial Society and Its Future is an extremely thought provoking essay. It establishes the following:

- Man's lack of empowerment is a result of society's ease of fulfilling the basics of life and automation overall.

- Without achievable goals that make man feel fulfilled and satisfied (content) with life, Man will seek secondary goals (Social success, extreme wealth, entertainment). These goals do not offer the same level of empowerment for most people and are a weak substitute.

- Man's lack of empowerment is the reason for most of America's (and these days, the entire world's), depression, apathy, and mid-life crisis's.

- Industrial Society and Technology is only making man's lack of empowerment worse, through more and more automation.

- Reforming Society is a fruitless effort, reform can never change the long term course of society and will eventually be forgotten.

- Only Revolutions (Revolution of Ideas, not necessarily violent, but violence is not precluded) is the only true means of altering the course of society.

- Without a revolution that drastically alters our course, society will end up in 1 of 3 possible outcomes:

- 1.) A massive, heavily populated world where the super-elite control the masses through media and technology and the majority live peaceful, but indolent lives. Most people do not have a job and everything they need is provided from the state. This is his best-case scenario.

- 2.) A massive, heavily populated world where cybernetic and generic modifications to humans is commonplace, and even necessary to get ahead in the increasing fast-paced society. Eventually, we will alter our generic and physical makeup so much that we are no longer even really human. This is his middle-of-the-road scenario.

- 3.) A nearly empty or dead world, where the tiny elite (less than 10000) live in luxury, where automated machines manage and make a wealthy lifestyle possible with a tiny laborforce. The majority of the population, being redundant, was exterminated. This is his worst case scenario.

- None of the 3 outcomes are not ideal, even outcome #1 is more a dystopia than a utopia.

- Eventually, the system will grow weak from crisis('s). At such a time, enlightened individuals should use the opportunity to overthrow the system and replace it one where man lives in small communities, much like the early middle ages.

Whew! That was a lot. But it's important to understand his core arguments.

The key point I disagree with is Ted K's conclusion. Life with small communities in nature is not the solution. Such a society would eventually relearn technology and eventually become a modern society all over again, repeating the very crimes Ted K perports to stop from happening. In fact, **Ted K's solution isn't a solution at all - it's a reform.** A reform that will ultimately fail, as all artificial man made barriers do.

Ni8

18 reviews

September 16, 2012

Ted Kaczynski was a child prodigy who gone wrong. His Industrial Society and it's Future is no different. Check the topics of oversocialization, the power process, surrogate activities, autonomy to get a glimpse of what genius he's been and the topics of technology is a more powerful social force than the aspiration for freedom, revolutions is easier than freedom, human race at cross roads, and strategy where he over shoots and misses the mark completely but still given a chance takes this one and read. To see the faults and the merits and the different perspectives Ted Kaczynski offers us on what Life's been to all of us in this Modern world.

David Koblos

305 reviews8 followers

December 18, 2012

Scary, scary, scary... Less popular, though more realistic than 1984 or Brave New World, this book truly gets you thinking about the direction we are going. Whether you agree or not is still up to you, but the points he makes are worth the consideration.
freedom nature-and-sustainability

Randall M

4 reviews6 followers

March 18, 2013

I believe he went a little too far to bring attention to his ideas, however, some of them actually make sense.

Meeg

54 reviews4 followers
August 24, 2013
more people should read this.

Trevor
3 reviews
July 7, 2013

Kaczynski believes that freedom and technological society are deeply incompatible. Technology after all demands a powerful centralized social system, and such a system must restrict freedoms of the individual. When he says we lack freedom he doesn't mean it in the conventional sense (the rights in the United States Constitution for example). Rather he defines freedom as the ability to go through what he calls the "power process": an individual's ability to set a meaningful goal, work at it, and achieve it autonomously. Technological society upsets the individual's power process because it makes meaningful goals (survival) too easy, leaving us with unmeaningful goals that we either strain to invent for ourselves (hobbies) or are imposed upon us by society (to buy things).

He believes the only way to fix this is through revolution. He criticizes those he considers leftists such as global warming activists, promoters of racial equality and feminists. To him these people are collectivizing because it gives them a sense of power that the system has deprived them of. But these solutions are short term and the only solution according to Kaczynski is to replace the entire system.

The manifesto was fascinating but he lost me on his way to his grand conclusion to abandon technology. My greatest concern that I share with some other reviewers is that human needs can not be boiled down to the power process. While it sucks to not go through the power process, it also sucks to not have food, and that is reflected in life satisfaction measures where countries with little technology score low.

Overall the manifesto is refreshingly insightful. Read it.

Aamil Syed
166 reviews36 followers
December 30, 2014

All of 150 pages, but one hell of an essay! He falters in a lot of places where he loses control and rants madly, but when he is coherent, he is really very sharp. His observations are quite spot on and he does seem to have seen through the charade that is the modern civilization.

I started reading this book just because I was curious about the mind of a serial murderer. Ted (aka The Unabomber) is after all, a convict who has been incarcerated for the murder of 3 people and injuring several others. However, if one is willing to look

beyond that, one will find a genius and prodigy who went a bit too far. He justifies his actions (unsuccessfully) in the book and though it is weak reasoning, it does seem to be reason enough to throw an intelligent, sensitive human being into despair; eliciting a terrible response from him. Ted claims that he killed people in order that he be heard. Without such an event, he wouldn't have been noticed. An Indian revolutionary by the name of Bhagat Singh, did the same. But he didn't kill anyone for that. Ted does show some remorse for this, but it is not enough.

However, that doesn't take away from what he has to say. Most of his observations about the state of the world and the negative effects of industrialization on human lives and nature are quite accurate and must be studied. The sum total of his argument is that we have become heavily dependent on the Industrial System and this has made us less human. We are now discovering that we no longer have to struggle for the basic necessities, but then we have paid a price for that by not being able to control what happens to us. Our lives are much more comfortable today than before, but we have much less freedom. The courses of our lives are now dictated by large corporations and government entities and if we have grievances against them, we are helpless. This must frustrate us, but the propaganda machinery in the form of media and entertainment, set up by the System have dumbed us down to the point that we suffer these frustrations silently and live with them, preferring to pop anti-depression pills to revolution.

Through this manifesto, Ted aims to bring to light this terrible state of the Industrial Society and human beings that make it up. He does so with a brilliantly written essay that is thoroughly riveting and certainly unputdownable. This book is not a terrorists handbook or the anarchist's bible; it's a very well written essay that reflects on humanity and civilization. It falters in some places where Ted has been unable to hold back angst and frustration and it has spilled onto the pages, but otherwise, it is a marvelous essay. I certainly don't condone Ted's methods, but I do suggest that we should try to understand where he comes from, looking at the way things are headed and how we are trapped in a nexus of big corporations and evil governments.

If you're not willing to go through 150 pages of brisk observation and analysis (available for free on the internet), do read through the excerpts that I have collected.

Forty-fifth book reviewed as part of the 130 Challenge | Read on my blog

Shannon Ellsworth

118 reviews1 follower

January 16, 2015

I have to say...this guy made some amazing points until he starts talking about how everyone must die. A truly fascinating read into the mind of a brilliant man who clearly fell off the deep end.

Michael Adcock
85 reviews9 followers
February 1, 2015

Ok, so he's an evil killer, but Ted Kaczynski's essay (aka The Unabomber Manifesto) is mostly an interesting read, with some genuine concerns about the impact of technology, and I felt more compelling the related impact of Big Business, Big Government, and Big PC. Worth a read for its historic context, and maybe it will bring out some interesting thoughts.

Mick Pletcher
92 reviews3 followers
January 1, 2016

I did not know the manifesto had been published as a book. I read this when it was released in the 90's. Although Kaczynski is extremely unstable in his thought process and actions, he does make many great points, especially that part on losing freedom as technology advances. He wrote this in the 90's and we are seeing this very thing happen as technology. Another point he makes in the book is the loss of intellectual stimulation in our society, which is very evident. It's such a shame that he had the potential to be one of the foremost mathematicians of our time and he decided to throw that away. The book is definitely worth reading.

Derek Smith
27 reviews
February 5, 2016

I recently read a series of letters that were published by Ted Kaczynski that were recently published. It for some reason made me want to read "Industrial Society". I was very surprised to find that it was not the ramblings of a crazy man, but a very well written call for us to return to a much more fulfilling and simpler time.

Jimmy
2 reviews
May 26, 2016

He raises a lot of good points on how to spot - what he calls - leftists movements.

Liam Porter

194 reviews44 followers

November 17, 2020

Hm. Will having this book on my shelf get me on some sort of list? I read it and it was crazy. I think his style of writing is a paradigm of clarity, but the man was plainly evil.

nonfiction politics

Mike

334 reviews24 followers

May 27, 2017

A controversial text given Kaczynski's subsequent terrorist activities, but nonetheless the text contains many interesting insights into industrial and post-industrial society. He argues that man has lost his connection with nature, that he has less control over his life than ever before, that we have focused on the economy with no regard for happiness, and have become slaves to the technology we created. The arguments are compelling even if you abhor Kaczynski's actions. 7/10

philosophy

Nguyễn

Author

2 books185 followers

February 6, 2017

what impressed me is how he covered every problem of modern society, from the over sensitive leftists, to how the system silently enforces rules over individuals. he met me at the point where we both think there is no way to peacefully reform or 'fix' the system.

while it's interesting to read through this whole manifesto, it seems to have many weak points where he over simplified the problems and the reasons. it's more of that way toward the end.

i wanted to write a long review citing many of my thoughts and arguments, but then i found myself lazy and only wanted to suggest you to go watch Fight Club. and also, read about the author on Wikipedia, please.

Max Stone

132 reviews14 followers

May 12, 2017

ok so of course there is a lot in this book to disagree with. in particular:
-his characterization of leftists and how evil and awful they are
-his thought that the right way to accomplish what is best for the world (reversing technology) by blowing people up to get attention

But there is also a lot that is interesting and thought provoking and true (I think) and prescient. Basically I agree with a lot he says about the structure of modern life and how it serves to deprive people of meaning and purpose and freedom; and why this is the case. It is similar to a lot of things published recently about the rise of AI / the robots, but of course was written a couple decades earlier.

I particularly liked his description of the power process that what is satisfying is accomplishing something with meaningful effort (which has elsewhere been called "progress against perceived challenge) and I think we are seeing now where people including myself are getting some satisfaction from games where various forms of leveling are basically designed to maximize that sensation), and how the structure have life and society have evolved in a way such that we are engaged in that process far less than in the past.

Tvrtko Balić

203 reviews65 followers

August 12, 2017

Kaczynski comes to all the wrong conclusions, but the manifesto is very interesting and well written none the less. I could criticize the ideas in it a lot and give it three stars, but honestly, I enjoyed it so much and I can definitely see how someone indecisive would be persuaded by it so I feel like I have to give it four stars even if I disagree with it. Kaczynski was a brilliant, but misguided man and this is simply a good essay.

ideological-political-or-economic

Samarth Agrawal

4 reviews1 follower

September 27, 2017

Hope I'm not the only one who sees shades of Notes from Underground. Expected incoherent ramblings of a mad man, was most definitely not the case. Deeply cynical, insightful nonetheless. Fascinating read.

Jurgen Rose

55 reviews1 follower

March 11, 2019

This guy had an IQ somewhere around 167. If you have not ever read this, it is worth it. It seems like he might be seen as a prophet someday. His methods might be screwed up, but his predictions and warnings make sense.

Andy

170 reviews

December 24, 2017

You can't have a united world without rapid transportation and communication, you can't make all people love one another without sophisticated psychological techniques, you can't have a "planned society" without the necessary technological base.

From our point of view it doesn't matter all that much whether the attitudes are passed on genetically or through childhood training. In either case the ARE passed on.

It may or may not involve physical violence, but it will not be a POLITICAL revolution. Its focus will be on technology and economics, not politics.

Nature takes care of itself.

We can imagine a future society in which there is endless competition for positions of prestige and power. But no more than a very few people will ever reach the top, where the only real power is.

For the "good of humanity," of course.

Tormenting a child for a trivial reason or no reason at all is something that appalls almost everyone.

andy-s-bedroom

Sharad Pandian

411 reviews137 followers

December 19, 2017

Got curious after watching the Netflix show "Manhunt: Unabomber", which was mostly a hagiography of Kaczynski. Please don't detain me at airports, internet police. culture-critique

Tom Radev

6 reviews1 follower

January 10, 2018

I think I enjoyed the comments in Goodreads just as much as I enjoyed reading this manifesto.

Most of the things in there should give people food for thought, at least. But they just discard everything in there because of who wrote it or because they only read the first paragraph.

Most of the comments here just highlight the need of this manifesto to be honest and for all the “lefies” in here writing things like “mansplaining” and what not here is a part of the manifesto you might have missed, which clearly shows that the aim of it is not to go against the socialists, but against everything that is going wrong:

“The conservatives are fools: They whine about the decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological progress and economic growth. Apparently it never occurs to them that you can’t make rapid, drastic changes in the technology and the economy of a society without causing rapid changes in all other aspects of the society as well, and that such rapid changes inevitably break down traditional values.”

Maybe, if you are going to read something you might want to consider thinking about it, rather than just disregarding it for silly reasons.

Everybody believes in evolution and nobody wants to apply it to people...

Fabio Quatela

4 reviews

February 6, 2018

Interesting read, it really makes you think. Are we free? Are we human as our ancestors were? Will our children be? Also, how much does it really matters. Your answers will likely differs from mine and from the author’s, but the questions are surely worth your time.

Zach

7 reviews

June 26, 2018

The odd thing about this book is not its author but the message. Not as muddy as you’d expect and quite coherent throughout. *Industrial Society and Its Future* poses an interesting question, when does technological advancement become more important than humanity? Even though this was written over a decade ago Kaczynski’s message about abandoning technology rings all too familiar.

The book does often rant about leftists and their goals to attain power through social action and proposes the reason why scientists pursue goals is for the advancement of their own personal interest. Both points have some truth to them, but only in a small way and can mostly be summarized as opinion. That being said, the message about how and why people attain power was interesting.

It’s definitely worth a read as it not only gives a little insight into the motives of one of the most infamous killers, but also really makes you think about how we use

technology and how it affects society as a whole. Overall a good read, and one that will definitely get you looks if you whip it out on the subway.

Justin Kwong

14 reviews11 followers

September 24, 2018

While I disagree with quite a few of his ideas (and of course his actions), this was a excellent read on how the project of modernity was a nearly a complete failure.

Masatoshi Nishimura

315 reviews14 followers

August 10, 2018

It may be inappropriate to endorse the terrorist's writing and I do feel sympathy for the victims. But I enjoyed his reading.

At the time of reading, I was reading Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil. I was surprised of how overlapping the content was. The will to power is Theodore's version of freedom. I am sure he was inspired by Nietzsche as well. Even so, his interpretation of the modern world was refreshing.

He's described our civilization is getting harder and harder to feel autonomy in daily lives. That's true, I agree. Yet, his perception about prehistorical time and our human psychology was way too naive. Yes. We want freedom. But we want to feel secure just as much. That has pushed our civilization this far.

I think it's possible to simulate a survival environment in today's world too. Go to Alaska. If that place is fully occupied, fly down to Amazon.

At the end of the day, he was just feeling bitter and resentful. He was so self-conscious, trying way too hard to convince the readers he was not a leftist. He tried to save the common people's freedom by taking down the techno nation. I was laughing at his hypocrisy.

biography

Nicky

178 reviews1 follower

August 30, 2018

A lot of good points - I actually enjoyed reading this. Throughout, I also couldn't stop thinking about how much the majority of tumblr users would hate/be triggered by this book. I believe that the "leftists" Kaczynski describes are pretty much the "SJWs" today.

4.5/5 because there were some points about technology that were a bit ridiculous to me. Sure it has some downsides, but technology has its benefits as well. Overall, anything taken in excess isn't good.

EH

254 reviews5 followers

September 11, 2018

The system couldn't care less what kind of music a man listens to, what kind of clothes he wears or what religion he believes in as long as he studies in school, holds a respectable job, climbs the status ladder, is a "responsible" parent, is nonviolent and so forth.

If you think that big government interferes in your life too much NOW, just wait till the government starts regulating the genetic constitution of your children. Such regulation will inevitably follow the introduction of genetic engineering of human beings, because the consequences of unregulated genetic engineering would be disastrous.

Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them drugs to take away their unhappiness. Science fiction? It is already happening to some extent in our own society. It is well known that the rate of clinical depression has been greatly increasing in recent decades.

2018

Shane Hawk

Author

10 books192 followers

November 21, 2018

Read this in high school when I was flirting with philosophical anarchism. Astounding how your perception of something can change over the years. Professor Ted was onto something, but his solutions were grotesque. Everyone should read this and read some supplemental material about him, his family, his career path, MKULTRA, etc. There's a lot to it.

civilization essays nonfiction

Taha Bashir

53 reviews

November 30, 2018

hmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm interesting

☒☒☒☒☒☒

Geoffrey Churchill

1 review10 followers

December 4, 2018

Well, everyone was absolutely dying to read this, so I figured I'd do a review. I must admit that it was with some trepidation that I opened my mailbox, but the Manifesto was a marked departure from Kaczynski's earlier work. In many ways it is just as soul-searing, but in place of his typically explosive plot devices, the reader is here confronted with the thoughtful musings of an exquisitely sensitive man. I eagerly look forward to the next Kaczynski.

Adrian

44 reviews19 followers

January 2, 2019

Time to get on the same watch list and get your own personal NSA stalker (hey, Greg). I was very curious about this controversial piece. Formatwise, it's a rather simplistic looking text with an occasional typo, dealing with very complex issues concerning the functionality of modern, industrial society and human fulfillment and place in this model. Eventhough the means definitely do not justify the ends in the case of Kaczynski, his points outline serious problems rooted in the continuously accelerating world we live in.

An interesting read, especially knowing how real were Kaczynski's concerns and how far was he willing to go to get his message across.

non-fiction

Graham Mumm

Author

1 book11 followers

February 5, 2019

Interesting read. Not at all what I was expecting.

Drew Pyke

226 reviews5 followers

February 28, 2019

Accessible, relatively short and at times very captivating. There is no narrative but paragraphs dedicated to certain aspects of his main objective, which is to tear down

the tech driven society (brought about from the Industrial Revolution) and return to "wild nature".

At times I was wondering why I was reading this book and whether it could stand alone as a masterpiece by Ted Kaczynski or whether it was already loaded given the terrorist attacks by the Unabomber. In fact, in the introduction by 'Autonomous Anarchists Anonymous' explain how the press view it as nothing more than a "murderer dragging noble ideas through the mud" and in fact harming the cause than championing it.

A big theme in the book is his attack of the Left (or at least his definition of it), which he believes is a culmination of either:

1 a feeling of inferiority

"Many leftists have an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak"

"He is not the sort of person who has an inner sense of confidence in his ability to solve his own problems"

"dismiss reason, science, objective reality and ... insist that everything is culturally relative"

2 over socialization

"...are trained to think and act as society demands"

"...obeys the moral code of his society"

"he cannot think 'unclean' [non-conformist] thoughts"

It is someone who has become so entrenched in organised society that he has no ability to think or fend for himself (oversocialised). This means for them that policy is good when it benefits society, bad if for the individual.

Another interesting piece is 'the power process', defined as the effort, attainment and, most importantly for TK, autonomy of goals. Put simply, it's the human aspiration to fulfil his purpose and where there is any deficit in this it will invariably cause individual anxiety:

"Everyone has goals; if nothing else, to obtain the physical necessities of life, food, water and whatever clothing and shelter are made necessary by the climate. But the leisured aristocrat obtains these things without effort. Hence his boredom and demoralisation"

When there is a gap, humans will turn to "surrogate activities" which are essentially non-survival goals that pass the time and gives them a sense of purpose (career, hobbies, social causes etc). This is against a backdrop of our ever increasing distance from important goals of food, water, shelter and security (Which would be essential goals if in a state of "wild nature").

"The only requirements are a moderate amount of intelligence and, most of all, simply OBEDIENCE. If one has those, society takes care of one from cradle to grave"

The industrial revolution and its consequences have done great harm to society, which gives TK an excuse to swipe at the Right:

"The conservatives are fools: They whine about the decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological progress and economic growth ... [which] inevitably break down traditional values"

You can't espouse conservative values whilst at the same time idealising modern technology that splits up small communities and reorganises society around the whims of market Supply and Demand.

Many can argue that this sacrifice of autonomy is worth it for the security offered by organised society. However, TK rebukes this.

"Primitive man, threatened by a fierce animal or by hunger, can fight in self defence or travel in search of food. ...he is by no means helpless against the things that threaten him. The modern individual on the other hand is threatened by many things against which he is helpless: nuclear accidents, carcinogens in food, environmental pollution, war, increasing taxes, invasion of his privacy..."

Amazingly, the masses are still fine with this Social Contract for various reasons:

"little need for autonomy"

"climbing the status ladder without ever getting bored with that game"

"they cannot satisfy their constant craving for the shiny new toys"

"'fulfilment' that he gets from pursuing the goal, not because he needs to attain the goal itself"

"have an insatiable drive for status"

Even the actual concept of Freedom, TK argues, is socially constructed. The "freedom" to pursue pointless goals that benefit society (becoming skilled for e.g.) is different from the freedom of survival (which many in the west would argue is shackled by nature).

All this being said, TK is obviously calling for revolution instead of reform. What separates him from others calling for the equivalent though is that he proposes nothing for the after-world. Going so far as to say:

"the consequences for the society as a whole cannot be predicted"

"A new kind of society cannot be designed on paper"

All of this is in the hope of taking back power. "The system ... cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead it is human behaviour that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system". This is why conforming is so significant in modern tech-driven societies.

This momentum will never wane, as TK demonstrates with the example of the car. Inadvertently we have taken away freedom when we thought we were only adding freedoms with the use of technology:

"When motor vehicles were introduced they appeared to increase man's freedom"

"They took a freedom away from the walking man"

"one cannot just go where one likes ...governed by the flow of traffic"

"has to stop for traffic lights"

TK believes this wasn't intentional by any grand architect or elite, but the emergent property of technology.

So why do we just take it? TK argues it is because we keep trying to "fix it" which in turn means we keep feeding the beast. For example, pills that relieve stress:

"If large number of people chose to undergo the treatment [of stress], then the general level of stress in society will be reduced, so that it will be possible for the system to increase the stress-producing pressures"

Instead of calming ourselves down around the fringes, we instead should overhaul the entire system. Continuing the way we do by relieving our anxieties with escaping through TV, self-medicating against anxiety, will only make it worse for us in the long-run.

Interestingly, TK only gives modern society less than a century before it implodes as humans continue to endure closer to their natural limits. To make it happen quicker though, he advises non-political strategy because people have become oversocialized and therefore a mandate proposing losing their "free" food and shelter will never be politically popular.

Again, whilst the aftermath is unknown and unpredictable, its impact on nature (and therefore the security of our species) will be minimal:

"People take the line that modern man has too much power ...over nature"

"Primitive individuals ...actually had considerable power over nature ...to find and prepare edible roots, how to track game"

"But primitive man did relatively little damage to nature ...compared to the COLLECTIVE power of industrial society"

TK is serious in his conviction that reverting back to wild nature should have no compromise. Even social justice is dangerous since it depends on "central organisation and control", "transportation and communication", "agricultural and manufacturing technology [to produce surplus and give to the less fortunate in the name of social justice]

This is an important point because it explains how things we take for granted and small actually rely on large-scale infrastructure (come about from the industrial revolution) which have consequences articulated in the book. He uses the example of the simple fridge that requires manufacturing (factories and parts), electricity (damming a river), copper wire (quarries). "It would be much easier to build an ice-house or preserve food by drying or pickling". Technology requires:

"You need tools to make tools to make tools to make tools"

A spiral down for man as modernity steams ahead.

David Parkinson
44 reviews4 followers
April 16, 2019

Some valid criticisms, particularly with respect to "surrogate activities" and the "Power Process".

One's purpose in life should be clear, whatever it is, whomever you are. And it's helpful to ask if what you're working on advances your purpose (power process) or is simply a surrogate activity.

Regarding my overall impressions, it's far easier to condemn modern society rather than create a compelling alternative. It seems unlikely that simply smashing the machines, structures, and society to start over in the wilderness will yield optimal results. If today's society was destroyed, I think we'd see a rise of strongmen/dictators which doesn't seem like a better alternative to what we have today in the West.

Tommy

338 reviews32 followers

December 23, 2019

Well articulated but the notions here aren't really original or beyond teenage nihilists. Technology works against freedom by integrating and making independence impossible so it has no right to exist, thoroughly libertarian and expectedly ignored or renounced by libertarians. Since "the system" is always for itself you should stop living for and in society and revolt against it or there's no hope for a truly human future. If this was the main point Ted failed by making it secondary to armchair psychology on leftists which becomes the centerpiece here. There has been no revolutionary developments to dismantle society or reimpose "nature" but throughout the 2010s you have seen a wave of violent anti-PC backlash from losers who feel powerless from Anders Breivik to the Christchurch massacre using very similar language to what's found here. Modern conservatism has embraced fully one side of Ted's analysis by demanding and even killing for more tolerance for politically incorrect opinions. The only threat being brought against industry also seems to be the potential of catastrophic climate change emerging from conservative inaction but that one is more unintentional and not fully accepted.

biography decline

Andrew Njoo

68 reviews27 followers

May 2, 2019

decent manifesto.

however it does have its shortcomings - in short the pros/cons ratio of technology's advances are mixed.

I do think the Earth is suffering from overpopulation; we need to live more sustainably and not f up the planet for future generations (grandchildren).

Also oil / natural gas are capital, renewable energy is income; in terms of energy production. We are using lower EROI (energy return on investment) fossil fuels, that provide less energy per energy invested to extract the resource.

And humanity is betting there will be a deus ex machina from fusion, but this is debatable.

that's why we should hedge, and invest in permaculture / horticulture / sustainable living. And also urban centres are too dense. And stop having so many children!

Samuel Peck

134 reviews20 followers

May 8, 2019

Premised upon a mixed bag of surprisingly cogent and sensible arguments and fallacious logic leaps, Kaczynski then proceeds to conclude, Thanos-style, that the only way to improve and change the system is to destroy and reset it. I suppose that's Kaczynski's allure and scariness.

Elede

144 reviews1 follower

May 25, 2019

Unexpectedly interesting essay in my opinion.

I bumped into this article while watching the Netflix series "Manhunt: Unabomber", as probably most people have come across this essay lately.

The TV show was pretty good in my opinion, and "Industrial Society and its future" is a shockingly crude read, with some ideas that make you think about our society and how it works.

Some of his ideas are very well thought, specially those regarding our society and how we behave, and the reasoning behind his statements is quite solid, although clearly wrong in some aspects, specially regarding the revolution to destroy technological society, as it is clear that it'd worsen our lives.

Still, a very interesting read in my opinion, agreeing in some topics and thinking about some others topics he presents to you.

Victor

130 reviews1 follower

May 30, 2019

Terrorist, mad man, genius and MK Ultra victim. Ted K. has it all. This manifesto is a showcase of his unique mind, and how he perceived the danger of technology. While

there are many very valid counter-arguments to his beliefs, and while his manifesto is EXTREMELY idealistic but NOT AT ALL realistic, it's still certainly worth reading. There are some insights in this little book that may give you a different perspective of the world. I'd recommend anybody read it.

M

68 reviews40 followers

July 10, 2019

All together now: "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race."

He's a murderer, yes. But was this infamous polemic, the 35000-word anti-tech screed Ted Kaczynski literally killed to get splashed across the pages of the Washington Post, worth all the trouble? (Paragraph 96: "In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people.")—Did it make a lasting impression? Well, industrial society is as "healthy" as ever, and Kaczynski continues to waste away in a supermax prison. We've yet to see the anti-tech revolution, even as it is becoming loudly, unbearably clear that the Enlightenment dream of universal progress is long past its sell-by date. Make of that what you will.

The sort of people who seek out Industrial Society and its Future, let alone finish it, are surely not the people Kaczynski was hoping to reach and persuade: serial killer enthusiasts, bloodthirsty eco-fascists, depraved nihilist cranks. And like me, I imagine everyone is a little disappointed with much of what they find. Several pages of Leftist bashing ("I'm not like those other girls..."), a quasi-Nietzschean analysis of slave morality and the Will-to-Power (recast by Kaczynski as "leftism" and "the power process", respectively), a vague plan of action for revolution with a distinctly liberal/idealist tone: at one point, Kaczynski argues that anti-tech revolutionaries ought not to try to "take power" too soon in case they get voted out. This certainly isn't Lenin.

But even so, there's just so much here that is interesting, compelling, and that feels infinitely more authentic than the optimistic FALC opposition. The uncompromising approach to the ghastly logistics of technological breakdown. The dry analysis of industrial society and its features, e.g. the hypocrisy of conservatism, the repressive function of psychiatry and modern educational practices, the ways in which technological progress forces itself upon even those who wish to resist it, the critique of civilisational reason, etc—and yet, Kaczynski keeps in mind that there is no conspiracy, that "technological control" is introduced with good intentions, that it is precisely those good intentions that need to be analysed.

Kaczynski looms over the Anthropocene like an ash cloud. Take a look at the news: things certainly aren't getting any better. And "freedom" isn't getting any freer. Even Fox News is asking: ...was Ted Kaczynski right?

Jeff Donnelly
10 reviews9 followers
July 6, 2019

To understand dystopia is to understand utopia. For, one man's heaven is another man's hell. To the one looking for the true path, the middle road, this article will assist their exploration.

VERGiL
3 reviews
August 28, 2019

Mainly, i belive that theodore (TED) took the origin of his ideas from eric hoover's (the true believer), i find both the ideas and the presentation quite similar.

C.D.
Author
3 books10 followers
September 27, 2019

On the surface this manifesto is enlightening and rational; but there's an unintended undercurrent of tension that adds an edge to the reading. It's impossible not to wonder whether this is what happens when government agents (allegedly) perform psychological stress tests on a sensitive genius on LSD. Some passages have a creepy feel to them. It's easy to imagine fingers pounding down on typewriter keys to emphasize words in all CAPS.

But there are moments of truth and brilliant insight. Each numbered passage offers something to think about at the very least. This book is a must-read for the open-minded, critical thinker, if for nothing more than examining an alternate worldview.

The book spends a lot of time examining, criticizing, and attempting to define the "leftist" phenomenon. One interesting take-away is the view that leftism is an inevitable "manifestation" or "symptom" of deeper problems resulting from exclusion in the "power process," as opposed to leftism being just a bunch of pesky, progressive complainers. The book also bashes conservatives for whining about the corrosion of traditional values while at the same time promoting the source of corrosion, further evolution of big business and tech.

The proposed solution is impossible. There's no destroying Skynet like in the movie Terminator, let alone reverting back to a hunter-gatherer state. We can only go forward, not back.

The billion dollar question for our future is whether "real goals," those that involve autonomy in our own survival, are the only route to true fulfillment. If not, then the

basic premise of the book weakens, and tech might not be such a disaster for the human race.

I

11 reviews

October 24, 2019

A fascinating look at the ills that beset society.

Daniel Xu

25 reviews

November 17, 2019

Some bits were insightful. Others are a bit tenuous (especially the revolution bits).

Vagabond of Letters, DLitt

594 reviews284 followers

December 23, 2019

7/10. Very incisive and strikingly prophetic look at postmaterial leftism. Less convincing when it comes to the need to abolish industrial society, but more thought-provoking than I considered likely a priori.

Vinícius Oliveira

5 reviews24 followers

July 31, 2020

A brilliant and shocking composition which describes accurately the two major tendencies of modern (1950-) leftism along with its dangers and relations with the current tech-industrial society. Also reveals characteristics of ours necessary to fulfillment that are under a leash by the system, even though some people adjust themselves to it. Furthermore, this writing discusses social problems and its sources/relations to Technology, outline its possible futures as well, which the author is against by promoting a revolution. Such paper, a bit repetitive and a generalized thought (as the author wrote: Roughly truth) but with a good organization and notes/references/bibliography, is a noteworthy one and a must read!

Nathan Wilder

114 reviews2 followers
January 6, 2020
damn that shit sucks

Chd7y
5 reviews1 follower
April 27, 2020

Since the beginning of civilization, organized societies have had to put pressures on human beings for the sake of the functioning of the social organism. This has been accomplished to a degree unimaginable to our ancestors in the West today where Industrial society (or are we now post-industrial?) has taken on a life of it's own and the system no longer exists to serve human need, rather human behaviour must conform the system. Society is in a long-term, self-reinforcing, accelerating trend towards mechanisation and only reforms in the direction of travel can have any lasting effect (think feminism and the various other egalitarian causes which do not conflict with the system). Violence, racism, discrimination and poverty must all be addressed but only because of the threat to the efficiency and functioning of the system they pose. The system needs workers and consumers more than it needs mothers.

The resulting alienation in modern man has meant we have succumbed to a perpetual state of boredom and demoralisation, itself giving rise to a host of societal problems such as widespread depression, crime, purposelessness and the breakdown of traditional communities and values to name but a few. This sense of alienation stems from the absence of what Kazynski refers to as the power process, in other words meaningful goals requiring serious effort and ideally relating to one's survival. Increasingly modern man's life is one of excessive leisure where the necessities of life are acquired with little effort. While the more driven among us adopt artificial "surrogate activities" (think cage fighting or rock climbing) many others become addicted to pornography, drugs, video games and other perversions as a means of distracting ourselves. This situation will only worsen as humanity allows itself to drift into a situation where more and more important decisions are made by machines and liberals and leftists push for the resolution of social problems by having society guarantee everyone's security.

Kazynsk does not think reform is a viable solution because, as mentioned above, the currents underway are so strong that only reform in the direction of the current is viable. Society is also a complex, unified system with all it's various parts dependent on each-other, and it is therefore impossible to change just the parts you don't find agreeable. The answer therefore is revolution (not necessarily violent although evidently Kazynsk was no pacifist) which can be achieved with a small group of determined individuals promoting social stress and instability in industrial society (accelerationism) and developing and spreading an ideology that opposes technology and the industrial system. It is small, determined groups such as this who influence history, the majority

for the most part being directionless. This group must not be allowed to be infiltrated by leftists, being as they are highly adept at subverting movements.

If and when industrial society breaks down, what remains will be smashed beyond repair, so that the system can never recover. Kazynsk gives the example of the collapse of the Roman Empire, where their infrastructure such as roads, aqueducts and sanitation fell into disrepair and disuse, the sanitation of European cities only recently recovering to the standard of Ancient Rome.

Gustavo Barreda

15 reviews

February 18, 2020

Very interesting social views of current global and future prospect of technology on society.

Luke Siverling

2 reviews

February 28, 2020

25 years later and his critique on leftists is still accurate.

Cris Edwards

127 reviews5 followers

February 28, 2020

Written 25 years ago, many of Kaczynski's predictions are proving to be very true. This book reminds me of the works of Eric Hoffer, whom the author cites as an inspiration. Kaczynski's criticisms of Leftist thinking are clunky, but his visions of our loss of freedom in the wake of Technological 'progress' are eerily prescient. Far from a crazy diatribe, this series of essays is written in a sober and intelligent tone that favors aphorisms which are succinct and spot-on. Worth reading.

Deirdre

10 reviews1 follower

April 19, 2020

Kaczynski's manifesto is quite a tough pill to swallow. Reading it is a bleak, frightening, and uncomfortable experience, most especially because his harrowing omens and ruthless appraisal of contemporary industrial society are surprisingly logical and

(usually) lucid. There are many important insights about the failings of our overcomplicated global system to be gleaned from the 232 points that comprise the essay, and any intelligent person would be daft to overlook this because of the author's crimes or his overreaching (but occasionally astute) criticism of certain social groups and movements.

I do take issue with what I feel is the influence of some unresolved bigotry that pops up here and there, but none of it is entirely relevant to the main thesis at hand. And I am afraid of the destruction and suffering that overzealous adherents of this essay's philosophy might feel justified to wreak upon the world. But I still struggle to figure out to what extent I agree or disagree with his main points and his call to action—I'm not sure if I will ever be able to settle that question for myself, to be frank. At the core of his argument is the exaltation of human freedom, which I think any decent person would believe in. While reading I always found myself tempted to raise the counterargument that technology has the possibility to elevate human freedom to previously unreachable levels, but at every turn Kaczynski seems to have a well-reasoned rebuttal to cast doubt upon such idealism. I probably won't be joining in to facilitate the total collapse of modern technology any time soon, but one thing is for sure—Industrial Society and Its Future has very much opened my eyes and activated my consciousness in a way that a very rare few written works have the capability to do.

There is so much more to say, but in the interest of brevity I will conclude with an urgent appeal to all who may be reading—do yourself a favor and read this with your mind wide open and your guard let down. You will be challenged, that's for sure, but I think there is a lot of growth to be found in the challenges Kaczynski poses, no matter your stance on his outlook.

Stephen Goodyear

1 review

May 3, 2020

Uncle Ted speaks the truth...

Gator

271 reviews26 followers

May 5, 2020

I have officially been Tedpilled! It's a Damn pity Ted didn't put his brain to better use and get his info out there in a more productive manner. He has a lot to say about the left and technology that rings true, very true.

Roland Matanzas

18 reviews

September 29, 2021

The first third of the book is uninspired ranting against various groups - academia, the religious - that won't surprise anyone who's ever perused a message board. However, there's some really thought provoking stuff here buried in the drivel. He makes a compelling argument, even in the nineties, about the conflict between technology and personal autonomy. He rather presciently lays out a future where the populace will be increasingly unable to resist authoritarianism due to the constraints imposed by technology. Worth a read and it will

Go quickly as you can skim over the rants.

Danny P Shoggoth

12 reviews2 followers

February 24, 2023

Look I'm not saying Teddy Baby was right about everything but

BustedEarly

9 reviews

May 15, 2020

A great perspective on the slavery of modern man, engulfed by consumerism to cope in a society that encourages mental illness by depriving us of our primal needs.

David

1 review

May 24, 2020

It is an interesting and thoughtful read. I don't condone his actions, but there is something worthwhile here.

Buck Wilde

833 reviews45 followers

May 29, 2020

The only thing Teddy hates more than civilization is the god damn liberals.

His rhetoric is by now archetypal of shrub-crouching anarchoprimitivists, and relies on the same general arguments appealing to nature and drawing attention to the

absolute state of the place, and humanity's psychological and "moral" decay since we really doubled down on agriculture.

Society, as we know it and jockey .gif live in it, was a mistake because it runs so contrary to what evolution programmed us for. We did just fine for two million years living in accord with the land, "in the hands of the gods" as Daniel Quinn succinctly put it, until about 10,000 years ago when we decided to start watchdogging plots of dirt that grew calorically dense but nutritionally vacant grasses that, truth told, we don't digest so good. Finally given a reason to go to war, we started going to war. Progress marched on, technology continued to advance, and with every new jump it brought with it the promise of a better, more fulfilling, and easier life that ultimately culminated in actual slavery (before giving way to the modern, wage kind), war, murder, rape, animal abuse, all of it. Name a bad thing and you can eventually trace it back to the technological advances that brought us out of the shrub.

Most of these green and black philosophers make vague allusions to how bad farming was, usually connecting it to being cast out from Eden (whether they mean to or not), and drop hints that something must be done, nudge nudge wink wink. Teddy makes his suggested solutions pretty obvious by, as Epictetus advised, embodying his philosophy. He also takes things a step further by suggesting all technology starts as a key and becomes its own lock. Every new bit of tech that guarantees simplification of life leads to greater reliance on that tech, and its providers, ultimately adding another layer of dependency, which takes its psychological toll.

The main thrust of Teddy's argument is that man has an ingrained psychological need to be free, like every other animal, and wandering around the savanna scrounging out each day's existence provided more freedom than does farming, sitting in a cubicle, or being a mathematics professor. The further we get from this freedom, the more we lean on the allowances and permissions granted us by the "masters", the keyholder technocrats, the more miserable and neurotic we become.

Teddy believes the system benefits no one but the system, which is why we're feeding children drugs to make them sit still in school, throughout the years where every comparable animal would be running, playing, and exploring, so they can grow up to become automatons of appropriate malleability. Obviously, no creature can distance itself from its nature so completely, so maintaining the status quo into adulthood many require further prescriptions, recreational chemicals like smonk and drink, and that good good Netflix, to maximize docility.

He suggests the power process (a psych term he seems to have invented for this manifesto) denied by modern life is sublimated into hobbies and work, so people pursue things like an academic career, collecting Magic the Gathering cards, or maximizing their body count (in either sex or homicide), providing them a sense of purpose that would otherwise be met with daily Darwinian attempts at survival and reproduction.

He also smashes libs unceremoniously and remorselessly. Here are a few occasions on which the lib status was adjusted to destroyed:

Those who are most sensitive about "politically incorrect" terminology are not the average black ghetto-dweller, Asian immigrant, abused woman, or disabled person, but a minority of activists, many of whom do not even belong to any "oppressed" group but come from privileged strata of society. Political correctness has its stronghold among university professors, who have secure employment with comfortable salaries, and the majority of whom are heterosexual white males from middle- to upper-middle-class families.

The language in this screed is a little dated, my dude, but I trust your judgment regarding university professors.

It is not the primitive man, who has used his body daily for practical purposes, who fears the deterioration of age, but the modern man, who has never had a practical use for his body beyond walking from his car to his house. It is the man whose need for the power process has been satisfied during his life who is best prepared to accept the end of that life.

In which the fear of death evaporates by a life well lived. Socratic.

The people who rise to positions of power in leftist movements tend to be leftist of the most power-hungry type because power-hungry people are those who strive hardest to get into positions of power. Once the power-hungry types have captured control of the movement, there are many leftists of a gentler breed who inwardly disapprove of many of the actions of the leaders, but cannot bring themselves to oppose them. They *need* their faith in the movement, and because they cannot give up this faith they go along with the leaders.

This comes tailing a hundred or so pages about how leftists are crippled by their personal insecurity and so enroll themselves in massive collectivists movements because it's only through that union, through joining with this mob, that they can conceive of having personal power.

If our society had no social problems at all, the leftists would have to invent problems in order to provide themselves with an excuse for making a fuss.

He also argues that these libs, these despicable libs, tend to champion causes that are already part of the established status quo. Virtue signaling wasn't a coined term when he wrote this, but it's the same concept. I don't have it marked, but let me paraphrase:

A leftist of this type will come out in staunch defense of something like racism being bad, which is a socially accepted perspective as it stands. The ones who argue that racism is good are social aberrants. Everyone agrees racism is bad. So when this leftist gets on the soapbox and bellows "racism is BAD you stupid FUCKERS! How many TIMES do I have to SAY IT?", they're not necessarily doing it to advance an anti-racist agenda, as the overwhelming majority of "the system's" agenda is already vocally anti-racist.

Well, who could say? If Teddy was as smart as they claim, he wouldn't be serving four consecutive life sentences plus 30 years right now. The philosophy makes sense in spots, but it's predicated on a lot of assumptions that you need to be pretty disaffected to accept in the first place.

Four stars. It lost a star because I don't want to be on any more watch lists than I already am.

Sahil Gupta

23 reviews4 followers

June 12, 2020

Most people I know would put away this book as the rants of a disgruntled serial bomber, but I was drawn to explore the line of reasoning a seemingly prodigious man took in acting as extremely as he did. Can one separate the art from the artist, can one pick up the good from the seemingly destructive? The fact that I am writing this review should tell you my answer to these questions.

Broadly, the book explores the evils of technology and modern society in taking away individual freedom, making us increasingly dependent on the 'system', and providing us with what Kaczynski calls 'surrogate' pursuits. His arguments suggest this direction is much like that described by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, which he alludes to himself. He speaks passionately of a return to nature and smaller communities. In the current setup, he argues, governments and centres of power (the 'elite' as he calls them) are remote from the common man and have unchecked control over his life. While technology may ensure longevity, its price he believes is self-determination and free will.

One of his most thought provoking arguments is how each technological invention seems like an innocuous choice at first, completely optional and only positive, before it begins to unravel its harmful effects and no longer remains a choice. The example of the automobile is brilliant, in how it has led to re-planned cities with long commutes, accidents, regulation even for pedestrians.

While many of his descriptions and arguments may be unfounded (as he concedes) and exaggerated, the book is nevertheless an interesting read. I believe it is possible to sieve out the good - to *eat your cake and have it too*.

Dilara

4 reviews

June 10, 2020

"Can't eat your cake and have it too."

Einar Davidson

13 reviews

June 20, 2020

Fuck it, I'll take the watchlist spot. I'm already on it for owning this anyways.

Is this a good essay? Yes. Did it expose a LOT of people to radical green ideas? Absolutely. Does it have some noticeable weak spots? Of course. Is it sort of a regurgitation of indigenous philosophers, Jacques Ellul, etc.? Obviously.

Kaczynski is a smart guy. Like a lot of greens from his time, Kaczynski is also weird and conservative. Despite this, he articulates a very straightforward, thought-out critique of civilization and industrialism that's essential to any present library of extremism.

anarchism anthro history

Ed

34 reviews

June 20, 2020

I'll probably end up in a watch list for reading this. Curiosity killed the cat. Surprisingly I found myself agreeing with more of the essay than I thought I would, particularly his fear of humanity slowly unconsciously handing over decision making to AI, the unpredictable effects of the introduction of new technologies and the inability of society to regress once a technology is widespread even if it's effects are detrimental. It makes you think.

Mischa Daanen

69 reviews14 followers

August 12, 2022

Interesting read not because of its exact contents but as a way to read into a conflicted person's mind who feels being cornered by society more every day. A society manifesting itself into a (to him) loathsome state at an alarmingly fast pace. The guy is clearly an intelligent and normally functioning person and to a certain extent one must be able to identify with him and recognize his sincere concerns with Western democratic and capitalistic societies. Deeming him far right or left wing is hard I feel and not really of any importance. Either way, he's simply extremely dissatisfied with a lot of things and decided a long time ago to withdraw himself from society he doesn't want to be a part of (he's not anti-society per se). Quite a noble deed to simply withdraw oneself from a society you hate instead of front on assault on it but when he even starts to get bothered by this 'society' at his front porch (buying his land, cutting his trees, demanding taxes etcetera) he turns to violence and the rest is history.

We studied the case of the Unabomber extensively in psychology classes but never got to reading his manifest myself. I advise reading S.C. Johnsons psychiatric competency report of Kaczynski as well (can be found online, public domain as it was used for him standing trial I believe and offers a lot of interesting background information). However extreme his views and ideas may be, it's hard to diagnose him as a psychopath or label him anything at all (even though they tried very hard as diagnosing him would make a much easier clarification for his deeds of course). Kaczynski fought for his freedom and what he felt was right. Using force and harming others to push your views is a lot of things, besides plainly wrong, but it's not a mental illness... It's terrorism (or military intervention when you didn't draw the short straw with your views and it's organized and funded by the government).

His ramblings started wearing me down a lot of times so I must admit I skimmed through a lot of the pages (he's certainly not a great writer, didn't aspire to as well I guess). It's mainly him summing up things he hates and he hates a lot of things and he repeats this over and over again. What I did find interesting though are his controversial but at times spot-on analyses of people's political and personal motivations which infuriate him intensely. He is an extremist, a criminal and a danger to society and deserves to be locked away according to the laws of established society. Still, it does leave one to wonder what alternatives a man like Kaczynsky would have had when one doesn't want to take part in Western society...

MedianJoe

7 reviews

June 25, 2020

Incisive and at times compelling. Definitely worth the read.

Aman Tiwari

Author

1 book4 followers

June 30, 2020

Metaphysically a revolutionary thinking but failed to incorporate it in its physicality. The actuality of the concept is undeniably in consonance with the truth but the realization of this actuality by Ted using means of violence, destruction was a way induced by escapism.

Aaron Schuschu

1,384 reviews12 followers

June 30, 2020

Basically, the authoritarian left uses technology to control people because they themselves feel personally unfulfilled; and so in some form or fashion we must go back to an earlier way of living. While I definitely agree on the level of my distrust of the mental health industry, can somebody tell him that ABA is not coercion? That it's religious conservatism that's willfully ignorant of its own coercive properties? Thanks.
political

Chad

8 reviews

July 4, 2020

His analysis of the ills of modern society were spot on, especially regarding the psychology of modern leftism. However, I didn't agree with his proposed solutions.

reemi ☒

43 reviews1 follower

July 8, 2020

I was expecting Kaczynski to be this maniac, very deranged person (I mean he is by what he did) but the way he writes and his ideologies doesn't indicate the person we know today which is very surprising. Although I do not agree with most of his ideas, I still enjoyed the book and found it very interesting. I'm actually very surprised that I liked it.

philosophy

Lubby

19 reviews

July 9, 2020

I think that for the remainder of the summer I'm going to attempt to read a few things that are probably objectionable, just to get a better understanding of the darker parts of our world, and to discern for myself whether or not each piece of media is as bad as its reputation suggests.

This essay makes a lot of excellent points. Kaczynski lays out the issues with liberalism that are blatantly obvious to anyone with any degree of knowledge of American neoliberalism. His primary concern that advancing technology will be used to suppress human freedom have never been truer than our present time, where numerous corporations are datamining your devices at any given time. I think that the best takeaway from the essay is Kaczynski's fear of genetic engineering—all of his points made on

the subject are spot-on and mirror my own fears. If you're not concerned with the potential for genetic engineering to essentially destroy humanity, I suggest you either read this or watch Gattaca, it's some really chilling stuff.

All of that being said, it's pretty obvious that Kaczynski is a nutcase, which would be the case even if he hadn't become an infamous terrorist. His writing betrays his childness, especially when it comes to his writing on education and his opposition to science education specifically. Not to mention that his discourse on race, specifically his frequent writings on black people, leave much to be desired. The most damning example of Kaczynski's childishness is a central tenet of philosophy—that the advance of technology must be stopped. It's insane to think that technological advances could be stopped at any point barring some kind of catastrophe—I find it interesting that Kaczynski never posits scenarios like nuclear war or climate change that would undoubtedly reverse industrialization, but perhaps the possibility of apocalypse just wasn't a part of his consideration.

Anyways, the core ideas at work here aren't all bad and have even bubbled to the forefront of public consciousness—look no further than the latest Avengers movies to see part of Kaczynski's philosophy at work (specifically his thoughts on overpopulation). It's painful to know that even with his brilliant ideas, Kaczynski chose to cowardly exercise violence in the name of an obviously unachievable goal. He shouldn't be praised considering the weight of his hateful actions, though let this essay be a reminder that even misguided, morally repugnant people aren't always totally wrong.

Edit: Also, before I forget, I can't ignore the irony that I read this as a PDF on the Internet Archive's website using my laptop. Yeah, to say that Kaczynski's philosophy lost to the mainstream would be an understatement. But hey, that's what happens when you advocate for the mass destruction of people's refrigerators.

edgy internet-archive

Udit Miglani

21 reviews7 followers

July 11, 2020

Kaczynski's idea of publicizing his work is to mail bombs around the country, then threaten the police that he will do more, unless his manifesto is published on the front page of America's newspapers.

Subtle.

The manifesto itself is a cross between a Luddite conservative and Marx's theory of alienation.

He argues that technological progress has increased our dependence on the prevalent economic structure, and this curtails our freedom- buying a car is a necessity now, and not a luxury. Our jobs don't give us an intrinsic satisfaction, since it's not a 'need

for survival' per se. The argument hinges upon our work not providing us autonomy, which is necessary to lead a satisfied existence.

While the argument does suffer from a range of issues- His idea about autonomy and power process aren't very academically sound. His solution is also impractical, and his 'revolution' a pipe dream. He also has prejudiced ideas about gender and views the left too dimly.

However, Kaczynski does tend to acknowledge the deficiencies in his thesis. Thus, the uncoupling of technology (which has its advantages) and capitalism (bad, exploitative).

Definitely food for thought, an anti echo-chamber work.

Jamal

59 reviews6 followers

July 29, 2020

He has foreseen it.

Zoey

1 review

September 19, 2020

-1 star for killing people

favorites

Hypertonic

8 reviews

August 1, 2020

Uncle Ted's diagnosis is certainly prescient although his solution lacks finality.

Yasameen

39 reviews14 followers

August 10, 2020

well, you can't eat your cake and have it too.

Fernando

224 reviews

August 13, 2020

Once I heard “Enrique Dussel” telling to his interviewer that the fall of capitalism is going to have its roots in the control of the nature by the people, the mass; contrary to Marxism’s class struggle or better to said according to E. Dussel “A way Marx didn’t expected”. People will no longer hold to live in an industrial toxic environment for the gain of just few rich people. Ted Kaczynski goes even further. At the beginning his rhetoric seems confusing, like describing leftism hate towards successful western industrial society, he takes side with the society he wants to sabotage and gave good reasons to do so. As we are heading to an imminent environmental Armageddon his manifesto does not seem paranoia.

modernity

gordon

47 reviews1 follower

August 16, 2020

Nourishing food for thought even if you don’t agree with the conclusions. I found *Industrial Society and Its Future* to be a stimulating counterpoint to my usual technology-focused life where my professional and personal worlds revolve around the creation and usage of the enemy identified by Kaczynski.

misanthropy

Rtrred

12 reviews

August 19, 2020

This is an eerily accurate description of modern life down to the consequences Kaczynski predicted. A definitely good read and certainly the one that introduced me to more anarchist works.

Philip Ejzak

3 reviews

September 2, 2020

His analysis of Leftist and conservatives feel contemporary, even though this came out decades ago.

Jackson

2 reviews

September 6, 2020

Solid premise with a somewhat less solid conclusion.

5 pound poi

194 reviews

September 11, 2020

The Industrial Revolution & its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. We therefore advocate a revolution against the industrial system.

PSYCHOLOGY OF MODERN LEFTISM:

The 2 psychological tendencies that underlie modern leftism we call 'feelings of inferiority' & 'oversocialization.' When someone interprets as derogatory almost anything that is said about him (or about groups whom he identifies) we conclude that he has inferiority feelings or low self-esteem. This tendency is pronounced among minority rights activists, whether or not they belong to the minority groups whose rights they defend. They are hypersensitive about the words used to designate minorities & about anything that is said concerning minorities. The negative connotations to the terms used have been attached by the activists themselves. Many leftists have an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak (women), defeated (Amerindians), repellent (homosexuals) or otherwise inferior. The leftists themselves feel these groups are inferior. They would never admit to themselves that they have such feelings, but it is precisely because they do see these groups as inferior that they identify with these problems. Leftists tend to hate anything that has an image of being strong, good & successful. They hate America, they hate Western Civilization, they hate white males, they hate rationality. The leftist is anti-individualistic, pro-collectivist. He wants society to solve everyone's problems for them, satisfy everyone's needs for them, take care of them. The leftist is antagonistic to the concept of competition. Leftists prefer to give society the credit or blame for an individual's ability or lack of it. Thus if a person is 'inferior' it is not his fault, but society's, because he has not been brought up properly. Notice the masochistic tendency of leftist tactics. They PREFER masochistic tactics. Self-hatred is a leftist tactic. Leftists may claim that their activism is activated by compassion or by moral principles, & moral principle does play a role for the leftist of the oversocialized type, but compassion & moral principle cannot be the main motives for leftist activism. Hostility is too prominent a component of leftist behavior; so is the drive for power. Much leftist behavior is not rationally calculated to be of benefit to the people whom the leftists claim to be trying to help. If our society had no social problems at all, the leftists would have to INVENT problems in order to provide themselves with an excuse..

OVERSOCIALIZATION:

Psychologists use the term 'socialization' to designate the process by which children

are trained to think & act as society demands. A person is said to be well socialized if he believes in & obeys the moral code of his society & fits in well as a functioning part of that society. The moral code of our society is so demanding that no one can think, feel & act in a completely moral way. For example, we are not supposed to hate anyone, yet almost everyone hates somebody at one time or other, whether he admits it to himself or not. Some people are so highly socialized that the attempt to think, feel & act morally imposes a severe burden on them. In order to avoid feelings of guilt, they continually have to deceive themselves about their own motives & find moral explanations for feelings & reactions that in reality have a nonmoral origin. We use the term 'oversocialized' to designate such people. Oversocialization can lead to low self-esteem, a sense of powerlessness, defeatism, guilt, etc. One of the most important means by which our society socializes children is by making them feel ashamed of behavior or speech that is contrary to society's expectations. If this is overdone, or if a particular child is susceptible to such feelings, he ends by feeling ashamed of HIMSELF. The oversocialized person cannot even experience, without guilt, thought or feelings that are contrary to the accepted morality; he cannot think 'unclean' thoughts. And socialization is not just a matter of morality; we are socialized to conform to many norms of behavior that do not fall under the matter of morality. Thus the oversocialized person is kept on a psychological leash & spends his life running on rails that society has laid down for him.

Leftists of the oversocialized type tend to be intellectuals or members of the upper-middle class. They want to integrate the black man into the system, make him a business executive, a lawyer, a scientist just like the upper-middle-class white people. The leftist will reply that the last thing they want is to make the black man into a copy of the white man; instead they want to preserve African American culture. But in what does this preservation of African American culture consist? It can express itself only in superficial matters. In all ESSENTIAL respects most leftists of the oversocialized type want to make the black man conform to white, middle-class ideals. These are exactly the values of the industrial-technological system. The oversocialized leftist wants to integrate the black man into the system & make him adopt its values. Today's society tries to socialize us to a greater extent than any previous society. We are even told by experts how to eat, how to exercise, how to make love, how to raise our kids & so forth.

THE POWER PROCESS

Human beings have a need for something that we will call the 'power process.' The power process has 4 elements: the 3 most clear cut of these being goal, effort & attainment of goal. The 4th element is more difficult to define & may not be necessary for everyone. We call it autonomy. One must have goals toward which to exercise one's power. We use the term 'surrogate activity' to designate an activity that is directed toward an artificial goal that people set up for themselves merely to have some goal to work toward.

In modern industrial society only minimal effort is necessary to satisfy one's physical

needs. The only requirements are a moderate amount of intelligence & most of all, simple OBEDIENCE. If one has those, society takes care of one from cradle to grave. Thus it is not surprising that modern society is full of surrogate activities.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

We attribute the social & psychological problems of modern society to the fact that society requires people to live under conditions radically different from those under which the human race evolved & to behave in ways that conflict with the patterns of behavior that the human race developed while living under the earlier conditions. Among the abnormal conditions present in modern industrial society are excessive density of population, isolation of man from nature, excessive rapidity of social change & the breakdown of small-scale communities such as the extended family, the village or the tribe.

The conservatives are fools: they whine about the decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological progress & economic growth. Apparently it never occurs to them that you can't make rapid, drastic changes in the technology & economy of a society without causing rapid changes in all other aspects of the society as well & that such rapid changes inevitably break down traditional values. A technological society HAS TO weaken family ties & local communities if it is to function efficiently. In modern society an individual's loyalty must be first to the system. An advanced industrial society can tolerate only those small-scale communities that are emasculated, tamed & made into tools of the system.

.....

Modern man must satisfy his need for the power process largely through pursuit of artificial needs created by the advertising & marketing industry & through surrogate activities. Today people live more by virtue of what the system does FOR them or TO them than by virtue of what they do for themselves. Our lives depend on decisions made by other people; we have no control over these decisions & usually we do not even know the people who make them. The individual's search for security is therefore frustrated, which leads to a sense of powerlessness. Threats to the individual tend to be MAN-MADE. They are not the results of chance but are IMPOSED on him by other persons whose decisions he, as an individual, is unable to influence. Consequently he feels frustrated, humiliated & angry.

Modern society is in certain respects extremely permissive. In matters that are irrelevant to the functioning of the system we can generally do what we please. We can do anything we like as long as it is UNIMPORTANT. But in all IMPORTANT matters the system tends increasingly to regulate our behavior. Behavior is regulated not only through explicit rules & not only by the government. Control is often exercised through indirect coercion or through psychological pressure or manipulation & by organizations other than the government/system by propaganda. For instance, the content of entertainment programming is a powerful form of propaganda. An example of indirect coercion: There is no law that says we have to go to work everyday and follow our employer's orders. Legally there is nothing to prevent us from going to live in

the wild like primitive people or from going into business for ourselves, but in practice there is very little wild country left & there is room in the economy for only a limited number of small business owners. Hence most of us can only survive as someone else's employee.

In primitive society life is a succession of stages. The need & purposes of 1 stage having been fulfilled there is no particular reluctance about passing on to the next stage.

Some people partly satisfy their need for power by identifying themselves with a powerful organization or mass movement. An individual lacking goals or power joins a movement or an organization, adopts its goals as his own, then works towards those goals. When some of the goals are attained the individual even though his personal efforts have played only an insignificant part in the attainment of the goals feels through his identification with the movement or organization as if he had gone through the power process. Another way in which people satisfy their need for the power process is through surrogate activities.

Even if most people in industrial-technological society were well satisfied, we (FC) would still be opposed to that form of society, because (among other reasons) we consider it demeaning to fulfill one's need for the power process through surrogate activities or through identification with an organization rather than through pursuit of real goals.

.....

THE NATURE OF FREEDOM

By 'freedom' we mean the opportunity to go through the power process with REAL goals, not the artificial goals of surrogate activities & without the interference, supervision or manipulation from anyone, especially from any large organization. Freedom means being in control (either as an individual or as a member of a SMALL group) of the life & death issues of one's existence: food, clothing, shelter & defense against whatever threats there may be in one's environment. Freedom means having power; not the power to control other people but the power to control the circumstances of one's own life. One does not have freedom if anyone else (especially a large organization) has power over one, no matter how benevolently, tolerantly or permissively that power may be exercised. It is important not to confuse freedom with mere permissiveness.

It is said that we live in a free society because we have a certain number of constitutionally guaranteed rights, but these are not as important as they seem. The degree of personal freedom that exists in a society is determined more by the economic & technological structure of the society than by its law or its form of government. As for our constitutional rights, consider for example the freedom of the press: it is a very important tool for limiting concentration of political power & for keeping those who do have political power in line by publicly exposing any misbehavior on their part. But freedom of the press is of very little use to the average citizen as an individual. The mass media are mostly under the control of large organizations that are integrated into the system. To make an impression on society with words is therefore almost im-

possible for most individuals & small groups. Even if these writings had many readers, most of these readers would have soon forgotten what they read as their minds were flooded by the mass of material to which the media expose them. In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression we've had to kill people. Constitutional rights are useful up to a point but they do not serve to guarantee much more than what might be called the bourgeois conception of freedom. According to the bourgeois conception, a 'free' man is essentially an element of a social machine & has only certain set of prescribed & delimited freedoms; freedoms that are designed to serve the needs of the social machine more than those of the individual.

INDUSTRIAL-TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY CANNOT BE REFORMED

Permanent changes in favor of freedom could be brought about only by persons prepared to accept radical, dangerous & unpredictable alteration of the entire system. In other words by revolutionaries, not reformers.

The system HAS TO force people to behave in ways that are increasingly remote from the natural pattern of behavior. The system does not & cannot exist to satisfy human needs. instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. This has nothing to do with the political or social ideology that may pretend to guide the technological system. It is not the fault of socialism or capitalism it is the fault of TECHNOLOGY because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity. Of course the system does satisfy many human needs, but generally speaking it does this only to the extent that it is to the advantage of the system to do it. It is the needs of the system that are paramount, not those of the human being. The concept of 'mental health' in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system & does so without showing signs of stress.

.....

Man in the future will no longer be a creation of nature, or of chance or of God, but a manufactured product. If you think that govt interferes in your life too much NOW, just wait until the govt starts regulating the genetic constitution of your children. Such regulation will inevitably follow the introduction of genetic engineering of human beings. Inevitably, genetic engineering will be used extensively but only in ways consistent with the needs of the industrial-technological system.

nature philosophy-religion watchlist

kz

115 reviews5 followers

September 17, 2020

Theodore Kaczynski, or better known as the Unabomber, manifesto. Here he has interesting takes from the anarcho-primitivist canon, mainly technology and industry will cause the enslavement and take away any sense of purpose for the Human race

by the machines we've created. Saying that once technology is made it rarely ever leaves and once history takes to a certain direction it won't change until something big knocks it off course.

I don't understand though why Kaczynski, and many other anprim types, spend about half of the book trying to dunk on Leftists. Generalizing about psychologies of people under a general political thought seems like a waste of time to me. You could spend more time lifting the theory of revolution from Lenin or the idea of Historical Materialism from Marx like Kaczynski has done here. Reworded to be more anarchist or whatever. Idk what I expected though ☒☒

Duncan.S

11 reviews20 followers

September 28, 2020

This book is a look inside the head of a crazy man by himself, thus making a rating unnecessary.

Alexios

35 reviews4 followers

December 18, 2020

If you actually want to read it, you have to keep in mind that the man who wrote it is an autistic serial killer. I'd say it's about 50% just observations about pollution and what the industrial revolution has done to the planet, 20% legitimately good points (in particular his critique of leftism is spot on), and the other 30% is schizo ramblings. Basically read at your own risk and for the love of god don't start to idolize him, because that'll make you look like a Redditor

Mansoor Qureshi

24 reviews

October 29, 2020

Who here is a crypto-leftist

Afonso Santos

1 review2 followers

October 14, 2020

Dr. Kaczynski explains the importance and dangers technology bears on modern society and presents several reasons as to why it is so dangerous and why it should

be changed (in this case, destroyed). He tries to create several hypothetical situations in which this "revolution against industrial society" would come to fruition. While I think Dr. Kaczynski has a well-rounded approach in technological, psychological and revolutionary positions, his political musings are sub-par and are quite shockingly ignorant at times, in my opinion.

Regardless, I found the book quite informative and amusing at the same time.

Jack

Author

8 books9 followers

October 16, 2020

I was interested in reading this book because of the Unabomber's anarcho-primitivism view and his glorification (I believe rightfully so) of nature. I saw that Netflix had a new series out (Manhunt) that focused on the Unabomber, and became even more interested in reading this. After I finished the series I decided to give this a read, especially since it was so short.

My biggest criticism of his views is his stance on what he calls "leftists". He has a long rant towards the end on what makes someone a leftist (an insult, in his opinion) as someone who uses 'catch- phrases of the left, like "racism," "sexism," "homophobia," "capitalism," "imperialism," "neocolonialism," "genocide," "social change," "social justice," "social responsibility' and then talks about beliefs they have which include women's rights to abortions, animal rights, suffrage for all, etc so apparently I am definitely a leftist. I think his biggest criticism is that leftists want to control people's ability to be racist/sexist/speciests, etc if they so choose to be. He calls leftists "over socialized" and weak. He thinks that they don't think that they could survive on their own essentially, so they group together to seek power from a cause/campaign/etc. He also thinks that leftists will never stop trying to make society politically correct and specifically said that if you ask a leftist to write down everything he thinks is wrong with society and correct all those things, he'll just come back with more and more that is wrong after all of the initial concerns are quelled indefinitely. It seems that his beliefs align most strongly with libertarians in that there should be no oversight over anyone regardless of how that impacts society as a whole. I disagree whole heartedly with his opinions on leftists and he dwells on this both at the very beginning and end of his essay.

What I found particularly interesting is his views on what he calls the "power process." Basically there are three types of goals: goals that are so easy that they don't give any fulfillment; goals that are hard enough to get satisfaction for achieving but not hard enough to be impossible to do; and goals that are impossible. For primitive man, getting food and gaining the basic necessities of life would be in the second goal category in that it was difficult enough to achieve satisfaction. For us, he views it as very easy for anyone to survive and get the basics of life. So we create surrogate goals in

our lives, that never gain appropriate satisfaction from. Instead of fighting to live, we fight to get a promotion, to keep up appearances, to have collections, to politics, to be healthier, etc but none of these things are ultimately achievable and don't accomplish anything and because of that we become more and more discontent with our lives as we don't fully go through the power process.

Another point that I disagree with, is his view on how technology will almost assuredly bring about eugenics and shaping the future with technology. He also stresses the importance of like-minded people having as many kids as possible. Despite the strain to natural resources and damage to the environment, because once the revolution happens if the generation that brings about the revolution dies off and there is not a sufficient number of people to keep the revolution going than the world will revert back to previous ways... But this is coming from the guy who has never had kids, never been married or been in a significant relationship.

He also talks about how when technology is first introduced it seems completely optional and anyone can opt out of not using it. The problem is that society is reshaped by the technology, and eventually it becomes necessary to a point. For example, cell phones. When cell phones were first introduced, they were completely optional and only available to the wealthy. As time progresses, they become more common and you are seen as a Luddite if you don't have a phone and don't have texting/emailing capabilities. The same thing happened with social media and even the internet as a whole. At first, it was just for the overly nerdy people and had limited use. As the internet became bigger, it's almost essential to have it for emails, for job searches, and because of the pandemic, a large percentage of people are doing all of their work completely online necessitating (for a lot of people) the internet.

Another interesting topic is how society generates unhappiness through the lack of being able to go through the power struggle. How does society prevent people from rebelling or seeking other ways to live or exist? By drugging people with antidepressants and through mass media. Rather than being agitated and examining the current state of affair, people are okay with having artificial emotions and vegging in front of the television.

This book generated a ton of conversation between my wife and myself. Towards the end she was starting to get very sick of me referencing the book as frequently as I was. She said that it didn't seem like most of his views lined up very much with my own, except when I talked about more of the anarchism views. Part of the reason I was interested in reading his work is because in a way he's like a modern anarchist. His writing was not written in the 19th century making the text outdated, harder to understand and uninteresting. He also wasn't a stuffy/stereotypical anarchist writer. He doesn't outwardly say he's an anarchist primarily just against technology. He feels that technology could be removed from society without a change in the government. So technically he's not an anarchist, but many of his views are inline with anarcho-primitivism. Definitely an interesting read that I would recommend although I disagree very strongly with some of his views.

Cesar
3 reviews
October 24, 2020
Good analysis wrong answer

Dio Mavroyannis
165 reviews15 followers
November 17, 2020

You might as well call this book, 'Why lefties cannot be reasoned with'. Which would help you get the entailment that Ted did, that is, use violence. It sounds like this guy has heard a lot of lefties give their talking points and has concluded that they are impervious to reason. He makes a lot of interesting points, about lefties being oversocialized, about their attitude towards African Americans...etc. Anyway, it's very fluent and fun to read, just don't go making bombs afterward...

Paul
1,094 reviews24 followers
November 20, 2020

Amazingly revealing analysis. Opened my eyes to displacement activities. The ideas about technology that can exist independently vs that that requires an existing complex system in place to support it are something that I'd now like to explore more. The biggest flaw, aside from brevity incompatible with the breadth of ideas discussed, is that the book doesn't describe the alternative and only shows what is to be destroyed but not what is to be built.

I also happen to quite like the industrial society.

N
32 reviews
November 22, 2020

This book is a must-read in the current times of technology-driven polarization and social unrest. While I disagreed with the anti-technology analysis of this book, it provides a solid analysis of the human nature and the challenges which arise in every modern society.

The manifesto claims humans need 4 things in their activities : a goal, a task to accomplish it, a result, and autonomy. It then analyzes that modern technology made

our daily activities less essential to the sustainment of our life : we are not hunting for our food, crafting the objects we use ... but instead accomplish a highly specialized task, against which we trade its benefits against essential and superficial goods. The purpose of this existence is less fulfilling, especially for the non-"bourgeois" than directly covering fundamental activities. Every life only becomes a clog in the system, locked in a position which the individual did not decide.

"The most important cause of social and psychological problems in modern society is the fact that people have insufficient opportunity to go through the power process in a normal way"

Kaczynski mainly blames technology for this, which is so complex that an individual can only contribute to a small piece. Some still manage to find purpose in those tasks, but he refutes this as Surrogate Activities. As an ex-wannabe-academic, I found his analysis of Academia as another Surrogate Activity while it is often raised as the pinnacle of scientific achievement to be a must read.

He also predicts that individual technologies, while introduced to achieve good, can either in aggregate or in ways which are unexpected create great trouble. This point felt particularly relevant today. I doubt Mark Zuckerberg expected to ever go to back-to-back Congress hearings on the influence on US elections of the social network he created from his dorm.

Other points of his pamphlet felt weaker to me. The style of the book proves it is clearly written by an ex STEM-academic, but lacks both numerical evidences and anecdotal illustrations of the troubles he points to. Thus, his case against technology is not very strong. The rant against "leftists" also felt slightly out of place.

After finishing this book, it felt to me that what Kaczynski wanted the most was not for modern technology to disappear, but only to be able to be left alone.

Donovan New

3 reviews

January 8, 2021

In this 32-page essay, written in 1995, Theodore J. Kaczynski argues how the continuation of an industrial society will increasingly lead to widespread suffering & servitude to the "system" due to a disruption of an individual's power process via "surrogate activities". This well-structured paper, suggesting a revolution against technology, comes across as a grave warning to the masses rather than a direct call to action for those with executive authority which, from my estimation, is the only area the authors fall short of their objective. Due to the intentional brevity of the paper, the authors fail to present a pragmatic solution, or course-of-action (other than to simply "choose Nature") due to the argument that revolutions are inherently "unpredictable". Nonetheless, Kaczynski presents an incredibly strong argument especially considering the consequences already realized on the topic of mental health due to technology and its exponential adoption

within the past 25 years following the publication of this paper.

I recommend this essay to those who enjoy challenging the norms of society. Not for the faint of heart, "Industrial Society and Its Future" provides ample reasoning to determine whether or not your goals may in fact be designed to benefit, not humankind, but rather the artificial constituents of our modern technological society.

Josh Svenson

40 reviews

November 25, 2020

This is clearly a work of highly intellectual individual , its great and practical example of logic and reasoning in mathematic put in application by mathematician to analyze and solve social problem (Argument).

He provide an argument about "Industrial society and its future", which he dissected it, reasoning with logic every little but consequential part of his argument and given his review.

Although I condone the use of violence and pains he caused just to be heard and listened, there is truth in that argument to an extent.

Scumbag Park

104 reviews7 followers

December 4, 2020

Some very salient points on modern leftism, industrial society, and the likely bleak future of humanity.

Rogue Insider Podcast

22 reviews10 followers

December 11, 2020

Obviously don't murder people but aside from that.

George Polykratis

33 reviews26 followers

December 26, 2020

Ted is a modern-day Luddite.

At a first read, a naive analogy can be drawn between Ted Kaczynski and John (Savage) from Brave New World, and portray Ted as the awakened individual who

futilely tries to warn society that has gone astray, especially when he argues about loss of individual autonomy.

(concerning the mentioned missing sense of security in the text see here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpFHY...>)

It is the case of the enlightenment saying of Spinoza gone wrong: "Those who are governed by reason desire nothing for themselves that they do not also desire for the rest of humanity". Well if he didn't believe that, he would have simply gone in the wilderness while letting everyone else in peace. (don't take this seriously - I don't believe he had such altruistic motives).

He states his arguments quite eloquently with surprising objectivity and impartiality at least for someone who committed such crimes. The text was written in the 90s and despite his insistence on the opposite, the problems he presents do not concern the majority, but the middle and high class, certainly not the majority in the 90s.

Industrialization first and foremost is a hope for the poor. As C.P Snow wrote: "It is all very well for us, sitting pretty, to think that material standards don't matter all that much. It is all very well for one, as a personal choice, to reject industrialization - do a modern Walden, if you like, and if you go without much food, see most of your children die at infancy, despise the comforts of literacy, accept twenty years off your own life, then I respect you for the strength of your aesthetic revolution. But I don't respect you in the slightest if, even passively, you try to impose the same choice on others who are not free to choose. In fact, we know what their choice would be. For, with singular unanimity, in any country where they have had the change, the poor have walked off the land into the factories as fast as the factories could take them."

If we observe things from a historical perspective we should be saying "thank you industrialization [...] for giving us time to read books" as Hans Rosling beautifully put it in his Ted talk on "The magic of the washing machine".

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZoKf...>)

The middle class was not the majority in the 90s but it is now, so this manifesto should be as important now as ever, right? I believe partly yes but still I believe it only concerns an extreme minority of individuals. I will explain what I mean.

[Intermezzo: One, can object on the definition of the middle class. Will it be those who can spend more than 2\$, 10\$ or 40\$ a day? According to Hans Rosling it should be more helpful to distinguish between 4 different levels of income (bounded by 2\$, 8\$ and 32\$ per day) if we want to talk about global improvement in wealth. The jest of it is that the global population is lifted from lower to upper levels and it is not only due to greater statistics from China and India. Whichever number we choose, (and the definitions of the different levels undoubtedly change in the future because no more people will occupy what we currently call Level 1) for increasing income (corrected for inflation) people will move to higher income levels and this is only an indication of positive progress.]

There are people who say that the that Chris McCandless (the protagonist from Into the Wild) was an idiot and acted irrationally. But one judges things according to his own philosophical axioms.

In an interview, Jon Krakauer (The author of Into the Wild) expressed an excellent point:

"When I was 23 I was young and reckless and did a a similarly stupid trip in Alaska, a very serious climb, a major solo expedition of the Stikine Icecap to climb a mountain called The Devil's Thumb and I was very lucky, I survived; if I hadn't people would have said of me as they now say of Chris that I had a death wish. I know I didn't. Some people say he was out to kill himself, I feel strongly that he wasn't.

-What was your wish?

Its hard to articulate, because it defies logic. I though if I picked a challenge that was hard enough and succeeded, everything thereafter would be alright, I mean it makes no sense but I was convinced of it. And it was that I would get rich, it was in some spiritual sense that you would feel so good after doing something this hard [...] its almost a classic rite [...] were risk taking is something a young man and sometimes young women feel they must do"

What John Krakauer is talking about here is the power process that Ted Kaczynki mentions in his manifesto. And I get it. Setting yourself a difficult task like surviving in the wilderness, upon completion you will satisfy (at least for a while) your inherent need to prove your self-worth, the crave for existential meaning and a sense of confidence that you know cannot attain any other way (though I believe this is true only for a very small number of individuals not everyone). And there are no substitutes for such activities that can give you such feelings of accomplishment and a reassurance of self-worth. Ok I don't know if Ted would rank these activities as so called surrogate ones (and it is not entirely clear from the text) since one does not satisfy his physical needs with those. But that also, in final analysis, is a matter of definition since from an existential point of view one could argue that all goals are artificial.

In any case I don't understand why does Ted assume that every person needs such so called not-surrogate activities to be satisfied? I believe the majority is content by simply say playing football, reading books, socializing and similar activities that are not so extreme. He seems to projects his personal feelings to the general population.

And on another level do you consider an existential problem (which is - under some oversimplification from my part - mainly a middle to higher class problem) more important than acquiring the basic necessities for living in the modern society? Are depression, obesity and lack of self esteem more important that lack of access to clean water, fresh air and sufficient daily caloric intake? Not that we have to make choice by shorting those problem with deontological arguments according to their importance. True progress does not necessarily need that. True progress does not usually come from manifestos and extreme ideologies but scientific and technological innovations that pass unnoticed from the general population. See for example:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASL4c...>

Going beyond his argument on psychology though, his opinion on the prohibition of Nuclear Power plants is statistically unjustified given estimations on the number of deaths relative to all the other energy sources. It gives us time until nuclear fusion technologies achieve market standards.

He also claimed that what the scientists are doing constitutes a surrogate activity that has nothing to do with curiosity. Well for the majority of scientists (and I can only hypothesize here), with the exception of those for which the component of prestige and careerism outweighs everything else, the surrogate activity part of the argument seems to be true but nobody argued the opposite. Some of them find a problem to solve and enjoy the process since it gives them meaning and the progress towards a solution improves their knowledge to the extent that this can satisfy their power process and self-esteem. They see progress in themselves and this gives them a challenging but attainable goal. Now the curiosity part I do not agree with. Curiosity plays an important role in distinguishing the problem that is worth investing in. But almost any problem is interesting if you look at it closely enough and that's why many great scientists were curious about many topics without the snobism on different disciplines that is so common in the young amateur scientists.

In the end I think Steven Pinker in *Enlightenment Now* is right but also the frustration of Ted Kaczynski is understandable. I really don't want this to be taken as a result of cognitive bias and I don't understand why he did what he did or what he hoped to achieve (violent strategies of protest are ineffective in comparison to peaceful ones). I understand that some of the things Ted is saying are true but I also realize that the problems he mentions are not as important as getting the world population richer, better educated, more peaceful with less conflicts.

That does not mean we have to choose between one or the other. We don't have to compromise between psychological, environmental or standard of living. There are ways around all those issues WITH the help of technology.

In the big picture we can and should try to satisfy all human needs and not some in the expense of some others. And yes, technology solves problems and creates some new in the process but the net change is historically positive. That does not mean that we should not be cautious.

Literature serves as a lighthouse for progress and this is how one should read this text, like any other literary text if one wants to learn from it instead of rejecting it, in an act of political defense.

Kyle
9 reviews
March 24, 2021
Based!
favorites

Jayesh

179 reviews104 followers

December 23, 2020

Great timeless observations about problems with modernity; bad proposed solutions. But again having already read stuff by James C. Scott or Eric Hoffer, this is not surprising. Should definitely be more widely read than it is right now.
non-fiction

Joseph Knecht

Author

3 books31 followers

December 26, 2020

A rational argument against leftist ideology. The problem is that it creates the Right ideology which has to be defended through revolution, rather than an evolution of the current system.

The author sees human beings as a symbol for "will to Power". The will to power is used by some humans to take over the freedom of others. Since power is a finite resource, those who have it must restrict the power of others, and through that restriction, restrict their freedom. Since technology/industry is an enabler for power, those who control technology (the elite) are unwilling participants in the transfer of power from humans to technology.

Western society has advanced so much that it has resolved most of the survival problems of its population. Once survival is resolved, humans need new artificial goals (surrogate motives) to reinforce their will to power. Humans invent new ways (sports, corporate ladders, politics) in which the will to power can be satiated.

The author has a tremendous grasp on systems thinking and is able to elaborate rational arguments on how the societal system works. However, he fails to see that society is just part of a larger system in which there is no will to power since the Power of God is Total.

philosophy technology

Rowan

50 reviews3 followers

January 5, 2021

I imagine the experience of reading The Unabomber Manifesto is kind of like the experience a frog has being slowly boiled alive. The premises are reasonable and the logic is sound, but by the time you get to the end, you realize you've been nodding

along with a philosophy that justified a good deal of murder. Would only recommend as a surrogate activity.

books-that-will-get-me-on-a-list

Alexander Allen

3 reviews

January 6, 2021

I don't agree with Kaczynski's ultimate conclusions, much less his methods, but many of the observations he makes in this book are spot-on. The liberals and moralists who make a show of assuming a dismissive attitude towards Kaczynski's ideas do not seem to understand (or want to seriously engage) the holistic scope of his worldview, which is a harsh indictment of the entire status quo. The concerns he raised in 1995 about the effects of technology, and our trajectory as a civilization should not be glibly brushed aside.

But don't let me tell you what to think. Read the book for yourself, which is easily digestible and available online, and make up your own mind. Are we rushing headlong into redemption, or ruin?

Chancellor Clay

33 reviews

January 17, 2021

The book exceeded my expectations.

Although Ted obviously takes a very extremist stance on technology and technological advancements, he does make some great points. His points are valid in regards to the psychological problems that are caused by over-socialization, population crowding, and an the over-dependence society has on technology.

political-theory

Cody Hawkins

27 reviews

February 15, 2021

TL;DR: I strongly recommend reading this book.

I find it more than a little eerie how much this essay articulates beliefs I've held from a very early age. Obviously Kaczynski was a troubled man and a killer, but there is no denying the prescience of his arguments. Everything he predicted when writing this in the mid 1980's to 1990's has come true. I think we are on the verge of the

watershed moment he discussed, and I'm not sure which direction it's going in. His commentary on the modern left is also extremely relevant and insightful.

People may disagree with me or call it abhorrent that I find value in a murderer's arguments, but there is no denying the society we live in today is massively unhappy, lonely, anxious, angry, and that it's getting worse all the time. We are destroying nature for our own machinations. When will it end? I don't know, but however it happens it probably won't be pretty.

nonfiction y21

Drake Hahn

105 reviews

January 24, 2021

A hugely prophetic read that I can relate to society in many ways today. I don't agree with everything, but for the most part, I align with basically everything that was stated.

Peter [VI]

4 reviews1 follower

February 4, 2021

I usually like to read political literature, and the meme that circulates on the internet "the industrial consequences have been a disaster for the human race; return to monke [sic]" was pretty funny so I decided to read the source of that meme. From what I originally knew of "Uncle Ted" was that he was a Post-Leftist, which is a critique of leftism coming from a leftist angle. He was also a Neoluddite, and the Luddites wanted a society that allowed you to not depend on the wage labor of the industrial system. I've also heard that while the praxis (ideological action) of Neoluddism was questionable and led to questionable results, its critique of modern day technoindustrialism had promise.

The manifesto starts with some definitions, mainly to that of Leftism. This manifesto absolutely loves to rant about "Leftism," and this is an extremely noticed choice when Leftists (different sense than Ted's) choose to read it. He defines the Left as an ideological and psychological group that is oversocialized or likes to oversocialize, e.g. stuff along the lines of "LGBT+ Rights!," "Trans Rights!," "BLM!," "Bash the Fash!" &c. And notably that even though they claim to be against the "[insert -ocracy] of Western Culture" that they still submit by its moral systems and cultural programming, e.g. wants Black Persons to have Fathers, wants to make a Utopic society, a moral haven for humanity [this humanism being a Western programming if you didn't know.] He also brings this attitude and claims its basis is in a feeling of inferiority, as a lot of Leftist types you'll meet have loads of self-deprecation, and frame things as power

struggles. Power struggles as in, they either group themselves as a weaker group in opposition to a stronger group (with a disdain towards a strong—typically “fascist” or “supremacist”—image) or constantly anxious that they are weaker compared to other groups (that is to say they constantly have in the mind that maybe—just maybe—they are weaker.) The anxiety of power is prevalent to a point where there is an increasing sensitivity to even the slightest term (e.g. words like American Indian are changed to Native American, which funnily in that example didn’t please the most Amerindian community by that much.) However, with this criticism, Ted makes not that he does not necessarily oppose these groups and their wishes, only their behavior. He also makes note of Postmodernism, attributing it as a Leftist notion, as a way of leftists to gain more power.

He then moves on to science and technophilia, claiming that scientists do work not out of curiosity or humanism, but out of surrogate activity (as opposed to real activity, which takes effort and is achievable, surrogate activities are more things which take either little effort and satisfy or things that can never be satisfied,) however he notes that some scientists do science partially out of other more real activity. He then attacks technophilia, claiming that the technophile and the futurist live in a pipe dream where they don’t realize the consequences of their creations, that eventually Gene Editing would give the government a much easier power for Eugenics and further its programming, taking away your traits one by one and effecting your children directly, and that science/technology is so interconnected that you cannot leave the bad and take the good.

His last part outlines possible praxis. He argues that a revolution is much easier than reform and much more effective (however he repeatedly makes the note that the revolution is a social revolution and not political, that it wouldn’t have to be violent and that it would just mainly be a change in philosophy and ideology.) He then talks about how violence may be needed to get messages out (because of technoindustrial mass media,) why he had to kill people to get this manifesto into the limelight (I’ll talk about this later.) He talks about how they should stay out of democratic politics, that doing so would lead to a societal decline and would permanently outcast the party. For society, he said it would be formed by ideology which is against technological progress, and that for the simpletons it would have the black and white of “nature good, technology bad.” He also said that the ideology itself would be sophisticated for those looking further, that it would have intelligent reasoning. It also wouldn’t be against absolutely all technology as the primitivist or primalist would, but just have a large disdain towards it and be against corporatization. Societies/communities would return to a natural, (utopic,) and sustainable state of being small and you would escape the hell that Accelerationists call “The Cold God.” At the end it rants about leftists again, calling them totalitarians in the thirst for power and that they should be distrusted and dissociated.

What worked? Well, I like the critiques of technophilia, medicines, and technoindustrialism. On technophilia and medicines, he borders on a philosophy known as Accel-

erationism. Accelerationism was a post-structuralist philosophy that centered around technoindustrialism and the acceleration towards a singularity point. That the machine will just corporatize and get more and more power and control, slowly but surely breaking you in. On technoindustrialism, his critique of corporatization was nice, although I feel Uncle Ted ignored a bit, especially on production being the main goal. He valued that man should not have to be dependent on the machine, which is an early value of Americanism that we have lost (he points out the Frontierism of the US.) He also had some background in psychology, so his ideal that real activity is best set him up to value productivism, maybe not on a social machine scale, but on an individual, yet this ignores that humanity loves to socialize, and that we tend to value production (which forms a productive social organism; a machine.)

What didn't work? Well this is where I have a lot more to say. To start off, I tend to 'subscribe' to a prominent (in the post-left) post-leftist philosophy known as Egoism, so many of my critiques come from there. Ted falls onto his same traps he outlines for 'leftism.' He values production, a common wellbeing for society, and a care for change not in his lifetime. He however notes that even if industrialism is inevitable, that it's in a too long time-frame to care about, yet he doesn't acknowledge that his time-frame is larger than a human life or your immediate relatives. He does claim that the change will happen in 40-100 years from 1995, however I feel much like this is in the same vein as Karl Marx, as he predicted (better put prophesized) a huge anti-capitalist communist revolution would occur in Industrial Germany, sparking other revolutions all across the Industrial World... simply put that never happened. He values production, while he seems to know that things naturally corporatize he seems to forget why. It's not because we value 'progress,' it's because we value production. We're both social and corporate organisms, if we didn't naturally corporatize we would not have bodies. Zero Accelerationism has a wonderful rebuttal to this, entropy and the laws of thermodynamics. The more something corporatizes the more energy it will need to do so, and the less energy there will be. This renders Ted's fears a little more null, yet his fears are still perfectly valid. If he wanted to make an ideology it shouldn't be based off of anti-tech, but 'anti-work' (this same anti-work/individualist mentality was what the CIA tried to implant in Soviet populations during the Cold War to stop Communist Satism, it later backfired as the philosophies the CIA placed in the Soviets now plague the US.) However this goes against his whole thing of activity. Much better alternatives to Neoluddism in my opinion would be Individualist Anarchism, U/Acc, Z/Acc, Frontierism, or most forms of Post-Anarchism. My main problem is his ignorance of Leftism. He treats Leftism from the rightist's perspective and includes many of the straw-mans. While his criticisms of 'leftism' are arguably valid, he doesn't work to better define things. He conflates an absolute ton of leftism, falling into the same trap of leftists. He cannot distinguish an individual, only a group. When he talks about Leftism he conflates both the Old Left, the New left, Social Progressivism, Fourth Wave, and Postmodernism. What really ticked me off was his association of postmodernism (existentialism, nihilism, &c) and leftism. Postmodernism is not leftist. In the neofascist

movement a rising force is actually R/Acc., or Right-wing Accelerationism. It's Post-Structuralist, which means it goes beyond even Postmodernism. Esoteric Fascism which is a larger umbrella will also employ poststructuralism to further their 'bundle of sticks' mentality through the use of group-truth. His attack on existentialism is also worrying to me. "Relative moralities/truth" is literally how science, mathematics, no matter how materialist it seems, is formed. Mathematics is like an alphabet, it is analog to 'real' sounds, but you can make it 'do' sounds that don't exist: it's axiomatic (both subjective and immaterial.) It works by exclusion. Science is visual, a methodology of perception, and often also axiomatic (doesn't help that a lot of its basis is in math.) This isn't to say science isn't useful or that we faked the moon landing, or whatever conspiracist junk is thrown at you, it's just 'proof' that science isn't a Capital T Truth but a tool (sadly what many call 'scientism' is turning "science" into a belief system rather than a methodology.) Science and Mathematics are not (and should not be used) for your detriment, but instead for a further understanding: not to cast yourself into shadows but to bring yourself up into brighter light. Another thing which I briefly mentioned is his justification for terrorism. He claims that mass-media makes individual information impossible to get across successfully to a wide amount of people... which is funny because the reason I found out about this manifesto was due to meme culture. The fact that meme culture is something where one guy can make something and it spreads like wildfire without the need for corporate media is proof that Uncle Ted was unjust and incorrect in his terrorism, because he literally didn't need to do it. Ted could have just gone "funni monke [sic]" to spread his message. Meme culture is a great way to spread propaganda like wildfire. In fact, modern day terrorist group ISIS quite notably uses this method, and it sadly works!

Overall, it's a great critique of technoindustrialism. While its solutions are questionable, its outcomes are hard to sell, it does an interesting job as an alternative. While I don't think it will lead to an Arcadia, I do think it will continue to entertain discussion about the foundations of our industrial society.

2020-1-reading-challenge

David Souza

8 reviews

January 27, 2021

I think it's very radical to say that all technology must disappear because it makes us slaves of the system but I must admit that he has very good arguments every now and then. Interesting essay.

Barsoum

18 reviews

January 28, 2021

The scary part is: it was written 25 years ago!

Ramon Galeana

21 reviews8 followers

January 30, 2021

Thought provoking!

Barry Mulligan

35 reviews

February 17, 2021

Very tough book to rate...obviously the person who wrote it performed heinous acts of violence. Yet if you push that to the back of your mind this manifesto as a stand alone piece makes some good points. I still don't agree though with everything in it. There are a lot of extreme and radical views in here and as a rule of thumb I try to stay away from that logic. Extreme thinking can be a bit lazy and easy to fall into at times but life isn't that simple, it isn't that black and white. You need to look at each situation within its own context. The same act may be morally correct in one context and heinous in another. It is up to the reader to decide.

Lyle

81 reviews

October 26, 2021

performed the surrogate activity of enjoying this thought provoking and well wired little package via audiobook on youtube
audio favorites

Artur

206 reviews

May 10, 2021

A masterpiece written by a murderous egotist who extrapolates his own suffering and pains on the entire human race. Nevertheless, a worthy analysis of the modern civilization and its ills even though too overgeneralized and finished with a conclusion that does not hold due to the fact that technological civilization wasn't an error of human nature but rather the direct result of it. Anyways, alienation and absence of a

constructive and self-focused power drives are quite powerful context that along with the analysis of the leftwing thinking constitute a work worthy of your time.

english

Jwsokol

21 reviews1 follower

March 14, 2021

This book is worth reading. Obviously, if you are aware of who wrote it, you might dismiss it; however, by reading it, you gain a ton of insight into the beliefs drove Kaczynski. But there is more to it than just understanding the man. At the heart of this book is a deep concern for the world we've build and our future. There are a number of interesting ideas to explore.

Millimani

35 reviews

March 7, 2021

hot take, anarchism is not leftism

Arvid Borgne

3 reviews3 followers

March 9, 2021

Kaczynski's text provides and interesting criticism of modern society's dependence and addiction to technology which is surprisingly agreeably given its radical and revolutionary intentions. It is refreshing indeed to see someone argue about humanity's relation to nature without simply talking about pollution, but trying to get to the bigger problems at hand. The only parts I can truly object to are his seemingly endless dunking on 'leftish types' which takes up an inordinate amount of given the length of the text.

Overall a pretty great read which, trimmed down, could be an almost perfect pamphlet for this matter.

Andrew Edling

15 reviews2 followers

March 19, 2021

He was unnervingly on point, in the rise of "Big Tech" and our ever-increasing dependence on technology. If the power went out, many of us would struggle to start

a fire. We have become separated from our natural world. Change is needed, and this might be the wake up call we slept on...

PS - Don't send bombs in the mail, please.
favorites

A

171 reviews2 followers

March 21, 2021

Is it wrong to want to give this book five stars? Guilt and a tinge of shame makes me give it four. I am, by no means, a supporter of Ted Kaczynski's crimes but he seems to make a lot of sense in this book. There are, however, a few points on which I disagree. Very interesting and informative read.

Billie Aurora

10 reviews

March 29, 2021

He is indeed a troubled man but are you really sure that you should avoid all the craziness in this world?

Srijan Shukla

18 reviews46 followers

April 6, 2021

Kinda conflicted, reading thoughts of a genius murderer. But it did make me think a lot.

===== Spoilers ahead =====

Random Notes, with chess notation follows,

Feelings of inferiority & Oversocialization = Psychology of Modern leftism (?)

Oversocialization -> Conformance to societal values. (!?) Constant guilt inducing. (!)

Oversocialization -> Mainstreamed prescriptions. How-tos. Techniques. Methodologies.

And all driven by capitalism. (!!)

Power process,

Goal, effort, attainment of goal, Autonomy.

"Power is not enough, one must have goals towards which to exercise power" (!)

"In order to avoid serious psychological problems, a human being needs goals whose attainment requires effort, and he must have a reasonable rate of success in attaining his goals" (!?)

Artificial goals - "Surrogate activities" activities that a person does not feel deprived of, if in case the person is not able to pursue it.

"Modern society has made satisfying basic biological needs trivial for the mainstream"

It only requires moderate intelligence and obedience (!)

People find autonomy in surrogate activities. Most people are not looking for autonomy. (!!)

It serves the need of the power process. (?!)

"Conservatives are fools, they whine of decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological and economic progress" (!??)

"Modern man must satisfy his need for the power process largely through the pursuit of the artificial needs created by the advertising and marketing industry. and through surrogate activities." (!!)

= Existentialism. Search of which is also a surrogate activity (!)

For a certain sect of people, Ted writes, that the power process cannot be satisfied with surrogate activities, they need a sense of security which almost an impossible practical task to attain. "We live in a world in which relatively few people - maybe 500 or 1000 - make the most important decisions"

Example, you don't make the rules on safety standards at a nuclear power plant in your country.

Modern man has less control, over most problems which are new and man made in their nature. (!)

Society is greatly permissive when it comes to unimportant things.

Important things, are regulated by direct or indirect means. Entertainment programming is a powerful form of propaganda. (!!)

"It is not the primitive man, who has used his body daily for practical purposes, who fears the deterioration of age, but the modern man, who has never had a practical use for his body beyond walking from his car to his house" (?!)

People vary in their drive to power process. People vary in their gullibility to oversocialization. People vary in their degree of acceptance of servitude. Duh Duh Duh. (!)

The FC consider it demeaning if one's need for power process is satisfied through group identity or surrogate activities. They advocate power process growth with real goals. They call this freedom. (??)

"Science marches forward blindly without any regard to real welfare of the human race" (!?)

The way things work, System » People. System induces changes it wants through propaganda. System = Technical necessity largely.

Technology starts off as a choice, but is eventually not.

Technology only goes in one direction, it cannot be reverted.

Technology chips away from freedom.

Before industrial revolution, people were not this depressed. Current environment has played a major role in making more people depressed, and what does society offer

to such folks? Mindless entertainment and anti depressants. (Excluding cases where depression is of genetic origin)

The chipping away of freedom and conformity to the system will always appear as a natural response to societal problems.

And they will appear moral. But its not, its solving problems that need not be there in the first place. People are never presented information or exposed to novel things in an unbiased manner, people are always manipulated into things

Author talks heavily about genetic engineering and is deeply afraid of how it can be put to use by the system.

Throughout the text, "engineering" "science" "technology" are the bad words. The harbinger of destruction. It is argued that science is aimless.(!!) Scientists/engineers do what they do just as a surrogate activity (?) And what society perceives as progress can have unintended side affects.(?!) And all these things trade off individual freedom. Basically we have no control unless a revolution is begun. And all efforts at technological progress must be brought to a halt, is what the author says.

Other bad words in the text are "leftism" "surrogate activities"

Science is taking us into the unknown with an assumption of "good things might happen" but really who knows?

"It would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences" (??)

Two kinds of technology: small scale vs organisation dependent.

Can a handful of local craftsmen build a refrigerator? No. Refrigerator cannot exist in an average person's life without outside help.

Leftism is driven by collectivism and need for power, the author says (?)

The anarchist seeks power too. But seeks it for the individual and small groups. Not for society or large organisations.

The economic and technological structure of a society are far more important than its political structure in determining the way the average man lives. (!!)

Chetan Sharma

10 reviews

April 9, 2021

The very articulate yet disturbed Dr. Kaczynski

1. correctly observes that modern leftism is a product of people with an inferiority complex and self hatred trying to grab power and give their lives some meaning by claiming to be fighting for marginalized groups.
2. correctly observes that humans, if they are to be mentally healthy, have a need for what he calls "power process" (meaningful achievement) by their own hands, but incorrectly concludes that since most human endeavours do not meet this need and

the modern civilization makes it impossible, as it requires large organizations, where most individuals are little more than interchangeable cogs, we should dismantle this civilization in a revolution, to go back to living like primitive people, whose lives he claims are more fulfilling, as they are content from winning the struggles that they face by themselves and are thus not looking for some sort of fulfillment or meaning like modern people.

Javier Garcia
2 reviews3 followers
April 10, 2021
the prophetic manuscript

Jedidiah Ng
16 reviews1 follower
July 26, 2021

Firstly, Ted Kacynski's writing style is very enjoyable to read and shows that he was a very intelligent and thoughtful individual.

Next about the content itself, one thing in particular that stands out to me is that the manifesto states that we're adapting to fit into society rather than society adapting to fit us.

From my experiences, I feel it's a very spot-on observation:

1) Many people despite having no interest are pressurized into studying engineering and programming degrees because society needs more engineers and software developers. People studying things like music are looked down on for obtaining a "useless" degree. Why? Because the system does not need such degrees and people living under the system internalize such views.

Yet while studying, many of these undergraduates are not passionate, deeply unhappy, and oftentimes after graduating many of these people experience an existential crisis over the fact that they're now locked into having a job in the field that they have no interest in and regret not having pursued their passion.

2) Society needs people who are unhappy because these people as a result of their unhappiness chase the latest cars, a big house, branded goods, and et cetera because they believe that it can solve their melancholy, yet evidence has shown that the active pursuit of happiness makes one unhappy. If people were content they would not desire to purchase as many goods and services which would collapse the entire world's economy. The economy needs a constant inflow of purchases of goods and services so employees can get paid and companies can make money.

Although this sounds like I'm being edgy or dismissing people who like to purchase goods as shallow consider this:

1) Many advertisements promote insecurities in their audiences in order to sell them solutions, and so may present retouched images, sexual objectification, and explicit messages that promote "unrealistic images of beauty" (LiveLifeGetActive, 2016) and undermine body image,[22] particularly in female audiences.[23][24][25]

Then the following:

1) Individuals with BDD tend to engage in heavy plastic surgery use. Mayank Vats from Rashid Hospital in the UAE, indicated that selfies may be the reason why young people seek plastic surgery with a 10% increase in nose jobs, a 7% increase in hair transplants and a 6% increase in eyelid surgery in 2013.

2) Body dissatisfaction creates negative attitudes, a damaging mentality, and negative habits in young women. [26] [27] The emphasis on an ideal female body shape and size is especially psychologically detrimental to young women, who may resort to grooming, dieting, and surgery in order to be happy.[28] A negative body image is very common among young adult women.

3) 53% of boys cited advertisements as a "major source of pressure to look good; [though] social media (57%) and friends (68%) exerted more influence, while celebrities (49%) were slightly less persuasive".[48]

4) Plastic surgery is popular in Asia as a means of Westernizing facial features; rhinoplasty and blepharoplasty may be employed to make noses and eyelids look more Caucasian.

5) Skin lightening products are also prevalent even in countries where non-white ethnicities are the majority, and the industry makes billions of dollars every year.[citation needed] In India alone, whitening products make up 45% of the skin care market.[75] Some whitening cosmetics have dangerous side effects; hydroquinone causes irritation and leukemia[citation needed] while mercury causes rashes.[76]

Taken from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_dy... and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_image philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Body_image_philosophy)

djm

2 reviews

April 18, 2021

It goes without saying that the authors actions are soberingly written on paragraph 96, "In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people." are haunting; this work would not be known without the abhorrent events related to it.

That's not to say it should be completely dismissed, far from it. As of writing this (2021) we have governments and corporations that are far more powerful and insidious than ever before. Their use of technology has further degraded individuals and their communities.

Dan

353 reviews

May 11, 2021

Straightforward, easy to understand. A tad Ad Hominem, but interesting psychology and social theory.

I think you're still alive, Ted. The Christ option is to know that some of these things about human nature are true, but to forgive them for it and to ask Christ for forgiveness yourself.

Jfzpam

1 review

May 13, 2021

good points bluntly stated/not very eloquent but entertaining read and found myself agreeing with teddy on a lot of points.

Jason Harper

127 reviews4 followers

May 22, 2021

The Unabomber's manifesto is well-written, logically supported, and structured in a way that makes it suited for popular consumption. Kaczynski identifies the problems with leftism – while granting that a neatly defined understanding of modern leftism is impossible – and of the modern technology enabled system. Leftist capture of this system leads to the situation we are currently in. Kaczynski, however, falls very short in identifying a path forward. Simply smashing the system – a global system – is not a viable strategy. And the actions he chose to take cost him and his ideas a serious blow in today's information space.

Xam Zepol

18 reviews

May 31, 2021

Makes a lot of sense, ngl, but it would've been way better if he didn't resort to make terrorist attacks, and injure and kill people in the process, to spread awareness of his ideals and thoughts.

Jarl Simonsen
89 reviews1 follower
June 3, 2021

To my great surprise I enjoyed much of this book. Though Kaczynski did commit violent acts due to his convictions, this book is still a coherent and well-argued treatment of the consequences of the industrial revolution which, of course, have been a disaster for the human race, according to Kaczynski.

Even though I may not agree with all of the book's conclusions I still have to give Kaczynski credit for being able to state and defend his positions quite convincingly.

Saurabh Chauhan
35 reviews
June 3, 2021

The background surrounding this makes it a tragedy, but it's worthwhile to consider that in a different age and/or culture, it would have been (culturally and morally) redeemed as revolutionary. Kaczynski being dismissed as a paranoid schizoid man does only add fuel to the fire he sets in the book, namely the psychiatric institution's tendency to pathologize all deviancy as a sickness to be cured so the subject may be well-adjusted to the functioning of the system.

The fact that some revolutionaries of the modern age wouldn't red flag Kaczynski and his work with the same fervency as the West does, is yet another interesting thing to me.

In the memetic realm this won't die easily despite lacking the epistemic rigour that the author himself repeatedly points out. It's short and powerful. A good conversation starter. An example of an 'insane' man presenting his deeply accumulated convictions in a hyper-sane manner.

Matthew Gilman
Author
44 books2 followers
June 5, 2021

I would rate this as five stars except for the obvious fact that the author blew it with a long history of postal offenses. It's was eerie to read the first few sections and see how well it fit with where our society is today. Of course, any one at any time of our current history could have said the same thing but as social media and big tech continue to rule the conversation and document when we poop I can't help but think that 168 IQ Ted was right.

Jack Bordignon
29 reviews23 followers
July 23, 2021
Interesting
society

Vincent Marger
9 reviews7 followers
June 20, 2021
Ted was right.
political-theory

sadichha
86 reviews
June 21, 2021

not the ravings of a lunatic, which seems to be the dominant narrative surrounding his actions, but carefully reasoned (if sometimes incorrectly) and impassioned. kept wondering what it says about me that I agree with many of his points; at the same time I think about his refusal to accept the insanity plea his brother pushed for, and how the label of schizophrenic had (also incorrectly, per TK) dismissed his valid and genuine critiques of the effects of capitalism and industrialization. which is something he predicts and writes about in his manifesto. my roommate accused me of some out of pocket stuff when I was talking about reading this, and I couldn't help but think that TK had also correctly predicted this interaction in the sections about critiquing leftism. at the same time, his complete dismissal and denigration of my interest is hilarious because there is so much that TK says that my roommate has expressed, but much less eloquently. there's something to be learned from everything, even if you don't agree with it. This is an interesting work of philosophy. Please don't put me on an FBI watch list, Joe Biden. I'm already technically considered a domestic terrorist as of this week.

library

delaney
12 reviews1 follower
August 12, 2023

Ted makes several clear and correct points too bad he sent bombs to people. Wasn't based enough. He used bombs instead of rocks

Margot Tustin

14 reviews1 follower

March 27, 2022

Make no mistake, this man was a murderer and a terrorist. He did have point worth considering, perhaps not to kill for.

Siraaaj Khandkar

39 reviews14 followers

June 28, 2021

Spot on diagnosis of the problems. Dubious ideas for solutions, possibly for the very reason outlined in the diagnosis - impossibility.

My own opinion? Go bravely into the future no human has yet experienced, rethink, reframe and don't worry about reinventing the proverbial wheel - there're plenty of challenges yet unseen and there always will be.

Peepee_KaaKaa

17 reviews

December 5, 2022

;/

Michael Montemurri

5 reviews

August 13, 2021

Reading this in 2021, shocking to realize it was written in 1995. Many of the problems identified seem to be a self fulfilling prophecy. Shares a lot of the same insights on the future of humanity with Yuval Harari's "Homo Deus". Definitely worth a read.

pbk

4 reviews

August 7, 2021

great book other than the "one struggle" shit

Denisdu67

2 reviews

August 7, 2021

Interesting but it need to be developped for young people who don't have a lot of experience in the society like me. So now I don't agree or disagree though about his ideas and I don't know if the technology is bad or good, that's why I'm reading other books, studies and other things.

Jeff Hoffman

89 reviews2 followers

August 8, 2021

Includes a great analysis of modern leftism along with a decent account of how development of technology harms society

20th-century anarchism anarcho-primitivism

Matt

143 reviews14 followers

August 18, 2021

A very interesting historical and pertinent environmental and social document, perhaps more relevant now than when it was written. Kaczynski's arguments, far from being the ravings of a mad lunatic, are well plotted, and make a lot of sense. I don't find myself agreeing with all of his conclusions, (namely I still disagree that technology itself is inherently problematic/evil), but his points cannot be ignored. Kaczynski argues his points very convincingly, and it's clear that he has considered the points where people will disagree with him and preemptively responds. The reconciliation between technology, freedom, and the balance of humanity's existence with the natural world are all topics that should be at the forefront of social and political discourse. We ignore these topics as a species at our peril.

Vuitton Nim

8 reviews2 followers

October 30, 2021

When I watched the documentary "the Unabomber in his own words" I was absolutely and utterly fascinated by this man. And I watched this documentary while I was close to the end of reading this "35,000-word essay".

Ted argues for some intriguing concepts. Two of them which personally made me think quite a lot are 'The Power Process' and 'Surrogate activities'. And as much as I love

a lot of this essay fundamentally he's an atheist, politically he's an anarchist, and I'm a Muslim, and politically im an Islamist so disagreement is bound to happen. I fully agree with his position on leftists. I was genuinely surprised when I read about a lot of modern socio-economic problems that ted just exposes and dissects. I think I have to read it again but I would like to have more general knowledge before I re-read this essay or manifesto. So definitely gonna read it again in the future. There's a whole lot more to say but ill leave it on the re-read.

inpo

Roberto

134 reviews23 followers

August 22, 2021

I guess there is some kind of benefit in reading this manifesto distant both geographically and chronologically from those awful acts of domestic terrorism. I say this beacause it helps putting the many topics of this manifesto into perspective, making it easier to understand both his thoughts and feelings about the way that the industrial society developed itself.

Many of the questions that he brings on were actually in the right path, I feel, and I got a somewhat bittersweet taste during the reading. I can't help thinking about him something that I also thought, in 2019, about Saul Alinsky, after reading "Rules for Radicals":

Ted Kaczynski, as mr. Alinsky did, "reveals himself not as a genius, but as an efreet." non-fiction read-my-30s

Marvin

7 reviews

August 26, 2021

One of the craziest advertising campaigns ever

Kyle Willey

24 reviews2 followers

September 8, 2021

Lots of unsupported claims, but also much better than one would expect.

Robin

26 reviews

January 11, 2022

He's right. Industrial society has been a disaster and is a failure. That doesn't mean you should kill people. Why he didn't stay lecturing at uni and then have this published conventionally, I am at a loss to explain. He could've gone on lecture tours. A man born into such privilege: the height of the good times for baby boomers, a well paid job as a professor. What more did he want? A great shame he threw away his life and vision.

Narsames Maiky

66 reviews1 follower

October 13, 2021

I would never think that Ted could be so keen about things and at the same time so thoughtful .

This book certainly took me by surprise and although I do not agree on some things, I think that much of what he stated is brilliant.

english

Móreyo Andino Ruiz

9 reviews

October 17, 2021

Industrial Society and Its Future is a essay written by Theodore Kaczynski (Unabomber) .

It explains why technology is bad, Basically. Pretty much light and darkness both have to coexist. I agree in a few points only. But it's a worth reading if you're bored ; easy read.

Marcel Wilnicki

77 reviews3 followers

October 19, 2021

interesting

Charles Haywood

505 reviews778 followers

October 22, 2021

What role should technology—the complex of machines and computers that undergirds our world—play in our future? This is a crucial question, and among thinking people today there exists a distinct split. Some, such as James Poulos in his soon-to-be-released *Human, Forever*, call for fully accepting that technology exists and is not going away, while refusing to surrender our humanity. Others, such as Paul Kingsnorth, entirely reject what he calls the “Machine,” and intimate that our technology-dictated future is an anti-human grotesquerie, followed by inevitable total collapse. Theodore Kaczynski falls squarely into this latter category, and this, his famous *Manifesto*, outlines what should be done—goals he notably took to heart.

Kaczynski’s book is not especially polished; it is, after all, the work of a man living alone and stewing in his own thoughts for many years (even though he purports to write for a group, the nonexistent “Freedom Club”). It is written as what it is—a manifesto, a list of bullet points that state his conclusions, along with the reasoning behind them, in a staccato fashion. It does not purport to offer, and in fact explicitly disclaims, complete coverage of the matters with which it concerns itself, nor does it try to refute every objection. Still, Kaczynski offers what amounts to a total philosophical worldview.

Industrial Society and Its Future contains one primary theme and one secondary theme. The primary theme is that industrial-technological civilization, that is, what we live in today and have since the Industrial Revolution, is very bad for mankind and therefore must be ended. That’s no surprise if you know any of Kaczynski’s story. But the secondary theme is that leftism is the biggest obstacle to accomplishing this goal, and to human flourishing generally. That is a surprise. I must admit that before I read this book, I had no idea that Kaczynski regarded leftism as the driver of evil. (It’s amusing that a thinker as different as René Girard came to the same conclusion through a totally unrelated chain of reasoning.) This largely ignored fact no doubt explains much of the animosity of the regime against him—after all, the very many leftist bombers of the 1970s were lionized then and rarely, if ever punished, and after were in fact often rewarded, most notably the execrable Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn. Kaczynski got life in the Supermax, where he is today.

Thus, after a brief Introduction, in which Kaczynski states his purpose of destroying the fruits of the Industrial Revolution, which he tells us has massively contributed to human suffering, he immediately turns to an analysis of “The Psychology of Modern Leftism,” which he describes as “one of the most widespread manifestations of the craziness of our world.” This thread then runs through every chapter in the book. He admits some lack of precision in how he uses “leftist,” but in general a leftist is someone who is both characterized by a feeling of inferiority and is “oversocialized.” Kaczynski places emphasis on the objective “inferiority” part, not the subjective “feeling” part. These are people who are objectively inferior, because they know they are not “strong, good, and successful.” Leftists include many, though not all, who are “socialists, collectivists, ‘politically correct’ types, feminists, gay and disability activists, animal rights activists and the like.” Leftists “hate America and the West because they are strong and success-

ful.” “The leftist is antagonistic to the concept of competition because, deep inside, he feels like a loser.” Compassion, which the leftist delusorily believes to be his motivation, is fake and merely a cover for his “hostility and frustrated need for power.” In a similar manner, one who is willingly “oversocialized” is one who is tightly bound by society, giving him “a sense of constraint and powerlessness.” Although he does not mention either, what Kaczynski seems to mean is social pressure from and upon leftists to absorb and then rebroadcast fatal debilities such as safetyism and the hyper-feminization of society.

Leftists, who “tend to be intellectuals or members of the upper-middle class,” are not at all rebels, as they would have us believe. Rather, they want to integrate everyone else into the “system” and force everyone to accept its values. The claim on which they base this demand is that they are “experts,” so we must obey them without question and without them having to offer, you know, facts or reasoning. Given that this book, as a manifesto published at Kaczynski’s demand in major newspapers, was released in 1995, when the cult of the expert was, comparatively, just a little cloud far away on the horizon, it’s a little eerie to hear this precisely on-point, concise analysis of the atmosphere of 2021. And while Kaczynski’s definition of leftism isn’t mine (I focus on demands for emancipation and equality), our definitions both end up covering essentially the same set of people—perhaps because one can map feelings of inferiority to demands for equality, and oversocialization to demands for emancipation.

This attack on leftists is warmup to defining what human life should be—the opposite of this life of the leftist. In its natural form, human life follows the “power process,” which in short is life lived by achieving goals through effort. “One must have goals toward which to exercise one’s power.” These goals can be artificial, “surrogate” goals, however, but such are a very weak substitute for goals that are tied to more existential matters, and surrogate goals (paper pushing makework, sportsball fandom, and so forth) are ultimately completely inadequate to support a society’s flourishing. Most of all, for the majority of people (Kaczynski constantly notes that he is putting forth general, not absolute, rules) work toward the goal must be autonomous, meaning either individual effort or effort within a small group. Through the power process, an individual acquires “self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of power.” He can feel fulfilled. This is freedom. “Freedom means having power; not the power to control other people but the power to control the circumstances of one’s own life.” (Kaczynski here again parallels a very different set of thinkers, notably Matthew B. Crawford and Sebastian Junger, and he channels what until the Enlightenment was the universal conception of freedom, that it is the opposite of doing exactly as one wants, which he says is “mere permissiveness.”) Freedom is not being granted some rights by bourgeois society, limited to those that promote supposed growth and progress.

If he, on the other hand, a person is not able, for whatever reason, to go through the power process, including as he progresses through the natural stages of life, he suffers a range of psychological damage, from a feeling of inferiority to eating disorders to abnormal sexual behavior. In short, no power process means the psychological health

of the individual is ruined, and he most definitely feels unfulfilled and lacking meaning. He may try to find a substitute, such as a mass political movement, or some other organization in which he can subsume his own goals. But this is not a solution (and if it were, Kaczynski explicitly says, he would not accept it, for it is “demeaning” to achieve one’s own goals through the actions of others). And a society made up of such people, as ours is, is a very defective society. No surprise, it is leftists who are the least able to undergo the power process today, or they choose not to, which explains their psychological problems.

So far, Kaczynski sounds like a combination of Oswald Spengler and Bronze Age Pervert (he even refers to the symptoms of modernity as “similar to those shown by caged animals,” echoing BAP’s famous remark about chimpanzees in captivity, and his concept of the power process has much in common with BAP’s “owned space”). I certainly see little to disagree with in his analysis. Kaczynski isn’t a self-help guru, though, helping us through our eating disorders and balancing our qi. His point is that industrial society, technological society, obviates the power process for nearly everyone. For him, “technology” means not digital technology, even less digital communications technology, but any large-scale industrial functions made possible by machines, and the social organization that derives from society being built around industrial functions, whether driven by steam or by Intel. This is what he calls the “system,” which manifests its will through our ruling class, which benefits the most from it. The system must control human beings in order to function. The goal is to oversocialize everyone and thereby weaken bonds existing outside the system, and this goal is the focus, explicit or implicit, of nearly all social efforts of the system, from breaking family ties to forcing women into the workforce.

Industrial society demands that each person’s primary loyalty be first to the system, because this is necessary for the system to operate at all. If everyone opted out, as Kaczynski himself did, the system would crash. As he notes, primitive peoples rarely, if ever, suffered the disorders resulting from being shut out from the power process, because their lives revolved around the power process. The various indicia of modernity blamed for modernity’s problems, such as atomization of man, his isolation from nature, and the breakdown of family life, are downstream from this problem. Thus, “conservatives are fools,” because they complain of these problems, while at the same time they “enthusiastically support technological progress and economic growth.” This is Kaczynski’s only direct criticism in the entire book of conservatives, although any support of industrial/corporate dominance, which when he wrote was considered a conservative position, is very bad in Kaczynski’s eyes, which means much of the book is indirectly critical of a type of conservative. (Of course, he wrote before today’s interlocking government and corporate tyranny, and the revelation that those in favor of corporate power are actually either leftists or their tools, such that no real conservative can support industrial/corporate dominance.) Leftists, however, are totally consumed by the psychological manifestations of exclusion from the power process, because they reject it on principle, not by accident.

Seeing the resulting problems, mass dissatisfaction with life, the system has tried to set up alternatives to the power process, such as creating artificial needs through advertising that can be satisfied by consumer consumption. But this is a very poor substitute, mostly because autonomy cannot be part of this equation. “Today people live more by virtue of what the system does FOR them or TO them than by virtue of what they do for themselves.” It is not only that we lack autonomy—we are afraid all the time, yet unlike primitive man we are unable to act to combat our fears, from war to increasing taxes, and worse yet, these threats are man-made and imposed from outside, not natural occurrences we can stoically bear as part of the eternal natural order. The system prevents us from doing anything important at all in response; it regulates all behavior, in its very nature.

Kaczynski’s point about fear and constrained response is very important, very insightful, and very prescient. Every nation in the world, it seems, is today organized around fear—most obviously of the Wuhan Plague, but of much else as well. When the Plague is gone, it will be something else, and that immediately. Governments both propagate fear as a means of control and try to alleviate fear in order to please the populace, which itself willingly bathes in fear. Why this should be is somewhat of a mystery to me. Part of it, of course, is mass feminization, allowing the concerns of one type of woman, what would in the past have been accurately called a weak or hysterical woman (and what Kaczynski would call a leftist woman), to dominate education and public discourse, and raising such women to elective office. Perhaps, for example, the frustrated maternal instincts of the childless Angela Merkel explain many of her insane policy prescriptions, from inviting millions of crocodile-tear-crying aliens, her substitute babies, into the German nation, to her “hush, little darling, don’t you cry, I’ll keep you safe from harm” reaction to the Plague. Certainly the majority of the most extreme Plague fanatics are women, who derive meaning from their prescriptions that narrowly focus on supposed safety while ignoring all other matters, most of all the costs of this approach. Another part of universal fear is the collapse of religious belief, and even more of the shared healthy social-mental approach to life that comes when much of the population is religious. (A recent video by Bishop Irenei, a Russian Orthodox bishop, excellently states what the Christian position on the Plague should be, which is not the position commonly found in Christian churches in today’s world.) No doubt there is more to it, perhaps tied to deliberate manipulation in the service of control; maybe I’ll come back to this topic another day (and I have already discussed irrational crowd behavior in the context of the Plague). Regardless, Kaczynski’s core point, that fear destroys the psychological health of a society, is doubtless correct.

That’s analytics. Next we turn to solutions, after a side note that “we’ve had to kill people” in order to “make a lasting impression,” with the complaint that it’s hard to be noticed nowadays (and this was before the torrent of information poured over us by the internet). Given the complexity of human society, large changes necessarily produce unpredictable results. But small changes ultimately change nothing; society

reverts to whatever was its original path. Thus, industrial-technological society cannot be reformed and we must accept the uncertainty of wholesale change.

Nor can we “rescue freedom without sacrificing the supposed benefits of technology.” Why should we sacrifice those benefits? Because industrial society inevitably massively restricts freedom. The system requires everyone become a cog, that nobody be permitted to undergo the power process. Expanded local autonomy is a chimera and no solution. The system modifies human behavior to fit its needs, rather than satisfying human needs. Yes, it seems to be, and it is, hard to give up modern medicine. But the system is intertwined; we cannot keep only part of it (and moreover, modern medicine tends to the degradation of man, because government will ultimately engage in forced eugenics as the genome deteriorates because natural selection no longer acts). Worse yet, when given the choice, most people will choose technology over freedom, in large part because each individual compromise, such as changing to motorized transport, seems to have only upside. Yet what has been wrought, all-together, by industrial-technological society is enormously destructive of human flourishing. Technology is a one-way ratchet; it cannot be contained or reformed. It must be destroyed.

True, industrial-technological society is suffering from self-inflicted maladies, both economic and environmental. This is not an indication it may reform itself; rather, its weakness is a golden opportunity to strangle it entirely. Efforts to reform or restrain the system are useless; lasting social reform on even minor matters not integral to the system (unlike the system’s need to deny autonomy, which is integral) has always largely proved impossible. “The only way out is to dispense with the industrial-technological system altogether.” This means revolution—a Gordian Knot solution that has the side benefit of being inspirational to those who must take the action.

What Kaczynski fears the most is what the system will do to actually change mankind permanently in the future, in the name of our own good but really to perpetuate the system, making revolution impossible. He fears improved psychological techniques that control, and therefore, strip the humanity from, people. He fears genetic engineering to eliminate undesirable traits. (He’s wrong that this will ever be possible; as I have noted elsewhere, all major scientific advancements we are told are coming are simply fantasy, especially those related to reengineering humans, or creating machines with the characteristics of man.) Most of all, he fears the closing window to do anything about these problems; he thinks forty to one hundred years. If the system is allowed to gain “complete control over everything on Earth, including human beings and all other important organizations,” whether the system is one organization or coordinated smaller organizations, we will never escape. The system will be aided by those who participate in advancing the system as a surrogate activity, with “unabated enthusiasm,” in particular scientists. At that point, “[h]uman freedom mostly will have vanished, because individuals and small groups will be impotent vis-a-vis large organizations armed with supertechnology and an arsenal of advanced psychological and biological tools for manipulating human beings, besides instruments of surveillance and physical coercion.”

As seen by this, scientists, as a broad category meaning those who claim to derive solutions to benefit mankind from the scientific method, are Kaczynski's prime target of obloquy. He says they are not actually seeking to benefit mankind, as they will tell you if you ask about their motives. Nor are they doing something neither beneficial nor harmful, such as satisfying their curiosity. They are instead pursuing the power process in a way that benefits, enlarges, and enhances the system, although their goals are mostly inadequate surrogate activities, not stated larger goals, so they are not even getting satisfaction out of pursuing the power process. Moreover, scientists are very susceptible to the desire to be part of a mass movement, for which they eagerly abandon all objectivity and slavishly serve, and worship, the system (an accurate summation, given what we have seen of most scientists' behavior in the Wuhan Plague).

At first glance, Kaczynski's dystopia seems pretty much [Review completes as first comment.]

Travolta's Fat Buddy From Grease

8 reviews

November 13, 2021

paragraph 116

Matthew Halloran

13 reviews

November 19, 2021

The book is well-written and thought-provoking, but it has some logical flaws. The author's main argument is that technological innovation will irrevocably change the human race, which is likely true. But he proposes that the alternative is naturalism, falling for the nature fallacy (i.e. just because something is natural, doesn't mean it is better). Technology may currently be creating more problems than it solves (e.g. climate change, pollution), but at least it gives us a chance for civilization to last millions of years. Without technology, we could be wiped out by an asteroid, super volcano, or the next ice age (of course these things could still wipe us out now, but not once life becomes multi-planetary).

Scott Hutton

5 reviews

January 25, 2022

Turns out he's a really reasonable guy, even in his call to enact violent revolution in the name of dismantling the technocracy he argues we occupy. Though I wouldn't kill

people over this. I think his hope was to inspire reactionaries but beyond the initial hype of what he advocates, I can't say there's a lot of wind in my sail for it. I think people are capable of getting along fine with the existence of cars and computers, incidentally required though they are.

Ben Weilbacher

5 reviews

December 8, 2021

Surprisingly well spoken for a domestic terrorist. I didn't find his points unreasonable at all until he said killing was the only way to spread his message. Great read, but very difficult to bring up in conversation.

grappé-recommendations

rt

26 reviews

January 3, 2022

i'm a unabomber sympathizer. sue me.

Robert Edwards

27 reviews1 follower

December 19, 2021

A very interesting perspective on the way society is going. I have to disagree with him though because he could have just bought an acre of land and lived off grid rather than sending people letter bombs. You can tell he has autism when you read his manifesto

Joshua

Author

1 book39 followers

December 31, 2021

I review and attempt to refute this here: <https://deusexvita.medium.com/purpose...>

Brad Young

153 reviews1 follower

January 3, 2022

I definitely read this too fast and will probably have to go back for a second read to really digest all of Kaczynski's ideas. As most people who have read this have mentioned to me (and as I suspected myself), this is a relatively sane and understandable response to modern society. If anything, the issues Kaczynski brings up regarding the advancement of technology and the enumerate both seen and unseen harms done upon humans by the current industrialized system have only been exasperated and highlighted within the decades following this publication and as has been the case - with the pandemic.

It's very clear that he's familiar and well-versed with modern philosophical thought and understanding of the modern power structures as envisioned by Foucault, and while I'm willing to concede to the damage done by modern society and perhaps even that the industrial revolution and resulting progress has been a mistake, I'd argue Kaczynski's accelerationist solution to the issue is unrealistic: those structures have become so ingrained in the control of society that they cannot be taken down. Especially when one of the points he tries to his so-called revolutionaries is to have as many children as possible to pass on revolutionary ideals.

While I'm also willing to concede what is likely valid criticism on political-correctness, Kaczynski is far too focused on it and perhaps pinpoints the origins of its faults incorrectly, thereby barring any leftist movement from embracing some of his insights. Not only that, but a number of his points about leftist equality being impossible in an anarchoprimitivist world due to the movement's reliance on power to subjugate and maintain equity strikes me as both naive and unfair.

So, bar a full-blown revolution, what can I take away from this read? A reconciliation between the views he espoused on the troubles of modern society and of the modern progressive politics he has so vehemently disavowed in his essay (I use / will use the terms progressive and populist to distance myself from his vision of leftism and this issues that Kaczynski sees plague it). And while he may have pinpointed the origins of some of the Spiritual Rot of the modern world, ultimately I think progressive/populist politics have a place in perhaps alleviating that pain if it cannot be undone altogether.

Hayden Lukas

67 reviews1 follower

January 6, 2022

It was good reading this after Jacque Ellul's *Technological Society*. Ellul was longer. Kaczynski was succinct.

His power process was assumed, not argued for, and that was a major problem. But the small scale vs large scale tech was a helpful distinction. Walker Percy makes a more interesting use of this idea on *Symbol and Existence*. Overall, it was helpful but

I can't say it drew the same Christian ethical implications as Ellul's treatment of the topic did.

Nika

68 reviews

January 6, 2022

some parts were questionable but overall a solid critique on our society

Philip

32 reviews5 followers

January 12, 2022

Radically inspirational.

Ian Horton

2 reviews

January 11, 2022

He crazy but an interesting essay nonetheless.

sophie esther

131 reviews43 followers

January 12, 2022

I agree with everything Kaczynski says in his manifesto. His understanding of how technology and social "progressiveness" are like pacifiers to civilization, distracting us from acknowledging and encouraging us to participate in the plight of human intelligence and ability, is well-documented and expressed, and I really do think Western society has a lot to learn from what Kaczynski writes about. I was namely impressed with the detail in which he wrote about technology's impact civilization and how the bad and good of technology and industrialization cannot be separated; it's impossible. The paradox is not deconstruct-able. His analysis of how people play roles in social activism ignorantly and ineffectively and how people create shortcomings for themselves to ruminate on, is also well-articulated and these themes have hauntingly only gotten worse.

He also deeply explores the impact that this progression and the technological advancements in society have impacted our mental healthy, and why today's generations have so many psychological issues. This was an interesting theme to cover that I think

is rarely accurately and unbiasedly (as humanly possible, I mean) analyzed. More interestingly, he explores how this psychological "plight" if you will, profoundly influences politics .

It's unfortunate both that this is called "The Unabomber Manifesto" which will inherently discourage people from wanting to read it, and that Kaczynski ended up pursuing foolish means to bring awareness on these growing issues in society that people - the majority of us - turn a blind eye to, and knowingly or ignorantly succumb to and participating in. Kaczynski could have been a gift to society had he used his superior intelligence, awareness, and will/courage for change to good use. His resentment towards technology and his wrath towards mainstream society got the better of him, unfortunately.

The reason I rate this four stars instead of five is simply because Kaczynski's manifesto was less educational for me and more a confirmation or reiteration in straightforward means, of what I already know and I'm not interested in rating a book 5 stars simply because it is validating. Had this been more "eye-opening" for me, it would have requested five stars from me. However, it might be eye-opening for you.

Rúben

35 reviews2 followers

February 18, 2022

Bomb manifesto. Literally.
musings-on

Robert Hughes

12 reviews

January 17, 2022

Very worth the read - thought provoking.

Luke

7 reviews

February 7, 2022

Theodore J. Kaczynski clearly did not like the world, and he clearly and forthrightly makes a case against industrialized societies. However, it's also quite clear that Kaczynski was an isolated and bitter individual who would sooner blame the world for his unhappiness than do something to improve the world. In some sadistic way, he probably believed that killing innocents was a means to improve the future, no differently

than did the Roman Emperors kill barbarians relatively incapable of defending themselves in pursuit of glorifying Rome. However, the emperors fought for their people whereas Kaczynski fought for himself alone.

As for Kaczynski's arguments about technology's growing impediment on human autonomy, I find these hard to refute. The Chinese use of technology best represents the threat of an absolute loss of autonomy for normal people, and preventing technology from being used in any way like that in the West will be the ultimate test of Kaczynski's ideas. Kaczynski was certain that technology would eventually win out and be used to control the masses by the few, or, with the advent of AI, control us all. I truly hope he's wrong and that we can find a way for technology to empower everybody, because doing away with industrialized society altogether would spell a regression of a different kind for humanity, not to mention billions of casualties.

Ryan Coulter

32 reviews

January 23, 2022

Luddite but in like a cool way

Neil Martin

20 reviews

February 6, 2022

Interesting look into the mind of a domestic terrorist who is against industry and technology all together. He makes some really valid points and tying this in with the Netflix documentaries made this a really nice read.

It's a shame that such a brilliant mathematical mind such as his fell to committing fatal terrorist attacks with his parcel bombs.

greenloeb

219 reviews32 followers

June 11, 2023

The closest thing to a John Brown for our age. Rest in peace.

eco

George

1 review

February 16, 2022

While obviously insane, Kaczynski shows his beliefs were incredibly well thought-out and detailed

Jimmy Buzaglo

1 review

February 17, 2022

It's too bad that he resorted to violence and murder because what he had to say was terrifying and seemingly more and more true. I don't believe that his actions should discredit his concerns and we should proactively study this further.

Lisa

27 reviews

February 22, 2022

It started out as a difficult read but got easier and more understandable as it moved forward. Based on the past two years or so, he makes some interesting observations.

Alex

28 reviews4 followers

February 26, 2022

Actually quite a surprising good book.

I am no stranger to alt-politics or philosophy and I like to believe I am relatively well read on these subjects, I've heard plenty about Ted and his ideas and actions and thought I'd give him a read.

I was expecting a book of high concepts and dense theory but what I got instead was a very sober, realistic, and succinct book about alienation from the mainstream, the functions of man, and reasonable revolutionary strategy.

I'm no new kid to these ideas so pretty much all of the writings in this book are different ways of saying things I've already heard before and if you are anything like me it won't be anything mindblowing. But I feel like if a disgruntled youth with little prior knowledge reads this book it would be an incredibly powerful book and liberating read.

If you're new to this sort of thing and fancy reading it give it a go it might completely change your outlook (Though I recommend Bronze Age Mindset for that) and if you're a veteran dissident this will likely just be an entertaining read and nothing much more.

Drew
10 reviews
April 12, 2023
Return to monke

Nick Jones
291 reviews13 followers
March 18, 2022

It's a shame that Ted Kaczynski decided to promote his ideas by mailing bombs to universities, as he makes a number of excellent points in *Industrial Society and Its Future* that seem prescient in 2022. If he hadn't killed three people and injured a dozen others, this "manifesto" would probably be viewed as a work of genius and assigned in college classes (with the criticism of the left quietly left out); however, given its provenience, people balk at reading it in fear of somehow justifying Kaczynski's crimes by engaging with his ideas.

Keshav Tiwari
26 reviews17 followers
March 31, 2022

The manifesto offers a lucid picture of modern man's problems and associated behaviour. The philosophy behind a movie-like criminal case, juxtaposed with the author's life story, forms a mosaic.

Janson Quinlan Prieb
51 reviews
April 9, 2022

Clearly a novice's attempt at explaining the problems with the modern age. Few paragraphs I disagreed with. But on the whole freedom club gets the picture mostly right, whether or not the prognosis (technology must be overthrown via Revolution) is correct the diagnosis is spot on, offering a very digestible analysis to anyone interested in understanding our modern age, ie slavery to technology, obedience to the corporate structure, being over socialized, etc. Even though written decades ago, most of the issues brought forth are relevant and one really feels the vigor/frustration of the author while getting a sense that not is all right in the world. I would've preferred if anything a deeper analysis of how man reacts to technology and what cash value we have for ourselves to become more free. Treat this book simply as an intro, not as the main course of social criticism but otherwise a short delightful read

Arkan Fay

16 reviews

April 11, 2022

It's definitely worth a read if you're frustrated with the system we're forced to live in, I would summarize it as: "Sad Thoughts that loop in my head while at work but actually well written".

Sadly by the end of the book you can see how the writer is starting to be hypocritical, If he wanted to start a revolution, as he mentions, then he shouldn't have done those terrible things. He went against his own advice, which leads me to believe his only motive, at the end, was to get some revenge against a society that did him wrong. What a pity, a mind like his could've been capable of so many beautiful and compassionate things.

Divyanshu Shukla

14 reviews

May 5, 2022

Book really provides a great perspective on industrial society and the harms caused by it.

Although I'm NOT planning to start a full blown revolution, I will still consider the points given in the book which may make me more independent and to use the technology I have mindfully.

Tyler

59 reviews

May 7, 2022

Despite the background for this manifesto, I think that the argument Kaczynski makes here is spot on. After reading "Civilized to Death" and learning about primitive abundance, the next step is to identify aspects of modernity that remove us from our primitive abundance, and that includes this isolating technological capitalist system that we live in.

I think that his critiques of leftism are awfully shallow, and I'm surprised that the author began and ended the manifesto with this topic.

Ava Jast

81 reviews

June 13, 2022

i've been radicalized ☒

AlexSupertramp

5 reviews

May 12, 2022

This is a book I would definitely recommend everyone to read who is interested in viewing society and its system from another non-mainstream-view.

If you don't know who the Unabomber is, you should probably do your research in order to understand where this comes from and why you shouldn't see this book as a tool to reinforce your already present political beliefs, but rather as an opportunity to gain insight into a potentially new angle of thinking about, well, the industrial society.

However everything you read is to be taken with a grain of salt, knowing who the unabomber is and what he's done. But don't forget that just because someone doesn't conform with your standpoint, it doesn't mean that you can't learn from them.

Patrick.Basedman

1 review

May 15, 2022

Based

Erik Rostad

340 reviews120 followers

May 23, 2022

It was quite interesting to read both this book and Friedrich Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State this year. Both books call for revolution; reform is not attainable. In this book, Kaczynski attacks industrial society, leftists, and oversocialization with a call to dismantle the entire system and eliminate technology. He also says the only way to get his message out above all of the other noise is to kill people. One is left contrasting the message with the messenger.

2022-books

J

25 reviews1 follower

May 24, 2022

Gets so much right about leftism, purposelessness, and the degradation of Man. Especially loved the "Final Note" and the diagram of how people lose their way.

Found lots of dark, prescient thoughts throughout that resonated with me hard, especially in the light of everything we lost during this pandemic. Example:

"If you think that big government interferes in your life too much now, just wait until the government starts regulating the genetic constitution of your children ... The usual response to such concerns is to talk about 'medical ethics.' But a code of ethics would not serve to protect freedom in the face of medical progress."

Yikes.

Miku

28 reviews1 follower

May 27, 2022

This is one of the most thought-provoking and life-changing pieces I have read yet I did not come to the expected conclusion. I think at the core this book is about power, and that most of the time we spent whether that is school, work, video games, having children, hobbies is to feel a sense of power. This book did not convince me that getting rid of technology is the answer though, but I understand why he feels the way he feels.

King Shit of Turd Mountain

1 review

May 31, 2022

Look, I'd give it 5 Stars, but if for whatever reason the FBI ever comes knocking on my door, at least 4 Stars will give me a little wiggle room.

It is an interesting read, however, he fails to factor in that narcissism and laziness render his revolutionary ideas undesirable to the majority. I guess when you are as intelligent as the author, you can lose sight of the fact that we live in a world inhabited primarily by NPCs who are probably physically incapable of comprehending the difference between freedom and captivity anyhow. Which is perhaps why he was so frustrated, come to think of it.

His theories on how modern technology and its incompatibility with the human condition people drive folks into a perpetually unquenched hunger for leftism is probably the highlight of the manifesto.

Abhishek Prasad

38 reviews8 followers

June 2, 2022

I wonder how successful this book would have been received had there been no killings attached to it.

Madeline
183 reviews37 followers
June 6, 2022
Quite interesting.
nonfiction

Adam Iwanicki
10 reviews
June 8, 2022
Mr Kaczynski is making a lot of sense...

Desiree Dawson
91 reviews1 follower
June 9, 2022

Theodore John Kaczynski, also known as the Unabomber, is an American domestic terrorist and former mathematics professor. He abandoned his academic career and moved to the woods to obtain a primitive life away from society. Between 1978-1995, he killed three people and injured 23 during his nationwide bombing campaign. He targeted places he felt believed in the advancement of modern technology which ultimately would leave to the destruction of the environment.

●●●●●

Okay...so I know y'all like to tussle so before I say anything let me say that I do not agree with him bombing establishments. He could've went a completely different route, but he was spot on in some of his visions for the future and how technology is crippling the youth. I couldn't imagine living in a pre-industrialized world, but I can definitely see what he means about more advanced technology causing social disruption and psychological suffering. How many friends have you told you "I'm going to take a break from social media?" Really think about it. How many times as an individual have you found yourself trying to measure up to the next person after scrolling through Instagram? For this book to have been written about 20 years ago, it's relevant and spot on. There are some parts that it's a little obvious. I would easily assume that 20 years from now there will be advancements because that's how it supposed to be. But then there were parts that I just kind of scratched my head because let's be real, he wasn't all there. We've read how technology has served for the greater good as well as

the bad. We've seen how technology has the ability to completely remove true human interaction. I highly recommend this read and I just want to reiterate again, I do NOT agree with his tactics to kill.

Ryan Nation
10 reviews
June 10, 2022

I mean, it's exactly what you think it to be. If one is able to set aside the horrors of the writers actions and judge the book on its own (a lot to ask, I know) there is some merit to be had. His points about the degradation of man through industrialization are only more pointed with the advent of social media (Hi, Goodreads!). The writing style is a bit stunted, but the message shines through it.

William
140 reviews
June 10, 2022

It's like Communism but more based. Still not for it tho.

Joshua
122 reviews
June 14, 2022

It's an interesting book. Despite the zealotry a significant portion of the book makes sense. Whether there is legitimate historical or practical precedent for many of the claims is a separate issue. On the whole, however, Kazscynski does make an appealing argument as to the inherent issues within modern industrialised society in particular, and post-industrial society in general. Interesting notions relating to the concept of power in society and the surrogate avenues people avail of to achieve this. Too bad about the terrorism though.

Alex
2 reviews
June 18, 2022

I was extremely pleasantly surprised, and that might have an impact on me giving it a 4/5 rather than a lower score. I thought his argument for the industrial revolution having been bad for humanity overall seems to be pretty solid, but I think where

he's mistaken is the idea that any individual country out to undo industrialization. If a country undoes industrialization it will definitely get rolled and smoked, and the consequences of that country getting rolled and smoked would undoubtedly be worse than the consequences of the industrial revolution. Much of the reason for this is that individuals can choose to opt out of 95% of industrial society and its impacts. Sure the air quality is reduced, and there's not such thing as truly fresh water anymore, but those are a small price to pay compared to the risk posed by intentionally weakening your country for other countries.

The other aspect of this book I wasn't so hot on was the section about the leftist psychology. It was pretty unhinged and didn't seem to relate to his thesis very clearly, and that's even putting aside that he was just making baseless conjecture about how other people work. With that said I don't think he was THAT far off the mark, and it was fun to read partially because it was so off the rails.

It's a good work, over all. Without a doubt the best manifesto I've ever read.

Maddie

10 reviews

June 22, 2022

Extremely thought-provoking and very straight forwardly written. Ted provides theory for activities and concepts in society that have been inexplicable in previous years, a lot of them are relevant especially today and seem to possess high validity. It makes me wonder what other intellectual thinkers such as Marx, Freud and Marcuse would have thought about the manifesto. I don't think Ted was a madman like media (how ironic) portrays him to be but a passionate individual with a valid point to prove. However, could one argue that his whole manifesto and ideology is surrogate activity (a term Kaczynski uses) for a real desire for autonomy and power that he believes he does not have? Just a thought :p did Ted just out himself in his own manifesto? (Freud would probably say ja).

James Cunningham

10 reviews6 followers

June 22, 2022

Crazy that this was written in 1995. Great breakdown of all the problems we're experiencing.

J.C.J. (James) Bergman

271 reviews102 followers

June 23, 2022

Industrial Society and Its Future (also titled "The Unabomber Manifesto") is a collection of aphoristic writings depicting the dangers of modernism and technology, and how it is sabotaging what makes us human, exploiting our psychological capacities through large corporations and so on.

The common knee-jerk reaction to this kind of text is to safely assert that Kaczynski was "insane" and these words within the book are "erratic and conspiracy theory-esc". These charges could not be further from the truth, in my perspective.

It's obvious that Kaczynski is an intelligent man, learned on the subjects he delves into within the book. It was hard to believe that he finished this in 1995 - he predicts numerous social issues and technological controversies that are rife today. Namely, explicitly describing and prophesying the rise of "political correctness", or Postmodernism. His visions were ahead of his time and it is unsurprising that his ideas were rejected, for when are new staggeringly original perceptions ever truly recognised at their time of conception? (see Ignaz Semmelweis for example)

Indeed, it's impossible to ignore the fact that he bombed people to proclaim his philosophy. This is clearly a step too far, and depicts (from a psychological perspective) how solitary confinement in his shed in the wilderness effected his mind, pondering all of these things (I imagine) on a daily basis. What we ought to do, however, is remember that we *must* separate this from what he wrote in this piece.

Did he go too far? Obviously. Was he generally correct in his conclusions and predictions about the future? Absolutely. We can concede, hopefully, that Kaczynski had something profound to say, but we must indeed remember that what he did shortly after writing it. With these distinctions in mind, I think it's important to read this book and separate the intellectual arguments he makes from what he did afterwards - this is the genuine indication of a critical thinker.

politics

Richard Zhang

23 reviews6 followers

June 23, 2022

Contrary to the media's portrayal, this is not the ramblings of a mad lunatic. Ted is often times very insightful on existential themes like the role struggling in attaining an autonomous goal plays in a good and fulfilling life and overstimulation as a cause of depression and boredom. That being said, he seems too eager to fit everything into his power process lens, and displays a tendency to view the industrial society purely in the negative (ie education as a means of control).

The main thesis is based on the assumption that individual autonomous freedom to exert one's will is a universal good (this point could've been further explored, especially since Ted agrees that the majority of people live by taught social values). Besides, by

calling for a revolution, wouldn't that mean imposing his personal values of an ideal society on others like he condemned the Leftists of doing? Overall this was a very thoughtful philosophical piece providing good food for thought on how we are in turn shaped by the tech/social structures we create.

explosive

Adam

74 reviews4 followers

June 24, 2022

A lot more thoughtful than you may expect. Has many spot on observations and it's impressive he wrote this before the internet, before smartphones, social media, or current social trends. He gets a lot more shallow on discussion of what the reality of the proposed revolution would look like. He knows, of course, that his proposal would lead to reducing the world population from the current 8 billion to maybe 1 billion but doesn't not even begin to discuss the terrible reality of what that reduction would look like. The book is a still a good read even though the author undermined the strength of his message by what he personally did.

Werner

24 reviews4 followers

July 13, 2022

Thoughtful and smart man. The first sentence is definitely in the top ten of intro sentence of a written work.

His best ideas in my opinion are:

his explanation of how "The System" (sometimes known as society, or modernity, or globalism, or the NWO, or simply - the world) is optimized not for human happiness and fulfillment, but rather is optimized for sustaining said system. This system is reinforced and maintained passively by the increasing complexity, specialization, and technological inter-dependence of various products concerning food, travel, comfort, etc. This system is also supported actively by those within the system who benefit from the current status quo either in rank, security, or "surrogate" fulfillment of the "power process" (Mr. Kaczynski's term for mans desire for purpose and/or a goal/end). As a subset of this active support of the system is by those too apathetic or enslaved by the rat race to care or do anything about the current state of society.

another great point by Mr. Kaczynski is how, when faced by the dead misery and unhappiness that is our current slavery to modernity, our response passively and actively is not to question the modern technological-industrial system or try to understand the deeper reason for our distress, but rather to suppress and double down on the inhumanity. A perfect example being the culture of excessive drug use, both "recreational"

and pharmaceutical, particularly SSRIs and other anti-depressants.

He also clearly recognizes the relationship between the degeneration of a human way of life and fulfillment in our modern society, and the secular zeal of "leftism" and all its anti-social and anti-human elements.

His proposed solution is a revolutionary return to wild nature and self-sufficiency. He reasons that man cannot break away from the leviathan in half-measures. There must be a total destruction of technological-industrial society, and the sooner the better.

I can see why many conservative right wing types can resonate with his message. His total disdain for abandoning the wisdom of a more natural way of life in favor of the false god of progress, and his calm zeal for doing something about it is admirable. Interestingly enough many "leftists" themselves also can agree with his messaging. Not surprising considering the spiritual core of his solution is not unlike marxist takeovers of history, which Mr. Kaczynski himself points out.

Unfortunately, Mr. Kaczynski himself is a victim of our times. He sees the world and man as a product of dialectical and evolutionary processes, relegating religion and morals as of tertiary importance. So while he correctly recognizes the need for large families, and values the good of more direct governance and sustenance, and of moral courage leaning towards tradition and nature, he fails to recognize God as the source and reason for these lost good qualities of civilization.

Anyway, it was a good read - and cordially invite all radical internet(ironic huh) right wing souls to consider the First Principle of Good that encourages us and enlightens us of the darkness of our times. Almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Catholic Church - the only way to save our societies and ourselves from the NWO secular death and the torments of hell.

historical philosophy political

Michael Parent

56 reviews1 follower

July 24, 2023

Scared to give it a 5.

Really clear and concise. Agreed with 95% of his diagnosis and 10% of his proposed treatment.

☒ Google the author before your reading. ☒ ☒ ☒

Whitman

27 reviews

November 19, 2022

Pretty interesting that uncle Ted spends a significant portion of his book devoted to critiquing and otherwise prohibiting collaboration with leftists. This is ultimately

a condemnation of industrialization and all its attendant consequences, as well as a vague instruction manual for how to bring about its collapse, but more than that, it functions as a psychological treatise on the personality type generated by a decadent and incredibly narcissistic cultural landscape and how this produces people emotionally incapable of the solidarity or resolve necessary for political/economic/technological revolution.

Nicklas

33 reviews1 follower

June 4, 2023

An eye opening book from a genius. He was far too intelligent for his own good. He understood every bit of leftist psychology and technology and what it is leading to. But the ends don't justify means, murdering people is always terrible.

Cecilia U

8 reviews10 followers

July 30, 2022

Not necessarily agree to all the standpoints in this manifesto but some of the thoughts are definitely eye opening and deserve contemplation.

Greg Jarmiolowski

18 reviews

July 31, 2022

Might seem crazy but this is a profound work that presages our modern society.

Doug Wolf

64 reviews

August 2, 2022

On many topics Dr. Kaczynski hits the nail on the head, terrifyingly enough. On others he is either deranged or a prophet, far be it from me to tell.

PowdyrdWyg

40 reviews

August 10, 2022

Written in 1995, the Manifesto is frighteningly prescient. On the whole, I found Ted's explanation of the problems accompanying technological development compelling. However, I believe that Ted misdiagnoses technology as the problem when it is, I believe, a symptom - a symptom human nature, of human insatiability. Even if Ted's revolution were to be realized, and the human race returned to a life close to the Earth, the development of technology would once again start its inevitable march forward.

Daniel Povolny

16 reviews

August 18, 2022

When you live long enough to realize,

Uncle Ted was right.

When industrial society makes you woke and rebelling against it makes you christian anarchist.

philosophy

vee ro

5 reviews

September 3, 2022

id rate this somewhere between 3-4 stars idk, definitely enjoyed this although i dont necessarily agree with some points that were made.

points were definitely made tho

Nedas Sarmanauskas

1 review

September 18, 2022

A contraversial book to say the least, written by Theodore J. Kaczynski is an essay about the industrial society. As a fan of true crime, i love delving into the minds of the killers rather than just their actions. I was expecting the paranoid ramblings of a madman, illuminati this, big brother that. However, in actuality, i found myself not only understanding, but, in part, relating to the main message of the book, if only partly. I believe Theodore is correct about the colossal impact technology has had on the quality and enjoyment of life to the average man, and the idea of the "power process", as he calls it, was an idea i had never thought of, but can definitely get behind. However, not everything written in this book is gospel. With a large cult of personality around him, it's easy to get lost in the clever wording and sophisticated argumentation this essay provides, however one mustn't forget this book, in it's whole, is essentially a call

to arms asking people to overthrow modern society violently and swiftly. Furthermore, the means Theodore popularised this message should not be forgotten - people had to die for his message to gain notoriety and traction.

Overall, i believe this book is worth a read not as a guidebook on how to live, but to experience a different perspective of life and take away what you can to help improve your life and your community.

Rodrigo Domínguez
105 reviews11 followers
September 23, 2022
3.5/5

As many have said, this does not read like ramblings of a madman. Kaczynski is very lucid and generally bright, with a style that shows he had thought seriously and rationally about these things.

More important than his style or insights, though, is his subject matter. It's my sincere belief that the question of technology is not visited enough from the left or the right. At best, the problems of technological and economic growth are ignored (or dismissed as not the real problem, but a symptom of some wrong political program). At worst, any rumination about their dangers is met with scoff and disdain. Of course the fact that one of primitivism's major mainstraem exponents is also a convicted terrorist doesn't help the case that these ideas are serious and not fringe.

Anyways, I found most of Kaczynski's diagnoses to be correct. He cuts through the bullshit and states clearly the stakes of technological progress; the cost is our freedom, our very humanity. While not particularly concerned with depth (Kaczynski does not draw an ontology like Heidegger does), the book does deliver in terms of breadth: in a few pages Kaczynski covers history, psychology, economics, psychopharmaceuticals, ideology, advertisement, AI, bioengineering, and even has time to lay down strategic guidelines for revolutionary action. His analysis of leftism is also spot on.

But I have a big problem with this essay. No, it's not the call for total collapse, though that too. While (correctly) denouncing leftists and their tendency to oversimplify the world, Kaczynski seems comfortable enough putting all the blame on "the system". The industrial system, in the Unabomber's worldview, is an autonomous entity that demands technological control at the expense of human freedom, dignity, and happiness. "The system" must therefore be destroyed and replaced by something more humane. Spoken like a true Marxist.

I'd say that this book's sin is being too optimistic: it ignores the role that humans and human nature play in creating, maintaining (and, in the event of total collapse, recreating) "the system". It sees that people are "forced" to adopt new technologies because of their convenience, and even acknowledges that many would not wish to have them taken away, but it does not locate the root of this desire. Sure, propaganda

and economic pressures play a role, but the real blackpill is that most people *want* this. He almost seems to get it when he says:

No code that reduced genetic engineering to a minor role could stand up for long, because the **temptation** presented by the immense power of biotechnology would be irresistible.

And where is the locus of this temptation? Indeed, the reason that this does not seem like a serious conversation and its alternative feels so nightmarish to most is that many of us want comfort, want ease, want to be entertained, want things to go fast, want control, want predictability, want longevity, want safety, and want to have more than we need. Of course we don't know/understand/accept that most of these desires are antithetical to human happiness and fulfillment. But that is our Fallen nature and no revolution is likely to change that.

Towards the end of the book, there's a couple of paragraphs which try to give an answer to this question. When presented by the inevitable challenge of technology making a comeback after being "destroyed" ("...there will be many people who will be anxious to get the factories running again"), Kaczynski rebukes:

The enthusiasm for "progress" is a phenomenon peculiar to the modern form of society...No one knows why Europe became dynamic [in the late Middle Ages]...At any rate, it is clear that rapid development toward a technological form of society occurs only under special conditions.

What special conditions, Mr. Kaczynski? And what is the "ideology" you will use to counter the ever-lurking Promethean impulse? That would make for an amazing sequel.

non-fiction

Saint Android

28 reviews

September 28, 2022

This hits

Suki

1 review

October 2, 2022

this is a great book must read

clarice

18 reviews

October 15, 2022

For someone that majorly enjoys fiction and fantasy i found this to be interesting! Kaczynski's formatting and being able to identify the flaws within industrial society and the effects it has on our own selves is eye opening. I think reading this is more than worth it because it helps subvert the positive view on the industrial revolution that schools (at least mine) put onto us.

I would rate this 5 stars but he did kill people and although he speaks of radical action being a part of the revolution I still don't like the idea of it. Maybe this shows that I havent gotten the full message but I as a Catholic think that premature death is bad.

Also if i rate this 5 stars a suspicious van will be parked across the street of my house.

Dale Booker

11 reviews

October 29, 2022

Very worthwhile read, it seems like Ted was foreseeing a few notable trends that have progressed to present day. Very useful societal analysis, albeit an unusual one at that.

Nassim Achahboune

4 reviews

November 4, 2022

Months ago, I came across this book from a meme on the internet. And its title stuck in my head. My curiosity hasn't let me forget about it, therefore. I've decided to read it and discover Kaczynski's perception of the world.

From the beginning of the book, Kaczynski states a sentence that summarizes the whole article and shows us what to expect from his writing, "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race".

Kaczynski introduced me to many new notions, such as surrogate activities and the power process.

He argued about how the disruption of the power process leads to frustration, anxiety, and depression.

For the surrogate activities, he defined them as the artificial goal that we set just for the sake of their fulfillment, they give us some sort of purpose, and we use them to entertain ourselves to escape from the feeling of boredom that leads to stress and dissatisfaction.

I find it particularly interesting because I can relate to it. I can't just sit for a period

and do nothing without feeling irritable, unlike the primitive men who can do nothing because they are at peace with themselves.

One of the most gripping parts of the book is when Kaczynski pointed out why and how we should eradicate the industrial society.

First, the main reason is as far as the system grows, the more disastrous the consequences of its breaking down will be, and thus we should break it as soon as possible to limit the extent of the disaster. we can give real-life examples to prove his saying, Nuclear threat, Climate change, development of AI, and much more.

Furthermore, we must oppose the system and reclaim the freedom and dignity taken from us.

The only way to break the system is not by reforms because they have a transitory effect but by starting a revolution while propagating an ideology that opposes technology, which makes us understand the reason behind his manifesto.

I share the same point of view as the author about the future of AI, either we control them and become in the process dependent on them or we give them autonomy, and they are going to throw us away, both scenarios are catastrophic.

Overall, The industrial society and its future were worth the read. It kept me engaged from the start to the end, and I learned many new things.

"The individual must always be kept on a leash, even if the leash is something long."

Max

3 reviews

November 11, 2022

If read through the lens of deconstruction, offers an interesting insight into the developments of modern society.

Aidan Wright

6 reviews

November 24, 2022

If any Feds see this im just joking ☒

Ellie cork

34 reviews2 followers

November 29, 2022

I expected this book to be a paranoid rant by a mad man, but was pleasantly surprised for the first time in a while

Max Kazakov

10 reviews

December 17, 2022

It's definitely not a perfect read, moreover some views are far from modern reality, yet it's an epochal writing and I'm curious if such a person as Ted K could exist and make up their mind to fight the tech industry today.

Matthew Sadowski

14 reviews

December 17, 2022

Lowkey goes hard

Moir

60 reviews1 follower

December 22, 2022

!!!fbi disclaimer!!! i don't agree w his conclusion this is just a very interesting read

Suraj Sridhar

14 reviews

December 24, 2022

A haunting mess.

XXXXXXXX

32 reviews8 followers

December 25, 2022

It actually deserves consideration! It was really intriguing reading that contained well-done thought-out critiques and analyses. The idea of the power process was new to me. It can be considered as a psychological political analysis of our current industrial society and its outstanding effects on all aspects of our life. It also contains notes about how societies change and what causes these changes regarding our human experience throughout history. As I expressed on my Twitter account, that Kaczynski is a terrorist is something that bothers me a lot.

Thanks to Dr. Feyzullah Yilmaz for this interesting recommendation!

Bill Powers

Author

3 books89 followers

December 27, 2022

Interesting - Not what I was expecting.
political

Jacob Wolford

6 reviews

January 2, 2023

An important part of history. Kaczynski makes many good points, although his solutions have little compassion.

Leaf

105 reviews5 followers

January 3, 2023

i LIED i listened to an audiobook while i was CLEANING UP MY ROOM!!!! Worth the "read", pretty short and his main thoughts and goals are quite clear. havent read his other stuff yet

Rafay Syed

10 reviews

January 8, 2023

The proliferation of modern technology will lead to the destruction of humanity itself. This is the main premise of this book, and while it might sound exaggerated or dystopian, Ted Kaczynski argues this point extremely well.

This manifesto is a very harsh but eye opening look at the relationship between human nature and post industrial revolution technology. Why is it that people nowadays are more depressed, mentally disturbed, suicidal, purposeless, unable to maintain basic relationships, and turning more violent compared to the time before the industrial revolution? Kaczynski blames this on the imposition of technology that makes people docile towards the system and look for some other avenue to find a purpose, which is in reality complete hollow.

While the manifesto is mostly well argued, I didn't find Kaczynski's critique of what he calls "leftism" very compelling (and he himself seems to recognize that this

argument needs more work). He basically says that "leftists" are collectivists and are very attached to their ideals to the point that they will never hesitate to use modern technology and therefore, they are the main enemy if you want an anti-tech revolution. The basis of "leftism" is classical liberalism which is something Kaczynski overlooks. This could have provided him a much stronger base to attack "leftism" but I guess it might undermine his own message for "freedom" as an ultimate goal, which also emanates from liberalism.

Modern technology and its tentacles are everywhere in the modern world. This is definitely a very useful book in order to take a step back and analyze what exact consequences these developments have on our lives and what is the final destination they will lead us to. The conclusion is not pretty, but it is necessary to realize it if we want to work towards a solution.

Rowan

64 reviews

March 28, 2023

(Apologies for how jumbled this is, I took multiple strategies in writing this, and did it in several sittings)

Going into this book, I expected to like it more, but was thrown off a bit between how the book was written and how I thought it would be.

See, I agree with a lot of the points that Kaczynski brings up here, particularly when he speaks of manipulative tactics used by the "system" to prolong its survival, however I did take exception to the fact that he rarely provides substantial evidence for his claims. This is not so much a problem for me, as I do agree with these constant assertions, especially about the psychology of those he calls "leftists", but from a more objective stance on the book, he needs to convince those who don't agree with his cause, but he fails to back up his assertions with any convincing substance. I guess he doesn't intend to sway others to his side, though, as he explicitly says that leftists should be avoided and will betray the movement until it is a leftist one, and he instead wishes to call to action those who already agree with him to some extent. Still, I think creating this substance would help reassure potential followers, and encourage them into making the next step in obtaining the destruction of the system. He does at least directly mention this fault at the end of the book, noting that "yes, this is indeed a crude generalization, but you get the point", and I do, but still I think this is insufficient. I admire his acknowledgement of this fault, but I think he could've just been better, simply put.

Namely, there are three ways in which Industrial Society has been a detriment: Erosion of Freedom, it has made Life unfulfilling, and it has increased psychological suffering. Firstly, this erosion of Freedom means that we no longer have the power to affect our own circumstances through control over decisions of life and death, like

food and shelter. Second, life is unfulfilling, and people are stuck performing "surrogate activities" which serve the purposes of technology, i.e. watching tv, science, or anything else that serves technology rather than human nature. Third, modern society has disrupted the "power process" (goal, effort, attainment, autonomy) by making things too easy (like the accumulation of tech) or too difficult (stopping large scale pollution). This creates failure to achieve "real" goals, which leads to defeatism and depression.

The Industrial Society has made life unfulfilling. Spot on. I agree with this completely and while some might find it a harsh reasoning, I think that man requires struggle, or at the very least challenges, to make life fulfilling. Oh, the poor privileged world, it has become catered to and filled with microplastics that they just can't help but be depressed! They spend too much time doing nothing, and as Rand said, activity is life. All too true, and the obese rotting blobs (I am an American, after all) find themselves depressed and struggling without anything meaningful to do.

The left is characterized by feelings of inferiority and over socialization. This had me smiling, but I digress. This is more of an outline for future claims against "leftism", but he is spot on with these applied notions of "defeatism, guilt, self-hatred" (among other things). I only have experience with a modern version of this outline, but man does he call it so plainly here, decades prior. There's some catharsis in him saying what many of us think, such as when he says that most people who support political correctness are themselves very privileged. "The leftists themselves feel that these groups are inferior. They would never admit [to having] these feelings" AH! Thank you for putting it in writing. I feel like I'm going crazy until I see these thoughts actually communicated! Now I must go on a particular tangent on this point. He says that feminists have a fear that they aren't as capable as men, which is why they try to prove they are. I agree to an extent. What really upsets me about the modern wave of feminism is that they themselves equate masculinity to being powerful or better, and femininity as being the worse trait, so they encourage the abandonment of their femininity. This is really sad, because as a man, there is a particular awe in the feminine virtues of women that I don't have, and these particular people need to realize that femininity IS strength, and in abandoning it and trying to embrace masculinity, they have already failed because they can't be more masculine than men, so now they have nothing. They are lost, without identity. This isn't to say that a woman can't do anything masculine, but that there should be an understanding that femininity is its own strength and power, and any masculine traits are just added flavor. Being a woman is nothing to be ashamed of, and it's sad that some women seem to think it is. Now finally, I can move on. "The leftist is [against] competition because, deep inside, he feels like a loser." HAHA he really gets me going, this wacko. Again, I agree to a great extent here. I think many of the people he talks about are anti-individualist, because they have no faith in the strength of the individual, and though I hadn't really thought about it before, he's probably right in connecting this to a self-perceived deficiency and lack of confidence in one's own abilities. This is probably why depression is also so common in this group as Kaczynski says, I mean, I would probably be depressed if I had absolutely

no faith in the strength of humans. He also makes a brilliant point about how, for example, the left does not care about black people, but a pathetic ploy for power, and as such they actually intensify race hatred. I've long felt that race is an overblown issue, merely propagated by the government. Of course racism will always exist as an idea, a repugnant and false idea, but an idea, and as such, it would be entirely dystopian and totalitarian to try and erase this way of thought. There will always be hateful people, and trying to control the way people think is a disgustingly fascist trait. Anyways, I've often felt that most people do not care about race, but the government (especially in the modern day) tries to keep it in the public consciousness to create an us vs them dichotomy among civilians and distract from tyranny. In relation to "oversocialization", I think Ted's point is even more clear in the year 2023. He argues that the leftist has essentially gone too far in obeying and staying within the strict lines of what society says is ok, and that leftists aren't the "rebels" that they seem to be. This is even more obvious today, and yet often the modern leftist see themselves as the struggling and rebelling minority. He makes some bold claims, such as the over-socialized person not being able to even think thoughts that go against what society tells them is right without guilt, and though I think there is some instance of this, I don't think it is a definite rule. I have definitely seen the cesspool of twitter produce examples of this, but I don't think it entirely covers every "leftist", though I suppose maybe he isn't arguing that EVERY leftist is over-socialized, but certainly most of them. He's right though as a whole, and it points to Kipling's stages of moral development, where most people mature to the 4th or 5th stage, and it is obvious that the leftist as Ted describes them, or at least the over-socialized one, is certainly stuck in stage 4, where they live by the morals that essentially say "whatever is legal is good, and illegal bad" (simplification, but you see the point), without any deeper thought to how the law, and by extension the government, is not and should not be a moral compass, remember that the holocaust, slavery, Japanese internment, and many other horrible things were perfectly legal. He also makes a point about how the left really only advocates for the retention of superficial culture in the black community while actually wanting them to conform to the attributes of the white community "that actually matter". It makes me think of when Malcolm X said that the white man would distract from meaningful change with symbolic changes that mean nothing (like painting "black lives matter on the streets"). I think he is also right in saying that things like psychotherapy, and how parents are taught to parent their children, are influenced by what is best for maintaining the system.

The conservatives destroy their self proclaimed values of "tradition" by simultaneously celebrating and allowing to slide technological and economic growth. As these things rapidly grow, obviously so will culture/society, and as such traditional values will dissolve. A fair point to make, and it is certainly worth recognizing that the embracing of these things cannot logically coincide with traditional values. I consider myself generally a traditionalist, and this takeaway does have me further evaluate my

thoughts to rapid technological progress, of which I have become increasingly weary (as I type from my computer).

Ted proposes that man is frustrated because he feels that change is imposed on him, whereas men of the past changed of their own accord. This is interesting, but not something I've given much thought. Certainly, the lack of control that man has over himself has become frustrating, I think this is no longer debatable but a certain fact. Man longs to be free, and it has even become somewhat of a cultural phenomenon of sorts to idealize these fictional "sigma" characters from movies like Fight Club, Taxi Driver, and other movies who "stood up" against the rigors of society which exact control over them. Where Ted differs from most in his manifesto is that rather than changing the relationship of money, he wishes to change the system altogether, to dissolve money and an economically based world. As he will himself suppose later, the more time goes on where this does not happen, the more impossible it becomes. Perhaps it is a show of my own un-evolved intelligence, but I see the value of money in society, and I think that it certainly is a physical representation of power that one has over themselves. I personally place a lot of stock in a free market economy, and I think it is the freest way to live today (aside from living alone in the mountains fending for oneself) because you take on responsibility for yourself while still living as a part of the modern world. Maybe this is a bad thing, I'm certain Ted sees it as such, but its just my thoughts that it is the most moral (even if not always the most efficient) method, and I don't think many people want to completely abandon the idea of modern society, just reform it, so Ted is surely extreme for many people, including myself, even If I do agree with him on a more base level about many things. I like the point he makes about how the "system" allows its citizens to do whatever they want in "unimportant matters", and it brings me back to my Malcolm X point from earlier. Certainly it does bring a pleasure filled, hedonistic illusion of freedom, where we dip our dopamine sticks in the pixie dust and suck it dry for the little things that they don't care about, all the while maintaining meaningful control. This is where we differ, however. I am a firm believer in the strength of the individual, and its sacred nature as the most precious thing there is, and as such, I think it is within the power of EVERY individual, and also their own responsibility, to resist these things, like consumerism for example. I understand why entities pursue these things, even if they are wrong, but again with the example of consumerism, I believe that there are no grounds to uproot the whole thing like Ted would want to do, but simply in our own quests at self-betterment, we may find the strength within ourselves to resist these fleeting pleasures and other such things that do not agree with our essence, as Spinoza would put it. (Why do I keep referring to Spinoza, whom I don't like?). I think this is somewhat agreeable with the point Ted makes about how the modern man in particular is concerned with mortality because he has never had a practical use for his body in his unfulfilling life. I think that each individual can find practical autonomy, without an entire overthrow of the system.

Kaczynski prefers revolution over reform because people are willing to sacrifice more for revolution, while they are held back by the fear of "going too far" with reform. Factories should be destroyed, and tech should be only what was present in the pre-industrial age. The suffering during the midst of revolution is preferable to allowing the system to continue until it collapses under its own weight from over-consumption and environmental disaster, or allowing its advancement which creates a long and purposeless life. Now I will always disagree with violence as a means to an ends, and I think Kaczynski loses credibility in forgetting the human aspect of - well, everything. This is not always true, but is often present. I will give him credit though for his assertion that a new society can't be planned on paper. He may be right that lives are increasingly unfulfilling, but as I have shared on many similar works, I believe in the power of the individual, in this case to find their own purpose. We have adjusted as we have changed the world around us, and while there is certainly room to romanticize and reconnect with the evolutionary and past lives we lived, I don't think we have to completely return to them. I think we can benefit by reconnecting, but it is up to every individual to find their own way to do that, and certainly as society has changed, so have the conditions in which we live. This feels negative at times, but I think that just as the prior man may struggle to kill the deer to feed his family, the modern man can too find struggle to feed his family, even if his work is less intensive and distracting. In sum, I don't think society will ever be able to impose certain unalienable things from a man, such as the right to live a purposeful life. I think it is an excuse to say there is no purpose in life because of society, no, rather you have not adapted to the changing winds, and have lost your own purpose, letting it flutter away in the breeze. I would certainly agree that society has made it harder to find purpose in an "easy" world, but I do not care. When the world becomes unforgiving, it is up to me to be unrelenting, and that is what I must do. I will work harder and harder to find purpose, with only myself to blame if I cannot find it, and after all, isn't it the struggle to do so that makes life so beautiful?

Ted ignores some technology that has served us well too, like plumbing for example. He does, however, reference some other instances of "good" technology. He says that there are necessary evils that would have to come with these "good tech inventions", such as a cure to diabetes, because it would mean that those predisposed to diabetes, or disease in general, would be able to spread in the gene pool. This is rather rationalistic, which again shows his lack of human understanding. He does, however, go further in saying this would eventually necessitate eugenics, in which man becomes no longer a creature of nature, but a "manufactured product". I actually do agree with this point, and it's exactly why ideas of post-humanism or trans-humanism disgust me, they abandon the wondrous nature of being human. It is, however, a tricky dilemma, because where do we draw the line in what is a justifiable modification to make to a human? Should people be given cochlear implants if they are deaf? If they suffer some rare illness, should they have their body's makeup completely altered? This is an ethical dilemma that I won't answer here, but it's interesting to think about. He also

tries to counter the point that primitive man would likewise have conditions out of his control, such as disease, by saying he can take these things stoically, but so too can the modern man I would say. He misses the whole notion of stoicism in my opinion, because the whole point seems to me to be that the stoic man is stoic regardless of the circumstances. As Epictetus taught, you should wish for things only to be as they are, so that way you may move forward. The one thing you can't lose attachment from in the stoic philosophy is how you view and react to things. This does not change if you live a modern or a primitive life, so I think this notion that "the primitive man can take these things stoically" is misplaced and somewhat irrelevant, seeing as it goes both ways.

In whole, while I like many of his ideas and just generally what he has to say, I think Kaczynski is just about spot on in his diagnosis, questionable in his prognosis, and misguided in his prescription.

2023-reading-list

Igor Ghidotti

45 reviews

January 5, 2023

An interesting manifesto what shows the way of thinking of Unabomber, the dangers of the future and of the technology. Even if i can't agree with everything, many things that he says are actually true, and made me question my point of view of life. He imagines this hypothetical primitive world free from technology, were the man is finally free and happy. But is it true? Is it true that we were happy when we were less civilized, less modern? Maybe it is. But is it really possible to go back in time, to stop the progress? According to Theodore, yes.

juanncorb

193 reviews

January 8, 2023

Might end up in a CIA watchlist for this one. But I kind of agree on the critique of late stage capitalist society and his takes on modern world. Most of what he said almost thirty years ago actually became true and some are yet to occur. Which is a bit fuck3d up if you think about it. On the other side I hate liberal anarchism and primitivism because they are extremely selfish and self destructive for society and are mostly followed by incel assh0les such as Ted. FFS the way he critiques leftists and social justice is unbearable, he resembles Andrew Tate. Some points were definitely made, until you remember what this guy did to get this published. :/

Charles

2,600 reviews35 followers

January 12, 2023

Theodore John Kaczynski is more widely known as Ted Kaczynski the Unabomber. Over the course of 23 years, he sent bombs through the mail that injured 23 and killed 3. In 1995, he sent a letter to the “New York Times” where he vowed to stop his campaign of terror if his manifesto on what was wrong with society was published. High law enforcement officials pressed for the publication, which took place. This book is his manifesto and when his prose style was recognized, Kaczynski was arrested and imprisoned.

The manifesto contains many valid points and while it was written before 1995, those points are applicable in 2023. He rails against the left and its’ fixation with political correctness and extreme wokeness. Kaczynski also vents some ire against the right as well, he bashes the corporate state, and he would not like the modern Republican party.

Kaczynski was clearly not a madman, his listing of the ills of modern society even predicts to a large extent the dubious power of Facebook and other social media to manipulate the masses. If Kaczynski had not resorted to the use of bombs to make his point, one can envision him being a prime commentator on cable news stations. He sounds very like much of the talking heads that are active now.

equinox

51 reviews3 followers

January 24, 2023

i’ve been procrastinating this review for a week so! i didn’t expect to enjoy this as much as i did, it was really well formulated and argued, you can definitely tell he used to be a maths professor and his ideas follow an amazing logic i’ve never seen before in a written piece. to add to that, i appreciated the effort he took to be as specific and objective as possible, i really didn’t feel as “attacked” by this book as i had expected. now for the actual content, i have to say some of his ideas are brilliant and extremely accurate, this book made me realise a lot of things about our society, as bad as this sounds. although basing your entire argument on some pseudopsychology “probably based in biology” notion isn’t exactly the best idea, a lot of his takes on the nature of technology and modern society are very on point, such as how we become reliant on new technology, the inherent infringement of freedom and the tendency of technological society to become a massive interconnected machine. his views on leftism are, well, certainly interesting. while i agreed with him in certain aspects, you can tell he’s suffering from the common “cis white man view”, in that he’s talking from a point of massive privilege when he’s seemingly advocating for complete neutrality between sexes, races etc. aside from that, as someone who holds many anarchist views myself

i did feel like he put some of the feelings i've had for a while regarding the rise of socialism and collectivism into words, and he really did manage to change my views on some aspects of technology, modern society and anarcho primitivism so, congrats i guess? overall, a really important work of philosophy which i would recommend to everyone hating on capitalism atm

(p.s rip ted kaczynski you would love the term "chronically online")

Hermas

5 reviews

January 18, 2023

Kaczynski effectively diagnoses many of the problems facing our world due to the integration of advanced technology into everyday life. This is more glaringly obvious nearly 30 years from the date of it's authorship, as we now find ourselves watching the baby steps of a technocracy. His assessment of leftism and it's adherents is spot on, highlighting the concepts of "over-socialization" and interference in the "power process" and what industrial society has done to exasperate these problems.

Where I disagree with Kaczynski is his solution to these problems, proposing a violent revolution and destruction of the industrial system, regressing to a pre-industrial society (an apt example would be the Amish or Mennonites). I find this solution to be entirely unrealistic and impractical. Garnering support for such a feat would be extremely challenging and it remains to be seen if humans are able to adapt to the new conditions in which we find ourselves.

Regardless, I find Kaczynski's manifesto to be extremely helpful and profound in diagnosing the problems of the modern world. I would recommend that you approach it with an open mind and consider what it is that he is saying, as opposed to just thinking that he is your average anarchist and nothing more. It is also worth saying that discounting his arguments because of the things he did is cowardly (not that I support his actions).

essentials-of-my-worldview

Harry Vincent

182 reviews

January 29, 2023

7/10 - gaping hole in his comments about artificial goals is that if you have to actively create food scarcity, health trouble and manual work to do etc then these themselves are 'artificial'. We've largely solved those problems, you're just choosing these problems instead but they're still artificial.

That said I think he makes some great points about what really motivates the progress of science and technology. Primarily people's need to be busy, not any benevolent (or evil) force. I just don't think you can truly go back to some kind of pre-technology world at this point. We know how to build technology and master the natural world now, enough people always will that a 'nature revolution' that he talks about would be too self inflicted to feel genuine at this point.

More to the point, I do think that I net prefer technology society to pre technological society. I'll still rate it a seven because so many of his criticisms seem well thought out and correct. I just don't think the grass is actually greener on the other side. Most of the world that still lives in pre-technological societies would probably agree I think. I'm sure that he would prefer living in the wilderness and being self sufficient but I think he's too self centred to consider that others might not so much. There's much self cantered thinking and hypocrisy through out, not least because he appears to be trying to incite a huge movement to agree with him, which reeks of the collectivism he so despises.

Mattias Ek

39 reviews

February 12, 2023

There has been a consistent tendency, going back at least to the Industrial Revolution for technology to strengthen the system at a high cost in individual freedom and local autonomy. Hence any change designed to protect freedom from technology would be contrary to a fundamental trend in the development of our society. Consequently, such a change either would be a transitory one — soon swamped by the tide of history — or, if large enough to be permanent would alter the nature of our whole society. This by the first and second principles. Moreover, since society would be altered in a way that could not be predicted in advance (third principle) there would be great risk. Changes large enough to make a lasting difference in favor of freedom would not be initiated because it would be realized that they would gravely disrupt the system. So any attempts at reform would be too timid to be effective. Even if changes large enough to make a lasting difference were initiated, they would be retracted when their disruptive effects became apparent. Thus, permanent changes in favor of freedom could be brought about only by persons prepared to accept radical, dangerous and unpredictable alteration of the entire system. In other words by revolutionaries, not reformers.

To those who think that all this sounds like science fiction, we point out that yesterday's science fiction is today's fact. The Industrial Revolution has radically altered man's environment and way of life, and it is only to be expected that as technology is increasingly applied to the human body and mind, man himself will be altered as radically as his environment and way of life have been.

Xrhstos

2 reviews

February 5, 2023

The 232 paragraphs of "The Industrial Society and its Future" present a clear, calm and carefully structured argument. I think an open-minded reader will come to agree, without even being able to resist, with his central thesis: namely, that the more technically oriented a society becomes, the less freedom and personal satisfaction its members enjoy. This is a simple hypothesis, presented probingly or moderately, which, in my opinion, is undeniably strong. "Industrial Society and Its Future" also contains (in fact, begins and ends with) the author's negative assessment of leftism. In those paragraphs leftism is portrayed as an essentially insincere way of thinking, a worldview whose stated goals and values conceal a more basic desire to replenish feelings of guilt and inferiority. The leftist is usually an over-socialized individual who rebels only partially and within acceptable limits, in line with his real needs and with the worsening social and ecological crisis.

alisha

77 reviews1 follower

February 20, 2023

interesting

Iain

128 reviews2 followers

March 4, 2023

Evergreen descriptions of the way technology bends all in society to its will, leftist thought and how we are left powerless without freedom moulded to technological society's needs rather than the reverse.

Williambasinskidisciple

18 reviews

March 9, 2023

Very convincing at first but quickly deescalates into unpolished anti-leftist and primal arguments that seem hardly applicable to our society. It's absurd to provoke a revolution against technological implications of the industrial era and then vaguely imply that in 500-1000 years it might just get back to how it was. It sounds like

Ted wants to turn back the clock and erase the richness of history and the mistakes humanity has done on the way. Surrogate activities are artificial, yea, but they do broaden human culture. At any rate, a lot of food for thought.

Milan Vrelic

23 reviews

March 11, 2023

Quite a short and easy read. The manifesto does one thing very well - illustration of the dangers that come from trading freedom for progress.

At the beginning of every page, you wonder if this is where things start to go batshit crazy but instead, you get rational thoughts and ideas. This continues until the end of the manifesto.

To my CSIS agent reading this , get a real job, you bum.

Christopher

Author

1 book47 followers

March 12, 2023

Third time reading this (first time was at the breakfast table in DC when the Washington Post printed it) and the world has moved spectacularly even further beyond what "Uncle Ted" feared and predicted almost 30 years ago now. Turns out he was actually optimistic.

(Since the "Manifesto" has essentially nothing to do with the "active" ministry of his philosophy, it doesn't give a lot of insight into the phenomenon of living through the twenty years of senseless murders he hoped would encourage an Anarcho-primitivist revolution.)

philosophy-social science-outdoors

Tyler Larade

43 reviews

March 15, 2023

Listened to audiobook, so didn't read this.

Was pretty good, had some valid points. I think people really like throwing this book around, making endless jokes about it, and not taking anything seriously regarding it. But if you do actually read or listen to what he has to say, you'll learn that he actually has a lot of good points. I say that even though I don't fully agree with everything he

says. It's also really well written and he gives LOADS of examples for every point he makes. Here are my favourite quotes:

"Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them the drugs to take away their unhappiness.

Science fiction? It is already happening to some extent in our own society.... Instead of removing the conditions that make people depressed, modern society gives them antidepressant drugs. In effect, antidepressants are a means of modifying an individual's internal state in such a way as to enable him to tolerate social conditions that he would otherwise find intolerable."

"In modern industrial society only minimal effort is necessary to satisfy one's physical needs. It is enough to go through a training program to acquire some petty technical skill, then come to work on time and exert the very modest effort needed to hold a job. The only requirements are a moderate amount of intelligence and, most of all, simple OBEDIENCE."

"The concept of "mental health" in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress."

Zand

30 reviews

March 19, 2023

I promise I do not know how to make a pipe bomb.

Toma Kostoc

4 reviews1 follower

March 26, 2023

Lots of interesting information and an excellent look into the writers mind, although more attention should've been paid to the end

Jeremy

676 reviews36 followers

March 28, 2023

Fascinating read. 30 years old. Wow.
Would this qualify as anarcho-libertarian?

James

167 reviews8 followers
March 30, 2023
This mf kinda spitting

Danny
11 reviews
April 9, 2023
He doesn't miss.

Alex Austin
40 reviews1 follower
April 14, 2023

A fascinating read, regardless whether you agree or disagree with ol' Ted's conclusions. Overall, I found his reasoning around some of the discontent of industrial society (abstraction from power, no longer finding fulfillment by mere survival, etc.) to be quite reasonable and relatively sound. However, I disagree on his solution to the issue.

I think that as an industrial society we have two options to solve the issue of our all-to-ubiquitous ennui:

1. We regress into primitivism, undo industrial advancement, and see power return to ourselves / small groups, and we find fulfillment in the mere fact of our survival. This is Ted's view

2. As members of an industrial society, we ACCEPT that mere survival will not satisfy us, and knowing this, we adopt a higher level of consciousness in all of our actions to ensure that our lives fulfill us and we do not live in dread. Ted would refer to such activities as "surrogate activities", and that living in pursuit of them is meaningless. But I would disagree.

TOUCH
24 reviews
May 14, 2023

As a Hkikomori living with no obligations it's very hard to tell what is and isn't a surrogate activity. Sometimes I feel that everything is, and others, that nothing is.

I don't consider myself a leftist, but maybe I am one. Kaczynski believes the main traits of a leftist are self-hatred and over-socialization. They've played the biggest part in the formation of my values too.

anarchism

J

43 reviews3 followers

April 16, 2023

Two quibbles:

Women, gays, the disabled and many others suffer massively under industrial society. So Ted here speaks from a bit of white male privilege when he dismisses their struggles as merely pawns in the game of the present.

What's with the spanking obsession? Shit felt like a Caleb Maupin diary entry.

Other than that, *Morgan Freeman voice* he's right you know

Kailee

19 reviews

July 19, 2023

Kaczynski's points are thoroughly articulated, but could be strengthened by more empirical evidence as opposed to his more "à priori" evidence. He offers plenty of real-world examples, though, that serve well as proof of his points. His ideas fall under the same pitfall as Freud, where it is not necessarily backed by anything "à posteriori", but it is easily observed in real life. He also writes in concise prose that makes his writing comprehensible but not overly simple. My favorite points he made were the ones about the characteristics of the leftist. I find this manifesto to be one of the most agreeable social commentaries I have ever read, so I don't know what that says about me.

Mathew Fegan

3 reviews

April 18, 2023

I found the general idea of the book amusing, but as the CEO of a large oil company, I found the book personally irreverent to me.

The book tells us about the future of big energy company, and how we as a society can adapt.

I found most of the book accurate and interesting around chapter 5, when we can finally get a clear picture on what the book is trying to warn us about.

altogether its a really good book and its definitely worth the read.

Yahya

1 review

April 21, 2023

Idk ,it been a long time. I liked it when i read it. But you know, it's that guy :P

Josh Daley

4 reviews

April 23, 2023

been on that schizophrenic grindset. Alexa, resume my audiobook

Philip Norton

84 reviews

April 24, 2023

Though his tactics were evil and his worldview is bleak, Kaczynski forces us to acknowledge many disturbing elements of our society that demand reconsideration. It is a good wake-up call, but it should not serve as anyone's foundation.

Julie

1 review1 follower

April 27, 2023

Very intriguing. Disagree greatly with large parts, agree with others. Forces both intro- and extrospective thought.

C. Clarke

41 reviews

April 29, 2023

The short of it, I agree completely with what Uncle Ted had to say in his 1995 essay, but it wasn't mind-blowing, that's why 4 stars, not 5. His style of writing at points becomes sort of colloquial and sarcastic. One of my favourite bits like this was when he said:

Whenever it is suggested that the United States, for example, should cut back on technological progress or economic growth, people get hysterical and start screaming that if we fall behind in technology the Japanese will get ahead of us. Holy robots! The world will fly off its orbit if the Japanese ever sell more cars than we do! (Nationalism is a great promoter of technology.)

And there were a few grammatical errors I noticed, and in certain parts personality is given, but not really for any reason than spite. Like, he makes a hypothetical quote

by a group he's against, then he says, 'Yeah, right,' and then his own rebuttal. That isn't needed and only makes the reader take it less seriously, although I find it funny.

As for the real review, I will copy and paste my review and analysis from my dissertation here (without the references to page numbers):

Kaczynski's essay *Industrial Society and Its Future* posits three main theories regarding Industrial society. The first is a general evaluation of a 'technological-industrial system' and its pathological nature to modern society. The second is a method of revolt against this system by means of revolution, as opposed to reform. And the third is the idea that in our Industrial society large organisations hold a certain power over nature, and that modern individuals hence have 'far less power than primitive man ever did'; whereas it is individuals and small groups who should hold this power over nature.

The work is Kaczynski's commentary on the industrial-technological system of present-day society as well as a generalised yet detailed technical account on the psyche of a modern type of individual generally of the left-wing persuasion; he says, 'What we are trying to get at in discussing leftism is not so much movement or an ideology as a psychological type, or rather a collection of related types'. He explains a system whereby the 'leftists' and the industrial-technological system of our present civilisations encouragingly feed into each other without showing any signs of stopping, contributing to each other's growth in presence.

Firstly, he writes of a conception he calls 'the power process', which is, according to him, the psychological principles that lead to and that humans rely on for feelings of success, prosperity, flourishing, etc. It builds off of four elements: he writes, 'The three most clear-cut of these we call goal, effort and attainment of goal. [...] We call [the fourth element] autonomy and will discuss it later.' In a time when physical necessities of life are instantaneously accessible, this 'power process' is disrupted. He thinks that in the natural inclination to drive in human nature can be posited to be divided into three groups, which he writes include: '(1) those drives that can be satisfied with minimal effort; (2) those that can be satisfied but only at the cost of serious effort; (3) those that cannot be adequately satisfied no matter how much effort one makes. The power process is the process of satisfying the second group.'

Secondly, the 'leftists' are an unorganised group of people who demonstrate, as was mentioned, a 'psychological type' which include 'feelings of inferiority' and 'oversocialization'. Kaczynski makes it clear that he is speaking in extremely generalised terms, saying, 'All we are trying to do here is indicate in a rough and approximate way the two psychological tendencies that we believe are the main driving force of modern leftism;' and, 'We emphasize that the foregoing does not pretend to be an accurate description of everyone who might be considered a leftist. It is only a rough indication of a general tendency of leftism.' The two psychological tendencies he refers to in the former quote are those of the 'feelings of inferiority' and 'oversocialisation'.

The technological-industrial system inhibits the natural human tendency towards the said power process and makes humans dependent on it. The system instead provides for humans as an alternative to the previously mentioned Group 2 of human drive an

artificial power process, called ‘surrogate activities’; since natural human goals such as survival and housing, for example, are so available, humans no longer develop an adequate power process protocol, which includes the three steps previously mentioned, and instead develop goals on the basis of material acquisition and things that people are subconsciously pressured into getting by the advertising industry. With regard to real goals (as opposed to synthetic ones), he writes, ‘Nonattainment of important goals results in death if the goals are physical necessities, and in frustration if nonattainment of the goals is compatible with survival. Consistent failure to attain goals throughout life results in defeatism, low self-esteem or depression.’ (ibid., p. 18) People whose drives are more fitted into the above mentioned Group 3 are mostly the ones who face these psychological problems.

This system is completely inescapable by means of reformation, and instead requires a sort of revolution; he concluded this based on what he identified as ‘principles of history’. In summary, the five principles that he mentions are intrinsic limitations of human nature that apply to any sort of state-level organisation, such as a country with a government. As for reformation specifically, he argues that reformation only works if society is leaning towards that direction in the first place, otherwise the change that would appear upon a reformation being passed is transitory and, overall, the how-things-stand will return into its prior form from before the reformation took place. Kaczynski criticises modern science in a similar fashion to Guénon, however this will be spoken of below. In addition, he claims that the pursuits in modern science by the individuals who practise in this field are still nothing more than a synthetic form of the naturally-human power process, and thus it is a surrogate activity.

Thus are the contents of roughly the first two thirds of the essay, an evaluation of the technological-industrial system and its pathological nature to society, along with the methods by which to bypass it. The beginning of the last third of the essay, however, is more speculative, wherein a hypothetical finalised version of the system is contemplated, without the obstacles that it is currently or in Kaczynski’s time or writing facing to reach its accomplishment. He writes:

‘The system may become a unitary, monolithic organization, or it may be more or less fragmented and consist of a number of organizations coexisting in a relationship that includes elements of cooperation and competition, just as today the government, the corporations and other large organizations both [sic] cooperate and compete with each other. Human freedom mostly will have vanished, because individuals and small groups will be impotent vis-a-vis large organizations armed with supertechnology and an arsenal of advanced psychological and biological tools for manipulating human beings, besides instruments of surveillance and physical coercion. Because of its imaginative and extremely hypothetical character, no more will be said of this part of the essay.

Then here was supposed to be another section regarding technology vs. nature, industrial society vs. individual and small groups, but I haven’t written that section yet.

Jacob Austin

2 reviews

May 1, 2023

Lectures from Uncle Ted's cabin.

Nikita B

17 reviews

May 1, 2023

It's aight

Declan Kelly

2 reviews

May 19, 2023

Interesting perspective but certainly not fully convincing with its conclusions

Tim Drew

7 reviews

May 20, 2023

This book was definitely written by a smart guy who was fed LSD for years.

I like the description of the "power process" which has many different interactions through psychology, but overall this guy seemed a little nuts

Dalan Mendonca

136 reviews48 followers

June 13, 2023

The Lord took ol' Teddy away so I thought it's a good time to read this.

In short, the book criticises the adoption of technology in society, raising a call to arms to give it all up.

Surprisingly coherent and clear; even though many might not agree (or downright revile) at it.

What I liked / found insightful

* Good callout of surrogate activities - There is some merit to the concept of surrogate activities. I believe our hardware and firmware were built for physical tasks; but our

modern world has much less of these so we run sub-optimal software ("knowledge work") on it.

* Very good articulation of systems thinking: He essentially describes the emergent/n-th order effects of technological change. We can never predict how technology finally reconstructs society.

* Great examples of decision traps - Clear examples of how short term rational/optimal choices can be long term irrational/sub-optimal.

* Science and technology as mass movements - Most scientists and technologists won't agree with this but their pursuits are but hobbies on a large scale and nothing like the "callings" or "noble pursuits" they pretend it to be.,

What was ok/bleh/weak

- Left hater: OK we get it, you hate the lefties and the woke folks.

- "Power Process": Sort of fuzzily articulated.

- Humans have agency against technology too: Netherlands is good example of how technology like automobiles is carefully controlled. They have cars too; but they have prioritised bike lanes and public transport. Not every country is a techno-capitalist hellscape like the USA.

- Technology is fuzzy to define - Where do stop? Before industrialization, before writing, before pyramids?

I am surrounded by techno-optimists and techno-utopians who think the solution to every problem is but an app. So, this manifesto from the opposite end of the spectrum is quite refreshing.

Elijah Anderson

12 reviews

June 14, 2023

Definitely don't agree with all that Kaczynski postulates, and it's certainly a tad ironic to be "reviewing" his article on a smartphone app, but he was definitely forward-thinking and hits the nail on the head of several modern issues. Sad that he found it necessary to kill in order for his ideals to be deemed outside the realm of triviality enough to be read by people. Sadder that he may have been (in a twisted way) right.

Fnaught

52 reviews

June 16, 2023

'It is not the primitive man, who has used his body daily for practical purposes, who fears the deterioration of age, but the modern man, who has never had a practical use for his body beyond walking from his car to his house.'

Ivan

20 reviews

June 16, 2023

Scary, lucid analysis of modern times. Oftentimes words have the same meaning regardless of who say them.

Tor Potheary

12 reviews

June 20, 2023

Concise and effective manifesto

Philip H. Moura

3 reviews

June 21, 2023

A well written and intricate description of the impacts of industrialisation from the mind of a domestic terrorist. While some of his harsh and brutal opinions hold some merit, it is not difficult to discern ideas that combat his extremist rhetoric. It is a shame that a mind like his was driven to such violence and extremism, truly an example of being too smart for your own good.

Tristan Searle

80 reviews5 followers

June 25, 2023

Despite its twisted history, this book becomes more relevant with each passing day. The most shocking part was just how many of the predictions have already come true and how many others are currently in the process of unfolding.

Matt Holcomb

33 reviews

July 28, 2023

Ted kaczynski just killed himself in prison so I decided to look into him. He's fascinating. He was a gifted Harvard mathematician and later became co creator of the FREEDOM CLUB (FC). A violent anarchist group like fight club. (fc). He talks

about humans feelings of worthlessness in an increasingly technological society. He believes in tearing down technology and never going back. His new society is based on small communities in NATURE. It doesn't sound so bad. Needs edits; 8/10

Kelsey

32 reviews

June 26, 2023

Obviously controversial and I don't agree with every idea and certainly not his methods but overall these really should not be fringe ideas.

Sevy

8 reviews

June 29, 2023

Dear Bank CEO. I have this huuge Package you really should open up :)).

Greg Koontz

5 reviews

July 13, 2023

Standard Michigan math major.

Segismundo

5 reviews

July 4, 2023

Needs a re-read

Webb

152 reviews2 followers

July 4, 2023

Good book.

I like the point about surrogate activities. That industrial society is so artificial and inherently oppressive, that nothing is truly fulfilling. Yet we pursue surrogate activities in a futile attempt at finding fulfillment. Such as reading books, or any other hobby.

Still, I'll make the most of things the way they are. I enjoyed this book.

Rylan Smolik

2 reviews

July 5, 2023

As I had some preconceptions going into this manifesto, I was surprised to see how modern Ted Kaczynski's ideas felt and how succinctly and clearly they were laid out. Though I can't say I was on board with everything, I thought this was a great insight into the destructive and ever-growing nature into the technology system we've built for ourselves. A great eye-opening read, one that I will have to reread in a few years to see how my perspective changes with it.

Pannacotta Fugo

6 reviews

July 9, 2023

"The right man in the wrong place can make all the difference in the world."

I think there was substantial potential in this book, as I believe it is one of the sharpest, most cynical critiques that unfortunately is encumbered by a pigeonholed solution which can never be satisfied or pleased. I admit I am sympathetic to Theodore, beyond intellect, there is hidden kindness, humor, and honesty in him. It is unfortunate his legacy remains mostly propagated by internet-addicted idiots who likely never read a book beyond the age of 17 and use irony to distance the thought of "it's so cool that he killed people"

I hope people take what he says seriously, if not the very real dangers foretold but as an exercise of understanding. All too often in media, people are discredited for beliefs that 'break the rules' by insulting them to distance the fact that a human rationally can come to these beliefs, and distance the reality they are often complicit in it.

Jake Khalifa

5 reviews

July 9, 2023

A surprisingly well written anti-left steel man argument against industrial society.

Oriol Frigolé Llorà

12 reviews

July 13, 2023

3.5/5. (This is a review of the ideas presented in the work, as well as the reading experience, and not a commentary on the author's general beliefs or any terrorist actions carried out in defence of those beliefs). I give it 4 stars instead of 3 because I was pleasantly surprised by the unexpected coherence in some of the arguments. The exercise of reasoning through such a "radical", unorthodox, and transgressive perspective was intellectually stimulating. However, the author's open-mindedness in deviating from the norm sometimes led to oversimplification and generalization. Towards the end, the author acknowledges this, making the manifesto slightly more sensible. Nonetheless, I believe the author's emotional involvement in arguing against technological/industrial society hampers its ability to provide an objective overview.

The most valuable insights I derived from this work are as follows: an understanding of how the increasing penetration of technological advancements in our lives unintentionally limit individual freedom by making us increasingly dependent on them; and how the disruption of the natural power process of individuals results in a lack of purpose and meaning, leading to unfulfilling lives. It certainly heightened my awareness of the hidden dangers of technology and its potential to introduce unforeseen problems when attempting to solve existing ones, creating a vicious cycle where new technologies are sought to address problems caused by previous iterations. I also became more mindful of how, in an industrialized society where survival is not a concern, individuals may attempt to compensate for the absence of a natural power process by pursuing insatiable and unsatisfactory artificial goals in an effort to alleviate feelings of alienation and emptiness. Examples of such surrogate activities include seeking recognition, prestige, social power, group affiliation, or succumbing to consumerism and materialism. This work made me contemplate the motivations behind my life decisions and the sources of willpower for my actions. It does not necessarily imply a need for changing any of my actions, but it is enlightening to objectively analyze these aspects and be more aware of the tendencies and influences that impact our daily lives as we strive to live (and thrive) within the system.

In my opinion, the weaker aspects of this manifesto would be the description of a collapse as the only possible end (future) of the industrial society, and the subsequent proposed solution of just making it collapse faster, with the only goal being its breakdown. It seems to me that all arguments defending revolution instead of reform are somewhat logical, but only for someone who has completely resigned, absolutely pessimistic about technology, and whose only hope is to start from scratch. This leads me to my next point. I believe the relationship between human nature, society, and technology is far more intricate and interdependent than being able to definitively delineate what is natural and what is not. Are our inclinations to organize in groups and our cognitive abilities to create and modify our environment not also a product of nature through evolutionary processes? Could we have consciously avoided reaching the point at which we are now?

I think that the perfect society cannot be planned or designed; its complexity and unpredictability elude our complete understanding and control. Moreover, I doubt

we even know what a perfect society truly means for us. Nevertheless, it is highly beneficial to continuously analyze each evolutionary step it takes and study its history, in an attempt to shape it towards what appears to be better at any given time. The outcome may deviate significantly from our expectations, but most importantly, we must accept it and even embrace it.

Ultimately, my take-home message is to learn how to open-mindedly observe our situation within society and be aware of how it affects us personally on every level, with the primary objective of changing our perception and attitude towards it and trying to live a healthy, honest, and happy life with what is given. Of course, one should strive to progress, advance and achieve one's full potential, as well as try to make positive change within society, but without ever forgetting our limitations and struggles towards defining and pursuing what is really good.

Grant Keegan

217 reviews

July 11, 2023

Half the time I was like "Wow, Ted was really a genius, he predicted so many things that became reality today". And the other half I was like "You absolute moron, get your head out of your ass for a second."

In his manifesto, Ted Kaczynski speaks so many truths but at the same time he was a person who committed terrible acts against innocent people (even if in his twisted philosophy he might not see it that way). This book is insanely flawed, even regardless of your opinion about leftism or radical environmentalism, but I also think that many of his ideas make plenty of sense. The world is heading towards terrifying and strange directions, our freedoms are being eroded, and it becomes harder to escape the systems he warns about. I do think this book is worth reading and discussing.

P.S: Hello FBI! Nice to see you again.

1990s future-tech-ai non-fiction

Haroen Tmimi

7 reviews

July 12, 2023

The writing style of this book is unconventional, to say the least. That is my only complaint. This book is one of the most interesting anti-establishment pieces ever written. Theodore extensively discussed the negative consequences of the over-industrialization of our modern times. The way he went about putting this ideology to life, though, was a very terrible decision on his end.

Cash McClanahan

16 reviews

July 17, 2023

I think lots of people should read this book. Ted K has a lot of broad generalizations about society but a lot of his ideas are pretty interesting and deserve some degree of attention

Petrify

4 reviews

July 20, 2023

Finally got around to reading uncle Ted's work. I can't say I was dissapointed. He did a pretty good job explaining his critiques of modern life and what is to blame. I thought his dissection of leftist psychology and that of the "oversocialized" male to be particularly strong. The discussion on the power process made a lot of sense too and could very be one of the contributing reasons to the modern man's lack of purpose. I agree with Ted on needing to be closer to nature and preserving it, but Im not sure I am 100 hundred percent convinced we cant live with any form of technology. He did make convincing arguments as to detriments of that, and a lot of his predictions came true with technology. I dont think however that it is always necessarily true that people cant be fulfilled with surrogate activites and the like, and I wished he spent more time giving points as to why we need to get rid of all of industrialization and technology. Ted himself at the end did say that not all of his statements may be true so at least he is being honest. For the most part I think this reading is necessary for any man, regardless if they currently want some kind of change. His description on how to adequately start a revolution was informative and could be used for a revolution of any kind.

8-9/10

Ben Hathaway

105 reviews8 followers

July 23, 2023

Got most of it spot on, did Young Ted.

2023 a-lifes-work

Hasini

95 reviews

July 25, 2023

Read this not out of my own accord but one of my loved ones.
I was surprised to find myself liking it + agreeing with the things the author had to say.
4/5 because I wish he had fleshed out some of his ideas more, and given more strategy
into how he thinks industrial society should collapse + didn't appreciate his critique
of feminism because he thinks women want equal power because they feel inferior to
men internally.

Tim Lanahan
5 reviews
July 26, 2023
dude needed to get laid but he lowkey spittin

Mai
13 reviews1 follower
July 27, 2023
surprisingly well written and backed up with examples and limitations.

Micah
30 reviews
August 8, 2023
I think Teddy's greatest contribution was identifying and articulating the "power
process" and "surrogate activities," and thereby the sense of distraction that results
from it which ever-so-permeates the psychological state of our industrialized culture.
I also appreciate his critique of the mental health crisis; "mental health" is often
measured according to the levels of satisfaction conforming to the unnatural system
we have created. Any deviation is seen as a flaw of the individual self, not a symptom
of the system's errors. Therefore, we are medicated in order to reduce the inevitable
stress to the system that would occur if not medicated. The system protects itself
at the expense of the individual's lack of the freedom to undertake the proper power
process.
I see this as more prevalent now than when he penned this manifesto. Many have
bought into "self care" as a false remedy (and thereby a distraction) from the deeper
problems with our society. I think Teddy unfortunately doesn't incorporate proper
spirituality into his worldview, seeing it more as a liberal preference (liberal not in a
political sense) rather than a necessity.

However, his proclamation, “Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them drugs to take away their unhappiness. Science fiction? It is already happening to some extent in our society,” is borderline prophetic.

I also believe Teddy places too much emphasis on the elite’s drive for power being essentially attributed to the power process and invisible hand of the system maintaining itself. I believe genuine evil exists, and it doesn’t seem like Teddy’s paradigm accounts for objective morality.

Some standout quotes:

“[...] a technological society has to weaken family ties and local communities if it is to function efficiently. In modern society an individual’s loyalty must be first to the system and only secondarily to a small scale community, because if the internal loyalties of small scale communities were stronger than loyalty to the system, such communities would pursue their own advantage at the expense of the system.”

“Most people hate psychological conflict. For this reason, they avoid doing any serious thinking about difficult social issues, and they like to have such issues presented to them in simple, black-and-white terms: this is all good, and that is all bad. The revolutionary ideology should therefore be developed on two levels.”

“[...] the leftist’s real motive is not to attain the ostensible goals of leftism; in reality he is motivated by the sense of power he gets from struggling for and then reaching a social goal.”

“Feminists are desperately anxious to prove that women are as strong and as capable as men. Clearly, they are nagged by a fear that women may not be as strong and as capable as men.”

katherine
8 reviews1 follower
September 3, 2023
almost convinced me there!

Andrew
26 reviews3 followers
August 16, 2023
Do I agree with the problems he identifies? Yes, absolutely.
Do I agree with his conclusion? No.

Kaczynski tries to tell us throughout his manifesto that the benefits of industrialization are hugely outweighed by the negatives. This is my first problem with his conclusion. Personally, I think that medicine, transportation, communication, etc. have a bigger impact (positive) than the problem Ted identifies, mainly the inability to go through the power process and the negative impacts of leftism and oversocialization.

Secondly, even if he was right and I was wrong, I believe that his plan to destroy the system is outright ridiculous and that it could never be done, therefore we are only left with the possibility of reform and not revolution.

—

Regardless of the quality of his arguments, I believe that the problems he brings up are important nonetheless and everyone should at least be familiar with the contents of this manifesto.

Vertwitastick

1 review

August 21, 2023

TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON ENSURING LEFTISTS ARE NOT INVOLVED IN THE REVOLUTION. I UNDERSTAND HIS HESITANCY WITH LEFTISM CONSIDERING PAST REVOLUTIONS (such as the Bolshevik Revolution in the 1917) BUT THERE ARE TOO MANY LEFTISTS IN THE WORLD TO LEAVE ALL OF THEM OUT. NOT INCLUDING ANY OF THEM WOULD BE A MISTAKE. I ALSO QUESTION HIS MASSIVE CONCERN WITH GENETIC RESEARCH. HE SEEMS TO THINK THAT IT WILL GO WELL BEYOND HELPING PEOPLE WITH HEREDITARY DISORDERS AND WILL END UP BEING USED FOR CHOOSING SPECIFIC DESIRABLE TRAITS. I THINK THAT EVERYONE, AT LEAST IN 2023, AGREES THAT USING GENE EDITING FOR PICKING TRAITS IS IMMORAL, BUT I CANNOT PREDICT FUTURE GENERATIONS' ETHICS, SO I DIGRESS.

Imrane Bit

2 reviews

September 2, 2023

Uncle ted was right, that's all what i'd say

Sidd Jain

1 review

September 2, 2023

“What do we want??? A revolution!!!
When do we want it? Now!!
How do we get it? Figure it out.”

Bobby Daugherty
1,278 reviews13 followers
September 6, 2023

Good analysis of the problems of modern society as well as the origin. Ted points out the problems acceleration due to leftist ideology.
nonfiction-essays

Sandra
35 reviews1 follower
September 9, 2023

Man took Brave New World to heart and started to bomb people
Genuinely strangely enlightening for understanding contemporary political issues and public clashes in terms of covid, gun reform, etc. Take it to a bomber to explain the contemporary american-conservative opinions most coherently. His way of writing sounds so insanely modern (and humorous) that his influence on internet politics is more than obvious.
non-fiction politics

thegrimelite
1 review
September 16, 2023
Great

Will Holt
3 reviews
September 27, 2023

Technology is for geeks, bugs, losers, and bugs. Your spirit, your planet, your family, your fulfillment and any hope thereof - doomed. Teddy K explains how tech is the evil, not libtards or conservacucks. In fact, leftside and rightside literally do not matter in the slightest and if you think they do you're a normie who probably spends weekend on Netflix or playing stare at iPhone. Ted K decided the best way to tell everyone this

is to just start bombing people. In an unarguably misguided attempt to ignite an anti-technological revolution, Ted sent bombs to various people who he felt contributed to his favorite wilderness creek getting turned into a Walmart parking lot. Just nuke it all and start over. Ted's manifesto with predictions of the future of our society, should it continue unchecked, and mailed it to random news companies demanding they publish it and he will stop bombing people. Seems fair enough.

Ted was a genius. Certified genius. He skipped 2 grades and attended Harvard at 16. 20 he had his bachelors in Econ (like me!). How did this all go so wrong? Well somehow at Libtard school, Ted participated in MK Ultra (allegedly) in an experiment where he wrote essays about something passionate, sat down with someone he liked and respected, and listened as that person he so desperately would have liked to impress took a fat shit on his passionate writings. This was some sort of twisted attempt to make mind control happen or whatever. Either way, it made Ted depressed, anxious, and almost go through with a gender reassignment surgery (he ran out of the office prior to the appointment because he came to his senses and wanted to murder the doctor, Lol. (editors note: not actually funny)). Ted claims this did not effect his future as a bombing dude. He did not kill the doctor.

Ted quit teaching college and moved to a off-the-grid cabin in Montana, working towards full self-sufficiency. One day, Ted found his favorite creek was turned in to a road. He sort of instantly decided to bring the system to its knees. Ted was wilin' out hard-style, doping little misdemeanors around the woods he lived in against construction sites. Then, for whatever reason, he decided it was not enough and started mailing bombs to people who he felt contributed to technological growth. His manifesto got published, his loser brother turned him in, and then Ted died years later in prison.

What was in his manifesto?

Here's a summary: The industrial revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race.

Simple as. We have created a world we aren't evolved to live in. Basically, every societal problem we have today would be solved if you returned to nature. Tech has made us robots in a robotic society in which the system is held in higher regard than those who uphold it. Your mind is regulated in order to suit the system and uphold the technology we 'need' to live. Your status and well-being are only relevant through the lens of your ability to be productive to the system. Kids with ADHD are put on silly-pills in order to make the productive for the system. Think of that. Your 9 year old son who, 5,000 years ago, would have been well on course to being the village's best tiger hunter, has to have his brain chemicals permanently altered so he will sit at desk and make stock ticker go up \$0.00001. There is nothing harmful about having a short attention span without the lens of our society to look through. Depression and anxiety have sky rocketed in recent decades. The causes are unaddressed, just medicated. Just pave over the problem instead of shifting the foundation. Walk up, explain feeling, eat assigned pill, continue to worksite to send email. Being made to tolerate shit that is simply intolerable. It's unavoidable now. When this tech shit started it was dope. Running

water. Medicine. Some other cool shit probably. Sliced bread, idk. However, they have all been so integrated that personal freedom has been shaved away at. When cars first happened, only few, wealthy dudes had car. Now you literally cannot live as an adult in America without car. Those who walk the streets must now constantly be in fear of car. My natural God-given right to just walk about has been cut away at and ruined by car. This is only one example. Cities have been designed around countless examples of this shit. Have fun getting a job in 2023 without buying internet. Have fun getting the permits to go deer-killing or silk farming to make your own clothes. Ted says we aren't free once our actions impact the system. Moral, social, etc, do NOT threaten the system. People you do not know, did not elect, and will never meet have dictated what you are allowed to do with your actions, thoughts, and emotions, all for the greater good of the improvement of society. You have no power to change this either. Almost 10 billion people support this system. Your vote doesn't ultimately matter. Nothing can be fixed.

Ted says that your basic needs are easy to get. You just get a job, show up, turn brain off, and you have food and shelter. This isn't what your spirit wants. You have to seek fulfillment externally from your tangible daily tasks. Does house cat do this? Does jungle lion collect stamps? Does narwhal try to speedrun any% Mario 64? No, they have all the fulfillment they need by waking up, doing what they evolved to do naturally, then going to sleep. Your work making tiktoks to dunk on republicans will never make you or anyone else happy. This inherent lack of meaningful goals and fulfillment is detrimental to humans and causes untold amounts of undue stress and distress. You aren't depressed because mommy didn't give you any life goals as a child. Don't be stupid. You are depressed because you are overweight, look at a computer screen all day, and haven't even killed one mammoth with a spear for your village to eat. That's what you evolved to do, bro. Ted says none of the shit we do today matters at all, it is all within a frame of society giving you lame suggestions of goals to aim for. Ted says it won't be long until scientists can alter your DNA to basically eliminate any threats to society. You won't ever be sad. You won't have any goals to shoot for beyond get promotion. You will be an anti-natural robot. An affront to God. A product in plastic on a shelf. Ted also says eventually AI is going to make every single decision society needs to make. Your whole existence will be the Truman Show.

Ted says it is too late to fix. You have to burn it down and start again. Technophiles have claimed for 200 years that science will one day solve all these issues presented above. Do we wait 300? 400? When do you start to tug at your ever-increasingly tight collar at your neck and wonder 'hmm is it too late?' For example, world hunger was supposed to be solved by tech by now. But all we got instead was hot-spots of insane fatness, and 90% of the world starving to death, disease-ridden, and over crowded. Every tech solution has caused new problems. Do you even want to solve world hunger? Have you thought about it? If you believe in ending world hunger but also hate that China had a one child policy you can see your way out the door because your IQ is bringing the room's average down by like 30. Enjoy the crowds. Crime. Aggression.

Stress.

Anyhow, ol' Teddy decided the only way forward is backward. Ted's idea was if we do a lot of bad suffering now and get it out of the way, then the thousands of years of misery, unfulfillment, overcrowding, fear, etc etc, will be avoided. Rip the bandaid off. The larger the system gets, the more people will suffer. End it now and it's actually way better. Ted wants us to return to primitive times. No industry. You live in accordance with how you have evolved. Tech cannot undo evolution. Nature always wins. Like half the work is about hating Leftists. About half of the remaining half is hating Rightoids. Such labels are pointless and don't begin to address the issue. It boils down to this: those suppressing freedom, and those being suppressed.

Anyway he got caught and arrested, 8 life sentences, and committed suicide. His 20 years of terrorism have been ultimately forgotten and changed nothing. He had fantastic theories and wanted to help. Now he is in Hell where he objectively belongs. Don't get me wrong, I love ecology. Petti Linkola is one of my personal heroes. Try writing a book and getting it published due to its virtue inside. Not bombs.

Displaying 1 - 305 of 305 reviews

3 stars - 194 reviews

chris

16 reviews4 followers

May 22, 2007

Kaczynski tells us what is wrong with industrial civilization. And he takes his sweet little time doing it. Originally published in the Washington Post, after "F.C." threatened bombings if it wasn't.

Richard

27 reviews

October 30, 2007

You say you want a rev-oooo-lu-tion... The Freedom Club (aka Ted Kaczynski's) manifesto is provocative, arrogant, insightful and from what I can tell, somewhat plagiarized from a variety of reputable enviro-anarchists. Anyway, what kind of asshole mails a pipe bomb to a university in order to gain media exposure?

Šarlo

17 reviews7 followers

November 28, 2021

The main problem I have is with Kaczynski usage of the term "power", that is, the power process. Specifically, he understands it as an axiom for a fulfilling human life / fulfilling a human life, which I cannot consider an absolute truth once the individual is successfully *outside of the system (or industrial society)*, whereas the author never even touches on the potential topic of freeing oneself from the power process. Before I get disapproved for being a bit, erm, irrelevant, I did not make any claims of being relevant or objective. I also do not claim that the imagined power process simply disappears at a specific point; I merely do not acknowledge it is a universal rule. That said, the manifesto is excellently analytical in relation to industrial society in general, and conscious about its main fault: a heavy tendency to over-generalize (am I being redundant?).

Ganglion Bard-barbarian

42 reviews10 followers

December 22, 2010

A fascinating insight into the psychology of a desperate and alienated third positionist. Not for the impressionable-minded. Interesting ideas, but all and all a part of the desert of politics.

Nicole Evans

28 reviews

August 2, 2011

I agree with most of the things he has to say but he pretty much just keeps repeating things over and over to the point where you want to tell him to shut the hell up. He basically just rants about the problems with society but offers few solutions. I also thought the fact that he pretended to be a group of people was pretty childish.

Stacia

36 reviews

November 28, 2011

Couple of weird things, but overall, a path to revolution.

Steven Rhodes

32 reviews34 followers

March 22, 2019

In a word and at the very least, prescient.

Chris Chester

572 reviews85 followers

November 24, 2014

Let me see if I can walk through the argument as Kaczynski has presented it.

Human beings derive satisfaction in life from exercising the "power process," which is an inherent drive in the Nietzschean mold to exercise power over nature, other people, and oneself. In a state of nature, man utilizes this power process to survive and meet his basic biological needs, and in so doing derives satisfaction with life. The world is balanced, peace on Earth, kumbayah.

The problem with modern, technological society is that it makes the satisfaction of those biological needs way too easy. What does it really take for most people to survive these days? A moderate degree of intelligence, Kaczynski says, and OBEDIENCE.

The problem is that human beings still have this inclination for the power process leftover. What most people try and do to satisfy this need is throw themselves into what he calls a "surrogate activity" – a hobby, religion, social activism, sports team, or really anything that will give you a goal whose attainment will require struggle on your part.

So far, so good, as far as I'm concerned. I've long been aware of the boredom of basic survival in the system today. I'm also far too cynical about surrogate activities to derive total fulfillment from them... excepting of course running against the wind.

The only way to get rid of the alienation and anomie caused by the system, he says, is to throw out all of it. Most important is to banish technology, because technology is what isolates us from one another, and allowing it to exist at all is just encouraging it to progress and isolate us further. And the only way to cast off the shackles of technology and the existing world order that creates it, is revolution.

I'm still with him here. Personally, I'm not sure that I'd like to see the baby thrown out with the bathwater, but I do acknowledge that the system that supports me today also greatly limits my freedom, is accelerating the pace of ecological and environmental disaster, and contributes to the mental anguish and anomie of any truly thinking person. I also accept that it probably can't be changed from within.

But this is where we diverge. Kaczynski goes on a rant on the inevitable evils of genetic engineering. He argues that society will inevitably, and with the best intentions, seek to engineer away traits that are negative responses to strains imposed by the system. This would not only enshrine the opinions and proclivities of the decision-making class into the very genetic code of human beings, but would make people more resistant to the strains imposed by the system and make things worse, on aggregate.

He also speaks with great seriousness about the possibility of a takeover of the means of production by robots and artificial intelligence, exploring a nuanced variety of possible scenarios for the robopocalypse, replete with various degrees of human/robot control.

To avoid this nightmarish future, a group of revolutionaries based around a core of true believers needs to be assembled. This group, recruited only on the basis of rational arguments, needs to call for economic and social change, while avoiding any overtly political movements. A shallower version of the ideology can be cultivated for mass consumption, but its creation should be subordinate to the core of rationally-motivated believers.

This revolutionary group should work to increase the social stresses within the system to hasten the day when it breaks down or is sufficiently weakened to be subverted. This will involve death on a massive scale. And all technology must be destroyed so that society cannot reconstitute itself.

Kaczynski has a certain amount of internal logic to his arguments, but it's all based on a bunch of assumptions that he pointedly (and admittedly, in various parentheticals) refuses to prove. In rejecting our technological society, he demonstrates that he believes in one of modern society's essential myths: the myth of progress.

That was what I was wondering amidst his rants. Why bother destroying technological manuals when the very fossil fuels that underpin the economy are finite, and will disappear of their own accord? Why worry about the takeover by Skynet, when we actually find that true artificial intelligence is a fantasy? His revolution may well occur, but if society tips over the edge, it's not necessarily because it's been pushed.

Also of concern his rambling damnation of "leftists" of various stripes. I mean, sure, I take a few of his points. Leftists (can we call them liberals?) are more likely than not to be statists, and thus to resist the fall of modern, technological society. It's also highly likely that the revolution that Kaczynski's calls for would be gobbled up and consumed on the lefty fringe into some bastardized politicized version of the green party.

But all the nonsense about how feminism and gay rights necessarily stem from low self-esteem is just out of place. Sure, the looney left fringe of the sort one might see on Tumblr these days is a little out of control, but I don't think they control any major liberal platforms. They're just there. Political correctness is not the ultimately evil of a society.

And then of course, there are his deadly methods, with Kaczynski addresses briefly, if directly:

As for our constitutional rights, consider for example that of freedom of the press. We certainly don't mean to knock that right; it is very important tool for limiting concentration of political power and for keeping those who do have political power in line by publicly exposing any misbehavior on their part. But freedom of the press is of very little use to the average citizen as an individual. The mass media are mostly under the control of large organizations that are integrated into the system. Anyone

who has a little money can have something printed, or can distribute it on the Internet or in some such way, but what he has to say will be swamped by the vast volume of material put out by the media, hence it will have no practical effect. To make an impression on society with words is therefore almost impossible for most individuals and small groups. Take us (FC) for example. If we had never done anything violent and had submitted the present writings to a publisher, they probably would not have been accepted. If they had been accepted and published, they probably would not have attracted many readers, because it's more fun to watch the entertainment put out by the media than to read a sober essay. Even if these writings had had many readers, most of these readers would soon have forgotten what they had read as their minds were flooded by the mass of material to which the media expose them. In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people.

Right.

There are a surprising number of good points in here. The fragility of the existing world order is something that occupies my attention more and more as the years go by. I think humanity might find more stability and personal satisfaction on the other side of revolutionary change. But I also have no wish to live the chaos that would be the fulcrum for this new order (or have my children live through it, for that matter.)

Nor would I be willing to mail bombs to people just to get the press to pay attention to my manifesto — that kind of narcissism is hard to forgive, even in an imagined future in which Kaczynski's revolutionaries come to be.

In all, a lot of interesting ideas to be had here, but it's based on some shaky assumptions and was enacted with unvarnished egotism.

american-empire collapse non-fiction

Shane

Author

12 books77 followers

June 4, 2013

This is an interesting book through and through. The version I read had an introduction by Ray Kurzweil, the futurist author who discusses human's coming merger with technology. He was targeted by Kaczynski during his bombing campaign, which allows his introduction to take on a fascinating dialectic between opposites on the same plane. The writing itself is a more paranoid version of much primitivist/luddite literature you read, but its critiques of the left-wing elements of "anarcho-primitivism" may be the most well researched and involved of its kind. A curious window into the anger and resolve of a violent life.

It should be noted that while it is interesting, it is only in a passive way. The logic of the writing does not stand any serious thought, and the fact that many radical

communities still hold it in high regard as a piece of revolutionary propaganda is appalling.

Muneel Zaidi

185 reviews72 followers

January 3, 2014

The "Final Note" on paragraph 231 is very important for this reading, and I suggest that it be the prologue, not epilogue. Readers should start there, then goto paragraph one if they feel it is worth their time. Here's a quote that summarizes that paragraph well:

"Throughout this article we've made imprecise statements that ought to have had all sorts of qualifications and reservations attached to them; and some of our statements may be flatly false".

It's refreshing to hear an author point out the flaws in their argument; still this excuse just addresses these flaws, it does not reconcile them. Throughout the reading Kaczynski would make some very astute observations and point out problems with our current system, then follow up with a conclusion that seems to come from no where, or a solution that is easily countered with critical thinking.

My rating of this prose is not based off whether I agree with Kaczynski's ideology or not, it's based off his argument. He makes a weak argument in this essay and completely takes all credibility away from it in his last paragraph. That said, he makes some great observations and his model for man's "power" is very interesting. Still, this essay isn't worth killing anybody over.

non-fiction non-fiction-social-science

Emily

97 reviews28 followers

July 11, 2022

Recommended by: my dad

philosophy recommended-to-me

Jeff

30 reviews

August 17, 2014

Enlightening. Worth the read as its rather short.

Dave

259 reviews34 followers

September 30, 2014

Can't say I agree with his actions but his words are pretty rational. And compared to Henry Kissinger, Donald Rumsfeld, Bill O'Reilly, Oprah and all the other purveyors of mass suffering who wrote best-selling books, why should any of us be scared that reading this one will land us on the no fly list?

Rui Coelho

222 reviews

June 4, 2015

An interesting book. I would recommend it to anyone interested on the origins of anti-civ thought.

Pros:

- Kaczynski's analysis of the human costs of modernity
- In many ways this book anticipates the anti-civ discourse
- The general lines of his strategy remain relevant (though the details don't)

Cons:

- Outdated. Is thought is mostly concerned with "disciplinary societies" (western 1920s-60s) so, in fact, it was already way out of date when it was first published in 1995.
 - His anti-leftist obsession is moralistic and throws out the window any possibility of intersectionality
 - The chapter sequence is not the best
-

Ryan Rodenbaugh

29 reviews13 followers

June 29, 2016

Thought provoking. Interesting how much of this is very evident today (2016 Presidential election, modern social justice movements, push for political correctness, etc.). At the same time, the text is outdated and (in my humble opinion) takes a flawed and over exaggerated approach to the evils of technology/industrialization. From a micro perspective I do believe it's easy to think technology is an impediment on modern happiness, but near the end where "FC" says (paraphrasing) that refrigerators wouldn't be a part of the ideal post-technology society he's pushing for, you really have to ask if "FC" drank a bit too much of his own Kool-Aid.

biographies

Adam McPhee
1,273 reviews207 followers
February 2, 2018

Liked: Acknowledges we have serious environmental problems that the system can't deal with as it is. Our growing lack of autonomy in the modern world. The stuff about the tension between technology and freedom, but only up to a point. He hates those Sylvan Learning Centres, the corporate tutoring franchise in the states. Also it's funny that he uses the first person plural pronoun to throw the cops off his scent.

Disliked: anarcho-primitivism in general. Critique of leftism as a pathology. The power process stuff. That his own brother ratted him out. The decades-long bombing campaign that preceded the publication of this manifesto, killing two and injuring twenty-three.

essays manifestos philosophy

Wouter
4 reviews
June 26, 2017

This is scary in a specific way. The manifesto starts off with rational and convincing points, not lacking footnotes and qualification of the author. Gradually though, it becomes clear this truly is written by a (highly intelligent) but insane person rationalizing his destructive thoughts.

It is an interesting piece of literature and an opinion worth reading, but I wouldn't quite agree with the author's plan for an uncompromising revolution against technology.

Wyvern
126 reviews
August 23, 2017

I've been reading through this little piece on and off in the background of my work, and was surprised (as many others were) to find it to be a well-written and confidently spoken piece of work. I found myself agreeing with quite a bit of Kaczynski's political *philosophy*, but not necessarily his *conclusion*, plan for the future, or perspective on industrialization. I'd like to think of technology in a more optimistic light, an almost transhumanist ad-on we can use to enhance our brief existence on this planet - not a vice restricting us from reaching our "true potential". The idea that regressing back into an uneducated, primal, disease-stricken environment would be *beneficial* is ludicrous. Overall, 3/5, not worth blowing up nerds over.

Ellen Davis

161 reviews1 follower

August 29, 2017

Fascinating, radical, eerie, and sometimes even insightful. Interesting glimpse at the philosophies of an atypical serial killer who likely considered himself a vigilante freedom fighter. I'm sure reading this has put me on some kind of watch list, but it was for intellectual curiosity only, I swear.

Andrew Ziegler

283 reviews6 followers

October 5, 2017

Someone else said this. It bears repeating. I hope the FBI knows I was just curious.

Richard Wu

176 reviews36 followers

November 5, 2017

I found it well-observed and sufficiently philosophical.

While not one of my alma mater's more distinguished alumni, Theodore John Kaczynski is undeniably one of its most prescient. Unfortunately, like many writers, Kaczynski would've been better off sticking to theory instead of attempting praxis (we all know how that ended up). Here we must mention the ultimate irony in the film *Barton Fink*, which is that the Coen brothers *actually* believe the words they inserted into Barton's mouth, that the so-to-speak "life of the mind" is precisely as Barton describes it: "I gotta tell you, the life of the mind... There's no roadmap for that territory... And exploring it can be painful." The film's ostensible message, that the lives of the working class and underclass are equally as rich and complex as those of the so-called cultured class, is one which no middling critic failed to notice, however what separates the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, is the realization that the Coens themselves fall prey to the trope in which intellectuals romanticize the *modus vivendi* of their blue-collar peers, somehow more pure and uncorrupted than those of the intelligentsia, beyond any semblance of their situation in actuality. The trope finds its origins in a decision made by those in said cultured class, though classify it as a decision they would (ironically) not, the decision to bear their inability to actualize the higher levels of Maslow's pyramid as personal failure instead of blaming it on circumstance. And this decision, of course, isn't based on any reality aside from the one these noumenal dwellers have constructed for themselves.

With regards to the manifesto's actual content, I find that, aside from a few unsavory ethical positions (e.g. bias against transsexualism), Ted's statements can be corroborated with empirical data in economics, psychology, sociology, and politics

(as it relates to governmental methodology). This is worth mentioning not because I necessarily agree with them—for counterexamples can also be dug up—but because certain readers will dismiss them out of hand by referencing the “facts” that he’s “the Unabomber” or “clearly insane.” We call these individuals “close-minded”; here the derision is warranted because it demonstrates their incapacity for intellectual engagement and their preference for self-righteous moralism. I recommend a small dose of empathy, enough to understand that you and I have no idea how we’d be transformed were we to undergo extensive psychological manipulation at the hands of someone like Henry Murray or Philip Zimbardo.

That being said, and though it is for the most part well-reasoned, the tract contains several internal logical contradictions; other reviewers have performed the gracious work of sifting through and pointing them out. So it does not obtain that having an IQ of 167 and produced prodigious work in complex analysis results in airtight ratiocination, and I say this in light of Kaczynski’s much-welcomed caveats that many of his categories are imprecise and many of his assumptions unvalidated. But this, however intellectually honest, does not justify the lack of nuance. Umberto Eco understood quite well that the more general the theory, the more are readers able to project their own interpretations onto it; the more readily they can supply it with their personal truth-conditions. One would do well to remember that just because certain—or even the majority of—parts ring eerily prophetic does not mean other parts cannot be mistaken or flat-out false, and one would do better to try discerning these for oneself.

Reading the manifesto *in toto* takes between two and three hours. But this is hardly notable next to the fact that I read the entire thing through the Twitter app on my phone. This biggest of ironies is worth mentioning not only because of its humor, but because it acts as particularly sharp evidence for paragraphs 127-129; anyone who disagrees is likely more insane on average than Ted at his worst moments.

Lastly, I have to trot out the old psychological trope where by definition, I and you as individuals must already be predisposed to whatever it is we’re reading (in the broad sense) at the time. Which means it’s no more productive for me to be reading this than it is for one of my Millennial compatriots to be spending her afternoon binging Netflix (and by productive here I don’t mean contributing to GDP). The people who ought (an opinion, necessarily subjective) to be reading this are naturally those who lack the taste for it, those for whom it would be more bitter pill, less afternoon snack. Jacques Ellul recognized as much—his cynicism runs through his book *Propaganda* (also highly recommended)—as did Eric Hoffer, whom Kaczynski begins citing in paragraph 222. The only advice I have for my friends on this site is: look past the NYT bestseller lists and broaden your perspective the tiniest of bits.

Shabab Hussain

4 reviews

January 29, 2018

Excellent diagnosis. Stupidly evil prescription.

Claude Petrescu

5 reviews6 followers

March 29, 2020

It's a perspective, and mind you, he makes a great deal of very good points, especially on "surrogate activities". Now, the fact that the author is who he is, is perhaps both worth judging separately from the actions he took but at the same time, we have to admit, half the appeal in reading this is precisely because of the controversial figure he was.

Kimpossible

57 reviews

March 22, 2018

I agree with a lot of what he states are problems in the first part. Technology has had its way with us, and now we can't live without. I think the way he went about getting his manifesto out there, and what he presented as solutions to the issues are way too extreme, and probably impossible to accomplish (which he said himself). Eat your cake and have it too.

history memoir nonfiction

Abhiraj

74 reviews41 followers

April 2, 2018

3.5.

Why did he have to go and bomb people??

He could've taught Math AND Philosophy!

Rajesh Hegde

21 reviews2 followers

April 30, 2018

The book gives good examples on how technology affects natural way of living even if it's unintended sometimes. His final action was extreme but his differentiation of small scale and mass technology is insightful in moving towards self sufficient living.

One of the honest assessments made by a person getting out of industrial order and living in the wild. The book is repetitive on his rant on the left wing and government control. However it's a quick read and his narrative is getting relevant by the year as we move towards complete automation. It's a must read for a person looking to move into natural living from industrial living.

Nick Skelton

Author

2 books4 followers

May 9, 2018

Despite the fact that I will probably be added to the FBI watchlist for giving this piece a good review, I feel like it has a great deal of truth in it! Truth or not, however, it certainly doesn't warrant the death and maiming of a single living being.

The idea he had on human happiness in modern society is interesting. That striving for your needs alone can make you happiest, and that having your needs provided for you by society can, at best, make you perpetually and futilely seek fulfilment in hobbies, and at worst, send you into a downward spiral of depression, resonated with me.

That said, I lost interest halfway through after not getting a satisfactory solution to the problem, other than living in the woods and mail bombing random people... what a jip.

Elshey Hey

22 reviews

July 11, 2018

I wanted to read this book to understand what Kaczynski wanted the world to know with his terrible actions. He was too propagandist to my liking but the manifesto gave a good understanding of the world he was living it. And he did make some good points, some of which are still valid today, in this world he was so afraid of. Being far-anything in one's thoughts probably isn't a good idea for the society. I recommend reading the manifesto before watching, for example, the Netflix documentary on him.

Kagan2017

19 reviews

August 1, 2018

Interesting.Kaczynski may well be proved right to raise alarms about technology,but so far his predictions have not been fully accurate.
It remains to be seen,wether this work was ahead of its time and warned against a dystopia,or is just a long rant of an anti-social terrorist.

Aakash Hari
5 reviews
September 13, 2018
Ironically, I read the ebook.

Ayla
1,012 reviews29 followers
September 19, 2018
Really twisted individual, you can see his contempt for modern society in this dissertation. For someone who was highly intelligent, I think he got screwed up by all those experiments in Harvard. At a young age being in college and having someone verbally abuse you for 3 years just to see your reactions, must have snapped something inside him, to make him the way he was. If you read it he even talks about people being hooked up to electrodes. His disdain for having kids "brainwashed" by places like Sylvan learning and technology is clearly shown here. His reference to we and FC(for himself) was also bizarre as if he was trying to start a movement. The whole line where he says they had to kill some people to publish this was very disturbing.
non-fiction

Gambrinous
22 reviews
November 17, 2018
What a "book". I decided to read the whole Manifesto after watching Netflix miniseries Manhunt: Unabomber.
First, it's for sure one of the best essays I've read in my life. I'm talking about the style; that *Chicago Tribune "style guide"* is **much better** than current style used in essays through Europe and most American universities. Then, Ted's vocabulary is amazing, and he certainly wants to defend his ideology based on irrefutable facts. When i started reading him, I suddenly realized he is not an alt-right stupid guy. He is a very intelligent man with upper studies (thus, that makes the essay even *more* interesting). Just for comparison, I was reading a bit of Anders Breivik's Manifesto 2083: A European Declaration of Independence. Breivik is an alt-right member who

is, surprise, a soul-less murderer of innocent people. Well, that manifesto is a bunch of stupid, racist, homophobic comments. I spotted the difference instantly.

BUT I decided to take my own notes of Ted's Manifesto. I have 11 pages of notes from this book, organized by a color-code (yep, I'm a *James Fitz wannabe*). I marked 33 parts of the book, and **I've found at least 11 phallacies or imprecise statements**, that being extremely generous to him. Furthermore, he exposes a not-so-rational hate against leftism or any resemblance with the left. The worst part is that, in a final note, [**SPOILER ALERT**] he recognises himself that there are multiple flaws inside the Manifesto.

So, after a couple of weeks with this essay, my own conclusion is the follow. Ted is a very, very intelligent man and **he is 100% right in some points**. But considering the whole Manifesto, I felt Ted as an **ill man, narcissist, full of hatred, who tries his best to justify his actions** as part of a good plan. They were not. He's a terrorist trying to justify himself. He is so narcissistic that, most of the time, he poses his opinion on something as if it was a *complete, universal tautology*. That's one of the worst mistakes someone can make while writing an essay.

So, sorry Ted, you are not a revolutionary leader. You are just a very intelligent killer.

philosophy

Amber

619 reviews5 followers

July 28, 2019

I watched the Manhunt: Unabomber miniseries on Netflix and it was so interesting it made me want to read the actual Unabomber Manifesto. It's worth a look, and it doesn't take very long.

Kaczynski's basic premise is that what's wrong with the way we live now is that living in a collectivist society (i.e. the bountiful life I'm saying you should be happy to have in my review of *The Alchemist*) only SEEMS bountiful - in reality, it's really crushing the human dignity and spirit out of us. Yes, we have nice things like advanced medical care and HDTVs and lattes, but those are just the shiny lures that got us to trade dignity and freedom for life in a degrading cage of drudgery.

I won't say Kaczynski's wrong, exactly - our society has painted him as a crazy crank, so it's surprising at first how many of the points he makes are plain truth. But what he's really attacking is the fundamental social contract. People agree to give up certain freedoms to reap the material benefits of a collective society. *That's the whole idea.*

It's undeniably true that there's a spectrum of ways human beings could theoretically live, with total individual freedom a la "the noble savage" (assuming you favor Locke and not Hobbes) at one end and total collectivist slavery a la Star Trek's "Borg"

at the other end. And living too near either end exacts a high price. Where Kaczynski went wrong was his incredible arrogance. He thought he could pick a point on that spectrum that was right for HIM and try to force it on everyone through violent overthrow. And his "solution" of obliterating technology is no solution at all. I think he has a very romanticized idea of how pre-technological people really lived, and his life alone in a shack in the woods didn't give him a realistic view of what life a pre-technological village was like.

I can say with a high level of confidence that I do NOT want to live as close to the "noble savage" end of the spectrum as Kaczynski thinks we should all be living. In particular, my quality of life has benefited immensely from access to medical technology that has allowed women (the ones who have access to it anyway) to free themselves from the tyranny of the human reproductive cycle and all the physical tolls and risks it places on women. I don't consider a short life filled with an endless round of pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing particularly free or dignified. It's just a different form of drudgery, and for me, it would be a much more miserable one. And I consider stopping at red lights when no one's around and showing up at work at 8:00 am, 5 days a week, to be a reasonable price to pay for living somewhere in the middle of the spectrum.

It's actually interesting to me to compare *The Manifesto* and *The Alchemist*. They both recognize the ennui of modern collectivist life, but Coehlo's solution is to run away from it, while Kaczynski's solution is to burn the whole edifice to the ground and everyone lives in primitive villages. I guess that's where he thinks we'll all find our personal legends and rediscover the soul of the world.

2018 made-me-think male-authors

Edmond

48 reviews5 followers

December 7, 2018

Let me start off by saying that while I don't agree with his actions, I do acknowledge their efficacy in getting people to read his work. I have no doubt that it would have been lost in the annals had he not conducted the bombings.

A very interesting anti-leftist manifesto, his meta-analysis of leftist movements is elucidated with much clarity. His critique on activists of said movements is incredibly interesting. However, a careless reader may easily construe what he has written as bigotry, which would have missed the point entirely.

However, his anti-technology viewpoints are incredibly biased, tending toward the traditional definition of antisocial (of course, as his terroristic acts would tend to suggest). He over-glorifies the ideas of small-scale societies being better than the system, favouring a constant labouring for personal survival over survival as a system through large-scale cooperation. He completely ignores the problems that such hunter-gatherer societies face problems due to externalities that threaten their survival much more than

they do the survival of people in the system. He hand-waves these problems away by saying that problems posed by nature can be accepted stoically while problems posed by other humans leave us helpless. This naturalistic viewpoint is incredibly naive and biased.

His main argument is based on the necessity of autonomy to achieve a true sense of fulfilment. He argues that this autonomy can only be achieved by being outside of a system. This is especially evident in society today which is filled with distractions that don't fulfil and merely appease, and it is nigh impossible to rid yourself from all of them.

I believe that due to his isolation from other humans (both physically and socially), he could only analyse a very small subset of people he had come in contact with and extrapolated the rest. This led to assumptions made that are unfounded but are nonetheless insightful. He, for example, sees no value in art and culture, relegating the pursuit of them to but a "surrogate activity".

The essential problem with the freedom that he pursues is that it is selfish. It is a self-centred idea which he believes only possible in isolation (alone or in small groups). Clearly, he is either ignorant of, or have rejected the idea of the social contract.

Despite my not agreeing with his ideas of freedom, his description of the relationship between man and technology is nonetheless insightful. He shows a great deal of insight regarding society as well as how a revolution has to be performed.

I believe that left-leaning individuals (of which I am one of them) should read the paragraphs 6-32 and 216-230 which consists mainly of the meta-critique of leftism. It is important to challenge your own worldview from time to time, to further understand and reevaluate your own beliefs. Only when your worldview is shattered and you pick up the pieces can you discard the weak parts of your ideology and focus on what is truly important to form a strong and self-consistent worldview.

Nile

57 reviews

December 8, 2018

There seems to be a trend, as least as I see it, of works, people, or groups being known by official or unofficial names, depending on whether you agree with it/them or not. Think 'Red Army Faction' v 'Baader-Meinhof Gang'.

Another is this work and its author - Kaczynski/Unabomber, Industrial Society and Its Future/Unabomber Manifesto.

On content, it is very much 'the Unabomber Manifesto', it has the opportunity to be a political work that set the tone for a whole generation's perception of their future, but instead Kaczynski insisted on spending page after page swerving from the actual supposed topic to address his own bigotries.

Kaczynski makes predictions that are painfully accurate given where things stand now, that are in turn deeply ominous regarding the implication of where they will go in future. Yet instead of leading the charge in mass understanding, he allows ego to cloud what should be and could be an impartial rallying cry of a text.

In words and deeds Kaczynski treated what he presents as a civilisational threat as a personal axe to grind. We have to read his racism and homophobia in text and see him send bombs in practice. Yet none of this is 'propaganda of the deed', bombs sent to technological ivory towers only affect ivory towers - it galvonised nobody. In that sense, his lonely charge against ivory towers is a quixotic as the Don's charge against windmills.

Kaczynski's fixation on 'collective leftists' is where he alienates himself, and ghettoises his cause. This technological threat affects every life on earth, but rather than deal with any of the others it affects, he demonises them, mischaracterises them, and fights it alone. The fact of the matter is, he delivered a personal manifesto for a humanity-wide problem, and in doing so allowed its issues to spend decades isolated as crank opinions. Kaczynski stands as testament to collective power and action being the only way to change the world. Dedicated cranks fight alone, die alone, and produce work so deeply biased that the message is subsumed by the anger.

non-fiction philosophy politics

Cav

703 reviews101 followers

January 8, 2019

An interesting read.

Kaczynski was clearly an intelligent mind. He lays out an interesting thesis here, but ultimately (of course) his desire and prediction that he could trigger some sort of anti-technology revolution with his bombings and manifesto, was patently delusional.

He does have some brilliant and prophetic commentary on leftism, which was well ahead of its time, considering when the manifesto was written (1995).

This writing makes for an interesting study on how otherwise intelligent people can pursue avenues of thought and make predictions that are clearly untenable, and even ridiculous to the outside observer.

The larger story here seems to be the tragic waste of a brilliant mind that was Ted Kaczynski. Apparently he was a mathematical prodigy. Maybe he could have made some great contributions to academia, mathematics, and science. Instead he's going to die in a Supermax prison.

Oh well. I'm sure the families of his victims aren't losing any sleep over that.

americas culture history

Jenna
118 reviews1 follower
August 16, 2020
interesting at first and then went downhill.

Diāna
90 reviews5 followers
March 1, 2019

Very thought-provoking essay aiming to show technology's destructive effect on society by announcing that freedom and technology are incompatible. I must admit that the author has foreseen technological effects on human psychology and control of the society. For humans to have fulfilled life, his offered solution seems to be returning back to the nature and stopping technological progress by pure destruction. On the side of technological criticism, Kaczynski is criticising leftist movements in aims for power (such as feminist, animal rights, "politically correct" etc.) and due to technological disruption, which has made life unfulfilling for many, their aims for useless goals or surrogate activities (as wealth building). Main point I can agree with is: identity crisis is crisis of meaning. However, the reader must keep in mind that revolution against technology is not a promise for fulfilling life and you still have to define this fulfilment for yourself.

Carlin Spink
22 reviews4 followers
March 8, 2019

Does it make me a bad person if I mostly agree with him? Hypothetically, obviously. Just asking for a friend.
non-fiction read-in-2019

Zak
407 reviews28 followers
March 26, 2019

The man speaks some truth on some of the broader aspects of his "ideology", though he doesn't go or seem to be interested in going, into much detail on its finer points. However, to say that his "solution" wasn't well thought out would be a true understatement. I'm not even implying he shouldn't have carried out his "solution" because it was evil but necessary (in his mind), but to think that killing a few people he deemed

as representing technological progress would reverse the onward march of technology was pure delusion.

non-fiction

George

128 reviews12 followers

July 3, 2019

Not easy to review a paper of a bomber. But it is still a paper with a lot of truth of how the society is organised, how it reduces the freedom of its people and how the technology progress shapes the world.

politics

Forino

21 reviews

July 26, 2019

notice me MI5

Matt_mack_

9 reviews

July 30, 2019

A quick read with about 3 interesting points. Technology certainly has many negative effects on society, but I, for one, will not lead the luddites

Jade

1 review2 followers

August 17, 2019

Though there are many problems with this ideology and this man, it's certainly an interesting and insightful perspective that modern people can learn a lot from.

Angelino Desmet

95 reviews2 followers

March 25, 2020

"For the rest, revolutionaries should take an empirical approach. If experience indicates that some of the recommendations made in the foregoing paragraphs are not going to give good results, then those recommendations should be discarded." —FC

This treatise remains visionary and thought-provoking, even after discarding 25% and disagreeing with another 25%.

Shrivathsa Srikanth

13 reviews

September 24, 2019

Bruh Sound Effect #1

2019

Tamas Kalman

37 reviews13 followers

October 27, 2019

this happens when an overly intelligent introverted math prodigy is promoted above his abilities (peter principle) as university teacher, where he feels miserable, and then as he seeks peace in nature & isolation someone chops off his favorite trees around his cabin and he is planning an elaborate revenge on society.

he is right about leftism though, even if his actions were unacceptable.

although he should also understand, that his actions were futile; leftism cannot be stopped and eventually we'll be all controlled by the all seeing central AI in a world-wide, enormous collective where everyone is equal and everyone is the same, whether we like it or not.

Mike

3 reviews

November 4, 2019

While Ted Kaczynski's essay is lucid and coherent, a significant amount of his claims are unsubstantiated and a lot of his arguments are not cogent. This essay, as he himself admits at the end of it, is a crude overview of his (or the "Freedom Club's") ideas. It is an interesting read as it gives us an insight into his motivations for his actions. But by no means does this essay convince me that his actions are justified and that we should condone them.

Kieran Van De Riet

34 reviews1 follower

December 16, 2021

Now the government thinks I'm a neo-luddite - help.
philosophy politics

Always Pouting

575 reviews762 followers

November 25, 2019

Another gift someone got me, mostly to be funny, but I have this compulsive need to read any book I have so I just wanted to get it over with so I just did today. It wasn't bad per se and I was certainly amused reading it the whole time. The computer nerd comments were pretty hilarious not going to lie and his obsession with people being allowed to spank their kids was pretty strange. I don't think some of the problems he tried to identify were necessarily wrong but then he just took jumps into saying we needed to destroy technology because that was the root of the problem and it felt like he didn't justify it completely. It just felt like he ignored everyone else who ever wrote about the trade offs between society and the individual and also he just kind of pretended that Industrialization was just about technology and not also about capitalism but a lot of his critiques seemed similar to Marxist ones? But then he also ranted about leftists but it sounded like someone a leftist would actually identify as a liberal. Like maybe my own conception of political ideology isn't that great but I know plenty of leftist are more class oriented in their analysis than anything else and it seemed bizarre that he was concentrating on things like feminism and LGBTQ rights as leftist priorities. Not to say those things haven't become integrated into leftist movements as far as I can tell but I do think class still plays a huge role and he never mentions class really. Anyway mostly just amused by reading it, it echos a lot of complaints about modernity that others have brought up but some how he thinks the solution is destruction of technology by any means necessary above anything else.

HEBrowne

72 reviews1 follower

March 19, 2020

I flip flop between whether to give this manifesto a high score (for being correct) or a middling score (to appear acceptable to liberal bourgeoisie society) and I guess in the latter case Ted has read me and my attachment to society rather well.

Kurt Fox

896 reviews19 followers

December 5, 2019

The "uanbomber manifesto" as some folks call it covers a lot of territory. I strongly agree with parts and strongly disagree with parts. While I see the ever 'downfall' of humans into this societal spiral in which it is hard (or impossible) to escape, I don't see how it can be avoided. While I may agree that it is not the right direction for human society, I also foresee no alternative. Human interactions at the societal level are too complex to predict and certainly a utopia on paper is flawed due to the complexities of humans and the diversity of their thoughts.

Kaczynski's conclusion (and reaction) about destroying the system is flawed because people are lazy and will always want to use technology to make their lives simpler. Even a wheel is technology, a shovel is a tool, both are better - one for easier travel, even if it is a bicycle - one is better than digging with your hands. Both require metal, hence metallurgy, yet another technology. Even if all that was destroyed, humans will build it up again... even if it takes 500 or 1000 or 2000 years, it is not really changing anything, only delaying the inevitable.

Even Kaczynski's reaction to bomb university professors and technology leaders also seems flawed. I am unsure if his actions even delayed technology for a blip of a second, or even deterred anyone from coming to work. It certainly did not bring down the 'system'.

While Kaczynski may have a genius IQ, and be stellar in the field of mathematics, I am not sure society, psychology and the "soft sciences" were his forte'.

non-fiction philosophy

Zach

80 reviews1 follower

December 9, 2019

Kaczynski wasn't just a math prodigy - he was incredibly well-read in the social sciences. His manifesto is clearly influenced by Viktor Frankl (the power principle/will to meaning), Karl Polanyi (the damage done by industrialization), Eric Hoffer (revolution's dependence on mass movements), and Marshall McLuhan (how media instills values in citizens), and most of his ideas are borne of fairly sensible connections between the works of these thinkers. For instance, it would be totally reasonable to think that a big source of society's problems is how industrialization has led to living conditions that frustrate people's need to work towards something meaningful. However, Kaczynski's philosophy breaks down because he takes his conclusions too far. He thinks that the only type of work that gives someone's life real meaning is the struggle for survival - everything else, from scientific pursuits to social cohesion, is in his mind a false goal. He's also against any form of "socialization", or ways in which the system imposes values on people which make society run more smoothly. Man is a

social animal, and is at his best when he's part of a community, but individuals may have tendencies that act as barriers to integration. To be completely against socialization, as Kaczynski is, is to be completely against society. Ultimately, that's what the unabomber is.

John Bond

Author

7 books10 followers

December 16, 2019

Interesting concepts, but sometimes scattered. Probably didn't need 35,000 words. I do take exception with many broad statements with no foundation or proof. But it is amazing how much has remained current in the last 20 years, or gotten more pressing.

Alberto Curutchet

42 reviews1 follower

February 9, 2021

This piece is basically too good for being a criminal's manifesto, but too poor and chaotic for the pretensions it allegedly has.

Nonetheless, surfing through these rants and holding my impulse to stop the reading and to correct the author or do further inquiries before going on, I have to say there are some interesting and/or accurate observations that could be helpful to understand some of the modern world problems and move forward into solutions.

No matter what ideology you embrace (if any) the first part throws some light into the leftist social psychology that are never discussed. And the second industrial-capitalism-driven part presented me some surprisingly adequate observations on the modern world issues that (despite some basic vocabulary and concepts) seems to be even more suitable for the current times and immediate future.

To sum up, an interest and alternative analysis of the Western world problems conducted by a mind just as troubled as it was sharp.

Giorgio

269 reviews3 followers

January 11, 2020

This...book... Is a Very intelligent diagnostic of our modern era.

This... Book... Is also one the most IDIOTIC thing I READ in a Lot of time.

Kaccynski is INSANE. He describes our problems since the industrial revolution quite well, but gets conclusion completely ridiculous.

80 per cent of our Big issues (consumerism, lack of meaning, powerful people destroying weak ones, use of technology to increase poverty, instead of diminishing it...) , He blames on... "Leftism", socialism, minorities...this is Just PURE MADNESS.

Ted is a high IQ person with lots of biases toward a Lot of people, he is the grandfather of the INCELS, a really dangerous kind one.

This...book...even with good insights, should be shelved with things like "Mein Kampf".

I Hope he never never never gets outside of prison... He is almost a Cartoon villain, a real Lex Luthor!

Why 3 stars? Well, he is Crazy, but smart as f*** too.

Divina

45 reviews

April 5, 2020

3.5.

It's a well written argument, and Kaczynski isn't wrong about a lot of things, but it would have been a much more interesting manifesto if his proposed solution managed to prevent the re-emergence of the exact society that he abhors. Sure, we could burn it all to the ground and start over, but that would only ever be a temporary fix – as much as Kaczynski enjoys critiquing the systems that bind us and glorifying the days when man had to fight for their basic needs and desires, the truth is that if mankind had ever been satisfied with fighting for their lives and living in nature, they never would have tried to change, and thus never would have created the society that we have now. Modern society is the result of human nature, and starting everything over without some fundamental alteration to humankind would just lead us all to the same place once again: a world with a Unabomber huddling in a cabin, judging society, and playing God.

Daniel Wilson

14 reviews

April 12, 2020

The author introduces some interesting concepts like "the power process" and "surrogate activities" that at least provide opportunities for introspection. There are some interesting bits about revolution throughout history and civilizations that have progressed technologically. The rest of it is mostly harsh critiques of institutions in which the author finds little to no goodness or value. Reading this will push you to either question your purpose or directly reject the author.

Daniel Allen
Author
2 books10 followers
April 21, 2020
Pretty based not gonna lie

Clay
30 reviews3 followers
April 26, 2020

Less insane and more reasonable than I expected. He makes some great points with regards to technological progress being more important than human happiness in today's society that I don't think I've ever heard elsewhere. It's pretty eye-opening to view the world through that lens and I wonder if he could have gotten a lot of "right leaning" people more on board with taking care of the environment since he's so vehemently anti-left. Alas, turns out he's a homicidal maniac.

Karanvir
13 reviews1 follower
May 9, 2020
Hey FBI, I was just curious!

Sagar
87 reviews
May 21, 2020
He has a point. He is just simply too radical!

Strong Extraordinary Dreams
550 reviews15 followers
May 26, 2020
Read this 30 years ago, remember it was interesting but its treating of 'technology' as a unified whole, well, I couldn't accept.
Glad to have read this, given that it is "Beyond The Pale" literature.
modern-systems unapproved-knowlege-thinking

Lavi

229 reviews19 followers

August 2, 2020

It's easy to agree with most of what he's saying, he's very passionate and also clearly incredibly intelligent (his predictions about our dependence on tech and AI taking over seem prophetic, being years and years before the inception of social media) but what did he accomplish

For all his genius, what was his solution? Return to nature? Idk I was a bit foggy on that.

Rather than trying to fix society, he would rather burn it all to the ground.

Cool motive, still murder

irratating-protagonist

Carlos

84 reviews

September 7, 2020

Surprisingly lucid and engaging from beginning to end, *Industrial Society and Its Future* revolves around the negative consequences modern society has imposed on the individual. In it, author, genius, and murderous ideologue Ted Kaczynski claims that, although technological progress has empowered mankind as a collective (i.e. the "System" or "industrial society"), it has severely eroded (1) individual freedoms as well as (2) healthy access to what he calls "the power process", a prime psychological need through which humans attain fulfillment.

In the first case, he explains, individual freedoms have eroded with technological progress because states have constantly improving surveillance, propaganda, and socialization (and even genetic modification) tools at their disposal, which they use to mold us into whatever absolute pieces of cog the System requires at a given time and place. Regimes of the past may have been *de jure* less free, but the truth is that *de facto* they weren't even close to modern-day industrial society's capacity for enforcing compliance. In the second, our access to "the power process" (i.e. finding fulfillment by autonomously setting a goal and attaining it after a reasonable level of effort) is being disrupted because all the "real" problems we are programmed for (e.g. food gathering, fight or flight situations, finding shelter from weather) are being made redundant by technology, labor specialization, overpopulation, etc. For example: in prehistoric, Dunbar-sized tribes our individual contribution to the group's survival would have felt significant, if only by the denominator's handicap; whereas in modern-day industrial societies it is drowned out by the masses.

Kaczynski then goes on to propose (unsurprisingly) a neo-Luddite revolution, so *caveat lector*. Nature has been, after all, The Great Oppressor for most of our history (viz. extreme hunger and thirst, predators, disease, exposure to inclement weather),

yet he still spares no ink in flirting with the Rousseauian fallacy, deeming natural hardships a worthy price to pay when compared to the inconveniences of progress. Up to a point, of course: Kaczynski advises we only discard technology that is (and imagine having the B.A.L.L.S. to come up with this category) “dependent on large-scale social organization”.

While many other things are worthy of mention (e.g. the unrelated albeit prophetic critique of contemporary leftists in the first and last chapters may have only been a “sandwich” ploy to prevent them from hijacking the manifesto), we will leave them for the eventual reader to discover. What is clear is that Ted Kaczynski is not your typical domestic terrorist.

Panda

38 reviews

September 23, 2020

Brilliant description of leftism from someone who is clearly on Nietzsche and Ortega y Gasset’s spiritual path. He managed to merge this anti-collectivistic stance with a novel neo-luddite pro-environment nuance.

We are clearly not talking about a deep, sociological essay, but about a long pamphlet, hence its quality is reduced compared to other works written down in the academia.

Perhaps he could be accused of a clear imbalance in the criticism, leaning towards the left wing spectrum, whilst just sometimes mentioning the right wing - anyway it is fairly clear that nowadays the moral and social issues debated in our western societies are a lefty product. Kaczynski, probably, was not able to predict the resurrection of the anti-left wing movement embodied in so-called populism - but, as the term says, we always talking about some sort of a collective movement which is clearly not anti-industrial. Similarly, the recent past showed us that, at least in Europe, the left-wing parties which tried to couple environmentalism with pure social issues were absorbed by the post-industrial system (Podemos, the Green party in Germany, The five stars in Italy and so forth).

Kaczynski’s critique stands, clear and sound. Amazing.

Jack

1 review

November 3, 2020

return to monkey

Anmol

199 reviews35 followers

October 13, 2020

3.5 stars. Agreed with many of his arguments against technology. Simultaneously, he had no need to insert the chapters on "leftism" - an oddly defined psychology which has unnecessary political connotations.

Jeffy

139 reviews5 followers

August 18, 2023

It's scary to see that a person who followed logical analysis could give in to violent outbursts both on paper and in real life. A few years back, I came across him being mentioned in Peter Thiel's Zero to One. If I recollect correctly, his assessment was along similar lines too. Mentally unstable but with flashes of prophetic insight. Makes me wonder if that combination is inevitable.

Christopher Byram

225 reviews

November 29, 2020

I think I first heard about Ted Kaczynski, or the "Unabomber", from the movie Good Will Hunting (1997). I didn't know who he was back then, I just assumed he was some historical American serial killer, domestic terrorist or cult figure like Charles Manson, the Zodiac killer or the leader of Heaven's Gate. However, I noticed in recent years that on a couple of posting boards on the internet, Ted and his work keeps getting referenced. Because of this, I decided to check him and his work out.

Ahmad Ahmadian

59 reviews7 followers

December 12, 2020

Very interesting thoughts on the industrial society from the troubled mind of a mathematician turned terrorist. The claims are mostly left unjustified, but there are many interesting insights about our current society and status quo. It has clearly poured out of a brilliant mind.

non-fiction

Kurtis Merrithew

9 reviews

December 16, 2020

A fascinating manifesto prescient in its discussions of technology's effects on society which have progressed greatly since its writing. There is also a very insightful analysis of the psychology of leftism which also seems more applicable than ever in current times. However, it does not sufficiently deal with the problems of anarcho-primitivism. Primarily the issue of the massive loss of human life would result from even a relatively gradual rejection of industry and technology, but perhaps this is to be expected from one who has shown such disregard for human life. Ultimately, the clarity of Kaczynski's arguments and his deep insights can't help but fail to promote his philosophy when he sees violence as the best means to promote it.

Marty

11 reviews

December 28, 2020

Interesting take on the progressive left.

interesting take on technology taking away our fulfilment.

worth a read.

René

18 reviews

January 6, 2021

Just curious about it. You can't be so binary in regards of the big decisions. I think natural selection also is included in adaptation for new technology and people conservative always will be in the opposite side of "progress" whatever it may be. And when you set a point in the future for society where do you set backwards or forward compared to...? Is an axe a technological tool? If yes, in which version of the humanity is? The environmental situation, etc.

Simran Singh

97 reviews67 followers

January 3, 2021

I think (incessantly?) seeking out literature (and consuming media) that critiques capitalism is a symptom of the sheer powerlessness and atomisation that is caused by the system. Isn't this yet another example of co-option of criticism by the capitalism?

Anyway, the dude has good ideas if not entirely new. Read because that's only what we can do, for now.

Tannen

3 reviews

January 23, 2021

It's a valid critique of the impacts of industrialization, but falls short in a lot of ways and there are many flaws in his arguments. From my understanding he is exerting the idea that the only value in life is labor. He talks about autonomy but the reality is that you wouldn't have any in a primitive society and you wouldn't be able to do things you like. He says that those activities are just a distraction from our base human nature that is being prohibited by industrialism (hunting, farming, etc) and you're looking for something that you can have autonomy over, but in reality that's just capitalism and the issue of autonomy will not be fixed by deindustrialization. I understand that he is also advocating against capitalism, but the argument against technology then serves no purpose.

It's a good read and there's a lot to be learned from it, but it shows that you can't rely on a misanthropic incel to accurately tell you what's wrong with a society he has never been a part of, both as a child and as an adult. His skewed perception of humanity and community from his ostracization in life renders this entire argument extremely misguided.

Oskar Henriksson

62 reviews

February 4, 2021

I'm deeply conflicted after having read Kaczynski's manifesto. I had quite high hopes, and it started off really strong. It was actually quite terrifying how much I seemed to agree with him in the beginning. It really didn't seem like incoherent ramblings of a madman as "they" would have you believe, but rather a thoroughly reasoned essay from a passionate man. As it went on, the momentum was however quickly lost.

In its most basic form, the arguments are based on the notion of historical trends. Kaczynski notes that we tend to follow a historical trend, and all small (reformist) changes either conform with that trend or are too small to affect anything more than briefly. Thus, the only answer is radical change, revolution. The problem, he notes, with radical change, is that it will inevitably have unforeseen consequences, society, and life, is just too complex to correctly predict. However, and please correct me if I missed something here, it seems like despite this his argument lies precisely in the fact that he claims to be able to see where the current historical trend is heading. Which doesn't align with the chaotic nature of society at all, especially not with the claim that radical rejection of technology is the only way.

As it went on, the essay seemed more and more to ramble about various "leftist" behavior, something that I hadn't expected at all. I think more than half of the essay

was spent condemning leftist thoughts instead of arguing for his own claim. There were also a few honestly ridiculous quotes, here's two for example

"Revolutionaries should have as many children as they can."

"Activists have fought gross child abuse, which is reasonable. But now they want to stop all spanking. When they have done that they will want to ban something else they consider unwholesome, then another thing and then another. They will never be satisfied until they have complete control over all child rearing practices. And then they will move on to another cause."

The first one is in the context of children being easy targets for brainwashing, which seems so paradoxical when the entire claim is that technology imposes on our individual freedom. The second one is the slippery-slope argument, but when talking about child abuse the whole thing becomes quite absurd.

Those were the things I didn't like. As for the rest, as I said I'm scared by how much of Kaczynski's writing I agreed with. In the end though I just cannot accept his conclusion. Maybe I can blame it on indoctrination, but I just can't accept the world he describes and the solution he suggests, to me that solution implies that the battle has already been lost. Which I don't believe, but that's not even relevant. Anyways, aside from the whole "society is doomed abandon all technology" shtick, here are some really interesting points that was brought up and I will pull out of context.

"The concept of mental health in our society is defined largely by the extent to which an individual behaves in an accord with the needs of the system and does so without showing signs of stress"

This is such an important point to make in today's day and age. I know I can at least personally relate, sometimes I can't help but think that there's something wrong with me for not fitting in. It's just kind of difficult to take it seriously sometimes, I feel like people forget that none of it matters in the end and get hung up on weird completely arbitrary things with no real importance. This isn't to say that you should become a nihilist, but if it just makes you feel bad why not drop it and try something new? It reminds me of that quote that I can't remember so I'll paraphrase it "To be sane in an insane world is the real definition of insanity."

"Imagine a society that subjects people to conditions that make them terribly unhappy, then gives them drugs to take away their unhappiness"

This is such an interesting thing to claim, as he does, as the ultimate dystopia. The obvious parallel here is Brave New World. What's interesting is that to a lot of people, most obvious one being utilitarians, this isn't a bad thing at all. Drugs to maximize happiness is for them truly a utopia, an end-goal. There's also a point to be made for the tendency to treat symptoms rather than causes in the medical industry. You might go to a psychologist and complain about not fitting in to the fast-paced society, i.e you have feelings of stress. Obviously they cannot change society so they try to help you adapt, that is they try to change you, not for any nefarious purposes but because there's nothing else to do. You might try to opt-out, but capitalistic techno-societies (whatever the should be called) have really done a good effort on spreading to all

corners of the world. So in the end, you're left here to read a manifesto of Kaczynski and sigh as you realize he was mostly right but you feel like there's not much to do about it.

Eric Ohair
19 reviews1 follower
February 10, 2021
What the hell

Case
14 reviews2 followers
February 15, 2021
Decent critique of technological-industrial society, with lots of anti-leftist rhetoric intertwined. It's not immediately clear whether the two can be untangled so that the former can stand on its own.

Jay Bradley
54 reviews
January 10, 2022
Pretty good overall - one point off for some points I don't agree with, another off for the whole murder thing
college

vladimir
2 reviews
March 14, 2021
freedom and how we lose it

Curtis Strong
19 reviews
March 17, 2021
Some interesting ideas and points but I think Kaczynski would have benefited from bouncing ideas off of others to strengthen them and avoid tunnel-visiony logic.

Big Ol'

11 reviews

April 5, 2021

reject modernity, ascend to monke

leoncito

3 reviews

April 9, 2021

pls fbi don't kill me

0-nonfiction philosophy

André Figueiredo

5 reviews

April 15, 2021

Contrary to what one might think, *Industrial Society and Its Future* is a sober and a well enough putted manuscript, taking into account everything that surrounds who is Ted Kaczynski.

Not agreeing with a great part of it, there is some topics in which is evident the problems in modern society, even more now than when it was written. Mainly the struggle between individual freedom and the constant evolution of technology that in the reflection of the author leads to the advocacy of some sort of primitivist anarchism (that I personally don't agree is the answer).

With that said, the biggest flaw in it is clearly the disregard of the Human being as a social animal, in which it becomes evident the antisocial traits of its author.

I recommend to read but with a large grain of salt.

Peter Derk

Author

25 books353 followers

May 23, 2021

Where to start with this...

I suppose "Why?" is the big question. Why read this?

Well, one reason was because a favorite author, Chuck Klosterman, has mentioned it a number of times.

Reason two was a matter of convenience. I found out this is available as a free audiobook on Internet Archive, and I was curious. I'm like a cat that way. I'm also like a cat because when I'm hungry, I'm obnoxious as hell.

Reason three was that this is a fascinating cultural document. One way to get published in the New York Times? Threaten to send people bombs. Poets, take note.

I suppose the next thing is to say that the star rating is completely divorced from the way Ted Kaczynski decided to try and bring about what he thought was a necessary revolution. Maybe my rating it this way is upsetting to some, but I don't really care. Get your own Goodreads going, review shit based on how you felt about it. That's kinda how this whole thing works.

I don't think there's much reason to read this thing if you're looking to decide whether or not Kaczynski was a bad guy. He was OBVIOUSLY a bad guy.

I do think there's an argument to be made that what he did was wrong, but perhaps he thought that what he was doing was taking extreme measures to prevent what he thought was basically the complete dissolution of human society, or that he was taking actions that he felt were necessary to "free" humans from their technological/societal enslavement. I don't necessarily agree with these ideas, but I do see similar sentiments in modern culture, that extreme measures are justified if the end goals are important enough. If you tweeted or Instagrammed "Burn it all down" in response to a demonstration last year, I don't know that you've got great ground to stand on in terms of judging hardline ideology and the willingness to go pretty far in order to achieve a goal.

Please note that I'm not saying that tweeting a sentiment is as bad as sending someone a bomb. I'm saying that holding the idea that it's okay to create destruction and harm in order to achieve a goal (that would better society) is closer to the beliefs of Ted Kaczynski than the beliefs of Gandhi.

ANYWAY.

This starts off with a critique of the modern (at the time) left, which sounds almost identical to what someone would say about the modern left today, just with a less internet-centric focus. It's almost uncanny, really, because this came out in 1995, almost 30 years ago, and yet it reads like something written by one of three people: A modern conservative pundit, a modern centrist criticizing the left because it's currently the seat of power and the individual is more concerned with power than left/right dynamics, or a modern leftist who wants to make a name for himself by being anti-status-quo. So edgy! K (I'm just going to call Ted Kaczynski K from here out because that's not the easiest name for me to spell) even quotes a lot of French Revolution philosophy and ideas that are very en vogue right now with groups like antifa and ecoterrorists and whatnot. But seriously, if you're a pundit or political commentator or whatever, you can basically just rip off this essay, and if you get caught, just say that you were taking Kaczynski's ideas and removing the problematic context, and that you weren't necessarily denying him credit, you just don't think a murderer should receive any notoriety. Might work?

K's bashing of the left isn't really about the left, I think. I think he's trying to say that the problems of technological modernity are easily seen in progressive, leftist people of the time. It's important to put this in historical context: Bill Clinton was President from 1993 to 2001, so the Democratic party was experiencing a moment of real power. From 1987 to 1995 Democrats held the majority in the Senate. So I'd guess the bashing of the left is probably more about bashing the center of power at the time than it is specifically about the positions of the left, and I think if things had been the other way, K would've trashed Republicans instead.

K then talks about the main problem, as he sees it, with modern society: people have no access to going through a process of power acquisition. K defines "power" a little differently in terms of the type of power he sees as critical for personal development. Power over other people is not real power. Money is not real power. For K, it's a more primitive thing, confidence in one's self, that an individual can determine his own destiny. As an example, a person living long ago would obtain their power through learning to become a hunter. That would fulfill their power process, and they would feel fulfilled as a human being. People kind of had to learn something, be tested, and come out the other side in order to be a fully realized person.

Modern, technological, industrial society makes our baseline survival tasks easy enough that most of us do not have to do anything strenuous just to get by. As K puts it bluntly, to get a mid-level job with a comfortable salary usually only requires a moderate effort. Far, far less than the effort required to hunt and gather for survival, basically. Living a comfortable life in modern society isn't all that difficult.

The last big thing is about technology, and this is where it gets a little depressing. More than a little, maybe.

According to K, technology is the most powerful force in the modern world. Technology ALWAYS progresses up to the point a society completely collapses. It's the one force that operates this way. Regardless of who holds political power or what the prevailing ideology of the time is, technology always moves forward. Morality, centers of power, and other concepts may change, but technology is always expanding and moving forward.

"The system" exists to feed technological advancement, not human enrichment. People conform to the system, and to the needs of technological advancement, not the other way around. K's assertions here are that we force kids into math and science because that's what's required to advance technology, not because this is what makes people happy. He also asserts that we mold the individual to fit society instead of molding society to suit individuals, even to the point that psychological and pharmaceutical interventions exist because they can turn someone who cannot or will not exist in modern technological society into a productive person.

TRUTHS

There are some things that K got right, if you ask me. I'd like to highlight some of those.

Early on, K warns that separation from industrial/technological progress will be painful and difficult, and the longer we go, the more difficult it will be. I think that if you'd told people they had to give up their smartphones in 2010, they'd have an easier time doing so than in 2020.

I do think, as K says, that technology is a difficult force to stop because each little piece develops separately and for a seemingly good or at least benign purpose. There are very few technologies that are "evil" from the outset, the problem is more that technologies come about, mesh with each other, and remove the human element from day-to-day tasks and interactions.

K talks about how it's inhumane to use technology to make some jobs irrelevant, then to tell people they need to learn how to do other jobs instead. That there is no dignity for the people who lose their occupation, and there's rarely consideration of technology removing jobs people may enjoy and that give them fulfillment. I think the most modern example is the whole "Learn to code" business. The concept of replacing manual labor with a computer-based profession probably gets caught up in the environmental discussion and the need to move away from fossil fuels, but I'm of the opinion that if coal miners were able to get jobs making solar panels or wind farm blades and so on, safer jobs that are still very hands-on and require physical skill, I think we'd be in a very different situation.

K mentions that the needs of a technological society are often disguised within propaganda. A technological society will need more people who can work with and advance technology, therefore more young people are pushed into science, math, and tech, even if they find these subjects uninteresting and unfulfilling. This seems possible to me. Movements like STEM-based education and Girls Who Code make it seem like a good thing, a pressing social issue, that more girls get into the tech industry, but I do question whether it's a human-centered movement, intended to improve the lives of girls and women, or if it's a techno-centric idea, intended to improve technology and the tech sector while mostly disregarding the happiness and preferences of the people who get swept up in it. Is the problem that we need a more even distribution among genders in the tech sector, or is this an inhumane effort to propagandize the underlying need, which is simply more people working in STEM? I'm 100% sure there are girls who are interested in these fields and who would be successful in them, by the way, and I don't think people involved in these movements are consciously doing something wrong or evil. My question is: Are these movements really about getting a more even distribution of girls and women in STEM as the end goal, or is this more about getting more people in STEM, in general, as a method of continuing the technological system, and girls are a convenient, untapped population? By forcing the needs of the technological system through the lens of gender, we can actually make it seem as though we're doing a good thing by pushing girls into STEM, and we can convince girls and women who might not be interested in STEM that by going into a STEM field, they're in sort of activist role. So, a career field that might be very boring, rote, and machine-like in its day-to-day tasks may be marketed as a "feeds the soul"

kind of job because by being in that chair, you're representing an underrepresented group in the field. Meanwhile, the reality may be that the system just needs more bodies. I mean, this is depressing as fuck, but think about The Matrix and all those bodies plugged in to operate the machine. Is there a need to have a more even gender representation inside the matrix, or would that just be transparent propaganda to get more people in the system, powering the system, and the truth is that the system doesn't give a flying fuck about the gender of those bodies?

This is hard to talk about, so maybe it'd help if I flip it to something more personal:

I worked as a librarian in a public library for 15 years. There are men in libraries, but not many, and there are very few men that I would call "traditionally masculine." By the by, I don't define "traditionally masculine" as being assholes or mean to women or whatever. I mean more like a fella who is interested in traditionally masculine things. Fuck it, a guy who doesn't wear skinny jeans and suspenders, who has opinions on brands of power tools, drinks brands of beer that are sold at 7-11, and does not spend time or money on hair products, including and especially overly-precious beard care routines. A man's man. Okay? I guess pretend you don't know what I'm talking about if you want. I'm sort of over talking about this stuff in ways that anticipate the weirdest idealogues reading something and interpreting it in the wrong-est way possible.

I enjoyed working as a librarian, for the most part, and I do think it'd be nice to see more men in the industry. But, if an individual, a man's man, asked me whether I recommend working in the library...I might say no. While it'd be good to have this person in the profession, it's good for the profession and maybe the public served, it might not be in the best interest of that individual. So, is the abstract concept of diversifying this profession more important, or is the overall happiness of the individual over the course of their life more important?

This one might've spoken to me more than anything else: we don't have to strain ourselves to do things that are useful in a direct way, like finding food, and we fill our lives with surrogate tasks and goals. Bodybuilding or distance running are surrogate tasks unless you actually need your strength and endurance for your everyday life (and if you did, you wouldn't have to bodybuild, you'd build the needed strength from your work). Basically, everything we do, other than those things that are not for direct survival, are surrogate tasks. You can have goals, or even things you consider altruistic, but the truth is that these are filler tasks artificially created to fulfill our human needs and to create a faux power process. It's an extremely depressing way to look at modern life, and it's a little difficult to think another way once you go down this road.

Whew

SOME THINGS I DISAGREE WITH

Well, aren't you glad THIS section exists!? And that there are words here!?

K sees genetic engineering as a big threat. I do not. I think, like most scientific ideas, genetic engineering is not inherently good or bad, it's the application of it that changes things. K sees the obsession with beauty and longevity as a really bad thing, and he might have some points there, however genetic engineering has the potential to make

the lives most of us live no longer, and maybe not aesthetically different, but better. I think most people see genetic engineering as basically evil Hitler shit. I guarantee you those folks have never been on dialysis. There's a huge gap no one talks about between making all babies blonde and blue-eyed and making sure that someone's vital organs function within a typical range, which allows them to live in reasonable physical comfort. I don't really see genetic engineering as an evil influence if it allows people to have typical biological human functionality and removes suffering from people who just lost a genetic roll of the dice. I mean, there's no reason for anyone to suffer from certain ailments if a cure, or even lessening of symptoms, is attainable through gene therapy. There's no "Huntington's Culture" or "Dementia Culture" that would be lost, and I think, weirdly, K talks so much about individual freedom and so on, yet doesn't feel like genetic engineering should be a matter of individual choice. Maybe he feels that it should be, but it wouldn't, in practice.

I think my primary disagreement with K is in the idea of what humans are "meant" to do. I think he sees humans as unhappy as a result of technological advancements, and I think there's validity to his claims. I don't see the advancement of technology as a force that increases happiness. However, I'm not sure that the answer is to go backwards on a societal level, both because that seems unsatisfying to me, and also because I don't think that's realistically possible.

On the realistic side, I just don't see us rolling back technology for the sake of humane life. I honestly think it's a possible solution, but I think when the rubber meets the road, it's just impossible. We might compel people to give up technology, either by restriction or by damaging infrastructure, but that just seems so unlikely and difficult to manage.

On the reversion side, I wonder if the technological revolution is a necessary part of human development, and if there will be a fading of technology. K asserts that technology always advances as long as societies do, and that is true so far, but perhaps it's possible that a society will last longer than the advancement of technology.

I wonder if technology naturally ebbs and flows, but on a longer curve than other things like politics and economics, which will always change and restructure with each subsequent generation (where technology is a-political, so it doesn't necessarily change when a new, more progressive generation comes to power).

The thing that makes me doubt this the most: We've got so much amazing technology now. Shouldn't most of us be able to work like 10 hours per week? Aren't we capable of getting things done so much faster and more efficiently now? Why have we filled the time provided by technology with...more work? Or has work amount dwindled and like a goldfish, the remaining work expands to fill the time allotted? Either way, we're all working 40-hour jobs even though we've got all this time-and-effort-saving tech.

I wonder if the technological revolution is necessary, and after we might get to something like a social, artistic revolution. If all of our daily needs were fulfilled by machines, what would we do with our lives? K seems to think we'd be miserable, but

I'm not so sure. We'd certainly have to find new ways of living, but I think we would and could. People retire, and some are definitely miserable, some don't know what to do with themselves, but others really enjoy retirement, find ways to be useful to others, and stay busy doing unimportant but fulfilling things.

This probably wouldn't happen in my lifetime, I think we've got too far to go in terms of setting up a structure where people are clothed and fed without lifting a finger, figuring out how all of this would work. But as far as this version of society goes, it could be a total fucking disaster, but it could be fun. I mean, what if everyone you knew who had a mid-level job they didn't care about was replaced in that role by a machine and was now a mid-level rapper? Would that really be a problem?

SHOULD YOU READ THIS?

Eh, maybe. If you're curious, especially about systems of power, this is a pretty good read.

I think the most sort of stirring part is the way K talks about power and systems of power using lingo that has more recently come into the broader culture. I guess it's a...useful mental exercise to consider that someone who did something horrible might hold a lot of the same beliefs as other people who have good goals.

I do think it's also a useful exercise if you can read it and then think about the way that thinking only in terms of systems of power maybe isn't wonderful. Or maybe even expanding it to looking at hardline ideologies as very questionable frameworks for looking at the world. Like, if you are of the belief that being wealthy is inherently immoral, you'll hear echoes of yourself in here, and maybe that's a good thing. Maybe you can kind of see how your hardline ideology comes off to other people.

Overall, the existence of this writing makes a great argument for the difference between speech and violence.

Daniel Park

7 reviews

June 18, 2021

Some interesting points, but meandering and vague.

The section starting at paragraph 171 titled "The Future" mirrors a lot of what I think, though.

Joseph Bianco

15 reviews29 followers

June 24, 2021

The people taking the contrarian position to praise him as a hero are just as concerning as the ones who outright ridicule all he says (like one top review here that just admits "I hate what conservatives believe")

Some of Ted Kaczynski's insights are completely true, and his frequent concessions throughout the book suggest a weirdly reasonable mind, in surreal contrast to the acknowledgement of his reprehensible actions. The ideas are indeed half-baked and intuitively vague, and he's sort-of constantly admitting that, and you can probably counter a lot of what he says if you go into it with that orientation. Still, he presents important points that aren't easily forgotten.

The problem is, just as he says of violent radicals who ruin their own cause by being so abhorrent, his decisions were too anti-social to be reasonable or attractive. Immediately with his murdering and mutilation of only arbitrarily-related peoples that he calls "representational targets", he has alienated and disgusted peoples that may have otherwise fought for a cause such as an "Anti-Tech revolution". Here his displaced rage is revealed, as even the actor Paul Bettany who played Ted in the dramatized Unabomber series said: "Why [target/bomb] [some small business owner], who's a nerd, who's into computers, why do that, why not take down the national grid with all of your brilliance. I think that something else was happening [inside Ted]."

The similar but much more realistic criticisms of technocracy by Ivan Illich are infinitely more appealing, as are (from what I hear) those of Murray Bookchin and Jacques Ellul.

A read of this book is an inadvertent psychological portrait of an isolated, alienated, obviously traumatized genius who also happened to terrorize the USA with bombs. His mental power became so fixated on his convictions that he took his primitivist (as some have said, eco-fascist(?)) philosophy to its conclusion with violence. It's a harrowing story, something very dark and depressing, acts of evil and supposed reasons behind it to contend with, not to be taken lightly at all.

Maxwell

55 reviews7 followers

June 30, 2021

I'm a huge advocate of self-sufficiency and live off-grid part time, but even I think it's delusional to believe that worldwide technological dependence can be ended through revolution, nor do I think it should be ended. I'm the type of person who uses solar panels to charge my Nintendo Switch. The best we can do is attempt to create a viable alternative to exclusive dependence on the global economy, and make it comfortable to the point that regular people would rather participate in it than work at Walmart. Revive village and communal social structures. That's what I want to spend my life working towards. I agree with Kaczynski's critique of leftism, but he's guilty of exactly what he condemns, to the point that he was willing to kill as a way to impose his moral system on others:

The leftist is motivated less by distress at society's ills than by the need to satisfy his drive for power . . . for them the drive for power has only one morally acceptable outlet, and that is in the struggle to impose their morality on everyone.

In short: fuck you, dude.

Void

22 reviews

July 2, 2021

Although the book is a call for a revolution, it didn't lay out the exact course of action on how to make about that revolution but only laid out general points on what to avoid and which direction to go

The book is an attack on leftism and how industrial society creates and perpetuates leftism. sometimes the author goes as far as explicitly attacking specific groups of people such as the disabled:

"Even if medical progress could be maintained without the rest of the technological system, it would by itself bring certain evils. Suppose for example that a cure for diabetes is discovered. People with a genetic tendency to diabetes will then be able to survive and reproduce as well as anyone else. Natural selection against genes for diabetes will cease and such genes will spread throughout the population. (This may be occurring to some extent already, since diabetes, while not curable, can be controlled through the use of insulin.) The same thing will happen with many other diseases susceptibility to which is affected by genetic degradation of the population. The only solution will be some sort of eugenics program or extensive genetic engineering of human beings, so that man in the future will no longer be a creation of nature, or of chance, or of God (depending on your religious or philosophical opinions), but a manufactured product."

There are misconceptions about 'nature' and 'freedom' especially about the latter that it seems the author adopts the American definition of the word, even though he tries to discuss that people have different interpretations of the word.

The author doesn't subscribe to an anti-natalist ideology, it was surprising to me because this view is widely spread in today's world, but it's not very surprising since the tone of the author sounds like American right-wing libertarian (even though he doesn't explicitly say it).

"When they have done that they will want to ban something else they consider unwholesome, then another thing and then another. They will never be satisfied until they have complete control over all child rearing practices. And then they will move on to another cause."

The paragraph above caught me because it highlights how the author doesn't understand dialectical materialism or hasn't heard about it. but then he goes on to say that

the elimination of the industrial society would result in the decreasing of the world's population.

There's no doubt the industrial revolution caused massive damage especially to the environment that even the elite can't deny at this point, but also we can't deny the good aspects of it (although arguably the bad outweighs the good).

One of the things that I share the fear of is the genetic modification of human beings and the fear of AI going out of control that even the elite that controls it are saying so. It is a very complicated issue that requires serious debates, which we are not having today (at least not as much as we should).

"The entertainment industry serves as an important psychological tool of the system, possibly even when it is dishing out large amounts of sex and violence. Entertainment provides modern man with an essential means of escape. While absorbed in television, videos, etc., he can forget stress, anxiety, frustration, dissatisfaction. Many primitive peoples, when they don't have work to do, are quite content to sit for hours at a time doing nothing at all, because they are at peace with themselves and their world. But most modern people must be constantly occupied or entertained, otherwise they get "bored," i.e., they get fidgety, uneasy, irritable."

here I cannot agree more, the entertainment industry is one of the most powerful propaganda tools of the elite.

overall Theodore Kaczynski is an interesting character indeed and this book is worth reading.

Gonçalo

21 reviews4 followers

October 18, 2021

2Ted's main thesis is that technology and industry have a net negative effect on society. He starts the book by giving different arguments as to why modern, industrial society necessarily leads to dissatisfaction and feelings of alienation. The main argument is that the environment where man evolved is much different from modern society and it leads to a certain conflict.

One of these arguments, which I found interesting, is that in a very complex, modern society the individual becomes more and more powerless and insignificant, like a cog in a machine. For instance, he is dependent on the politicians, or his boss, or the nuclear scientists who keep a nuclear reactor from melting down. More and more aspects become out of his control, and this disrupts what he calls the "power process" (an innate human necessity for fulfillment).

K proposes that industrial society must be abolished through revolution and suggests a return to primitive, local communities, as he sees many ailments of modern society such as widespread depression and mental illness, social instability (even though we're living in the most stable period in history), unfulfillment and loss of liberty are

simply products of an advanced industrial technological society, and are needed to maintain it.

Though I disagree with most of the second half of the book, where K calls for a revolution, he makes some very compelling arguments that makes us think. Ideas about individualism, about society and how it forces compliance and forces people to act the same way. About self-reliance, autonomy, and what it means to be fulfilled*. This is a book written by a very intelligent, albeit misguided person, it is unfortunate where his ideas took him.

There's some memorable quotes from this book, especially in the first half. I don't entirely agree with his thesis. This is a 3.5/5 worth a read.

*According to K Fulfillment comes from tasks dedicated to survival-hunting, getting water, which I can't fully agree with.

Emily

179 reviews

August 21, 2021

Insightful yet also extraordinarily silly. I had to double-check when it was written, because it so precisely described the twenty-first century. So, it predicted some facets of modern society, gave an interesting analysis of leftist psychology, and then diagnosed some of the most prominent complications arising from the industrial and scientific revolution.

But it's really just not anything to kill people over. My main gripe are his notions of suffering and freedom. Sure, the quality of human life hasn't increased as dramatically as once hoped due to technological advancement. But people have always suffered throughout history, just differently. And what is freedom? The brute is a slave to his own drives and impulses as much as we are today; is he truly free? However, the dumbest part was ultimately his proposed solution. It's just so obviously ill-conceived and unrealistic.

He's onto something, but he exaggerates humanity's current suffering in relation to the past. And the issues brought up just don't have easy solutions.

Simon

47 reviews

August 24, 2021

I've always thought that anti-civ and anarcho-primitivists were leftists, well I'm clearly wrong since Uncle Ted hates my guts.

There's some truth to his criticisms, but there's also a lot of easily refutable stuff.

Regarding the core of the book, I think I agree with him to some extent. While I definitely understand that long-term communications and the Internet etc. etc. are

fantastic tools for the elite to control the mass of people, I don't think I'd be ready to give up plumbing and refrigerators.

It's very well written and Ted is clearly an intelligent person, but I can't help but think this is a depressing read. I was not ready for him to call all my favourite hobbies/passion/reasons to live "surrogate activities" and tell me I can't satisfy my power process.

I strongly disagree with his feelings that all revolutionaries should have as many children as possible and his views on being allowed to spank children (he seems obsessed by it).

All in all it's a bit of a weird read, definitely uncomfortable but it's necessary to read material you disagree with in order to have a solid ideological base. I do recommend it, oddly enough.

e-book

Younes El Yadari

14 reviews2 followers

September 15, 2021

It gets a bad rep as its coming from the infamous unabomber. Yes, its not as meticulous as it should be, considering the subject matter. I might go as far to call it lazy but, you can't deny a bunch of its pin-point insights.

Ash

1 review

October 13, 2021

It's a well-written glimpse into the disturbed mind of a serial bomber with anarcho-primitive views. Kaczynski clearly outlines his motives and demonstrates his point of view efficiently. I appreciated his framework of contrasting "surrogate activities" against a more fulfilling alternative of a biological power process- the contrast makes it easy to see how one who is disillusioned with modern society might be radicalized into primitivism as an alternative. The anecdote on leftism, while very off-topic and a little unclear at who the criticism was directed towards at times, was an interesting read and a valid critique on upper-class, unoppressed leftists that are more performative than proactive in their activism.

However, it's worth noting Kaczynski earned a doctorate in mathematics instead of philosophy or English. His manifesto reads more like a personal vendetta against academia and modern jobs than a wider analysis on the faults of industrialization. Other than the subjective concept of individual fulfillment, there's not a lot of evidence pointed towards the hazards industrial society brings upon humanity. He also leaves out how economics impact modern society, which is an elephant in the room that

must be acknowledged whenever discussing power in modernized countries. There's also no solutions that are discussed except for a mass retreat from modern society into primitivism, a goal that is undesirable and inaccessible to the majority of the population. Kaczynski provides no route for how to get from point A to point B, leaving the reader a little lost and confused.

Overall, this was an interesting and well-written read from a psychological perspective- not a philosophical one. If you want to know more about Kaczynski and his motives, this is a great book and I highly recommend it; if you want to know the ins and outs of anarcho-primitivism as a philosophical and economical system, you might want to keep digging.

Taylor Pearson

Author

4 books733 followers

November 3, 2021

Social commentary from the Ted Kaczynski who was a terrorist responsible for a series of bombings in the U.S. 1980s and 1990s. Though his behavior is obviously unforgivable, his ideas around how society was changing reflect a certain point of view that has grown more prominent since his actions and is worth understanding.

At the core of Kaczynski's arguments is a belief that technology is the cause of most of our societal woes.

He argues people need a feeling of autonomy and some form of mastery to strive after. He also argues that the Industrial Revolution and hyper-specialization that it kicked off took a great deal of agency away from people, creating a feeling of being a cog in a system beyond our control.

This is the cause of a great deal of modern issues from increased suicide rates and depression.

There are elements of truth in this and I think some of the general points are valid.

I think that it is fair to point out that there were tradeoffs to be made, and that many of the costs are illegible. It is easy to measure life expectancy or literacy rates but hard to measure a feeling of agency or control in people's lives and I think it's a generally valid critique that modernity tends to over-emphasize more legible benefits like literacy or life expectancy over less legible ones like a feeling of agency and control.

One thing he misses, of course, is the benefits of those same changes. I would not trade my sometimes stressful and specialized life for living in Medieval Europe, even if I was more autonomous then. It's one thing to say that something like a feeling of autonomy is undervalued and another to say that it's the only thing that matters.

He should go back to living in the woods and destroy industrial society is also a pretty dumb argument.

All Luddite movements are ultimately futile in my view. Technology has its own agenda and we can never go back, only work to chart a better course forward. The only way out is through and all that jazz.

One thought I kept having while reading the book was whether the advent of public blockchains is perhaps a critical development here that allows society to function at a high level of interconnection and scale while also enabling a higher level of autonomy for individuals.

Particularly relevant to the public blockchain angle is Kacynski's distinction between two kinds of technology: small-scale technology and organization-dependent technology.

Small-scale technology is technology that can be used by small-scale communities without outside assistance. Organization-dependent technology is technology that depends on large-scale social organization. We are aware of no significant cases of regression in small-scale technology. But organization-dependent technology does regress when the social organization on which it depends breaks down.

Example: When the Roman Empire fell apart the Romans' small-scale technology survived because any clever village craftsman could build, for instance, a water wheel, any skilled smith could make steel by Roman methods, and so forth. But the Romans' organization-dependent technology DID regress. Their aqueducts fell into disrepair and were never rebuilt. Their techniques of road construction were lost. The Roman system of urban sanitation was forgotten, so that not until rather recent times did the sanitation of European cities equal that of Ancient Rome.

The reason why technology has seemed always to progress is that, until perhaps a century or two before the Industrial Revolution, most technology was small-scale technology. But most of the technology developed since the Industrial Revolution is organization-dependent technology.

What is most unique and novel about public blockchains to me is that they enable social scalability in a fairly small-scale technology way, something that industrial technologies never did.

politics-social-commentary

Karan Desai

10 reviews

November 3, 2021

Reasonable arguments which with the passage of time have proved his theory possible. However he imposes a set of moral and ethical guidelines of his (FC) where freedom and dignity are seen paramount.

He super agaisnt the left. His idea that Nature will give rose to freedom is questionable. So is idea that humans seek power process. He gives his arguments from an ivory tower. For him was feels better is the only way and sees the masses as unintelligent.

Yusri Vanna

2 reviews

December 21, 2021

I heard about this book because my friend kept spamming the 10 hour audiobooks on discords. This book was honestly pretty fun to read consider that I don't agree with most of his points, some parts are agreeable, some aren't. Overall I read this book because of the memes, but it's a good book and I like it.

Maurits

68 reviews6 followers

December 27, 2021

Surprisingly good. Although there's plenty to disagree, the author brings up quite a few good points.

Herman

3 reviews

January 2, 2022

This was a curious read. It was interesting to see how a man with an IQ of 167 sees the world.

Most of his thoughts were taken from the mass culture of that time. Very few ideas are actually original. Unless that was his goal, although he mentions that he wants to unite a minority of intellectuals. Certainly, intellectuals are able to understand concepts that are not shown on TV.

The entire ideology can be summarised as Neo-Luddism, which is also nothing new. His ideas of revolution are almost an exact copy of a Marxist-Leninist strategy of waiting before the system becomes weak.

His ideas are also very western in nature. The naive concept that people in the US, Japan, and Saudi Arabia are practically the same and see everything the same way, just have a different language and a skin colour is a very American way of looking at things. I doubt his ideas would meet any interest or understanding in a poor family from Liberia.

The ideology also has two fundamental flaws:

1. The belief that there was some "happy before" prior to the evil machine world. This is a very widespread mass cultural misconception. There was never a "happy before". Not in the Roman Empire, not in Ancient Greece, not in Renaissance Venice. The further you go into the history, the more brutal, the more terrifying it gets. We live in the happiest time in the history of the human race. There was never better than

now, that's the bitter truth. The idea of the "happy before" is by itself escapist and pondering it is a way to escape everyday stress. "However tough it is now, there was some "happy before". There wasn't. Kaczynski seems to oppose such escapism labeling it a replacement for real control over your life. And yet here he is, a slave of an escapist mass cultural idea as we all are.

2. The belief that there is a system that is independent of humans, and it makes them do stuff they wouldn't do otherwise. The "system" is also a very American idea. Unfortunately, humans are the system. They are what form it. You cannot separate one from the other. For example, there is a mass cultural misconception that the government is something separate from the population. It isn't. It is an integral part of human society as a hive for bees. Where's a functioning human society, there is a government.

And because 1 and 2 the whole thing falls apart.

Komi Amegblenke
258 reviews4 followers
January 6, 2022

Not too sure what to write here. I got this book only because it was mentioned on the Netflix documentary called "Unabomber: In His Own Words". They kept bringing up the IQ and intelligence of Ted along with this book.

I'm at a lost for worlds because I'm simply going through the motions of life at the moment. What I found really profound was his attack on leftist. I didn't know it was a political ideological attack until afterwards. I like some points he made but I don't think I truly understand myself to feel one way or another.

Bradley
11 reviews
January 8, 2022

Ted provides some valid points but nothing original. The manifesto should really be titled, "The Black and White Thinking of a Self-righteous Psychopath". There is no denying that Ted Kaczynski is an intelligent man but George Orwell managed to influence a similar ideology, on a much greater scale; without ripping apart the lives of 26 families.

Mustakim
377 reviews35 followers
January 26, 2022

So I've finished reading this book :3
I hope the cops know that I'm just inquisitive and not a lunatic. I agree with some parts of the manifesto, but overall, it appears to be a good strategy to destroy the world.

Rating - 3/5

2022-reads audiobook english

Diane

54 reviews

February 20, 2022

audiobook 3.5 Remarkably well thought out, but for me, flawed logic. However, good food for thought about the ways technology has had a negative impact on our society told with clear foresight about some of the problems we deal with today.

tauber-book-club

Honor

66 reviews9 followers

February 16, 2022

Not the ravings of a mad man... The ravings of a calculating, ill informed, whiny man for the most part. Occasionally, there are some fairly reasoned accounts of social injustice however for the best part it is the jealous ramblings of an outcast. Perhaps I am a slave to the system after all?

akbarzsc

1 review

February 18, 2022

How deranged are you to finally pick this book up and read it?

Lucas Martinez

31 reviews16 followers

February 19, 2022

"The industrial revolution and it's consequences have been a disaster for the human race..."

It's an okay book and definitely worth a read.

Although it makes the distinction between the individual and the collective, most of the criticism it makes is made on a collective basis. It shows a soft spot for nostalgia and shows the pre-revolution era in a brighter light than the post.

No, the book doesn't attack tech per se, but only the type that needs a well oiled and controlled society to exist.

And yes, the whole basis of the book is the marxist (Hegelian?) notion that it is technology who alters, changes and shapes the values of a society. I don't agree with this, and i think it is the other way around (it is a priori ideas that shape society and create/use tech in one way or another).

An overall interesting read from a really interesting author.

juliann

64 reviews

February 21, 2022

Ummm so listen the his thoughts aren't wrong just a bit extreme. Also a bit weird thinking about who wrote this

Cody

Author

9 books14 followers

May 4, 2023

I recently read The Unabomber Manifesto and was more intrigued by its ideas than I, a proponent of nonviolence and free markets, thought I would be. You may recall that the Unabomber made a name for himself by sending mail bombs to people he thought were complicit in advancing our modern technological society. The Unabomber, or Ted Kaczynski to use his real name, is sometimes referred to as an anarcho-primitivist—someone who sees industrialization as destructive to real human flourishing. And indeed he did argue for this point in his manifesto.

While free market advocates see our modern technological society's ability to satisfy our basic needs and goals of survival as one of modern capitalism's greatest achievements, Kaczynski sees this as a problem to be fixed and not the laudable solution to hunger and disease that it appears to be.

Why? Because pursuing the goal of survival—hunting, foraging, fighting bears, etc.—makes humans feel fulfilled. When that goal is met for us by complex social structures, we are left to pursue “surrogate” goals that are artificial and less fulfilling (perhaps goals like writing anarcho-primitivist manifestos and sending pipe bombs to strangers?). To quote Kaczynski, it is “demeaning to fulfill one's need for the power process through surrogate activities or through identification with an organization rather than through pursuit of real goals.”

In addition to feeling less fulfilled, he argues that we also feel less free. The fact that our primary desires are met for us upon the condition that we obey and become properly socialized—diligently filing into an office building every morning— means that control of our lives is placed into the hands of others: bosses, technocrats, and other organizers of society. In other words, individuals have less control over their own lives in a highly organized technological society but must become dependent upon others. For Kaczynski, freedom is the "opportunity to go through the power process" of taking control of our own lives without control or manipulation.

Kaczynski's solution to all of this purposelessness and powerlessness is to destroy the technological society—all of the things that require specialized knowledge and a division of labor—and go back to pre-industrial society, where humans can go through the "power process" to meet their natural goals and thus be more fulfilled. Think Wendell Berry meets Friedrich Nietzsche.

But why stop at our previous social development? Why not go back further, to hunter gatherer societies, ape clans, sea dwellers, or amoebas? Many of us, like artists, mathematicians, and manifesto writers, thrive in the technological society but might not have in earlier stages of human development. Maybe some people genuinely like to understand how computers work, to study viruses, or to read the Church Fathers as valuable activities for their own sake and are not all miserably attending to "surrogate activities"—this is one of the beautiful things about the division of labor, isn't it? I can focus on what I do well, you can focus on what you do well, and we are both doubly enriched for it through trade.

That being said, there's nothing wrong with asking if, as a society, we may be reaching our limits in some areas. Humans are adaptable, though not infinitely so. Perhaps, for instance, living our lives on social media for the "likes" could be stretching our elastic-like flexibility to the point of breaking. Maybe our dependence on the supply chain, as we've learned post-COVID, can begin to be a liability if too many links in that chain break and we are left unable to take care of ourselves and our neighbors. And maybe our dependence on the financial system is likewise a double-edged sword, as efforts to freeze the assets of Canadian trucker protestors and ordinary Russians in the early months of 2022 also have shown us.

Maybe more of us should, as John Prine suggested in his song "Spanish Pipedream," blow up our TVs, throw away our papers, and build homes in the country.

But we definitely shouldn't blow up other people.

Imp

61 reviews7 followers

March 5, 2022

My approach to reading is to try and mine the text for information, to abstract the concrete points made and try to apply them to situations I would use them in. In this

way, it doesn't matter if I agree with the text or not, I am able to see the "truth" of a point I completely disagree with.

Industrial Society and Its Future was a great exercise of this approach. There is a number of useful nuggets of information that can be extracted from this essay. Chief among them is the power process and how he uses it to explain behaviors of both human beings and the technological-industrial system that he just refers to as "the system".

His analysis of the behavior of what he calls "leftists" (I understand what he means by it but don't agree with the use of the term) is illuminating and holds up today, including the tendency of the movement to totalitarianism and total social control. His segment on oversocialization and how "leftists" of this oversocialized type aren't actually rebels is spot on.

However, I personally don't think this is particularly a leftist phenomenon in the proper sense, rather it's a long standing phenomenon in the United States that clothed itself in left or right-wing packaging depending on what was more prudent (it started with people like Woodrow Wilson).

Many in the original left-wing tradition (Emma Goldman, Bakunin, Kropotkin etc.) would have been disgusted by the people Kaczynski describes as "leftists", but he himself admits the possibility of as much.

To me, the people he calls "leftists" I would call moral busybodies, who just in the last two decades have manifested themselves in both a right-wing (post-9/11 USA) and left-wing (2010s onward) form.

He then goes on to describe how industrial society disrupts the power process. He describes three categories of goals: those that are trivial to obtain, those that can be obtained with significant struggle, and those that are near impossible to obtain. He calls these categories one, two and three respectively, and remarks how industrial society had shifted most goals into either category one (having basic needs met and even some pleasures require nothing more than continued conformity and obedience), or category three (acquiring true influence over one's surroundings rather than being controlled by them, by starting one's own successful business or mass movement is night impossible and requires struggle against the system inherently).

The point here being that category two serves the power process the best, but this is specifically the category of goals being eroded by "the system".

I think this is somewhat true in that life is becoming easier and easier, but so has becoming independent of the social systems surrounding you. It wasn't so long ago that conformity and obedience were your *only* choice, even if this conformity still came at some physical struggle and therefore did more to satisfy the power process. All a medieval peasant could hope is to move to work under a different feudal lord, at great cost and sacrifice to himself. Today, it is comparatively trivially easy to change jobs or even careers.

Kaczynski defines freedom as the opportunity to go through the power process, with a nontrivial degree of autonomy. It's the erosion of this freedom that he finds objectionable.

The author lays down some principles of history and shows how "the system" erodes freedom as defined above, and how "the system" cannot be reformed, nor the good separated from the bad parts.

Here I took out my thinking cap and I think most of these principles apply in actual truth to the state, rather than some technological society.

The claim that "Technology is a more powerful social force than the aspiration for freedom" stood out to me, and to me is a very important principle of anarchist praxis in a positive sense - if this is true, then technology (such as blockchain) can be developed as instruments of freedom.

Kaczynski points out the censorship that made it nigh impossible for him to get his ideas out there, and that he had had to commit acts of terrorism in order for his message to be heard. I think despite his ideology and actions this is an excellent example of the censoriousness of the corporate press that made sure only opinions it approved of ever saw the light of day, and made sure all others were silenced.

I think the late success and popularity of this essay and Kaczynski's prominence in popular culture (especially meme culture) is a testament to the fact that today the monopoly and power of the corporate press is a husk of its former self, and the author would not have had to resort to such methods today in order to have an audience.

The chapter on strategy was particularly intriguing. He makes the point that a revolution must not only destroy the existing order but establish a new one, and therefore the motivating ideology has to be for something, not just against something. Kaczynski posits nature as the ideal to strive for in his ideology.

Propaganda-wise, he makes a distinction between propagandizing intellectuals and people of more modest intelligence. He also echoes the sentiment that it's better to have a smaller group of deeply loyal people than to build up a huge mass of "followers" running on hype who will abandon your movement for the next cool thing.

He also points out that revolutionaries should not expect to have the majority on their side until after the struggle starts in earnest. This is historically sound as the machinators of revolutions consisted of only a tiny minority of any given population, and it was only after the battle was won by the revolutionaries did the "majority opinion" side with them.

I would object that a real violent struggle would not be necessary for revolutionaries who are on the side of good, and they should not expect to ever have majority support, but instead work to peacefully demonstrate the illegitimacy of the existing system while building a parallel, better alternative.

Ultimately I think this is the core reason why Kaczynski's ideology is wrong. So many ideologies advocate for a violent replacement of the old system with their new one, but only an ideology in the right can do it peacefully.

Kaczynsky also warns against working with "leftists" (or moral busybodies) who are only motivated in their struggle for power and not for actual ideals. This I agree with, although again I do not agree with describing such people as leftists.

He also points out that the core goal of the ideology must be the number one priority of the revolution, as having any other secondary goal introduces the temptation to use and empower the enemy concept to achieve that goal.

I have seen this many times, as people who are ostensibly against state power advocate for using state power because they want to enjoy the state's bribes in peace.

The last interesting thing I'd point out is Kaczynski's distinction between small-scale and organization-dependent technology. He argues that small-scale technology (which can be developed and used in isolation or by small communities) will survive, but large scale technology (such as modern electronics, refrigerators etc. that require power, manufacturing plants and international commerce systems to function) will die without a supportive infrastructure in place.

I thought this was a really interesting distinction and I hope technology moves toward more independent, small-scale technology in the future. We're already seeing this with things like 3D printers.

Overall I enjoyed reading this and applying some of his points to my own worldview, and can definitely say it was worth finding out what the fuss was about.

owned philosophy politics

Henry Heading

76 reviews

March 6, 2022

Now first of all giving a rating to this book I was on the fence with as this is the manifesto of a domestic terrorist but eventually I decided that its about the book itself.

The book itself shows alot of interesting and credible ideas and it's criticism of society and of the influence modern technology has upon society is well thought through and i personally can see the merit. (Though I don't agree with the basic ideological premise)

But as I find can often be a trend with anarchist literature the critique and examination of society is excellent and then you get to the Strategy or suggestions of change and this Manifesto follows the trend: Most of the Strategy and ideas that Kaczynski puts forward are vague or to be honest seem almost ignorant of everything else which has been written in the book before it suggesting a tiered system of his own ideology in order to overthrow the tiered system. Then as this section ends as almost always with anarchist books Kaczynski goes on a rant about the rest of the left for about 20 pages in which at times he is often hypocritical for example "The leftist NEEDS to believe in leftism; it plays a vital role in his psychological economy. His beliefs are not easily modified by logic or facts. He has a deep conviction that leftism is morally right with

a capital R” and this statement comes from the man who sent out bombs to get his ideology to be noticed and pretended to be a whole organisation of people, If you are willing to take a life for your ideology then you clearly believe you are morally 'R'ight.

I would still say this manifesto was a interesting read and don't get me wrong I repect some of the observations but the last quarter of the book shows a weakness and discredits much of the rest of the book (as does Kaczynskis actions).

X

87 reviews

March 7, 2022

ted should be released from prison on the condition that he's forced to be a mod for a discord server.

also i wonder if he's ever read dune.

nonfiction some-good-points-some-weird-points

Catu Batalla

85 reviews1 follower

March 12, 2022

Demented, absolutely crazy but he does make some valid points. I wonder, what type of manifesto this one would be if it were written today. I ponder upon whether Kaczynski is aware of technology in today's day and age. He would go absolutley mad, even madder than what he already is.

Never thought I would end up reading a manifesto by a serial terrorist, but well, here we are.

Adam

671 reviews2 followers

May 25, 2022

Some people seem to be really passionate about this manifesto. While there were some interesting points, after a while it felt really dry and I lost interest.

Utopians always seem to paint with too broad a brush and want to make people's lives much worse in the hope they might be better one day, the author wants to attribute utopian ideals to leftists but he seems to have similar aspirations. Also, living in a cabin in Montana is not a good way to put your ideas to the test. One main point that resonated with me is that industrial society has led to decreased purpose in life, but despite that problem I think it's still possible to find meaning in life despite modern difficulties.

Alexandre Ramalho

19 reviews12 followers

March 30, 2022

The book was meh.

The author definitely as a valid point when it talks about the apparent happiness paradox industrial society finds itself: The increasing quality of life of the average citizen not being followed by an increased happiness, as it would be expected.

I would love to see a serious debate on why this is, covering its psicological and biological factors. Although, the author insteads uses it to channel it's inner hatred in the form of biased arguments built upon discussable assumptions.

Good book for the sake of curiosity, but I wouldn't recommend it.

Richard

58 reviews

April 14, 2022

Funny that his swipes at leftism still hold 30 years later...

He made some great points here and there but there was alot of ignorance on how tech would effect us. I guess *eventually* he could be right.

Lastly, I still maintain he was a victim of the Project MKUltra while at Harvard.

Morven

32 reviews

April 6, 2022

Even more apt today than when Kaczynski described them are the psychological issues of depressive tendencies and unfulfilledness (although he might disagree with that word). These feelings, despite being unspecific, have value in a general social diagnosis of which it is impossible to argue against the impact of technological society. Furthermore, the influence and power that elites control is substantial and is only used to gain more control over their own domains.

I do feel however that his critique of leftism is perhaps in some ways accurate but some ways misplaced. He makes several disclaimers about the brevity and temporality of his writing which will naturally leads to inaccuracies. Some of his criticisms are not very novel and sound quite similar to right-wing talking points or even internal criticisms of the left. It feels as if he is not too strongly in touch with left theory and subsumes everything on the left side of the political spectrum as leftist. There is a strong difference between left-leaning or progressives and communism or anarchism.

My final point concerns the conclusion: returning to pre-industrial societies. I agree that revolution to achieve change (at least one with communist/anarchist goals) is not only more effective but also necessary because reform within the system is difficult, ineffective, and temporary. Rights are taken, not given. However, when the masses are no longer angry or protesting, that is when the reforms will be chipped away at and even reverted. But is it necessary to go back to a pre-industrial social organization? His answer, despite his intelligence is partially a cop-out and partially idealistic. One point that can already be raised is armies. What can be done if a band of mercenaries

if not a more organized leader creates a military organization of any kind. Anybody else will just have to succumb. This doesn't even bring into light other questions like whether some people are actually more fulfilled, if the possible maximum happiness/experiences/diversity of life is higher, or even if technology is really something to remove.

All in all, it is certainly something to read to get a perspective on the arguments and his thought process. His statements are general and his leftist critique is weak, is not sophistry. Otherwise, quite provoking. . . Could you think of any other better solutions?

pol-phil

Adrian Green

11 reviews1 follower

April 17, 2022

To understand the manifesto I think it's informative to understand Kaczynski's mental state: Kaczynski almost certainly suffers from schizoid personality disorder.

The schizoid creates "life inside himself" (see Guntrip's Schizoid Phenomena Object-Relations and the Self); it's as if the schizoid contains an inner person who receives modified sensory inputs from an outer shell. Hence why schizoids show flat affect: sensory signals may be externally significant yet they don't correspond to significant sensory events for the inner person.

Kaczynski is writing from the inner self which exists in an inner world. The inner world *approximates* our own but is markedly different, and these differences lead to faulty conclusions. Hence Kaczynski's writing comes from an empathetic place where he sees the disgusting & contemptible acts of violence he perpetrated as necessary to avoid an eternity of suffering for humanity. The issue is that his thought process occurs from bastardized sensory inputs: his inner world is *not* the real world.

That being said some of his lines of reasoning are interesting and I found his writing to be well-organized and cogent. I appreciated his concept of "surrogate activities". However the essay is predicated on erroneous assumptions. Kaczynski's prodigious

talent denied him a childhood & I believe he romanticizes childhood innocence & the natural world, and the core of his argument is based on the naturalistic fallacy.

For more on why the naturalistic fallacy is wrong I would recommend Shellenberger's Apocalypse Never.

The second fallacy he commits is to believe he exists outside of the system because he sees the system as industrial society. I counter this by proposing that society is a small part of the actual system which is *reality*.

Reality is unescapable, hence the choice between industrial society vs. wilderness is about choosing your master. In industrial society the majority of people will have a human master whereas in the wilderness you're a slave to natural processes. Definitionally the natural master is incapable of empathy. It is illustrative to provide a personal anecdote: as a young man I was employed as tree planter. I lived in a tent in Northern Canada. One day a bad storm came through, destroyed my home, & soaked all of my belongings. This was an act of aggression perpetrated by a more powerful actor (nature.) If this act of aggression had been perpetrated by a human actor I would have recourse.

Kaczynski's (pre-1996) assumption that he exists outside of the system is incorrect when in reality his existence is predicated on modern society. Primitive society didn't have hermits hanging out in their huts working on their little projects because they would immediately get raided. If they weren't murdered in the raid, they would die of exposure shortly thereafter. The only thing that was stopping Kaczynski getting raided in Montana was what he wanted to destroy.

Thom Deane

23 reviews

April 11, 2022

A Good reads review of Ted Kaczynski's 'Industrial Society And Its Future'

I listened to this manifesto as an audiobook on YouTube (available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4TkFm...>) while I've been at work this past week or so. Overall, I found it interesting. It was challenging to my own beliefs in parts and despite disagreeing with T.K as often as I found myself agreeing, I ended up reflecting a lot on what has forged said beliefs in me which is an extremely positive thing and was the reason I started the reading (listening) in the first place. A single key area I found of value was ^authors reasoning behind the sections dedicated to the importance of the revolution being non-leftist (In so far as previous leftist revolutions, mainly Russian, have later weaponised technologies such as print based censorship, after initially opposing them). Also, I did enjoy the bullet pointed way that this Manifesto was written.

The following are some notes I managed to take between washing pots, plates and what else operating hotels manage to dirty. Some chefs were very inquisitive as to what I was doing at the time.

(Chronological but I'm not aware of specific sections I was notating on)

- 1- Tk seems to equate transsexuality in Native Americans to domestic violence experienced by women Australian Aboriginals when saying that 'not all was sweetness & light in primitive societies', this was the first time I remember being simply taken out of whatever he was saying by such a silly comparison. How are these things comparable? He is saying that transsexuality is only pursued in an unsatisfied society as one of his 'Surrogate Activities'. But surely the existence of trans people in NA groups whilst also stating that these societies were otherwise filled with sweetness and light disproves that the search for transsexuality then was a tertiary, invalid one.
- This line made me think about when I was reading *Cancer Ward* by Solzhenitsyn—I still am reading it but I've paused because he was overall extremely chauvinistic anyway but—he made a big point in writing about a male cancer patient's betrayal by his nurse who gave him a woman's blood filled with fem-hormones to treat his cancer and the 'violation' that this was. I've now re-assessed, and I think that I don't care what people who; blow up buildings (TK); or people who were exiled and forced to labour (AS), think about gender, trans issues, etc, these things were out of their purview and their viewpoints of such were true to them, why waste energy? They needn't be saved, I think it's an ego thing to try to convert people to my way of thinking (I'm just deeping this), I digress.
- 2- The failure to compete in the power process as it relates to readiness to accept the stages of life is extremely interesting! A lack of successes in a person's 20s leading to a non-compliance with marriage, then a further lack of achievement not readying the person for familial responsibilities or wanting to take active part in them, all the way to a lack of power struggle competition in life not readying the person for death and their fading from this existence – interesting.
- 3- Surrogate Activities as things taken up to exercise the power struggle over one's own life, things that fierce engagement with (golf) is nonsensical. Tk says it is 'demeaning to fulfil one's need for the power process through these', but I don't feel fulfilled in his explanation of this 'innate need' of us all to experience this struggle for power, is the world so black and white with things only being surrogate activity or experiencing this process? Is there no space for those challenging from outside of the comprised system?
- 4- Science as surrogate work – 'curiosity' is manufactured by arbitrary societal factors such as the availability of funding at the right time to foster development in the right people – This I enjoy from a class perspective, yes, nice.
- 5- I liked his estimation of America's constitution simply boiling down to a bourgeois conception of freedom.
- 6- Disagreed heavily with his fear at the prospect of a North Korea or an Iraq getting hold of genetic modification secrets, thinking here largely feels Cold War based and very afraid of the 'other'.
- 7- But after initially thinking that his thoughts on AI also seemed largely speculative and a bit robo-cop-esque & based in the public fearful perception of the topic, he

started really nicely speculating on the belittlement of working-class peoples through machine automation to their eventual total annihilation apart from those which stick around by good virtue to just be looked at as useless animals – what we will be reduced to if things advance.

- 8- (Coming to the end now as notes get sparse (a quiet spell must have drawn to an end and the pans must have been coming in)) Revolution – ‘It would be better to dump the whole stinking system and face the consequences’ !

- 9- I agree with his thinking that, just as in France and then in Russia, the revolution must form when society is at its weakest, this time however, whatever the underclass is revolting against must be completely eradicated, in Ted’s case its technology, in Russia’s case the rev’ may be seen as unsuccessful because the Bolsheviks brought in even more ruthless secret police, more racial oppression equal to Tsarist control etc. But I appreciate his agreement that such revolutions were successful in their unsuccessfulness too, the sheer exertion of human strength to complete such a task in the first place must be appreciated truly.

- 10- going off my head now – I’ll have to read (listen to) his views on leftism, specifically on it being the religion of the non-religious, again at some point. My main takeaway is that yes to some, and myself guilty also, political doctrine becomes higher than ideology and that yes, those opposed to certain beliefs are seen as sinners in need of reproach or talking points spoken at them akin to religious nutters I hate so much, I will be sure to be less like this in the future in order to appease the libertarian bomb nutters.

There I go again (for comedic effect).

- 3/5

-11/04/

Szymon Kulec

170 reviews98 followers

April 11, 2022

I was expecting much more madness and much less reasoning. Theodore delivers FC manifest in a well structured form, split in numbered paragraphs that one can refer to (as the author does himself). There are some debatable things in there:

- reasoning jumps, based on foundations laid out in a way that you know what’s going to be next.

- the leftist blanket treatment, even with some good points about whataboutism and ”borrowing” causes

- spanking children repeated several times (looks like a trauma or sth) as an example of telling people what to do/what not to do

The most sad aspect of this book is the vision of the future it delivers. Elites ruling the world, science (especially gene engineering) never saying no or the failed premise of

the productivity boost making people work harder with more side effects (depression, less contact with nature).

One can hope that, when speaking about this big topics, he'll be wrong.

James Brennan

5 reviews

April 16, 2022

The most valuable thing I took away from this book was how it inadvertently pre-emptes neoreactionary views yet from a very different angle. This is both in the view on technology and its impact on human society, but just as much on the views of leftist psychology. The accelerationist theory within *Industrial Society and Its Future* is akin to Marx being one of the most influential theorists of capitalism. Teddy K sees technological acceleration and the breakdown of humanity which he can not separate from reactionary psychology no more than Curtis Yarvin or Nick Land can. There's a curious adjacency between acceleration and fundamentally viewing leftism as a "slave mentality" (in the master-slave dialectic sense) where leftist sadomasochism is behind their fetishistic obsession with the oppressed. The racism, sexism, and queerphobia explicit in Kaczynski's world is much of the same put forth by the anti-woke neoreactionary movement. All that's lacking in bridging Kaczynski to Land is some proper psychoanalysis and cultural context. Both are obsessed with the destruction of the human by technology, yet where this leads Kaczynski to eco-fascism, Land is led to the singularity. Teddy and Nick both agree on the nature of the acceleration and merely come down on opposite sides of it.

Alan

3 reviews

April 23, 2022

He had some good ideas! Minus the sending bombs and stuff.

X

230 reviews7 followers

May 5, 2022

Pretty good diagnosis of society made in the 90s that only appears stronger. His "solution" only makes sense from a utilitarian, materialist perspective, and even then was beyond a long shot (a global revolution to destroy all industrialization). Regardless, makes you feel pretty bleak about the future.

Dominik

37 reviews6 followers

May 16, 2022

This manifesto is a collection of mostly bizarre propositions about the supposed necessity for destruction of industrial/technological society. But that didn't catch my attention so much.

I give 3 stars because of the remarkable psychological analysis of an average leftist. According to Kaczynski, a leftist is primarily a person that has a problem with self-esteem and self-confidence and is generally a person with inferiority complex. To be prone to interpret anything as offensive is a sign of a troubled, inferior individual. If someone talks about you, and you almost every time interpret it as something deeply offensive, that obviously mean that you have a big problem with your confidence and generally you're weak, and feel weak and inferior to others. Therefore, a leftist, by acting insulted really acts like a weakling. It's just LAME.

I'd like to elaborate further on the phenomenon of 'leftist'.

A leftist, deep inside, hates an organic society. By organic society I'm talking about any kind of mundane knowledge, street wisdom and set of values developed outside the scope of the institution.

Why do leftists hate organic concept? Because they're aware that in the organic hierarchy, they are given a low spot. Perhaps an average activist left-winger has an oval-shaped chin, and therefore hates guys with strong chin, because strong chin is a sign of masculinity, therefore some casual, confident chads remind him of something that he's not, so a leftist will say that these guys are 'primitive', violent and evil and therefore we should 'educate' new generations in a way that these violent, primitive types don't occur anymore in our society.

Perhaps an average leftist doesn't have much testosterone, and therefore is overly timid and unenterprising person and therefore he hates everyone who's the opposite of that. Since organic world puts everything he's not in the higher hierarchy, a leftist is becoming aware of the fact that he's just low in that world. Therefore, leftists want strong institution, strong in a way that every organic value becomes devalued by institution.

That's the reason why leftists are obsessed with social reforms, mainly in educational sphere. They want to 'educate' people which means nothing more than to diminish organic values and increase value of their recessive phenotype. 'Boys don't cry' is just one of myriad examples of organic 'wisdom' leftists passionately hate. They hate that because they're not 'boy enough' to compete in organic world. So therefore they'll claim that 'boys don't cry' is a bigoted, patriarchal phrase that should be destroyed in their utopian world. There are many more examples.

Kaczinsky used an example of a typical leftist activist protest in which protesters lie down on the road, or perhaps kneel, which just show their inner lack of self-esteem.

Francis

149 reviews1 follower

May 18, 2022

I prefer our current boring dystopia to Kaczynski's prognostication.

I prefer Marshall McLuhan:

Man becomes, as it were, the sex organs of the machine world, as the bee of the plant world, enabling it to fecundate and evolve ever new forms.

Luddites are distasteful.

Jed Chown

4 reviews

May 27, 2022

ooh ooh ah ah i go make mode

JP

118 reviews1 follower

June 1, 2022

Some great observations from Uncle Ted. They're scattered among a midden of schizo grudges, unexamined biases, and ungrounded assertions, but those jewels of observation are undeniably there:

That we seem to be driven to achieve goals. That it's harder to do as a mere cog in a vast machine. That people will create outlets for this need if their environment doesn't provide it. That this manifests in all sorts of interesting ways in our society, including currently relevant phenomena like ideological purity spirals. Good start, Uncle Ted! We see the premise - now are you going to be able to land this plane?

It's a bad sign that none of his work is original. It's why these true observations are used as points of evidence for a proof of the necessity of political violence that is never actually proven - they're wholesale stolen from work like Jacques Ellul's "Technological Society" and Desmond Morris' survival-substitutes and Seligman's learned helplessness, and they had already been presented better by people like Huxley and Freud.

So when the rubber meets the road, and his useful observations need to be connected with his scheme for saving humanity by forcibly returning everybody to premodern life, Uncle Ted sounds like a willfully ignorant math grad student living in the woods. He's got an idealized view of a "natural" life that any premodern person could tell him bears no resemblance to their complex strategies for surviving their environment. He's got idealized views of everything, in fact - not just the things he likes, like primitivism, but also the things he hates, like scientists and specialists. It doesn't seem like he's

ever been a carpenter, or a soldier, or a scientific researcher, or any of the roles whose work he confidently calls out in building of his neoprimitive anarchist framework.

In the end, his failure to make a point is twofold: he's too lazy to have actually done the research that would prove his points, so he settles for throwing rocks at things about which he is personally ignorant; and he's too cowardly to see any way out of the predicaments of modern life, other than backwards, back into the life of a caveman. But about these predicaments, he does a decent job synthesizing and presenting these ideas of better thinkers.

Samuel

48 reviews

June 1, 2022

The occasional moments of brilliance and insight are clouded by the frequent moments of bigotry and bitterness. Not a huge fan of the writing style either.

Lachlan Douglas

7 reviews

June 14, 2022

Issues of personal freedom in technological society argued thoroughly and has merit. Idea of valid 'power-processes' being exclusively a fight for individual biologically necessary actions is debatable. However, the diminished/changed level of effort put into current society to make ends meet is lesser and possibly causing psychological issues has merit.

'Apolitical' revolution was violently anti-leftist as he personally stated, however just because you qualify something incorrect does not validate it. Also as mentioned in 231, he exclusively painted broad strokes through everything it touched, bar the definitions of the personal freedoms and the power-process and its change via technology and 'the elite'. Holes like these examples and many others do not provide anything substantial, and diminish the quality of his overall goal which is unfocussed to begin with.

After you remove the holes, what you are left with is a pamphlet providing a his message - that due to our technological advancement your freedom and your mind are at the mercy of our upbringing, our progress, and the 'elite', and there is nothing you can do about it - cool.

Ibrahim

66 reviews1 follower

June 14, 2022

Mostly right, but his incel delusions get annoying really quickly. Kaczynski is like a transitional footnote in history between Adam Smith and Marx timewarped to be exalted by neo-anti-civilizationers. Regardless, a necessary read if you want more talking points against MSM.

Diarmuid

19 reviews3 followers

June 16, 2022

Some really bad takes along with a radical look at some inescapable truths.

Pedro

5 reviews

June 18, 2022

Is this Jordan Peterson's inspiration? (Giving right wing "look at me I am so detached from these ideologies, only to truth," academia, traditional values kinda guy)

FBI I swear I am a good boy.

Was he wrong tho? Maybe a little bit, some nuance would suit him well. Oh well. DFW already said everything worth listening from this book but better, and... with less murder.

10/10 get existential with me

Good quotes: (irony)

"Industrial society is killing us all. I must kill others"

"Lefties bad"

"Suwogate activities ahwe bwad, so I am going to wwrite a bwuk about my opinions. ITS NOT SUWOGATE"

Being honest, yeah, Twitter is bad for you, and abstract pointless jobs seem meaningless as well, and we are all kinda existential nowadays. But can we grab the bad things, tie it with the bow and throw it all away? I wouldn't say so. We have medicine, better higiene, global transportation, more ways to connect with people and to be creative. But that is just me being "over-socialized."

Again nuance. And we can be more like Ted, (no, not by killing) just stay out of Twitter.

kermit the frog vocals Oh and touch grass.

3/5 : 6/18/2022

Jesse Zhou

58 reviews4 followers

June 30, 2022

I wanted to read a book that was an extremely anti-technology stance out of curiosity. I think this fit that bill? The core takeaways I got from this book were:

- Humans have some biological hardware that needs to work for us to feel fulfilled in life, and technology is not allowing to function properly
- This biological hardware / the world would function better if there was no technology at all (ie people would be happier, the environment would be saved, etc.)
- Technology constrains freedom of the individual over time, and technology will always be stronger than any regulation that tries to wrangle it (I think I agree with this point)
- If we want to remove it completely from our lives, we must scorch the earth and destroy it all in an intentional and revolutionary way

At a high level, I thought the book meandered a lot and some of the arguments were a little confusing. The most interesting part of the book was his explanation of the “power process”, or a mental exercise humans must go through in order to feel fulfilled in their lives, and how technology makes it difficult to experience that process properly.

I honestly felt like Ted’s argument was not only for total destruction but also total stagnation of innovativeness within the human race, which I don’t agree with at all. I think inventiveness is in the blood of every human and to not leverage that is not playing to the strengths that either evolution or God has given us.

I also strongly do not agree with his statement that people had to die in order for his message to be heard (context around the author and what he did IRL is needed to understand this point). I think this could’ve stood alone as a decent philosophical work, but now there’s this weird infamy around it because of the stuff he did to earn its first publication.

Overall, it was an interesting read, and certainly represented the most extreme views when it comes to anti-tech. On the flip side, it was confusing for me at times, and honestly felt like a bit of a slog when he went off the rails, or went too abstract. I felt like this manifesto could’ve been cut by half and still gotten across the same message.

As a side note, there are also weird rants about liberalism in dedicated sections throughout the book, but I’ll leave the analysis of that as an exercise to the reader.

Thomas

421 reviews13 followers

July 2, 2022

Industrial Society and Its Future by Theodore J. Kaczynski

This one blew me away. (Sorry.) ((Not sorry.))

Oh the paradox of reading a treatise against technology - purchased, printed and dispatched by one of the largest corporate entities of all time.

What I wanted was an unconventional approach to the problem of climate change & capitalism. Sometimes it's good to read extreme views in order to expose yourself to ideas that often go unspoken. Like Swift's A Modest Proposal.

A text doesn't always have to be satirical to act in the same capacity. Sometimes someone can launch into the most bizarre and wrongheaded idea train with no hint of irony and it'll still work as a good levelling/balancing text to broaden the scope of discussion.

There's some good examination of the dangers of the modern lifestyle. I mean, the conclusion seems to be that people gain value from effort... The more decadent society becomes the more mental illness and depression rages beneath the surface.

He directs a lot of anger towards LEFTISTS and I've got to admit I do find them deeply annoying, hypocritical and borderline evil as well... But then, I think those things about most people...

Dunning Kruger presides over Left and Right camps equally. Both are made up of the most sycophantic, hypocritical and ridiculous people imaginable.

I love the idea that a Green party shouldn't take over until things are so bad that they won't themselves be blamed for the hardships going on and people will correctly see that they are a symptom of the industrial system. That's smart. It shows a refreshing and wise lack of confidence in the population to correctly analyse the true causes of collapse.

I also liked the point that most revolutions fail to establish their desired new world order... But they very rarely fail to destroy the existing order. Makes you think.

Rating: ☒☒☒

Axel Samuelsson

31 reviews2 followers

July 12, 2022

The power process parts are 5/5, spot on. The politics and discussion about leftism are kind of crazy and rambling.

bookb

36 reviews

July 14, 2022

7/10

ok, fine I ~really need to read some niel postman. technology erodes personal freedom ya ya ya. weirdly liked the format, essentially endless bullets building an argument.

I am surprised they published some of this in the paper but I guess that only shows how things have changed in the information age.

ted k was on the money saying that the system is only there to benefit itself. his sections on \mental health\ are tragically true. I watch as my peers and friends succumb to pharmaceuticals to cope with \modern living\, I don't blame them. in teds eyes - to become better cogs. I think there's more nuance than that, but I certainly somewhat agree. if modern living is causing such a great collective depression and the modern cure is continual pill popping we got problems.

i too abhor the path we are on as i get my face scanned to board a flight. my one complaint is that his conclusion seems to miss the entrenched communal hex of atomizing technology that feels like community. the technophiles have put us in a trance. in some ways we don't want to look away. it is increasingly alienating and difficult to remove yourself from technology. maybe i'm one of the 'leftists' ted describes after all. it seems short sighted to me to bring up small collectivism and forget the cultural brainwashing we all go through. maybe one shouldn't care about technophiles opinions, but removing ourselves is easier said than done. to have no social media and an aversion to technology leaves one feeling out of the loop and like a social outcast. everything from dating to pop culture is entrenched in the same constant 24hour nervous tick we all inhabit. "that's just how you ___ in 20XX" is a pill i've swallowed too many times at everything from ordering food at a restaurant to dating. ted calls for a complete overthrowing. although I sympathize with some of his ideology, nobody leaves their house anymore. we aren't in control and never have been. maybe I'm defeated but as the system crumbles so do the people inside of the system. we are addled by Products and will lose the firepower game. what now? i guess i need to finally play ff7 to see how modern eco terrorism plays out. if ~people are invested in technology and life is about other people it seems destroying technology destroys people. its all just sad.

his critique of leftism seems salient as we continue to turn up the speed on the euphemism treadmill endlessly. moralizing is the Natural Mode for many on twitter dot com

teds version of 'return to tradition' holds up more than i thought it would. i do want to chill in nature and find meaning in self sufficiency. the power process does seem important! i think i may just need to rip that cord for myself... one of these days. i likely wont~

J.R.

180 reviews2 followers

July 21, 2022

So Ted Kaczynski isn't crazy or irrational. In fact, it is obvious that he is highly rational and sound of mind. However, Ted is a radical, and like all radicals, falls victim to oversimplification and narcissistic tendencies (explained further).

The basic premise is this, human beings evolved to seek emotional fulfillment through the ascertaining of goals. He categorizes these efforts into three types:

- 1) objectives that require little effort to achieve
- 2) objectives that require maximum effort to achieve.
- 3) objectives that cannot be achieved regardless of effort.

Ted argues that technological advancements have been the driving force of societal designs. As technology has advanced, societies have changed to better adapt themselves to technology. In modern society the meeting of basic needs for survival (food, water, shelter, etc.) have shifted from type 2 into type 1 efforts, leaving a void in type 2. He also argues that types 3 problems (which were traditionally reserved for death, disease, natural disasters) have increased due to reliance on institutions and technologies beyond the scope of control for the individual (i.e. utilities and national defense).

The void in type 2 incentives people to fill their time with "surrogate activities" which are basically meaningless to advancement of their wellbeing and are just there to fill the psychological voids created by technology. Coupled with the increased helplessness of type 3 problems, modern humans are led to depression and other societal ills. Their freedoms to engage in what he calls "power processes" are therefore limited and they become cogs to the machine and lose their humanity.

In fact Ted's premise is similar to Dr. Harari's in "Sapiens", but obviously more radical. I think both suffer from an over romantic memory of hunter gather societies. They are both correct in pointing out the faults and obstacles advancements in society and technology impose upon humans, but they also gloss over the horrid and painful experiences that were common in those primitive societies. I may feel unfilled at work at times, but I also appreciate that my child isn't **LIKELY** to die before the age of two and that an infected cut on my leg isn't going to lead to a slow and painful death. In fact, given the choice, most people prefer modern society and its problems over traditional society and its problems. Just because Ted doesn't prefer them, doesn't mean other people's rationalizations are somehow flawed.

Ted's general outlook reminds me of other notorious critical theorists. Ted, Marx, and Hitler all had opposing ideologies and perspectives on what is causing problems in society. Yet if you read their works, they structure their arguments in similar ways. They all capture elements of truth in their critical observations of the world. Hitler correctly identifies problems with democratic process, especially in the context of the early 20th century Austro-Hungarian and German governments. Marx correctly identifies the predatory nature that capitalist enterprises can have in their relationship to labor. Ted correctly identifies that modern society does impose limits on individual behavior to conform to desired system outcomes.

However, these observations are only one portion of an extremely convoluted and complex social network that makes up human societies. None of these observations

describe the world in its totality and are therefore oversimplified and generalized truths AT BEST. At worst, they are manipulations of reality that are often used to inspire violence and suffering. Ted admits to many oversimplifications in his writing, something Marx and Hitler both fail to do, but it doesn't seem to dissuade him from believing so deeply in his views that he was willing to kill people to have them heard.

In my mind, when you subscribe to a simple view of the world, you tend to derive simple answers to solve the world's ills (perhaps not simple in implementation or effort, but simple in the sense that "doing this prescribed thing will make the world's problems disappear"). This type of thinking is not only arrogant, it's almost ALWAYS wrong. Marx was wrong. Hitler was wrong. Ted Kaczynski was also wrong. Yet their unwavering belief in their radical ideal and simple perspective of the world led them (or their followers in the case of Marx) to justify horrific behaviors in the pursuit of correcting the world's problems that only they (as they believed) were smart enough to see.

Ironically, Ted discusses at length about this type of psychology behavior regarding "true believers" when describing what he feels is the general psychomog of modern "leftist". The irony lies in the fact he fails to recognize that exact same behavior in himself.

Anyways, an interesting read. I learned something about Ted Kaczynski and believe he was concerned about valid things, but he was not a hero (or anti-hero). He was a radical narcissist (who was very intelligent) who vigorously subscribed to an oversimplified and critical view of society, then used that oversimplified view to justify horrific acts of killing.

history non-fiction

shruthisagar

20 reviews

August 8, 2022

Ted perhaps saw the truth more clearly than anyone ever did and could not continue knowing full well the implications of the truth that he had then realised.

Robert Szeffler

3 reviews

August 14, 2022

A classic.

Nick

21 reviews

August 15, 2022

Guy was smart but clearly nuts. What I'm pulling from it mostly is that though politics and government structures are ever changing, technology is on a forward progression, and it's reaching a point where no government will be able to give you freedom from it. Well thought out, but dude spends the whole time criticizing leftists while sounding exactly like one in reference to his environmental views. Basically says it's okay if millions of people die tearing down the industrial system so long as he has his revolution

KertuL

90 reviews1 follower

August 27, 2022

6/10

He might be a little overdramatic with some things but I suppose he is right. But I don't like the idea of agreeing with a mad man :D

Percit

23 reviews1 follower

September 4, 2022

It took me great deal of time to read it, even though it is so short. You can clearly tell that Mr Ted is no writer, it seems that he didn't reread and didn't refactor it. Book jumps between ideas, some things are briefly written, but were explained much later. You really have to read it from beginning to end, otherwise you can come up with ideas that are contradictory to what Mr Ted meant. Most of the things he said may be new at the time he wrote it, but are now well known for everyone, that learnt about it even a little bit, but there is still like 1/4 of text, that was new to me, and I was able to learn from it. Expected something better, but it wasn't all bad. Definitely every young person should read it.

self-improvement

Chandler Juego

9 reviews2 followers

September 20, 2022

Disagree with one of his main points that we have lost fulfillment because we have lost autonomy over our survival (something along those lines, idk, it's 12 am when I am writing this). We have moved far too past this point in nature to consider redoing

the system to fit this assumption. Anyways, it's well-written and makes interesting points—just be wary of some of the assumptions he bases his main ideas on. On a related note, here's a quote somewhat related to this reading whose sentiment I agree with:

“The whole planetary ecosystem is as much of an artifact, now, as ... a city's microclimate. Believe me, I wish that wasn't the case, but it is – and now that we've created an artificial world, intentionally or not, we'd better learn to control it. Because if we stand back and leave it all to chance, it's just going to collapse around us in some random fashion that isn't likely to be any better than our worst well-intentioned mistakes.”

– Greg Egan, *Permutation City*
enlightenment

Olanrewaju Olamide

43 reviews2 followers

September 22, 2022

The author thinks that freedom is good, just because.

From that assumption, he proceeds to make a beautiful argument for the eradication of technology.

But if the fundamental axiom of freedom being good in and of itself is false, then the entire argument falls flat on its face.

I mean, destroy technology and take us back to preindustrial society? That is, society before the Industrial revolution – society with slavery, disease, famine, and war. I don't think so.

Ryan Klee

48 reviews

October 6, 2022

The rant of a mad man but surprisingly salient arguments for technology's impact on society (in the first half of the manifesto). Technology has evolved so quickly that people's needs are largely filled, and they find "surrogate activities." People then find other things to find meaning in their lives. I am sure he got this from other texts, not giving him full credit.

His approach is crazy though, sending bombs to random academics. And the second half of the text is unhinged and impractical. Once people acquire a luxury, which in the next generation becomes a necessity, it's very hard to go back to living without it. Electricity, climate control, the internet, Netflix.

I would like my employer, the government and all those interested to know I only read this out of curiosity.

Rania

53 reviews2 followers

October 29, 2022

Hmmm...

Quite thought provoking..

So, let me think about this..

shorts

Maddox Egart

1 review

November 2, 2022

The book, "The Unabomber Manifesto" written by Ted Kaczynski, is a very interesting ethical paradox. Kaczynski's main basis of discussion is on the industrial revolution, and its consequences. Prior to writing the manifesto, Ted was born on May 2nd, in Chicago, Illinois. As he was growing up he expressed interest in mathematics, and was said to have a lack of emotion, and was socially inept, among other things. He graduated from Harvard university, and got a job at UC Berkeley teaching geometric function theory. Ted was certainly a contrarian, and not interested in his teaching job whatsoever, even though he became one of the youngest assistant professors in the history of Berkley. Students of Ted were noted to have said that he was not interested in the material, and showed no enthusiasm nor interest for teaching. Being disinterested in the inadequacies of life, he built a remote cabin off the grid in Montana. His initial goal was to become completely self reliant on nature. However, after realizing that there had been a road built nearby his off grid establishment, he began a goal of dismantling modern industrial society. From 1978 through 1995, he sent a series of bombs injuring 26 people and killing 3. Ted would mail these bombs to people who he generally felt help aid to the expansion of industrial society; such as, civil engineers, law makers, etc. He climaxed, by sending an ultimatum to newspaper companies to either publish his manifesto, or face further bombings. In fear that bombings would continue to occur, several prominent newspaper company's published his manifesto in hopes that this would end the bombing attacks. His nearly 35,000 word manifesto was published in June of 1995.

The manifesto itself presents Ted's philosophy on the effects of the industrial revolution. Ted goes into detail about how the industrial revolution ruined modern society. It mostly follows a radical tone, with general as well as very specific statements about the effects that industrialism has on society. He believes that long term changes to society are simply transitory, and these gradual changes will not affect society as a whole. Likewise, he believes in forming a new society, and this idealized new society

will not succumb to the effects of the industrial revolution. He essentially thinks that the fixing of modern society is a futile effort. He also has a strong stance on politics, stating that modern leftism is a core exhibitor on the ethos of industrialism. He states that “The two psychological tendencies that underlie modern leftism we call “feelings of inferiority” and “oversocialization. (Kaczynski 9)” Continuing with saying “By “feelings of inferiority” we mean not only inferiority feelings in the strict sense but a whole spectrum of related traits; low self-esteem, feelings of powerlessness, depressive tendencies, defeatism, guilt, self- hatred, etc. (Kaczynski 10)” He elaborates on the fact that modern leftism is inhibiting social prowess, and further zombifies us from a non-industrialized life, and it takes away individuality, from an already non- individualistic society. Kaczynski specifically argues two ways in which technology is degrading humanity; first, it destabilizes society via the erosion of freedom. In Kaczynski’s eyes, freedom is being in complete and utter control, with little government nor 3rd party inclusion. Second, he argues that technology has increased suffering, in a literal, and also metaphorical since. He explains that people have a basic need, that he calls the “Power process” which has the four attributes of goal, effort, attainment, and autonomy; However, industrial society disrupts the process, by making things either too easy, by the accumulation of material goods and services, or too difficult, by enabling certain social issues such as, invasion of personal privacy, or pollution. Kaczynski’s solution is to create stress and instability in society until the whole system collapses. He argues that tapping into “sub-societies” will threaten the absolute control of the system. He suggests that revolution should be preferred over reform. Interestingly enough, Kaczynski didn’t mention the seemingly positive aspects of modernization, opting for more of a pessimistic tone throughout the whole manifesto. Kaczynski’s philosophy is still believed by many, and most would say that even today, he still feels these sentiments.

Tyler Proctor

49 reviews17 followers

November 9, 2022

Continuing to listen to YouTube audiobooks of books I wouldn’t actually read during work study. This is like unhinged, godless Wendell Berry. But I hate how much sense it makes, problematic as it is as a whole.

Teodor

13 reviews

December 8, 2022

There are lots of thought-provoking and interesting aspects to this piece: that meaning of life might be strongly linked to the “power process” (the human need for having goals and pursuing those goals with autonomy, while achieving a reasonable amount of them),

thinking about the technological-industrial system as an evolving self-reinforcing "organism" (and where this evolution might lead to), the fact that multiple incremental and clearly beneficial changes can add up to some important unforeseen drawbacks, etc.

Having said that, most of it is not backed by facts (even the author admits it) and I believe some aspects aren't explored thoroughly enough. The attack on leftists is just some sprinkle on top.

Dylan

9 reviews

December 21, 2022

I found this to be an interesting look into the perspective of the Unabomber on society and what motivated him to do what he did. It was also a way to get a look at the psychology of Ted Kaczynski through reading his views on society and the world.

Lewis Birkett

2 reviews

December 22, 2022

How can someone so smart be so stupid.

I agree with his prescription that the industrial revolution has complicated modern life and made people less happy than in simpler times when we were hunter gatherers (thats ignoring all the quality of life improvements we've had as a result of technological advances).

But his solution? Yeah just have a revolution and hope society will be magically better after, with no plan in sight. Like ????

Riley

18 reviews2 followers

January 4, 2023

Poor writing and editing, but sound concepts.

kazzo

16 reviews2 followers

May 27, 2023

kaczynski presents some really interesting points on modern society, and his manifesto, although flawed in some places (his solution to the problem??) does speak volumes about the state of today's world. however cannot overlook the fact that he was a complete madman ngl

reviewed-2023

Louis Bolton

3 reviews

January 7, 2023

I thought it was quite flawed and full of contradictions, some of it was eye opening to the fact that modern society limits and decreases quality of life, however the majority of the book just seems to be a dig at leftism.

Daniel Perez

3 reviews

January 8, 2023

An interesting perspective on the requirements for societal change and why our current approach might actually lead to a reinforcing of a destructive industrial society.

An obvious American perspective shines through a large section of the manifesto, showing how the environment of the author might have influenced his opinions. This is especially seen with the examples used to criticise the failures of the Cuban government, whereby Kaczynski states that it fails to provide a positive modern industrialised society due to it being an autocracy. No mention is made of the critical mass blockade, which was being held up by the U.S. during that time, which arguably is a very relevant caveat to the statements made by the author.

Additionally, a slight delusion and personal disdain around the concept of "The Leftist" is present throughout a large section of the manifesto. The author defines the modern-day leftist in his own inflammatory words and, in doing so, uses his own biases to create the perfect strawman which to use his arguments against. Throughout the manifesto, Kaczynski shows his superiority complex by criticising "The Leftist" in a way that (amusingly) someone whom he defines as a "leftist" might have done (forcing morality on others, rejection of all other slightly different ideals, etc.). Strawmanning, such as the above, happens throughout the manifesto - but especially in relation to his self defined leftist figure (which he later states that might not even cover a majority of left leaning, detracting from most examples he uses the strawman in).

Some very valid criticisms are made about the state of modern-day industrial society, especially with a Brave New World like perspective on what we consume on a daily basis for the sake of entertainment. Huxley's Soma could very easily be paralleled with

the consumption of television and other forms of modern-day media - as expressed by Kaczynski.

I would argue that the manifesto does provide some interesting insights into what potential pitfalls might exist on the path towards social reform. Its analysis on how the system maximises the stress which it puts people under whilst providing enough numbness through distractions and medication to cull the revolutionary awareness in the worker is, in my opinion, one of the manifestos' most interesting sections.

Overall, a very curious look into the authors' psyche, which (in my opinion) needs to be read with a context about Kaczynski's life and formative years.

VRDrive

39 reviews

January 8, 2023

Read it on a e-book :)

Favorite paragraph: "179. It would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences."

Funda Fener

1 review

February 2, 2023

endless rant about leftists

Philip Neill

51 reviews

April 25, 2023

Kaczynski is extremely obsessive and posits an outlandish theory about technology being the root cause of an inevitable revolution.

That being said, some of his critiques of radical leftism are actually pretty relevant in today's "cancel-culture." I obviously don't condone Kaczynski's hatred for the weak, but there is clearly something healthy about the competition that exists in a free market. If we take away all of the ladders that people climb, they will create new, more toxic hierarchies on their own. New problems are constantly being invented so that people can claim victimhood and take the throne of "most oppressed." The fact that these people are often very well off makes the whole thing even more frustrating.

He also makes a good point about conservative psychology, bashing them for worshipping tradition while simultaneously pushing for the fastest economic and technological development possible.

This guy is obviously crazy, but we can partially blame MK Ultra for that.

katie

19 reviews

February 18, 2023

absolutely massive hunter gatherer energy. not entirely bad. racism and eugenics bad.

Narkkiipiispa

39 reviews5 followers

February 22, 2023

Pretty good, but his ideas about leftists seem a little outdated.

usa

tia bhaskar

5 reviews

February 22, 2023

3 stars mostly because of the amount of anti-leftist ranting that was unnecessary and frankly irrelevant in critiquing industrial society. The author seems to hate facets of leftist political beliefs which advocate equality and minority rights (for example he seems to personally hate the gay-rights, feminist and political-correctness movements) and continues to randomly bring them up.

Begrudgingly, I can admit the book does raise some valid concerns and criticisms of modern day industrial society and some thoughtful projections of its future. Kaczynski argues that modern industrial society is unsustainable and that technological progress has led to a loss of individual freedom and a degradation of the environment. He presents his own philosophy, which he calls "primitivism" or "anarcho-primitivism," which advocates for a return to a simpler, pre-industrial way of life. He argues that humans are fundamentally unhappy in modern society and that technology has created a sense of alienation and powerlessness in individuals. He also warns of the dangers of technological advancement, arguing that it will eventually lead to the complete loss of individual freedom and autonomy. The Unabomber Manifesto raises some important questions about the trade-offs between progress and freedom.

Johannes Lilover

70 reviews4 followers

March 2, 2023

Agreeable fellow with a sharp mind.

Autonomy, privacy, personal power, nature technology, easy life, big corporations, control

Can't really argue with any of that and having a voice in your head which supports burning the whole society down and running to the woods is always useful in this contemporary world.

But in the end it kind of fell off, and I got bored a bit? Idk

Toren Valk

40 reviews

March 3, 2023

His ideas valid, his methods barbaric.

Nathan Chamberlin

106 reviews

March 20, 2023

This was honestly way more fascinating than I thought it would be. His analysis is sometimes well done and in a few paragraphs even admirable, but he often draws conclusions that don't quite add up. Idk what leftist fucked with him, but he reeeeeaaaaalllly hates leftism despite frequently doing dialectical materialism and presenting other ostensibly leftist talking points. He's also very against activism for marginalized groups which is very odd considering a lot of his other views on "industrial society". Kinda reminds me of like white working class conservatives who wont consider leftism cuz it doesn't let them have their racism, misogyny, and homophobia.

Anyways sort of a fun short(108) read.

Jordan Herling

13 reviews

March 24, 2023

Well, a part of me is glad I didn't find this worthy of a five-star rating, as if I did I'd definitely be put on a list. He makes several good points regarding mental health and the progression of history in the first half of the manifesto. However, he makes lots of assumptions, conjectures, and poor analogies which undercut his argument. Additionally, the manifesto contains media tactics for the "unthinking masses", constant railing against feminism and gay rights, and an entire section about the "dangers of

leftism”, none of which exactly shake off the madman character he has about him today.

egg

3 reviews

March 29, 2023

Sure he’s a domesticterrorist but he made some good points. Sometimes.

Domantas Česnulevičius

3 reviews

April 14, 2023

Ted offers incredibly good criticism and incredibly horrendous ”solutions”

First and foremost, his excuse for killing people so that the manifesto gains more attention is the height of stupidity. Sure, it gave him more attention, but it soiled his ideas and turned people away from some of his more rational thoughts. This is one of the reasons I first expected this book to be the ramblings of a madman, as did many more before me.

I chose to read this because of the ”disaster for the human race” meme and I was surprised by the amount of rational thought put into this. First, I would like to speak on the political aspect of his ideas.

While I am economically center-right, I am culturally center-left. And I must say that much of his criticism of the Left, specifically in the first half of the book, is well deserved. Most of us have heard so-called white SJWs, who claim to fight against racism, call a black person ”Uncle Tom”, ”Token” (or more rarely - ”House *****” and ”Race Traitor”) when he chooses to speak against leftist ideals. The attack against such a person contains not only a critique of his thoughts but also implies a ”betrayal of his race”. Such, as Ted calls it, power-hungry leftists are the ones he mainly criticizes, while the rest, more moderate, are criticized as such who would stand by and not do anything to prevent the radical ones from doing radical things.

I must disagree with some of the reviews. Some reviewers seem to think he is a conservative, and I can only imagine that is due to living in a two-party bubble, where you must be a Trumpist if you criticize the left. While he does not spend as much time pointing out problems caused by the conservatives, he does mention he considers them hypocritical and borderline stupid. That is because, according to Ted, they spout how much they want traditional values and yet they encourage technological progress which destroys them. Some reviewers also mentioned that Ted must have a dislike for gay people, which I disagree with. He merely states that the fight against technology must take precedence over all other fights. And since a fight for equal rights would require some centralized force to enforce it, Ted chooses to distance himself from those

protesters, since he is against a centralized body. "He fails to mention that those issues appear because of capitalism," say some reviewers. But he doesn't, he literally mentions these problems appear both in capitalist and socialist countries. He literally criticizes nationalism as a thing that is useful to the advancement of technology. Meanwhile, his criticism of the conditions of workers (all humans) in face of machines making human workers obsolete reminds me of Marx's thoughts of workers' conditions in face of capitalist industrialists.

Next, let us move to his anarchist and primitivist ideology. His thoughts on technological addiction are very on point. And we have only seen the hold of technology take a bigger hold on people since, with the evolution of smartphones. Many people like to write of such things as "boomer saying boomer stuff", but as a generation, a lot of us are in the "I can stop whenever I want, I just don't want to" phase of technoholism. Sure, internet access does allow us to see more information than ever, but how often is it correct information? The surplus of information of different kinds leads to a false sense of intelligence. Not a lot of people fact-check the information they receive before they move on to a new reel of YouTube video explaining something to them. And social media algorithms make sure that the information you read is one you already agree with.

Back to his goals - primitivism. I appreciate, that Ted does not fall for the "noble savage" myth, however, he for some reason places moral virtue on the state of nature over the state of society. He mentions that while primitive man is less physically secure, his safety is in his own hands because there are no nukes. But he completely ignores things such as asteroids or tsunamis, that primitive man cannot stop. He also says that primitive man can take primitive problems in a stoic way and survive them, but gives no arguments as to why modern man cannot be stoic about modern problems.

There are additionally more things I have a bone to pick with. His later paragraphs criticizing the left, such as revolutionaries betraying their allies once they gain power, can easily be applied to right-leaning revolts as well. His idea of a World Government with a technological elite is, in my opinion, impossible until we are at war with a sentient species on another planet. Even with impeccable surveillance and a singular government, there will be stagnation with no competition, and such, autonomous communities will break off. Or there would be a power struggle from the inside which would divide the Empire. A neo-Imperial-China-bureaucratism of internal power competition could not last for long.

Ted talks about how people nowadays drug themselves to stay sane in modern society but ignores Vikings who drugged themselves before and after a battle, to survive in a war-torn world. He claims that more primitive societies have lower crime rates but ignores the possibility that it is harder to commit a crime in a place where you know everybody (you would therefore prefer a raid on a neighboring village) or that the system for reporting and counting crimes is not as good. Overall, there are a lot of blind spots, but I do appreciate the sobering breath of fresh air where an author admits,

that some of his ideas may be false, and if life events show that his mentioned ideas were wrong, they should be disregarded.

My rating of this book is in general, an average of what I thought of his arguments. Some were really good, and some were horrible as f**k. Had he kept this as a book criticizing the technological addiction and industry in capitalist and socialist societies, he would be remembered as a great, yet maybe a bit underground, philosopher of our time. Yet, his calls for an anti-tech revolution, which is essentially a mass suicide cult, left him being remembered as a madman. That, and the murders he committed. I would not recommend this book to impressionable younglings or someone who prefers ideology over critical thought. However, if you are only into this book to broaden your worldview by seeing a point of view you do not encounter that often, this can be an interesting read.

philosophy

Trey S

117 reviews1 follower

April 19, 2023

A good book with some salient points made. I agree with him on leftists being losers and that modern industry does harm the earth. I don't like how he was killing people at all though. This book is a super quick read and pretty fun to read. I recommend this.

3.5/5

Christian Messner

5 reviews

April 25, 2023

Thought provoking, but I think I'll keep enjoying driving in my gasoline car to pick up Carl's Junior...

Bill Dobbing

10 reviews

August 19, 2023

Interesting book, try not to blow anyone up because of it.

Stephen De

10 reviews1 follower

June 1, 2023

It teeters on some interesting points that I think are worth digesting and considering. The book gets a lot of flack for how heavily anti "leftist" it is but I take it as a more internal critique of the movements that would deter others from seeking more powerful changes that Kaczynski advocates in the book.

There are glancing blows at right-wing thoughts which are characterized as being purely short-sighted in nature and always causing more problems than they solve, but they aren't delved into with as much vigor and loathing as leftists who are characterized as picking up movements and causes not for the sake of change or solutions but purely for the sake of self-satisfaction in merely advocating for them.

This is a lot of the same criticism I hear from people on the left today: if only people could get their shit together and work towards something other than their own feelings maybe something would get done around here because while we squabble and bicker over who is more right and who is advocating for the most oppressed the right will continue to just push on ahead towards whatever immediate thing will bring them the most benefit, consequences (and the world) be damned.

Mark Alexander

340 reviews4 followers

June 6, 2023

His thoughts and ideas are too ludicrous to be taken at all seriously, but somewhat disturbingly, while what he is SAYING is both illogical and arguably insane, he comes across in his writing as articulate and clearly was capable of thinking coherently, if not logically.

adamvls

20 reviews

June 17, 2023

when i first read this book, i enjoyed it a tad bit, and tried to ignore the strange parts because the man for some reason really does not like leftism while he himself is an anarcho-primitivist which falls under the leftist category.

i would love to go in-depth in the review but i forgot the majority of parts in the book as i decided to put it down for a month.

overall 2.7/5. the book is overrated imo, but it was a decent read if you ignore the hypocrisy.

classics philosophy politics

Tim Benschop

5 reviews

June 16, 2023

This was doozy to read right after New Earth by Tolle. Where that book had a very positive message, this one just oozes negativity.

My problem with this book is one I have with manifestos in general. The Unabomber gives a lot of pretty radical claims, and hardly backs them up, if at all. Or he does offer an example, but it is such a general one that it feels like shooting fish in a barrel. I feel like this manifesto would have been a lot stronger with solid examples of the claims made, which happens more towards the end of the book. If only he did it during the entirety of the book.

Furthermore, a large portion of the book just boggles down to 'return to monkey', as technology gets described as the cardinal sin of humanity time and time again.

Maybe this is just because I am so ingrained with technology for my work and daily life, but I feel like calling everything technology has offered us quite a lot of good and bad. Not only bad.

But apart from my criticism, it was very interesting to read a book that offers a critical look on a thing I often use, technology. Furthermore, studying at an art school with a bunch of leftist types, it is interesting to read about the 'psychology' of those types.

But being indoctrinated by your environment is not a new thought. It reminds me of Michel Foucault.

Anyways I am rambling. The book is decent. Interesting read. Would have given it 2.5 stars if this app allowed that.

worm eater

4 reviews

June 17, 2023

half of this makes rational sense and the other half is just "leftism and computers bad :(""

Nester

10 reviews

June 21, 2023

5/10. Edit: The more I think about this the more I agree. People are so miserable at their work that many people need antidepressants to keep them going. And if not for media like TV shows, movies, TikTok, and other distractions, people would barely be able to function because they would be forced to think about the dissatisfaction in their lives rather than consume distractions. Entertainment is nothing but a distraction.

A lot of what he says is true, especially about leftists and the psychology of a leftist, but I disagree with a lot of what he is saying as well. I agree that the threat of technology is the utilization of it by leftists to dominate society to force people to bend to their collective beliefs and limit freedom. The solution is not to undo industrialization, which is impossible, but to prevent leftists from ever attaining power.

Amanda

105 reviews

June 23, 2023

Considering this is written by a guy who seems to be schizophrenic or something, this was actually fairly organised and coherent. He even made some insightful observations about society. Still a lot of these observations are nothing new, many people before him and since have discussed these issues. There was nothing especially radical or violent in here either, so it's hard to believe that this guy killed several people, and apparently he poisoned several of his neighbour's dogs. A lot of his critiques about modern society and technology seemed aligned with reality, (I disagreed with some of it though, including his sweeping views on eugenics, 'leftist' issues including woman's rights, lgbt etc, and that going back to nature is the solution to society's problems). Nature is brutal and humans have triumphed over nature which has led to our success and domination over the whole planet. While we have become dependent on technology, and that is an issue, it is probably more of a good thing than a bad thing. I for one, don't want to go back to living in the trees, worrying about getting eaten by tigers and bears while birds shit on me. He is also down on academic work, doesn't want to be a 'computer nerd' and considers academic pursuits as 'surrogate' activities. I mean he's not entirely wrong but at the same time, if I had to choose, I'd rather do 'surrogate' activities than manual labour, 'essential' work etc which is often boring and repetitive. Maybe if he took a little more interest in the issues of women and minorities he would realise that a lot of people are already doing salt of the earth, 'essential' type of activities all the time, and barely get a chance for surrogate activities, and this is not necessarily a great or fulfilling situation. Despite all that, I do genuinely relate to a lot of the concerns he raised. We are becoming increasingly 'docile', addicted and reliant on technology as well as the products of modern technological society. We have lost a lot of our natural instinctive behaviour and a lot of people certainly are becoming more depressed and isolated. Society is becoming more complex and socially engineered even despite the individual freedoms that technology has provided. Still, part of me, perhaps optimistically thinks that society will naturally push back against any issue that is happening including with our technology. Or at least, the technology will adapt to help solve these societal issues. We may give up our 'freedom' but how 'free' is anyone anyway. I don't believe any one is free, technology or not. All the technology is doing is making that fact more obvious. I genuinely don't understand what

this guy thought he was going to achieve by living in a cabin and sending bombs to people anyway. Though the part about spanking was funny lol he really had a hang up about that

Sam Drummond

22 reviews

June 28, 2023

Really mixed book. Ted Kaczynski is best when talking about technology and he accurately predicted the development of the dependency we have on tech. Everything else he misses the mark and the call to arms at the end falls a bit flat. I do think it's a must read for anyone

Zen Ventzi Marinov

7 reviews3 followers

June 30, 2023

5 stars for explaining very precisely the issues with modern society. 1 star for writing as though there hasn't been exploitation, despotism, and slavery before all the advanced technology in modern society. In other words, he explains very well how technology and other modern conveniences, like our overly-moralistic views, are hurting us, enslaving us, but fails to convince us how what we have currently is worse than what we've had in the past. Overall, I was very pleasantly surprised by the high quality of the observations. Before reading I thought that was just some crazy guy, out of touch with reality but it turned out he's not.

dan

4 reviews

July 22, 2023

A really interesting read. Throughout the book, Kaczynski shifts my sentiments from sympathy to complete disagreement. I was most onboard with his critique of technology in society and his observations on how human needs are not put before technical necessity. However Kaczynski's intense focus on leftist ideology was less interesting to me and came across as unhinged and manic.

Méphistophélès

23 reviews

July 26, 2023

Ted merely needs a trip, Someone takes him to Dubai or Qatar (:
psychology-sociology

Marcus

56 reviews

August 1, 2023

The industrial revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have increased the life expectancy in "advanced" countries, but they have destabilized society, made life unfulfilling, subjected humans to indignities, lead to widespread psychological suffering and inflicted severe damage in the natural world.

Elliot Kurtz

34 reviews

July 27, 2023

Ted had very valid and serious criticisms of society. He predicted many of the horrible things that modern man is currently experiencing as a result of advancements in technology. These advancements have arrived as a result of economic growth. The process of which the two interact is very circular.

On the one hand, I do agree that man was never made to live like this. We do not struggle at all to obtain the most necessary things in life—food, water, shelter. Because of this, we create a struggle to obtain something with the same level of importance, however there is no such thing more critical than these. We pursue hobbies to their absolute end, become world record holders, champions, Nobel prize winners, millionaires, and so forth. Despite all this, everyone is depressed, on medication, seeing a therapist, or committing suicide.

Can there be any question that the demise of society begins with its individuals? The lack of real fulfillment and meaning in people's lives has pushed them to psychological extremes they cannot handle. They are assuaged of their psychic pain by the many colorful movies and TV shows that are released each year. Someone (an internet influencer) starts a movement to plant a bunch of trees and that satisfies them for a little while. We build a massive telescope to rocket into space and that reminds us that we can do hard things. But the pit of despair at the center remains.

Although I am tempted to agree that technology may be one of the root causes of our suffering, I cannot reasonably say that the solution is to completely destroy it all. I CERTAINLY cannot say that failure for the rest of society to agree with such a view justifies violence against them. This is where Ted and I disagree. I am puzzled because Ted seems in fact very reasonable when reading through his manifesto. I would expect him to realize, as any rational individual would, that malicious targeted

violence could never yield the change in attitude that he seeks. Even if he COULD change the attitudes of the masses, did he really think he could eventually convince the entire WORLD to destroy the very technology which has shaped and crafted their present reality? To expect such, to me, is ridiculous. Ted would have been much better off writing this manifesto in the form of an essay or even a novel and then resigning himself to the world's issues and going off to live a solitary life like that of Henry David Thoreau (also an anarchist). I would have expected him to draw on the writings of such a man as well as Mahatma Ghandi—someone who also rejected modernity and was "anti-civilization". The canyon sized difference in their ideology obviously boiled down to their differing views on the use of physical force.

Edit: I just learned that Ted originally did try to live a peaceful life in the woods but was brought out of retirement by economic land development. Curse you, housing market! Also perhaps he should have moved to a more off the grid location? I mean how close was he to town to justify entire houses being made next to his cabin? Anyone getting Michael Scott in the woods off the highway Survivor Man vibes? I digress.

In any case I am disappointed that such valid and pointed criticism has been mired by a despicable track record of domestic terrorism. There can be no question that Ted was deranged but if he was able to keep his sanity somehow I think he would have been a very interesting mind to talk to. He seemed like he truly did care about humanity and where it was headed. I am sure he was shocked by how deplorable things got to be at the end of his life. This AI movement has been shaking the world but its not like we didn't see it coming. Whose to say it won't play out like Ted predicted and mankind will choose to hand over the keys to the kingdom to some superintelligent AI that knows what the "best" recourse is for a destructive species and a dying planet.

It is nauseating to consider just how many losing battles mankind is fighting to stay alive. Climate change devastating the natural world with no controls in sight, the threat of nuclear war always looming, society on the verge of collapse in a twisted Brave New World style, and the dawn of the machine overlords. Yippie kai yay for technology and all its boons! We pray the end come soon.

Jack Bloomfeld

20 reviews

July 31, 2023

5 stars for the ideas, -2 stars for how these ideas were delivered to the world. Your ideas aren't that important, don't kill people.

Henry Speight

2 reviews

August 5, 2023

Anarchist try to shower challenge (impossible)

sean

47 reviews

August 12, 2023

he tried his best <3

Abu Dhabi

152 reviews2 followers

August 13, 2023

Surprisingly readable and interesting, particularly its insights into human psychology, but ultimately advocating something that is impossibly implausible and self-defeating.

non-fiction philosophy politics

Noah Shearouse

1 review

September 11, 2023

This book aroused my curiosity just because it's a philosophical book written by a terrorist, and it didn't disappoint. It was extremely interesting, insightful, and thought-provoking and I highly recommend it. I already agreed with a lot of what he said and he made me consider some new ways of thinking on the dangers of technology and our society. He is obviously very intelligent. I marked it lower because there were a number of things I definitely disagree with him on. These disagreements are primarily rooted in his prioritization of "Nature" over God, not being a Christian.

Michael Barros

167 reviews

August 27, 2023

Okay +5 stars for content because I mean the guy made a lot of good points. But I feel like it has to be -3 stars because he blew people up. BUT his work has only grown more relevant today, so +1.

Look, you just can't be blowing people up. But I can't justify going lower than 3.

Jade

1 review1 follower

September 6, 2023

Ted ought to leave psychology to the psychologists.

Grady

5 reviews

September 11, 2023

Only giving 3 stars so I don't end up on a list

Chris

65 reviews2 followers

September 13, 2023

The book carries the essence of a sequel to Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto. Within its pages, Ted Kaczynski explores the bourgeoisie's relentless attachment to technology and the resulting erosion of human relationships and freedoms. His hypothesis contends that a society driven by industrialization becomes one of domestication, where genuine freedom can only thrive within a semi-primitive framework. Much like manifestos typically do, the writing serves to ignite revolutionary passion among the populace rather than offering tangible solutions to the challenges of society.

Pelvis Resley

30 reviews

September 15, 2023

REBEL AGAINST THE FUTURE!

See the violence

inherent in the system?

Techno-repression!

Anagram review: *Tech City, rotted industry ooze ennui. Sad, I ask liars: "Fu'k?"*

Valta

15 reviews

September 13, 2023

Ironically, i read this on a PDF on my phone. Ted would not be proud

2023

Displaying 1 - 194 of 194 reviews

2 stars - 80 reviews

Conrad

200 reviews312 followers

April 30, 2007

This is interesting if you're into the criminology; if it's rational thought you're after, look elsewhere.

Barton

6 reviews2 followers

May 16, 2008

neo-Luddite... That sums it up.

Aaron Crofut

364 reviews36 followers

August 19, 2012

Just skimmed through the Unabomber Manifesto. Rather amusing, actually. Same problem as Rousseau, but rather than attempting to fix society, he opts to burn it all to the ground and go back to Nature.

Not all that dissimilar from the Occupy people, really.

I do have to give him small props for having an argument at all. Society creates people with too much time, which leads to psychological complexes and unhappiness. He (rightly) rejects the social engineer's claim that they can "fix" society. What Kaczynski doesn't seem to get is that a great majority of people enjoy this life; they have every opportunity to return to Nature by moving to some God awful backwater but they choose not to. Kaczynski fears Popper's Open Society.

His analysis of leftist psychology is a textbook example of psychological projection. philosophy

Zac Stewart

8 reviews2 followers

November 18, 2015

An interesting, yet absurd indictment (mostly) of technology. Outlines the fairly obvious fact that technological change manifests societal change and then attacks it.

Malcolm

27 reviews

December 3, 2013

The overall thesis of this essay is very interesting, and has caused me to think and read more about Primitivism as a philosophy and political designation. But the first part of the essay is a very ham-handed analysis (more like a rant) of the "psychology" of liberals. I didn't understand why this is necessary, or how it relates to the overall message, especially when this analysis is how the essay begins. I would also expect a more concise, better written essay from someone as educated as Ted Kaczynski, or at least for him not to feel he has to resort to capitalizing certain words to emphasize his point.

Ivan Kapersky

59 reviews3 followers

June 14, 2014

Kaczynski was an academic genius. I felt motivated to read his manifesto because I wanted to learn how he think, maybe why he did all the bombings. The narrative it tends to be humdrum, the author refers to a certain sector known in society as "leftist", which is consisted of people who has low self-esteem or morale towards society and always seeking victimization. The way the author describes it, is very prejudice and the author doesn't expose a argument that supports his point of view.

While reading the first chapter, the author starts an idea or opinion, finished the chapter without fully explaining the idea. Which it leaves lots of questions in his arguments. I find the book poorly written, the author used inadequate examples to presents the arguments, and doesn't seem to know in are more depth analysis the "leftist" side or their fight or perspective. I giving it 2 starts because some of the themes the author mentions it, are happening in society and are "bad" for it, as the author said, but for most, is very repetitive and monotonous.

G.

98 reviews36 followers

October 1, 2014

Kind of like a ultra-libertarian version of Abbey. I'm probably a modern leftist. Too bad.

history non-fiction

Anthony

64 reviews1 follower

August 29, 2017

What were the ideas that a man bombed people to get seen? I wanted to know so I read this essay.

My early assessment was that Ted had some good and plausible points about technology; its development is indeed accelerating, largely once something is adopted it becomes relied upon and tech is increasingly encroaching into our personal lives in potentially invasive ways. He also had some good ideas about personal sovereignty and need-fulfilment, though I think he over-attributed fulfilment to self-sufficiency in meeting our fundamental needs like eating, sex and social status... where I began to distance myself from Ted was when his claims in both these arenas became black and white and catastrophized, which also may be because of the era he wrote it. Technology has made us more free, informed, connected, mobile, educated, adapted and given us immensely more choice as to the multitude of ways we can live our lives; creating careers that never existed before and reducing the cost of previously inaccessible commodities.

Perhaps Ted wrote this book too early in the digital and modern technological revolution to see what good would come. Yes there is potential for his dystopian outlook to be realised, but technology is solving those same problems almost as fast as they come up. It's in the best interest of societies' development to ensure its members are psychologically well so they can wilfully add their own good to it: that's what the most functional societies do - their value structures are congruent at every level of the hierarchy from the individual to the family to the community to the state to the society.

Hillbilly

469 reviews20 followers

September 3, 2017

I agreed with some of his material like how we are socialized to behave "right" in modern society. However he was wrong about some of the most important points like his "revolutionary" ideas would not get published unless "we" blew people up first. Another gentleman with schizophrenia paranoid type, and schizoaffective disorder named Alex Jones got a fellow with Cluster Two Personality Disorder elected President last year. For all his intelligence, Ted K. could not foresee the day when his ilk would be published and followed by the dumbed down (by design) masses brought up on mass media now feeding their own children on the rectangles in their palms.

Victor Davis

Author

24 books68 followers

September 5, 2017

I really wish Ted had not gone off the deep end and mailed bombs to people. He really was a brilliant man and a fairly good writer. The prose is purple as hell. Any idea that flitted into his head, he was instantly certain and confident about it and had a depth of insight about it. That's not the path to truth. Collaboration, sound-boarding, and study all serve to temper the "truths" we arrive at by intuition alone. This is the life rant of a lone genius who chose to allow his thoughts to run wild all alone in the woods and thus "solved" the meaning of life and all the things wrong with it. It's a shame he chose to kill people instead of applying that very impressive mind to make a living in the world.

Turkel Afandiyev

60 reviews3 followers

December 23, 2017

I liked the criticism of the "left". However, the rest 95% of the "manifesto" seemed like a paranoid grumble.

non-fiction

Sean McCloy

Author

2 books7 followers

January 9, 2018

The poorly proof-read ramblings of the Unabomber.

Gregg

22 reviews3 followers

March 12, 2018

Interesting ideas, terrible proof and method of execution.

1: There is no "primitive man". This concept was used by 17th/18th century philosophers and was long outdated before the dawn of the 20th century. Research into primitive societies do not support his concept.

2: Claims "leftists" have a damaged psychology. This coming from a man who lives like a hermit and thought sending bombs to people would help his cause.

3: His movement would need to be a global one, all happening at roughly the same time. Unrealistic to say the least.

4: His power process is interesting, but fails to consider other process' that people find beneficial. It is merely one aspect of the human experience, not all encompassing.

I did agree with some of his concepts regarding the dehumanizing nature of industrial society. But the solution is not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

All in all, it is an interesting rant by a very intelligent man that is unrealistic and narrow minded. I wonder what his mind would have created had he not been terribly abused under the MK Ultra program.

The Kekistani

295 reviews51 followers

May 5, 2018

Although he made some solid points on a few points and provided accurate critique of the leftists he failed to address any of the issues, he is the perfect definition of the anarcho capitalist, he wanted people to live like animals, no organization, no regulation, no common agreement, he forgot the part that this planets time is limited and it's in our best interest to cooperate and work on space technologies to get out of here, get the genetic modifications or biomechanical augmentations to live comfortably in space and the regulations to best apply these technologies to ourselves.

His perfect society was doomed to be destroyed ultimately by natural forces ergo making us weak in terms of Darwinian norms. The "system" he describes as the invisible enemy is in fact the cooperation and common agreement of humans on living together -ergo sacrificing a modicum of freedom for sustainable existence while working in cooperation with the others- is what sustains EVERYONE's existence.

I am totally for a free market economy but never the anarcho capitalistic laissez faire to the extent Ted desired, that kind of destructive selfishness would harm the selfish ambitions of each and ever human.

Christian Chapman

41 reviews9 followers

May 19, 2021

not a very convincing rant

he got some stuff right but all the stuff about leftists is basically just vitriol against the people who i guess in present day they are calling soyboys

more significantly he seems to have taken as axiom that the obstacles created by "industrial society" are morally unjustifiable, denigrating, unapproachable and unsurpassable. i agree that these obstacles are real, inestimably grotesque, degrading, dehumanizing and maybe even actually unsurpassable as he says they are.

but he doesn't provide strong moral justification for retarding humanity back to a state of 'SMALL communities' and smashing 'organized technology' (both very slippery

ideas). maybe his inclination to do so has something to do with being a gaian and pedestalizing a nomad-type forest hermit clan lifestyle. he has a lot of attachment to some nebulous concept of freedom and to the nature of humanity in the supposedly more natural near-feral state he proposes, seemingly because the horrors of "the system" do not pollute your mind in this state.

even if you buy all this stuff, we are left with two equally wretched, cartoonish extremes for humanity's ultimate destination: either the radiohead song "fitter happier" or (literally) hyperindividualistic postapocalyptic microcommunities.

i think ted would call me a leftist for saying this though

Gary Brompton

56 reviews

July 17, 2018

DNF @ 35%. Mostly complete madness. Some small veins of truth generalised.

Sagar

87 reviews

August 28, 2018

After reading 20% of the book, I am disappointed by the book. Surely, it was written in the extreme situation by Kaczynski who was an extremist himself...but the hatred and non-objectivity of the book make it unbearable to read. The first 15% of the book was about how worthless Leftists are! (Maybe I don't get the hate because I might be a left)

BUT, my main purpose of this book is to understand about technology and its effects and maybe know more about the concrete alternatives we can take. So, reading on!

I don't think I want to finish this one. The author has an amazing background, and that is the reason I started reading this manifesto. I don't have much experience in reading manifestos. I am going to be very blunt and write that, if you like reading and you feel that reading improves you, then stay off short manifestos. They are great, but they come out very badly edited, and linguistically inferior.

Nick

498 reviews20 followers

November 8, 2018

Hey, I don't know if you guys have noticed, but this Unabomber guy is kind of nuts.

...

More seriously, despite having read some commentaries that discuss the lucidity and strength of Kaczynski's arguments, I didn't find his manifesto particularly convincing. He routinely presents his personal preferences as though they are rationally defensible: at one point, for example, he declares that while people might feel that their hobbies fulfill them, they are not truly as fulfilled as they would be if their energies were spent on the struggle for survival. Maybe that's true, but unless you can prove it, you don't get to claim it as a fact. He frequently indulges in the use of anecdotal data (e.g., 'rich people can have anything they need without working for it, and yet some rich people are miserable, therefore being able to have everything you need without working for it can't make you happy.') He acknowledges that pre-technological societies have shorter lifespans, but hand waves this away by declaring that they're really much happier despite dying at age 30. At one point he claims that pre-technological man was so much more at peace with himself that he could sit idly without any entertainment for hours, and while I'm not an anthropologist, I don't think that hunter-gatherers were generally known for having large amounts of idle time between killing buffalo and not dying of dysentery.

I also found it hilarious the extent to which he rails against leftists. In pursuit of the overthrow of technological society, Kaczynski argues that revolutionaries should be willing to make common cause with anyone else—but NOT liberals, because their inherent treachery and authoritarian impulses mean they will inevitably betray the cause. It takes up at least a few pages and I couldn't help but wonder if Noam Chomsky killed Ted's dog or something like that.

And while it's easy enough for me to have a laugh about the whole thing while Kaczynski rots in a supermax cell, it's revolting that the pursuit of such a harebrained ideology was used to justify his murderous actions. He explains in the text that he just HAD to bomb folks, because otherwise no one would have paid attention to his philosophy. All I can say is that I wish Kaczynski had mailed his manifesto to the New York Times and then blew himself up in his cabin as an act of protest—his arguments would have been just as ineffectual, and the rest of us would have been rid of him without further bloodshed.

Zack Johnson

14 reviews

March 9, 2019

kinda good book by an even better guy named Ted mosby. Book like this is why good read is "good" reads. Great reads? Five star *****

Steve

380 reviews1 follower

March 23, 2019

If you're seeking a sleep aid, this is worth reading; I snored off three evenings in a row. While some of Ted Kaczynski's thoughts resonate with me as true, he accomplished nothing with this work and in its journey toward publication, he murdered and maimed several persons inexcusably. None of his observations were original, further his prose, typed in the first person plural and third person, was tedious, even by the standards of Lenin and Trotsky.

Yes, since entering the Holocene Epoch, our species has diverged from the order arrived at through millions of years of natural selection, and this at a frightfully increasing rate, like a spaceship accelerating toward escape velocity. This situation, appears to me anyway, as the underlying cause of nearly all that ails us. Yet there is an elegant, peaceful solution to our woes: stop having children. Even caged zoo animals have the good sense to cease reproduction, unlike humans. Want to cast a dagger at the governing elites, want to rid the world of depression and suicides and wars and cancers and heart attacks? Stop bringing children into a world in which they were not genetically conditioned to live. Ted Kaczynski, however, chose to ignore, or perhaps was ignorant of, this simple, most moral of choices.

Rareş

41 reviews2 followers

May 8, 2023

Even though Bomberman's manifesto has brought up a few good points, its reliance on speculation about the future and downright dismissal of people's attempts ("no conceivable way" (par. 117), right) of creating a good society have rendered it exceedingly poor, nihilistic, and destructive.

A few problems with the essay are presented here:

–The "power process" (pars. 33-37) is Ted's golden hammer. Everything and anything people do is to achieve a goal which satisfies them. This is an alright starting point, however it becomes utterly demeaning when used in conjunction with Ted's other central concept:

–The sodding "surrogate activity" (pars. 38-41). Everything which is not for your own direct survival is meaningless and artificial. Ted also doesn't know about Maslow's pyramid. Not to mention that "need" can be subjective. It is on a spectrum: from things that you need and you will die if you don't satisfy them (food), things which you need but not satisfying them won't kill you (sex), and things which you like but don't need. In his view, everything is a "surrogate activity". I can make getting food and eating one such activity. I will die, sure, but to some music, or something equally "trivial", is just as important. Calling something a "surrogate activity" or an "artificial goal" is brought down to a playground insult that only Kaczynski uses. Royal Highness Ted

Kaczynski believes himself to be the sole arbiter of what is a "real" goal. The worst thing about this, however, is that science is listed as a "surrogate activity":

–Bomberboy dismisses curiosity, the desire for the betterment of humanity etc. as anything other than men of cardboard set up by humans so they could be defeated and make humans feel accomplished. This is insulting. His section about science (pars. 87-92), in particular, dismisses that anyone can be curious about anything. It is one of the worst, most cynical things I have ever read in my life, and I won't go into detail about why it is completely wrong. All I will say is that a) primitive people, when engaging in theories of even a religious nature, when they hypothesize that fire will appear when they rub sticks together, when they test its properties, are doing science, b) even an accountant may be curious about a chemical, c) to be curious is a constant thing, and needing basic knowledge in a field to know more about something advanced is normal, and d) the child who must toil at his farm, but who still rereads whatever books falls in his hands, is displaying curiosity in spite of having to devote all of his energy to getting his basic needs.

–Kaczynski claims that the American Revolution wasn't actually a revolution (par. 109). His reasoning is very poor. He basically mauls the definition of the word "revolution" into something from which he can exclude revolutions which did not derail from their perpetrators' vision. His semantic trickery, once unmasked, kills his argument.

–He refers to himself in third person.

–Kaczynski's idea of freedom is that of a hunter-gatherer's (par. 94). Personally, I don't want polio, so I am willing to give a part of my "freedom" for not dying (you can't be free if you're dead). Ted, however, claims without citing any sources (the book only has 8 of them, I counted) that primitive men were content with their life and willing to die early (par. 75), and that they would sit hours on end if they didn't have anything else to do (par. 147), boredom being a purely modern phenomenon. I do not agree (cave paintings and really everything preceding the development of civilizations - rudimentary rituals and religion, domestication of animals, farming, the development of tools, the telling of stories etc. - seem to infirm this), and the lack of sources means I can't verify what he is saying.

–He calls environmental issues and child abuse, for instance, straightforward matters (par. 136). This is obviously not the case.

–A fifth of this manifesto is an attack towards leftism. While some points are valid as a whole, his central conceit is what bugs me endlessly: leftists are all just a bunch of self-loathing, defeatist gits who are only leftist to satisfy their "power process" (see above), and that they don't actually desire to help minorities etc. You are in no position to claim what other people's reasons for doing something are, mate. These psychogenetic fallacies are all bogus anyway: if an argument is logically sound and has good premises, I shouldn't care what the psychology of the arguer is, if it even is the source of the argument. He calls for his followers to not collaborate with leftists under any circumstances, even though anarchists are his closest ideological allies. His critique of conservatism, too, is shallow, though in a childish way.

–Excessive historical determinism: Ted believes that society tends in one direction, and that reform is useless (pars. 99-113). Granted, I read a lot of alternate history, so imagining things going radically different is easier for me, and so is claiming that he is wrong. His notion that theoretical models for a new society always fail discourages even trying. A lot of his criticisms of revolutions can also apply to his own movement.

–Ted seems to believe that the needs of "the system" and those of individual human beings, and things which are bad for one of them, cannot possibly overlap. To him, everything good done to someone is done exclusively for the benefit of "the system". Compassion doesn't seem to exist in Kaczynski's world.

–He seems to imply that mental illness doesn't exist and that all illnesses are just names given to people who do not conform to the needs of "the system" (par. 117). He doesn't say it outright, but his scorning at antidepressant medication and him putting "mental health" in quotation marks gives the impression that he believes that, somehow, primitive people never had mental disorders.

–The worst part, however, is his justification for killing people. Yeah, he gives one. He says that, were it not for the publicity he got, no one would have read his manifesto, and those who had would have forgotten it due to the torrent of media or something (par. 96). Basically, he had to make a tragedy so people would bother to read his garbage. He could have written random words on paper so people would read it. To me, this is an indirect admission that his writings are not substantial and that death was required for people to bother. This is disgusting.

All in all, even though Ted Kaczynski has been lucid in writing his manifesto, it is only useful as a historical piece and as a beginning for further discussion of the state of our modern world. Otherwise, its proposals should not be followed.

english non-fiction online-pdf

Steffan Carroll

3 reviews

July 12, 2019

He thought deeply about problems with civilization. He wanted others to find solutions. I think if he'd thought through to the solutions he would have modified his hypotheses.

Kenton

19 reviews

July 22, 2019

As a manifesto, too much emphasis is given to describing leftist and the fears of genetic engineering. Based on nothing more than my own intuition, I'd say this shows a personal bias which delegitimizes the core argument, that technology is bad. There are

many other possible aspects to how technology could be bad, and many are brought up, but harping on any inparticular belies the calculated demeanor I felt the writer was going for.

Jordan Barclay

133 reviews

September 11, 2019

So much garbage to sift through in order to get to the brilliant parts. Clearly, this man is brilliant. However, this man can't write if his life depended on it. Numerous typos, so much repetition; he says "society" 258 times in this book. That's literally more than 1 in 200 words of this manifesto.

Writing Style: F-

Content: 10% A, 90% F

Overall: D

headache-inducers

Christopher

Author

2 books92 followers

January 11, 2020

Simultaneously well reasoned (in an internal kind of way) while also being a somewhat superficial reading of macro historical trends. I mean, I would rather read this than Stephen Pinker's euphoria these days as it least it questions dominant trends, but people rightly sick of social media and the noise chamber of our technological society today would do wise to avoid going down this exact opposite path as a reaction. If the only way you can see out of our many and very real technological problems is an unsustainable and fantasist anarcho-primitivism, than you are no more interesting than the silicon valley nerds Teddy K often rightly derides.

Speculative realist philosophy offers a far more balanced and far less idealistic take on combating faith in universal progress and anthropocentrism while also understanding that one needs not reject technology or large scale society to reach this point.

Jeff Paal

78 reviews4 followers

January 19, 2020

Ted's critique of the ills and externalities of modern industrial society was interesting, but his critique of the left was so heavy handed and shallow that it's clear he

completely lost the plot. Ted also remains apparently unaware that he is both indicting industrial society as well as the primary movement - leftism - that arose to incrementally attempt to resolve that same industrial society's worst excesses. The most obvious example of this is left organization of labor and trade unions to get industrial workers some basic bargaining power and protection from the rampant abuse of the factory owners.

This is just one example of Ted's indictment of the current problem (free-for-all capitalism and industrialization at all costs) and our current best non-revolutionary and non-violent means to restrain and reform that problem (left movement politics). By outlining the problem and condemning our current solution, he is obviously attempting to leave violent revolution as the only alternative. He does all this in clunky prose and uses sweeping generalities as his primary vehicle.

My final analysis is that Ted would have been quite at home as a middling academic in the same university system that he loudly condemns. It's just a shame that he instead opted for murder as his means of promoting a work that, in the end, really belongs on a poorly maintained Blogspot.

2/5, would recommend primarily as a cautionary tale of the hazards inherent in taking one's own views too seriously.

Steff En
39 reviews
May 14, 2020
source(s): dude trust me

Stephen
60 reviews
February 18, 2020
2.5 stars

The issues Kaczynski has with modern society, and the implications therein, are valid, perhaps shockingly so due to my expectations.

However, his initial chapters have their foundations built upon statements that begin with "As everyone knows..." and other phrases with the same general hand-wavy oversimplifications. Sure, his final chapters acknowledge this shortcoming, but how does that make the lack of foundational evidence any better?

Despite this massive issue, I personally understood some of his fears and issues with the current societal trends.

I don't know if I'd ever recommend this book to anyone, but for those that are already compelled, I feel that there is something to be learned. For me, it was certainly not what Kaczynski intended, but it was valuable nonetheless.

Devin

196 reviews37 followers

April 23, 2020

1.5 stars.

You know that meme that says "hurr hurr electricity and technology bad and thomas edison was a witch!?" ? This is that meme, but stretched out into a 232-point manifesto by a disgruntled spree killer who lacked any sort of ability to make friends.

Let's cut the shit: Ted Kaczynski is a very smart man. No one can deny that – his contributions to mathematics are astounding; I've read just the abstract of his PhD dissertation on Boundary Functions and his brilliance is evident. What is also true, is that Kaczynski was not able to acclimate himself to the rapid rise of technology and, coupled with the painfully evident fact that he is a white man who is very smart in certain skills and also very alienated (for reasons perhaps only known to him), instead of embracing a thriving movement dedicated to the overthrow of capitalism – the rapidly rising movement of the left in disrupting high tech capitalism, he instead rejected all of it and attempted some "third path" in which he deemed all modern technology bad and any attempts to control it, even from the left, as "totalitarian and evil". How silly.

Kaczynski continually contradicts himself through this manifesto. He repeatedly attacks Marxism, the USSR, Vietnam, China, the DPRK, and Cuba, as "useless and totalitarian", even going so far as to praising the downfall of the USSR (perhaps for 2 reasons – he hates socialism and hates technology, so the fall of a socialist grasp of technology which plunged Russia into the capitalist poverty state it is today, made him very happy – interesting how he doesn't find poverty cruel), and yet, his views on his "revolution", that is, the overthrow of the industrial age, his strategies he suggests, are all taken from strategies OF Marxism, of strategies utilized by Lenin, by Mao, etc.

His continued attacks on "leftism" (which he never really defines and, if pressed on this issue, would probably equate leftism and liberalism which are incompatible) as being results of psychological repression, of feeling inadequate and inferior, show his true colors: Kaczynski is a right-wing type who goes so far as to equate anarchism with being right-wing (he doesn't say this outright but heavily implies it), and sees "leftism" and social justice as larger threats to the development of technology than say, capitalism. Which is the true threat behind the rapid development of high tech technology.

There are moments in this where Kaczynski veers onto a path that I would even agree with – technology can be responsible for the overworking and overstimulation of society, and for the rise of exhaustion and depression on the world that is exploited – sure! I can agree with that. But what Kaczynski repeatedly gets wrong again and again is that it is technology in the hands of capitalism that is responsible for this. It is very well known that Cuba, Vietnam, the DPRK, and the USSR, all thrived

(and with the omission of the USSR, which no longer exists, continue to thrive) in developing technology, because they used it for the collective good of the people. But that's the issue – Kaczynski hates collectivism; he is a staunch individualist which is (to use his own "psychology lesson" against him) rooted in inferiority and fears of inadequacy against the undeniable process of dialectical materialism. Kaczynski, if he did so knowingly, having used tenets of Marxism in his strategies for "revolution", should know dialectical materialism and dialectic as a whole: everything, including nature, is constantly in motion. Things are always developing, never to be the same as they were. That includes the raw material and modes of production that create those raw materials into constantly-evolving forms of technology! But he doesn't know this. Or he refuses to admit it. Time and society cannot regress – even those of us "hard line" Communists who speak of the pre-capitalist, pre-feudalist world, which was communal, know that the world we fight for will not look like that communal world that existed thousands and thousands of years ago. It will look vastly different as humanity evolves and thus, our needs evolve.

Kaczynski makes a critical error in his assumption that if the industrial society were simply overthrown, the world would return to a hunter-gatherer-style society. That society already existed, Ted. And it was successful for a time, but dialectics dictates that needs of humanity evolve and therefore, modes of production and suitable answers to these needs also evolve. Would Kaczynski have, had he existed thousands of years ago, complained about the invention of the wheel as simply being "a distraction"? Probably!

That's another thing: Kaczynski's continued insistence that subjects such as science, art, and even his own specialty, mathematics, are "surrogate activities", hobbies or activities that distract from what "the human really wants": to hunt, fish, gather food, and reproduce. Again, those were wants and needs thousands of years ago, in a time that no longer exists – science is necessary for the development of humanity; without science, there is no medicine, no adequate healthcare, no nothing. Imagine looking at a lightbulb and thinking "the person who created this was just distracting themselves from their deep, longing desire to go kill and eat a deer!" Give me a break.

But again, Kaczynski makes notice of how developing technology has violently impacted the Third World. Correct! It absolutely has, but again, he fails to say exactly who is behind this – technology is not an autonomous being, it is a series of processes that help propel society forward if in the right hands - but in this case, it is capitalism and the elite bourgeois' grip on high technology, that impacts the Global South, the Third World. Unsurprisingly, Kaczynski eventually drops his faux concern and seems to strike fear into only himself in saying that it would be disastrous if the Global South got their hands on the high technology of the imperialist empires.

Is this the worst thing I've ever read? No. Is it anything noteworthy? Perhaps if you want a glimpse into the absolutely absurd world of anarcho-primitivism, as a start, I suppose this works.

Oh, and I couldn't roll my eyes hard enough at Kaczynski's insistence that pre-colonial Indigenous societies were "monarchies". Also him indirectly blaming the leftist rise in technology on gay people, feminists, disabled persons, fat people, and "ugly people" (I did a double take reading that) really just show his lack of understanding in these topics.

anti-academia environmentalism nature

Volbet

250 reviews7 followers

June 5, 2020

It's kinda strange how this is held up as a prime manifesto for an anarcho-primitivist movement, since the manifesto both starts and ends with scathing critiques of leftism and the leftist mentality.

Kaczynski is more of an Anglo-American libertarian with a mean streak of anti-technological ideas. He's essentially Robert Nozick if he had a terrible flight with United Airlines.

The ideas put forth in these pages, while thought-provoking, are quite incoherent. I don't know if it's down to the power of hindsight, but it's obvious that it was written by someone that was just talking to himself.

For example, it's postulated in the very beginning of the book that mental illness is in large parts to be blamed on techno-industrial society, while later on it's said that depression was a result of a lost power process, which goes back to humanity's beginning.

While the two aren't mutually exclusive, both statements don't really acknowledge one another and the reader is as such left to interpret as they see fit.

Matheus Resende

10 reviews1 follower

June 5, 2020

Well-made garbage with some based comments on it. The main reasoning is definitely wrong, but some points are interesting to pay attention on.

Alana Araújo

57 reviews25 followers

August 9, 2020

Utter bullshit.

non-fiction

Cristina

8 reviews

July 30, 2020

I separated Ted's ideas from his actions. I guess he felt compelled to get this message out by garnering the attention on a grand scale. I have no clue how he could do that for so long and live with himself after injuring so many, but I suspect he really thought it was for an important cause.

That being said, I found the book to be really insightful. I tend to agree with him on a lot of these aspects, and disagree on a lot of aspects as well. I think we all should be weary of the evils that can and will come from technology. There are good things that will come of them too, but it's easier to recognize/remember the bad. My personal opinion is that in a few hundred years Ted will be regarded as a revolutionary prophet, trying to warn the people. High intelligence is a bitch.

M. Pereira

48 reviews17 followers

September 4, 2020

Gave absolutely no good arguments on why technology wouldn't eventually return. Eloquently written though.

RY

13 reviews

September 7, 2020

What he says is actually pretty basic and nothing new, even for the time in which it was written

Arthur Juliani

4 reviews1 follower

November 1, 2020

Kaczynski is unfortunately more a victim of the system he decries than a prophet pointing outside of it. There are a few interesting (but derivative) ideas concerning the state of individual agency in modern technological society. Aside from that, it is filled with poorly thought-out critiques of leftism, and an even less well thought-out call to violent revolution and a barely explained return to "nature."

Dave

431 reviews11 followers

November 16, 2020

With andrew cuomo making books written by mass murderers all the rage I thought, why not?

So, Ted, sky high IQ and brilliant mathematician who decided to reject the world and live in a cabin in Montana. If only the story ended there ...

Ted lays out his thesis in the first sentence, that the industrial revolution was a disaster for humanity. I take the exact opposite view, with human life expectancy and wealth able to back me that a solid 10-word summary of the human condition could be, "Most things were awful, and then the industrial revolution happened."

Ted makes the case that technology has caused humankind to become divorced from the fruits of their labor, the power process that grants autonomy and a sense of control over your own life. He goes on to say that technology must be torn down because it makes kids into computer nerds, collectivizes the species, robs humans of their free will, and ultimately cannot be controlled, perhaps leading to a robot takeover at some point. OK, great, but how in the hell does that justify sending mail bombs to marketing executives?

This is what never gets answered. If Ted wanted to live in the Montana woods, living off the land, more power to him. It's his failure to live up to his own standards that makes the book the work of a hypocrite.

Some of the writing toward the end was quite prescient regarding leftism - the hunger for power and the crushing of freedoms of the marginalized once the leftists have control (See Russia 1917 and American academia today for examples). However, what Ted doesn't see is that he became who he hated - a violent control freak who thought he had the right to force his views on someone else.

For the work of a real genius, there's just not a lot here.

Gaspar Olea

30 reviews

January 5, 2021

Super cool argument, but it's wrong.

Mino

246 reviews2 followers

January 7, 2021

Leftist? You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means.

Dale El
20 reviews
March 23, 2021

It's alright, read it after watching the documentary. Honestly if he hadn't killed a bunch of people he probably could have made this book popular but I'm an electrician and his plan would put me out of work so I'm taking another star away.

Jonáš Gruska
23 reviews
April 2, 2021

Some interesting analysis, but a lot of contradictions and historical inaccuracies in there. Critique of leftism reminds the modern neoconservative whining, that often confuses liberals and leftists in general.

J. Phillip Johnson
75 reviews6 followers
June 14, 2022

An example of how a terrible marketing campaign can sink your book, no matter its content.

Without being cheeky, *Industrial Society and its Future* makes a great companion piece to other, superior disputations against modernism. Having been immersed in Nassim Taleb's *Incerto* series since the beginning of the year, the two parallel works echo each other frequently as they identify similar problems with modernity, with complex societies, with technology, and with self-preservation of systems. Do not mistake this as condemnation of Taleb nor as sympathy for Kaczynski; this means to illustrate that what *Industrial Society and its Future* gets right, it gets 100% right. Notably, terminology such as "oversocialization", "leftist", and "power process" identified prominent problems that have not been expanded upon by more recent authors sufficiently, and Kaczynski continues to hold the prestige of having captured these ideas succinctly and exclusively.

Unfortunately for Kaczynski, the medium is the message. A manifesto written by one misanthropic man who relieves himself in the bushes by his cabin, in between mailing disassembled alarm clocks arbitrarily, will never be anything more than what it is. My criticisms all stem from this fact. Foremost among these: a single editor would have worked wonders for *Industrial Society and its Future*. Should Kaczynski have spent less time building bombs and instead went to a Sylvan Learning Center to study English, most of the problems with his manifesto (including its disastrous mailing campaign) might have been evaded. Chiefly, organization and style deflate Kaczynski's arguments even though their cores stand solid, giving the appearance of

non sequiters where they do not exist. This presents a reader a twofold task: first, he or she must retrieve the argument being made from wherever it appears; then, he or she must dust off the editorializing and excessive digressions before putting together the argument themselves. It is obvious Kaczynski comes from a background in mathematics based on this structure and flair: essentially, exploring proofs and defining terms takes precedence over coherence in language and argument.

Besides these basic problems with *Industrial Society and its Future*, an editor could have also helped to dissuade the radical elements that actually qualify as non sequiters. Most concerning is Kaczynski's intention in the harming of innocents merely to propagate his ideas, making him no better than those he professes protect a flawed system through violence. Worse yet, in so doing, he strengthens the existing system by associating radical anti-modernism with violent domestic terrorism, which helps neither his goal of revolution nor accelerationism. For revolution, more individuals shy away from these ideas to placate the system, and greater emphasis placed on oversocialization sires a society of men and women who are simultaneously miserable (to the point of suicide and self-destruction) in the current system, and see no alternative in the fear of being designated as anti-modernist and therefore a threat. This also precludes accelerationism as he intends; acts of violence strengthen an already invincible system, and there is no number of thorns in the side nor briars in the eyes that a population will not endure.

In mentioning accelerationism, worth mentioning is Kaczynski's *a priori* obsession with the concept. There is no substantiated reason in *Industrial Society and its Future* for it, and much less his own participation. In fact, quite the opposite: Kaczynski identifies correctly based on the power process that as the system consolidates power and drives more and more activities into type 1 activities (those of trivial effort), the system becomes more imposing and impregnable. Violent rebellion does not diminish this power because individuals see widespread dissent not as a demonstration of weakness on part of the system; rather, it is obvious that these are the fringes and the radicals who comprise a minority of individuals and that the system readily, easily crushes in a show of force. The system can actually use these outbursts to gain more power, expanding its reach and leveraging invasive and unethical technologies to ensure its own relative stability. Individuals will not protest because the type 3 activities are opaque and type 1 activities are salient. In other words, they do not understand what they will be gaining by revolution, but they know what they will be losing.

The premises in *Industrial Society and its Future* are not without merit, but its conclusions do not follow from its starting point. This is ironic, as Kaczynski does well in discussing the *Industrial Society* aspect, but for the *and its Future* component, his mistakes led to loss of life, a permanent setback for modern dissidents, galvanizing an already oppressive system, and probably puts me on a list for this review. I believe that this book is a worthwhile, perhaps even a necessary read, but I repeat that it only contains useful terminology and accurate rendering of modern issues; it is not a practical path forward and I strongly urge readers to understand why Kaczynski is

behind bars. I am not slavishly disavowing. I am distancing myself from violence, and especially frivolous violence, committed for its own sake. The traditionalist or "Evolian aristocrat" cannot rely on it for actual political and societal transformation.

Spooky Socialist

45 reviews116 followers

May 3, 2021

A profoundly disappointing read. I was expecting something incredibly thoughtful and intelligent about how environmental degradation is destroying the planet and the survival of the human species (something more and more relevant in the modern day of climate chaos), but instead got the idealistic thoughts of someone who has very clearly not thought through many of their ideas.

Kaczynski's argument hinges on the idea that industrialization has interrupted the "power process" by which individuals attain freedom and psychological wholeness. Rather than emphasizing how industry (and capitalism, which he rejects as a key component of industrialization) has completely ruined the planet, he emphasizes this psychological determinism that he later undermines by saying that even if industrialization didn't undermine the power process, he would still oppose it.

He goes on completely unrelated rants against leftists, sitting on his tree trunk arm chair and diagnosing them all with inferiority complexes (thank you for your profound insight, Unabomber man). He found this idea so compelling he started AND ended his manifesto with these rants against leftists that have proven to be nothing more than basic-ass conservative propaganda. The amount of times he scaremongers about completely unrelated nonsense like "leftists will BAN spanking your kids" or "political correctness" made me roll my fucking eyes. Plus he goes on to support eugenics, other fascist nonsense, and is incredibly dismissive of the fight against racism, homophobia, etc.

There are a few good insights made by Ted about modern industrial society, but it is marred by his completely incoherent analysis (i.e. he will say that the entire industrial system is interconnected, but then REFUSE to acknowledge that capitalism is therefore inherently tied to technology and that the revolution will be "apolitical") and completely irrelevant rants and ideas about other topics.

pdf

Tara

8 reviews

May 22, 2021

Some genuinely interesting ideas about modern society and dependence on technology but this was overshadowed by bigotry and historical ignorance

Roberto Yoed

689 reviews

July 30, 2021

This is what happens when you:

- 1.- do not go to a psychoanalyst.
 - 2.- live under capitalist and oppressive dynamics and do not have a background of knowing anything of social sciences.
 - 3.- are a genius but not a wise man.
 - 4.- an average american with high IQ.
 - 5.- are a repressed individual with technical mastery.
 - 6.- perturb a hermit.
-

Evan Baas

52 reviews1 follower

June 6, 2021

I picked this up out of curiosity. There are a lot of radicals online that praise it (free from any self-awareness). I think a lot of these people just think anything written by someone with a 150 IQ is destined to be good, and it makes them smart for agreeing with it. There is a few grains of truth in here. Each new piece of technology is made from good intentions, but it can end up causing more problems down the line. And yeah, "mental illness" is just a euphemism for people that dont fit in or agree with society's values.

But, most of the manifesto isnt even about technology, it is just Ted playing armchair psychologist on what is now called "SJWs". He claims liberals are just projecting their own insecurities and are interested in activism becuae it makes them feel good about themselves. A lot of these parts are just projection. I think Ted's bad social skills force him to isolate. In turn, he rationalizes it by coming up with theories about how glorious the primitive life is, and why modern society is actually bad. It is the whole "I don't wanna go to the prom anyway" mentality.

Lace

18 reviews

June 13, 2021

It wasn't necessarily a bad read. went into it thinking it would be a laugh, but i ended up agreeing to a handful of what he said. although, i have to say i was looking for the ~reason why technology is the enemy~ when all i got mostly was anti-leftist remarks and griping about kids being pushed into science and engineering

Piotr

1 review

August 23, 2021

I read it after watching the Netflix series, which was very interesting. Unfortunately, except a few good points, which were highlighted in TV show, it's rather disappointing. Good points involve his predictions of certain risks involved in technology, but the author offers no real solutions or improvements, rather tries to blame leftists and encourage violent revolution against technology. His methods to get this published were obviously disgusting and disturbing, it's hard to say what went wrong, was it Harvard's experiment, mental illness, or multiple other factors that caused a clearly intelligent man to become so disturbed and violent, overall it's not really worth reading. I might change my mind when AI becomes a thing, but so far we seem to be solving most of the issues that arise with new technologies, that mostly serve humanity. As for the idea that every technology removes people freedom, you can still go live off grid at any point, or with tribes in the jungle, the bigger issue is environmental damage at this point than the author's concerns.

Eshna

2 reviews

October 3, 2021

Poorly edited

true-crime

J.

433 reviews40 followers

December 18, 2021

For some reason expected this to be more coherent, and new? The guy has a following and he is pretty educated. But comparing this to Ellul's work (which he actually read and in places clearly plagiarized), this is disjointed and shallow.

disappointing social-studies

Dylan

26 reviews

March 9, 2022

TK's philosophy boils down to "industrial-technological society is bad" and he supports this thesis with vague, over-generalized, over-simplified, sometimes bigoted, sometimes just false arguments. I don't think industrialization or technology are inherently evil; they are tools that can be used just as much for good as for evil. TK does have one interesting theory which is that of the power process and surrogate activities — I should say, I find his description interesting; his diagnosis and prescription are crap too. I think a better answer to the question of the power process is Marx's alienation from labor: if people were connected to their labor, they would gain fulfillment from it.

Accessible language, pseudo-academic theories, generally a shit manifesto, although an interesting look into the motives of an insane, disillusioned serial killer.

Irmina

88 reviews24 followers

February 15, 2022

no idea how to rate this or whether I even should
theory

Will Spohn

162 reviews2 followers

May 17, 2022

Read it because I was curious about it. A mix of Nietzsche, Rousseau, and half-baked naturalism. It seems like his "world-view" is one which would naturally lead to the type of behavior he laments: an atomized, depressed, broken society. He laments science and technology yet his view on things is a product of what he laments. He hates cultural relativism yet he is relativistic; he laments "mid-life crises," yet human life to him is essentially staving off an inevitable "life crisis." Even his choice of "nature" as the cause is, by his own admittance, an arbitrary one! He seems impossible of actually articulating any positive view opposite to the one he condemns. You are better off reading Heidegger's essay on technology. I mean, it is ironic that he looks to primitive man, as far as I can tell, as the peak of human life, yet one cannot avoid that primitive human life, whatever it may have been, is religious and not at all like the view of the world he has. Yet he condemns religion as "unimportant," and the only solid things which human pursue is food and drink and sex: everything else is a distraction. What kind of life is that, Ted? Can you condemn our society for seeking satisfaction without real care when you admit that life is just seeking satisfaction via any means possible, admitting of no difference in quality but only in quantity?

Stephen Gilman
16 reviews3 followers
May 25, 2022

Other, better, writers have covered this same topic without resorting to serial murder. Neil Postman's Technopoly, for example, is a more worthwhile read.
read-in-2022

William Becker
Author
8 books174 followers
June 13, 2022

Makes some marginally interesting and correct points that make the author seem smart at first, but really, this is a giant word count that only goes to show that Teddy has no emotional intelligence or understanding of nuance in social situations. Maybe if he had some friends or had gotten laid once or twice, he wouldn't have felt the need to write such garbage. It's basically him whining about how people are politically correct and how we have stepped away from basic values. Teddy obviously never heard of the hierarchy of needs pyramid. Obviously if your only priority is food and it's a struggle to get it, you won't be working for serious social issues. It also seems to neglect the fact that even if his revolution did happen, society would probably reform and do the exact same thing he is complaining about. God, this is stupid.

This book in a nutshell:

"We are focusing on silly things like people saying the n word and gay rights. Instead, we should be focusing on not starving to death and reproducing constantly."

Mark
447 reviews14 followers
June 15, 2022

For the longest time, I thought the "unabomber" was the guy who tried to take down an airliner by detonating explosives hidden in his underwear, but apparently that's a totally unrelated thing. When I finally found out about who Ted Kaczynski was, I was told he was a mass murderer, which makes you think of Jeffrey Dahmer or Hitler or something, but he's not quite that. His killings were decidedly impersonal, anonymous, and spread out over the course of years. I remember hearing that this guy was crazy, and of course you see his unflattering mugshots whenever you look him up. But if you ever look up youtube videos about him or articles with their comments enabled, there are lots and lots of people saying that he was right, that he wasn't crazy, and that they take him seriously.

I've read some seriously unhinged manifestos, and by comparison, this is actually extremely tame, and I may even say boring in some aspects. Ted, though a pretty original (or perhaps just bold) thinker, still adheres to some tired cliches like the right/left divide, and he does unquestioningly accept some political agendas (such as environmentalism) while questioning others (such as animal rights, feminism, etc.). Overall, his manifesto is actually very very very self-aware, in that it repeatedly qualifies statements and admits ignorance. Ted, whether he really is being honest, certainly gives off a very strong "Ethos" component in his writing, especially with the following:

231. Throughout this article we've made imprecise statements and statements that ought to have had all sorts of qualifications and reservations attached to them; and some of our statements may be flatly false. Lack of sufficient information and the need for brevity made it impossible for us to formulate our assertions more precisely or add all the necessary qualifications. And of course in a discussion of this kind one must rely heavily on intuitive judgment, and that can sometimes be wrong. So we don't claim that this article expresses more than a crude approximation to the truth.

This intellectual humility is probably the best part of the manifesto, and the worst is probably his attack on leftism. For whatever reason, Ted decides to rail against Leftism first, then he rails against technology. I would argue that his leftist comments could be entirely removed and would create a more robust manifesto with wider appeal. He claims that leftists cannot but help using Technology to further their ends, and thus can't be trusted to help with the anti-technological revolution:

216. Some leftists may seem to oppose technology, but they will oppose it only so long as they are outsiders and the technological system is controlled by non-leftists. If leftism ever becomes dominant in society, so that the technological system becomes a tool in the hands of leftists, they will enthusiastically use it and promote its growth.

The problem is that this, like most of his criticisms of leftism, can just as easily be applied to right-wing ideologies as well. For example, one of his points near the end covers the quasi-religious nature of modern leftism, and I would wholeheartedly agree; I wouldn't limit it to Leftism, however, (scientism does a good job of being a religion, ironically enough), and I also wouldn't say that religiosity is necessarily a bad thing (he only implies it). I wouldn't even say being dogmatic is a bad thing, because I think it's more of a matter of being dogmatic *in the right ways/places*, not being undogmatic as an absolute.

But I've gone off track a bit. Let's return to the start. Ted begins the manifesto with the legendary (and somewhat true) statement that "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race." This is memorable, surprising, and bold. All people in the postmodern world feel deeply alienated; depending on who you ask, different people will give different answers, depending on their own proclivities (as Nietzsche said, every philosophy is an autobiography). I, a religious person, would say that a lack of true religion (and an infusion of ersatz secular religions) are to blame; a Marxist would say that the worker is alienated from what he produces by

the machinations of capitalism; Ted would argue that people subsist on unfulfilling "surrogate activities" instead of real, meaningful work.

What does he mean by this? By Surrogate Activities, Ted means: "When people do not have to exert themselves to satisfy their physical needs they often set up artificial goals for themselves. In many cases they then pursue these goals with the same energy and emotional involvement that they otherwise would have put into the search for physical necessities." He also divides people into those who are content with surrogate activities (such as sports, chess, etc.), and those (implicitly of a better type) who desire autonomy (and thus other types of activity, those with more "real" results). I am not well-versed in this realm of psychology, so I'm not sure how original Ted's theory is, or if it's borrowed/stolen from other places. I will say that initially it sounds intuitively correct, but it has some major assumptions I'd disagree with.

1) I would argue that all things in life that are really worth pursuing are some form of surrogate activities, such as art, philosophy, religion, etc.; none of those have a quantifiable or physical result, but despite that they are absolutely essential to what it is to be a human! Does Ted want us to "return to monke"? He seems to not truly be anti-modern, but anti-human!

2) The thing we need to ask about this concept of surrogate activities is why Ted is A) privileging non-surrogate activities such as survival and B) why he values autonomy more than conformity, i.e. why conformity is illegitimate. We all must conform to some degree; I think it's utterly false to say it's a matter of "Conformity vs Nonconformity", but rather "where and when should we refuse to conform?" In this seeking for "authenticity" he is deeply modern, i.e. he assumes you must create your own meaning, instead of allowing any traditions or institutions to dictate it to you (I would actually attribute most of the psychic distress we feel today to that unfair expectation for everyone to construct the entire universe themselves; their worldview, their perspective, everything must for some bizarre reason be *original*).

3) Thus the problem isn't getting rid of surrogate activities (or getting rid of conformity), it's distinguishing noble from useless ones; that distinguishing is what religion and philosophy teaches us, not anything else.

Ted rightfully sees the looming possibility of the collapse of industrial society, and I think it's a legitimate worry (especially given how interdependant so many things are, like everything requiring electricity, people being unable to survive on their own if needed, etc.). Ted's misstep is that he sees this as an opportunity to destroy technology and rid ourselves of the plague of meaninglessness that we have (by artificially plunging ourselves back into the dark ages? or even worse, the stone ages?). I think it unwise and immature, despite Ted's seemingly sober assessment of how many people would perish if/when our society went under. It's actually very overwhelming to imagine; it would be the single worst disaster in human history, and to think that a mere solar flare could wipe out the planet's electricity and cause all of this... God forbid.

In the vein of Richard Weaver and Roger Scruton, I think it's really as simple as moral reformation on the individual level, which would involve a return to first

principles. I really believe that everything would fall into line if that happened, but the intractable problem is how to achieve such a goal. It seems evident to me that a corrupt system full of good people would be much better than a "perfect" system full of evil, corrupt people. The former would negate the system's badness by the virtue of those who comprise it, and the latter would negate the system's goodness by the very same thing. Ted, like all other politically-minded people, merely attacks the symptoms, not the root; industrial society's negative impacts are invariably caused by people who do not have a holistic view of life or who lead disordered lives/have disordered worldviews (such as seeking profits over what is right).

The one time that Ted attacks conservatives is quite telling (and I think quite accurate), and deserves to be quoted here:

50. The conservatives are fools: They whine about the decay of traditional values, yet they enthusiastically support technological progress and economic growth. Apparently it never occurs to them that you can't make rapid, drastic changes in the technology and the economy of a society without causing rapid changes in all other aspects of the society as well, and that such rapid changes inevitably break down traditional values. I'm convinced that Religion is the only thing conservatives have which is robust enough to carry positive values (as opposed to merely negating "progress", which abdicates the debate to progressives before it even starts). It also looks like Ted's entire argument is built on a modernist conception of history, where it's the quantifiable technological changes which drive history, not the social, political, theological, philosophical, literary, artistic, or any other endeavors which do. I think it's most likely a mixture of all of them. All cultures have focused on some of these to the exclusion of others, and that's just the nature of prioritization. Perhaps it is true that we're over-reliant on technology, but the solution isn't forcing the collapse of the technological society; we can distance ourselves without resorting to annihilation and violence. Despite what Ted says about reformations not working, they have worked, and it's the impatience of revolutionaries which is much more dangerous than the gradual changes that structures inevitably bend to. Ted predicts that in the coming generation (20-40 years), the technological system we inhabit will either survive major traumas, or it will weaken and invite in revolutionaries like him. Either way, God help us.

contemporary dystopia essays

ellie a

44 reviews

August 31, 2022

okay like. the stuff about technology is interesting but he did lose me when he started talking about literally everything else. i partially read this for the meme, obviously, but it was still interesting. do i agree with literally anything? no. am i glad i read it? no. was it a waste of my time? yes. but he does have some interesting things in

here– "interesting" the same way that, i don't know, medieval torture techniques are "interesting"

Kale

51 reviews1 follower

September 3, 2022

Me a computer science student (as Ted claims, "computer geek"), while listening to this in an audiobook format on a mass video platform called Youtube. Done with fast enough bandwidth to steadily listen in the background without buffering issues, and playing American Truck Simulator "just for fun". Just a couple hours earlier, ordered a Halal snack pack and got it delivered by UberEats, didn't need to hunt or even cook. If Ted was dead, as he might be very soon, he would roll in his grave.

I want to point out, if you're going to kill people for a cause, (especially a former professor), at least use proper citations. If I submitted a paper with opinions, and the references are there to extend on the opinions said, I would fail.

He claims that his writing must be down (by the reader) to fall under "common sense". Sure, lets say that is true. We cannot explain why we don't have an equal amount of matter and antimatter in the universe. Lets say in a 100 years, it becomes common knowledge a higher being did this to preserve life in the universe. Since it is common sense then, why isn't it now? Sure, maybe Ted is right about leftist are power hungry, however, what sociology journal did you read this in? Do I just assume (at the time), an unknown eco-terrorist "group" who had killed people, were right?

I'm not saying everything he wrote was nonsensical, he just greatly annoys me he took lives so he could have more than 15 people read his essay. Top with that, it was all opinionated with history sprinkled in some paragraphs.

essays fbi-watchlist

Haro

11 reviews

September 6, 2022

stop hating liberals

Juliana

23 reviews8 followers

October 20, 2022

Man this could be a masterpiece but no, it's just nonsense sh*t. At some point I believe neither the author was understanding what he was talking about lol

Henrik

115 reviews6 followers

October 22, 2022

I achieved peak irony when buying this from Amazon.

There are some interesting thoughts here, and I agree with much of what is said about the problems with an industrial/technological society (loss of individual freedom, destruction of nature). However, there are many critique-worthy aspects as well.

The manifesto starts off with a short introduction, then digresses into a long rant about "leftism", immediately alienating a large percentage of people who might agree with his anti-tech/pro-nature stance. While I do not necessarily disagree with all of K's takes here, it doesn't fit the topic at all. The same critiques could also be directed against "rightists", and K even acknowledges that "The conservatives are fools" (50) and that they "are just taking the average man for a sucker, exploiting his resentment of Big Government to promote the power of Big Business" (note 13, paragraph 66). He also ignores capitalism's role in the Industrial Revolution itself, which seems very strange considering the infamous opening line of the manifesto.

I agree that many people feel like they lack a purpose in life, but I am not certain that this is purely/mainly due to technological advancements. "The system makes an individual's life easier for him in innumerable ways, but in doing so it deprives him of control over his fate" - how much control over his own fate did the man of the past have, whose days were spent hunting and gathering roots for survival? What of the slaves of the ancient world whose fate was to be entombed alive when the monarch died? Was there really more individual freedom in a small, puritan pre-industrial village where "everybody knew everyone's business" and where they burnt people for being witches?

So while I do have a pessimistic view towards much of modern technology and the consumerist/technological/whatever society, I, as a bespectacled person who is alive thanks to modern medicinal technology cannot adhere to this degree of anarcho-primitivism. I also do not condone killing people (95).

Michael Janes

74 reviews2 followers

February 8, 2023

[Audiobook, 2nd listen, Jim Johnston narration] Unsure if the narrator or the second listen of Kaczynski's mostly-ludicrous ideas or both caused me to drop my rating a full 2 stars. On initial listen of the Graham Dunlop narration, I gave the audiobook 4 stars. This second listen was much more difficult to the point where I wasn't much interested in finishing. Luckily it's only about 4 hours in total. Kaczynski's screed seemed to

make a lot less sense on second listen. While he makes some accurate observations about modern life, his conclusions are absurd and the thesis of “everything modern takes away from freedom” breaks down easily.

I do think it’s probably important to consume his manifesto to remind ourselves that not all crazy people are dumb (he was a mathematics professor). Get the 2007 Graham Dunlop-narrated edition and listen to it twice. You’ll get a much clearer picture of how silly the manifesto is on the second listen. Don’t get the Jim Johnson narration.

available-audible-only short

Aaron Kleinheksel

239 reviews15 followers

January 1, 2023

I wish I could remember the individuals who recommended reading this so as to make sure not to take their recommendations seriously in the future. Of course Ted’s crimes lend to this tract a bit of morbid cachet.

Ted is a techno-anarchist. This is mostly a screed against industrial society and technology as it has developed since the industrial revolution. He most often comes across as a cranky type of neo-Luddite, screaming almost literally “get off my lawn!” It is also a call for revolution. Do not expect Ted to provide any ideas as to what is to replace our world once it is destroyed however. Sez Ted: “We have no illusions about the feasibility of creating a new, ideal form of society. Our goal is only to destroy the existing form of society.” (pg. 85-86). He spends a fair amount of time discussing the growing dangers of our machines taking over much of our society from us (AI), the future of genetic editing, etc. - basically transhumanism, though this was written in 1995 and so that term was not in use. Some of this is why he is hailed as a minor prophet by some of his fans (yes, he actually has fans).

Kaz seems to think a return to a kind of state-of-nature is the best thing for humans, and acknowledges that this will likely only happen after a substantial reduction of the human population, however that comes about. He is open to whatever tactics or stratagems might work. His rather constricted theory is that humans can only find true fulfillment from properly going through the “power process,” which includes the use of their physical powers for proper purposes. Of course our modern techno-industrial society prevents this. Like most agnostic-atheist utopians, he presents no ultimate purpose of man outside of psychological-material concerns - hunt for meat, forage for mushrooms, build dwelling place from wood and stone, whittle small animals from wood for your many children from your many wives (since they keep dying in child birth), etc.

Honestly, Ted is quite smart, but he spent too much time with only himself for company in his cabin in the mountains. He needed some push back on his ideas that he very unfortunately just never got. A lot of the stuff in middle of this manifesto is just

bad college-level reasoning and tired revolutionary dead-ends. The odd thing is that he seems to be aware of this, and as another reader points out, he is intellectually honest enough to acknowledge that he is relying on his "intuitive judgment" in many areas and that he could be wrong - that he is here merely presenting a "crude approximation" to what he view to be the truth.

So, while the primary mission of his manifesto falls epically flat, it must be said that his critique of Leftism (starting on pg. 99 of this edition) from a primarily psychological standpoint is quite good. He several times makes clear it is not safe to invite with or work next to a "True Believer" Leftist in the overthrow of the present order, for it is inevitable they will betray the cause and supplant it with their collectivist vision. I daresay the entire section (titled "The Danger of Leftism") would make a brilliant and incendiary Twitter thread!

To conclude, it is pathetic that 3 lives were taken just so that Ted could get THIS mid-rate manifesto published. He is brutally honest about this as well: "In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people." No apologies, not from Ted.

politics-philosophy

Erik Espinoza

18 reviews

January 5, 2023

Ted K is a sad man. He hates society and its niceness. He hates being forced to be "politically correct" to women and minorities. He wants to go back to the raw nature where man can do what he wants and live off the land. He thinks technology makes us slaves and true strength is hated.

He thinks he speaks for all humans when he says true happiness is when the only rules are between a small group living off the land.

I see through it. He's an incel. He hates that the 'weak' are doing better and have more power than him (the strong). He wants rape culture back, because holding back his 'primal' instincts will never make man happy.

He thinks going back to nature and letting go of technology will make everyone happy. Lol it will make HIM happy. He wants everyone back at zero so he can be lord of the weak. Take what he wants and face no reprecussions.

Technology will NEVER go away. Making your own Sentinel island will only make you ripe for pillaging by someone technologically stronger.

"A man is only happy when he can live and defend his land.. " with what, Ted? A club? A gun? I can buy a used Russian tank and plow you over and free the slaves you'd inevitably keep.

Humans band together to protect themselves. They build communities and cities and pass laws where the collective people can stop raping raiders like Ted Kaczynski who is upset he can't compete for a mate when there are so many rules in society.

Minorities and women are protected, not because we want to feel good or have some inferiority complex, but because we see value in them and depriving them of opportunities deprives our community of their talents.

TLDR: A man with a PHD in mathematics can't find love, so he tries to destroy society so he can TAKE it.

Galib Kabir

33 reviews

January 24, 2023

surprisingly hard read. this guy shouldve stuck to doing math and sending mail from the woods. awful book.

Mike Van Helden

94 reviews

January 30, 2023

Onto the next controversial read: Ted Kazcynski's Industrial Society and Its Future. Like with Ayn Rand's "Anthem", I would like to seperate the author and the book.

Do I believe that "the Industrial Revolution and Its Consequences are a disaster for human society?" No, not in the slightest.

However, I agree with certain parts in aspects of genetic modification, the loss of privacy and I believe that high tech (certainly social media) has a negative effect on people's mental well-being. Still, I believe that the Industrial Revolution has brought many good things; modern medicine, low tech stuff like a water cooker, wash machines or solar energy.

Nonetheless, it was interesting to read. Personally, I believe people should live simpler, plainer, less consumerist lives and closer to nature; not against nature but rather with nature. But Kazcynski's method, radicalism and idea of revolution is just BS.

Cat Noe

408 reviews21 followers

February 12, 2023

Phew, where to start?

He has a sense of humor. I like that. At least, I hope he was trying to be funny...

I'm going to have downrate this one. Technology always works on a sliding scale; you can't keep the waterwheel and farm tamed plants and still say you're against all advancement. At one point, we were all slaves to satisfying basic needs. The advent of farming opened a window for a leisure class, while most people remained slaves. Nothing has changed there, and at the same time, much has.

On the one hand, most people are still cogs in a machine, and much of the population is slave labor, only with a pittance of leisure time and the technical right to choose homelessness or switch jobs if a better offer turns up.

On the other, playing by the rules does seem to ensure physical security, and at least a little leisure. He rails against mass entertainment, and it's hard to disagree; it's a narcotic meant to fill the hours, but at the same time, it helps connect a population in desperate need of connection.

Technology is lacking in places where people can't get clean water, let alone clean clothes and adequate food. We've got enough, the rich people in the system have enough, to feed, house, and cloth every homeless person on the streets of America. They use it to be rich. What percent of the money is in the hands of how many people? Bet Google has an opinion.

Technology can be used to take care of everyone. That sword swings both ways. The fact that this is not being utilized demonstrates a need for social change. We still have people thinking the earth is flat. Most of us are not taught critical thinking, and few have any real understanding of how their own minds work. This is the crisis that needs fixing, and... I don't believe a revolution is necessary, because it's already happening. This one has to be slow, folks, because waking up is a process. And everyone can do it.

So. Technology good, slavery bad but still in action under other names, society needs a serious rehaul to provide for everyone and it's a petty point, but diabetes has at least as much to do with lifestyle as with genetics, so let's not go killing people off just yet. Nietzsche praised societies on their ability to support the weak. That's the measure of their strength.

His power process theory has a great deal of truth, but it can probably be reduced to a reward mechanic; the desire for power is more or less narcissistic. I'm going to pull the Blizzard games front and center here. They're addictive. Why? Because they offer consistent rewards equal to the effort provided. This scales to power in the game, but a top level character is rarely the goal, and if it is, illegal farmers can do the footwork, and Xanth help the seasoned team that has to deal with the butter bars buy in.

People respond to rewards. Technology, to him, seems like a threat. He must have logical and valid reasons for thinking so, but his rationalization leaves too many plot holes.

As far as reading goes, if I'm looking for a good book, this was ok. I try not to downgrade because I disagree, but history says, and he's blowing off science that has a chance of doing actual good.

We probably need a revolution, but this isn't it.

Show me a nation where people don't bow so far to the illusion of authority that you can no longer inflict sexual harassment on a teen by impersonating an officer over the phone. Show me a world where sexually abused children can escape to safety without being called liars because the abuser has full control of their world.

Show me a nation where people trust what they see and experience, after reservations for how the mind typically works, and have a salt dish on the side for everything else.

Humanity can get there. How long will it take, and how much will it cost?

dystopia non-fiction psychology

the nobody man

37 reviews

April 24, 2023

He made a few good points I agree with and his criticisms of the industrial machine are very valid, but his anarcho-primitive ideals and solutions for the future are so fucking extreme that you quickly remember who wrote this and what he did.

Also, his attempt at psychoanalysing the the American left was laughably cursory and irrelevant. I got the impression that he wrote it solely out of personal vexation caused from being slighted by some left-leaning academic rival during his University days.

I honestly don't know why people give so much credit to this manifesto as its essentially just the inane ramblings of a lunatic that makes a few good points here and there.

Nirvana X

143 reviews9 followers

June 4, 2023

presents an almost childlike understanding of reasoning, idk man what he did was okay and I agree with a few parts but hmm

Ryan

47 reviews1 follower

June 16, 2023

It's pretty bad. I'll write more on this later.

Thad

7 reviews

June 21, 2023

In “honor” of his passing, I decided to read this. The most disturbing thing about his ramblings is that he could easily be mistaken for anyone in right wing media here in the United States over the last decade. If he wrote this today, Ted Kaczynski would have his own show on Fox News by Tuesday. We may be doomed.

Liam F.
15 reviews
June 21, 2023

This is what a lot of praxis and not a lot of theory does to a STEM-lookin’ mfer. Go read Capitalist Realism by Mark Fisher instead.

Pascal
10 reviews
June 24, 2023

Thanks to this essay I learned what neo-luddism is, and that I don’t agree with it. Very cynical and uninspiring, surely we can do better than this. Also, the whole rant against leftism seemed pretty irrelevant to the topic.

frackledust
28 reviews
July 13, 2023

This book might be good at pointing out some interesting ideas (for example how much we - as society - value our safety over our freedom of choice). This book also uses idealizing the past and “strong survive” mentality to make points that make no sense - trying to save it with “this is a simplified version” or “this does not apply to all BUT” rhetoric. Plus actually not having any plan how to solve the current issue besides “let’s blow up the system and then blame THE SYSTEM for all the problems that will arise after that”.
I’m sorry the system failed you - but this is not a solution.

Juniperus
366 reviews14 followers
August 19, 2023

No matter the content, I find manifestos an inherently tacky format.

Joshua Joyce

Author

1 book5 followers

August 28, 2023

Check out this quote. I left some thoughts to give context beneath it.

"Here is an illustration of the way in which the oversocialized leftist shows his real attachment to the conventional attitudes of our society while pretending to be in rebellion against it. Many leftists push for affirmative action, for moving black people into high-prestige jobs, for improved education in black schools and more money for such schools; the way of life of the black "underclass" they regard as a social disgrace. They want to integrate the black man into the system, make him a business executive, a lawyer, a scientist just like upper-middle-class white people. The leftists will reply that the last thing they want is to make the black man into a copy of the white man; instead, they want to preserve African American culture. But in what does this preservation of African American culture consist? It can hardly consist in anything more than eating black-style food, listening to black-style music, wearing black-style clothing and going to a black-style church or mosque. In other words, it can express itself only in superficial matters. In all essential respects most leftists of the oversocialized type want to make the black man conform to white, middle-class ideals. They want to make him study technical subjects, become an executive or a scientist, spend his life climbing the status ladder to prove that black people are as good as white. They want to make black fathers "responsible," they want black gangs to become nonviolent, etc. But these are exactly the values of the industrial-technological system. The system couldn't care less what kind of music a man listens to, what kind of clothes he wears or what religion he believes in as long as he studies in school, holds a respectable job, climbs the status ladder, is a "responsible" parent, is nonviolent and so forth. In effect, however

much he
may deny it, the oversocialized leftist wants to integrate the black man into the system
and make
him adopt its values.”

lmao, this dude just described capitalism under the term ”the oversocialized leftist”. His critique of this hypothetical leftist is literally just your vanilla, moderate Democrat or Republican. Look, capitalism doesn’t care about you or your culture. It only wants the profit that you can produce and nothing more. Ted can’t even tell the difference between a liberal and a leftist here lol, let alone the economic policy he’s talking about, (which is just Reaganomics) and yet his manifesto is littered with critique about a political faction he barely understands. Actual leftism is built around the foundational idea of dismantling capitalism. Not enslaving more people underneath it (After hypothetical revolution you get many, different flavors of leftist ideology). That’s your sign right there that this guy is way off base.

He has a few good ideas sprinkled throughout, but they are sparse and scattered among a whole lot of rambling. He is very eloquent with his words, however.

Cormac Smith

4 reviews

August 29, 2023

Definitely an interesting book and some of his ideas are more relevant than they were then but nevertheless quite boring

mesityl

10 reviews

September 2, 2023

Some interesting trains of thought based on strange assumptions and unjustified priors. The fundamental premise is a cute neo-luddite fantasy but does not hold in practice.

Rob Joynes

5 reviews

September 3, 2023

Did Ted K just call me a cuck?

Haydenn

95 reviews

September 18, 2023

This text is only rated highly because it “owns le epic angry woke feminist liberal lgbt commie”.

Kaczynski’s thought is a combination of surface level conservatism with some (moderately) interesting anarcho primitivism. However, anyone who’s actually spent time reading political theory will see through this for what it is; fake deep surface level politics for people who already were predisposed to agree with him (people who dislike liberals). I could make an in depth political critique of this but it isn’t interesting enough to - maybe one day.

Recommended for: Nobody really - I guess anyone who wants to read the og Unabomber text.

Grade: D, avoids an F because Ted is literate

Displaying 1 - 80 of 80 reviews

1 star - 58 reviews

David Schwan

1,034 reviews35 followers

December 5, 2010

The incoherent mad ravings of a lunatic. Enough said!

sologdin

1,717 reviews642 followers

May 13, 2021

this style of anarcho-primitivism strikes me as consistent with griffin’s descriptions in modernism and fascism, or, at the least, irredeemably and pathologically rightwing. If anyone thinks that this text can be associated with the leftwing, the mccarthyist language that periodically interrupts the bluster about decay and tradition and whatnot should dispel it.

nuke-from-orbit-only-way-to-be-sure

Adam Biggs

1 review

February 17, 2017

Dismisses actual problems in the world and calls the people who bring attention to them mentally disturbed. I've met people who think like this, some still think this way. It's funny how he refers to himself in the third person plural. He seems to hate people who aren't enslaved by culture in their sexual desires. Today the pc types say we should use such pronouns. In the end, it seems like a secret government plot to destabilize social reform. I did not finish it, nor intend to. It is so toxic to reason that I regret having read even half of it.

Gary Beauregard Bottomley

1,009 reviews 605 followers

September 5, 2017

The right wing still spouts most of the anti-left rhetoric within this manifesto. I'd say half of the manifesto is an anti-leftist screed and the other is a call for a back-to-nature screed advocating the elimination of technology and the industrial age so we can retain our freedom for the sake of freedom itself.

The dribble against 'collectivist' anti-freedom loving leftist who are mostly feminist, 'gayist' (he seemed to not like gay rights), and political correctist was no deeper than what one could read on any of the alt-right blogs today. The leftist won't stop at just putting labels on cigarettes or eliminating spanking they want to take away all of our freedoms he will claim. (I really despised when a teacher would hit me when I was growing up. I, for one, am glad society no longer approves of hitting fellow human beings and by calling it spanking you don't lessen the fact that someone is being hit. Conservatives today long for the good old days when teachers and parents hit people, after all it "builds character" and it didn't do them any harm, and it made them the person they are today).

I hate what conservatives believe. The author's thought on one half of the manifesto meshed into modern conservative thought and had no more depth than what Donald Trump is capable of believing. The manifesto states colleges are a hot bed of collectivist politically correct thought and freedom is squashed by the leftist (he uses that word, or socialist, but not democrat or liberal). It's the typical kind of crap I read in the editorial section of the WSJ on a daily basis.

The other half of the manifesto is a screed against technology and a cry for freedom. Freedom is an ultimate good for him and technology stands in its way. He seemed to me to have a whole lot of overlap with the post "Being and Time" Heidegger on the evils of technology. The author really wants to have created a world like in the TV show I used to watch called "Revolution" where nanobots have destroyed all vestiges of modernity and he wants to do anything that is possible to put us back to his Rousseauian paradise.

One can tell from this document itself that the author is alienated. Also, I'm a mathematician, and it was obvious to me that the author of the manifesto would have

been a mathematician (it's easy to say that in hindsight and I already knew that he was a mathematician), the way he described things and how he would include mathematics in his analysis was an obvious red flag.

I didn't actually read this document. I listened to it by putting it in to natural read app on my Iphone. I have no idea how any one but an anti-equality, anti-modernity, or a modern day conservative could get anything of value from this Brietbart news like screed against leftist and not even they could get past the complete destruction of technology and modernity for the hypothetical return of the ideal state envisioned by the author.

Lori

343 reviews58 followers

December 24, 2017

Digital copy of the manifesto available here.

You could cherry-pick some quotes, and they would make sense. But then again there is so much wrong with modern society that it's almost impossible to not get a few things right if you just blindly throw things out there. Do yourself a favor, and read Murray Bookchin's *Towards a Liberatory Technology*, and *Deep Ecology & Anarchism*. You get infinitely more outrage at current society, while the former essay debunks the vast majority of Kaczynski's claims about technology, and while the latter is a blow to the primitivist outlook in this book.

Ted Kaczynski fails miserably in deriving any convincing theory. He blames this vague "industrial society", or claims that we are enslaved by "technology", as if technology is the prime decider in who gets to be enslaved, not the people with power! The simple fact that he points out many of the disasters that capitalism has wreaked upon this world without once being critical of capitalism — the hegemonic moral, social, and economic system — is quite telling of the fact that you cannot find relevant and insightful, or even original social critique here. For instance, take paragraph 170 (there are many others like it):

170. "Oh!" say the technophiles, "Science is going to fix all that! We will conquer famine, eliminate psychological suffering, make everybody healthy and happy!" Yeah, sure. That's what they said 200 years ago. The Industrial Revolution was supposed to eliminate poverty, make everybody happy, etc. The actual result has been quite different. The technophiles are hopelessly naive (or self-deceiving) in their understanding of social problems. They are unaware of (or choose to ignore) the fact that when large changes, even seemingly beneficial ones, are introduced into a society, they lead to a long sequence of other changes, most of which are impossible to predict (paragraph 103). The result is disruption of the society. So it is very probable that in their attempts to end poverty and disease, engineer docile, happy personalities and so forth, the technophiles

will create social systems that are terribly troubled, even more so than the present once. For example, the scientists boast that they will end famine by creating new, genetically engineered food plants. But this will allow the human population to keep expanding indefinitely, and it is well known that crowding leads to increased stress and aggression. This is merely one example of the PREDICTABLE problems that will arise. We emphasize that, as past experience has shown, technical progress will lead to other new problems that CANNOT be predicted in advance (paragraph 103). In fact, ever since the Industrial Revolution, technology has been creating new problems for society far more rapidly than it has been solving old ones. Thus it will take a long and difficult period of trial and error for the technophiles to work the bugs out of their Brave New World (if they every do). In the meantime there will be great suffering. So it is not at all clear that the survival of industrial society would involve less suffering than the breakdown of that society would. Technology has gotten the human race into a fix from which there is not likely to be any easy escape.

Really, is it technology agnostic of social institutions that keeps doing this? Is it the poor toiler who wants to see technology put towards more senseless production instead of shorter working days, or is it the greedy-short sighted capitalist who actually has the power? He decries decisions being made left and right, and people being divested of freedom but doesn't see that it is a different small minority of other people who gain that lost power — although he was rather close at some point, but then lost it again on a tirade against technology.

Many such glaring oversights are to be seen everywhere in this manifesto, he decries the ruling classes but without tying them to the profit motive and capitalism, somehow only to "technology".

Don't get me wrong, that technology is being used to manipulate, to manufacture artificial needs, and ultimately to enslave us is almost a given. The thing is that it's not technology as such that does it, its systems of hierarchy and domination that have reached their culmination in capitalist society — even if the originated in the late paleolithic.

The problems of society are social, not technological. The worst technology can do is exacerbate existing patterns of social domination. This should be fairly evident that it didn't take much technology for the British to cut down their entire forests, enslaved half the world, and then used all this power to kick-start the industrial revolution.

Not to mention his tirades against "leftism", combined with his incessant apologia (by omission) of capitalism's role in all this can make it quite easy to label Ted Kaczynski as a fascist, pure and simple. And eco-fascist, probably, but a fascist nonetheless.

John

87 reviews2 followers

July 14, 2018

“In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we’ve had to kill people.”

<https://jdcloughblog.wordpress.com/20...>

Given that I was starting a research project on the relationship between modern society and nature, I thought there would be no better way to ease into the reading than by checking out the manifesto of America’s most notorious pre-9/11 terrorist – Ted Kaczynski, aka FC, aka the UNABOMBER. Kaczynski blew people up to protest against an increasingly industrialised and automated society, which he viewed as impeding freedom. What would make anybody want to read the manifesto of a calculating killer today? Well, unlike a lot of serial killers and terrorists, Kaczynski was an exceptionally intelligent individual, with an IQ of 167 who made it to Harvard aged 16. So, maybe his Manifesto would reflect this apparent intellectual brilliance? Unfortunately, while *Industrial Society and its Future* is certainly not the rambling of a madman, it is also not very good. While I’ve no doubt he was a very capable mathematician, he’s not a particularly noteworthy social theorist.

For some reason, Kaczynski decides to bookend *Industrial Society* with two similar sections in which he attacks the broad and nebulous world of ‘leftism’. The arguments here, particularly in the opening passages, were absolutely dreadful, and really detracted from the later content. Kaczynski attempts to describe the psychology of leftists, in an attempt to portray them all as people with inferiority complexes who, rather than having well-meaning and compassionate intent, are motivated by self-serving and conservative interests. In reality, however, Kaczynski instead simply constructs the most ridiculous of straw men and proceeds to stab wildly with a half-hearted methodology vaguely resembling a corrupted and superficial psychoanalysis. This whole section just seems ranty and stupid. To give a taste of some of the joys to be found within: “Feminists are desperately anxious to prove that women are as strong and as capable as men. Clearly, they are nagged by a fear that women may NOT be as strong and as capable as men”. Or, Ted, thousands of years of patriarchy has put women in a position where the default is to be considered inferior and so they have had no choice but to prove themselves. We should be able to consign the entire section to the rubbish bin of history if only so many arguments resembling Kaczynski’s weren’t still being trumpeted around by reactionaries in contemporary debates on identity politics.

Having tackled such a dreadful first section I went into the following passages, treating the individual in modern industrial society, with even more scepticism than I had at the beginning. However, Kaczynski has obviously settled down into his comfort zone by this point and the reading is a little less painful. His core argument is that the increasing role of technology in society is increasingly infringing on human freedom. I think he is accurate if unoriginal in diagnosing some of the issues that modern society faces with technology. For example, he talks about how technology has claimed to give us freedom while actually depriving us of it. Individual pieces of technology, like cars, seem liberating, but the cumulative effect is to create new forms of behaviour that actually limit us. When we think about self-driving cars, for example, they will

free us from having to drive, but they may also take our lives out of our hands in a crash situation. Even when Kaczynski is making these reasonably valid points, however, his argumentation, though highly methodical, doesn't stand up to much analytical scrutiny.

There are a lot of small holes in his arguments but there are two core flaws for me. The first is that Kaczynski places the unjustified ethical claim that individual freedom is the ultimate good at the centre of his argument. This obsession with individualism blinds him to the possibility that collective behaviours may not be considered a negative, as well as pushing him to the belief that all people are fundamentally driven by a cynical self-interest in all their behaviour. When individual freedom is placed on a pedestal above all other virtues, any kind of social activity beyond competition on a market becomes suspect. This is clearly the wrong way to look at things. Humans are social. There are a lot of valid reasons why we may deprioritise our own freedom in order to better a group. Industrial Society, then, fails to provide any justification for its fundamentally unrealistic claims about the value of individual freedom, upon which the entire argument sits.

An even bigger issue than this, however, is that Kaczynski misidentifies the source of the perceived threat to freedom and as a result, his solution is brought into question. Kaczynski believes that the core of the problem is technology, that it is in the very character of technology that it is freedom suppressing and therefore the only way to reclaim freedom is by the total undoing of industrial society. For this to be true, he would have to demonstrate that all technology, all of the time, reduced freedom. This is something that he rejects himself when he suggests that individual technologies can seem to provide increased freedom because they complete a task more efficiently than before. He suggests that it's technology as a whole that is the issue. This betrays the fact that what we're actually dealing with is the systemic framework in which that technology is utilised; it is manipulated at the level of power relations to suppress rather than liberate. There is nothing inherently anti-freedom about the invention of the calculator, or the computer. The increase in productivity they bring about could easily be utilised to allow people to work fewer hours and have greater freedom. It's our economic system that ensures this increased productivity just means individuals are given more work to do and organisations make greater profits. Modern technology actually provides the potential for unprecedented levels of freedom. Rather than seeking to destroy it, we should seek to change the ideologies that command it to be destructive of nature and encroaching on freedom.

Overall, Kaczynski's arguments were occasionally interesting, occasionally dross, and never strong enough to stand up to scrutiny. Any of the valid points he makes have been made elsewhere and better, and his solution is not only absurd but impossible. He was definitely right that nobody would have paid attention to his work if he hadn't killed people. This isn't because of some grand conspiracy, however. It's simply because it's not very good.

Alistair Hawthorne

15 reviews7 followers

November 12, 2018

If Fight Club was written by Tumblr.

Basically, what Mr Bomberman says is this:

Modern, civilised, industrial society provides us with all we need for easy and effortless life, which robs us of our need for self-realisation and lowers our self-esteem, rendering us depressed and dormant. Those few problems we have we made ourselves just for the sake of being offended. Leftists are to blame, as they get their panties in a twist over minor inconveniences and should just shut the fuck up for the sake of everybody. If we ditch technology and return to the stone age, our lives will once more obtain fulfilment. Because no one can be unhappy if they spend their entire time trying not to die in a wilderness or get eaten by a bear. Since we cannot change society enough, it has to be destroyed entirely so we can start from scratch.

Apparently, bombing is the way to go.

Funny, how this guy was brilliant in his field of work, but is on par with a bag of hammers when it comes to people.

While he sounds some good points and valid arguments, his reasoning and writing is on a high school level, hard to take seriously.

Steph

10 reviews4 followers

December 19, 2018

Shite. Anti- left white man who thinks he's alway right behaviour. Get out of yer bloody shed and get a life you weirdo

Ruby Rue

132 reviews14 followers

September 22, 2019

I generally shared Kaszynski's ideas about technological domination in the world and in our lifes and found him quite interesting (no, I don't justify the terrorism), so I started reading the manifesto. However, it was totally something else than I expected. More than half of the book is about how horrible is leftism, when the author has very shallow knowledge and sounds like a typical Trump supporter bringing arguments on the level "leftists are horrible, because they don't want us to spank our children".

Krokki

235 reviews8 followers

March 17, 2020

The rant of a bitter brain damaged madman! His IQ (167) might be brilliant- but overall intelligence (EQ, SQ - the whole brain, not just particular cognitive parts) he is like a toddler, at best. That tends to be the case with extreme IQ like his; they struggle to adapt - wich clearly is the root of Ted Kaczynskis issues with the world.

His generalazation of the "modern left" (anno 1995) has all the clichès, except that their for the most part envious of sucess. I was expecting that one, wich I think is the most used today. Its just not conceivable that some people wants to improve the lives of other, without being all about power. What he don't get; Its is all about freedom, giving all people a chance to thrive. Thats what the best of techology also offer. What a ridicioulos idea to get rid of it. I sure wouldnt want to go back to a death rates of babys, pregnant woman, people struck by sickness++ in the pre-industrial era.

As I've watched some Unabomber documentaries, I know he got isolated as an infant and had a lot of social issues his whole life. That explains alot. My hope is that brian biology will change the way we punish people. Sick people with brain damage, should not be put in jail, under current conditions, in my opinion.

"A society should be judged not by how it treats its outstanding citizens but by how it treats its criminals."

- Fyodor Dostoevsky

Matt Knox

51 reviews6 followers

April 15, 2020

Usually I do not rate books like this. However, this was so bad that I had to make an exception. Not only does he fail to understand primitive and modern society, he bases his arguments about them on numerous claims which are simply incorrect. There is no solid internal logic to his argument and he contradicts himself numerous times within it. He may have even unconsciously realized that his ideas would not work, because the tactics he used to further them are not even supported by his arguments and seem more inspired by a desire for revenge than a desire for change.

Harold

49 reviews21 followers

June 6, 2020

stop ranting about leftism which you can't even define and tell me HOW to do the revolution, not enough application here Ted!

Shorya Jain

69 reviews14 followers

July 5, 2020

Full of assertions. The explanations were presumptuous and not grounded in reality. It is a rant from someone who wants to live away from society as we know it and is fed up with the fact that he cannot do so.

Fadi Alsalti

17 reviews19 followers

August 3, 2020

A lot of wild claims without proper grounding; couldn't finish it.

bunny ☒☒

193 reviews10 followers

October 11, 2020

imagine these clowns giving cia agent osama glowing reviews. For someone who abhorred technology he sure did murder innocent people using it. Take your qualms with conglomerates to conglomerates.

Patrick

34 reviews

October 24, 2020

thinks he's smart...and he's not ! :)

Michael

74 reviews2 followers

December 3, 2020

As a misanthrope I was kinda looking forward to reading this. But what a disappointment. It's just a massive pile of dung; incoherent, rambling dung - spiced up with a little racism here, a little anti-gay sentiment there and finally a completely insane rant against unspecified 'leftists'.

For a smart man he sure knows how to look stupid.

Bernd Schnabl
208 reviews1 follower
December 11, 2020

I wonder if this affects a visa application, so I better only give it a 1 star

Dale Cheesman
52 reviews
December 21, 2020

It was good but not THAT good if you know what I mean
non-fiction pandemic-reads philosophy

Ryan R.
6 reviews
February 22, 2021

Contradiction upon contradiction upon contradiction. I'm thankful someone chose this for a book club as I had a glimpse into the mind of someone who's so made at society they'd rather point a finger than work to fix it. Unless you're assigned to read this, don't waste your time.

Xbhbhjhxjbv
2 reviews
July 17, 2021
Why did i read this

Alyssa Berger
24 reviews2 followers
March 30, 2021

While there are some valid points in this manuscript, 1 star because he killed and maimed people.

Chris
108 reviews
April 5, 2021
Meh

Dacian Kolkhuis Tanke

1 review

May 31, 2021

dumbass, dont kill people.

Wei Chang

90 reviews3 followers

June 6, 2021

This is the longest rant I've ever read; the good part is that it only wasted less than three hours of my time.

I was expecting something much more logical, profound, and persuasive. But only after the first maybe 1 hour's read I realized his famous 167 IQ is probably a mistake. I'd rather believe the result of the later test, which has a score of IQ 138, as more reliable. After all, 138 is only two standard deviations above the mean, and it was the mean in 1995.

To be honest, the value of this book doesn't really come from the contents, as the theory and observation is really immature and lack of support from either history or fact. This book is valuable only because he is capable of making bomb, which suggests that Ted probably not much smarter than Osama Bin Laden.

A big disappointment.

philosophy

Tim

74 reviews

August 29, 2021

omg, touch grass.

Like yeh, he raises some good points, but nah he tweakin

philosodendron

74 reviews

September 23, 2021

Disappointed, I was hoping for a really unhinged and radical philosophy of technology (or rather, against technology) and all I got was a Reddit post on the evils of SJW

Scotty

55 reviews

December 16, 2021

Eco-Fascist asshole, would guillotine.

Terrorist who is an extreme bigot and believes in eugenics being applied to disabled people who he thinks should die and leave the gene-pool along with everybody else who rely on any form of medication which he thinks should be abolished.

This guy is not an Anarchist by any means, he is a reactionary whose vision of returning to some twisted idea of hunter-gatherer life would require billions of deaths, something I think he is perfectly aware of after reading this. He also hates all forms of art, science, technology, communication, transport, he takes it to such extremes that it wouldn't be suprising if he was also against us using language and writing.

The edgelords quoting the first sentence probably haven't even read the book and just think it's some environmental slogan rather than the beginning of a rant by a lunatic.

anarchism

Carl Ingwell

30 reviews4 followers

October 27, 2021

I'm admittedly not through with this as I write my review. This is bad. His takes on why people partake in science, or are "curious" is garbage. There is no distinction between types of technology that the author rails against (for example, a shovel or a shoelace can be viewed as technology too) and it's hard for me to agree with the blanket statement that technology=bad. The book seems really racist, transphobic and homophobic in parts. His critiques of the left are corny. Saying that he has to kill people for people to read his writing seems like something a bitter and unsuccessful author would say, and it's quite horrifying. I'm a Luddite anarchist too, but this sucks.

Bexan

103 reviews1 follower

October 29, 2021

This is what we call a "Cope Post." Doctor Kaczynski wrote an entire manifesto about liberals, homosexuals, and more to explain how much Industrial Society solely because of his inability to cope with his gender identity crisis. Truly a wonder how a transphobic society will do this. (Plus some minor torture when he was a minor at Harvard courtesy of the CIA in operation MKULTRA, but that hardly counts.)

Really his ideas are interesting but they are kind of overshadowed by the fact that he killed people for no real reason, since his ideas could never truly be implemented

via acts of random violence, and the fact that he got caught solely because he reversed the saying "Have your cake and eat it to" to "eat your cake and have it to."

Matthew

41 reviews

December 8, 2021

He gets so close to actual arguments. Its funny how exhausting this read is. Your brain is constantly filling in his talking points to actually get anything it out of it. You get one or two interesting questions his asks, but most people have already asked them in a much better way. I wonder what Nick Land thinks of Ted.

philosophy

Sadako Yamamura

99 reviews3 followers

December 18, 2021

I was naive enough to expect this to be some sort of angry anti-capitalist manifesto outlining all the crimes of Western industrialization, or at least an amusingly paranoid rant by a technophobic conspiracy theorist, but unfortunately it was neither. Instead it's just a typical boring right-wing essay whining about a made-up abstraction called "leftism" which only exists in the mind of the author, at least the way he perceives it. In his pretend psychoanalysis of the average "leftist" he completely misses the target because he never bothered to understand any leftist theory and just makes assumptions based on how he's been treated by them instead of reflecting on what he's doing wrong to deserve the treatment. Part of it might be his denial that racism and gender inequality exist. Leftists are not a monolith and they are fragmented into a million different ideologies, many of which are in conflict with one another. Anyone with even a little bit of experience in leftism knows this, but somehow it completely slips by the entire alt-right, who only understands the left as the collective action of mobs they see on the news. At the end he admits to certain contradictions but just glosses over them and pretends they're of no importance. It takes a level of arrogance to write something like this and then be so convinced to its validity as to carry out bombings. If you're gonna bomb stuff to bring attention to your ideas, then you should at least come up with something new and intelligent.

His view of nature is also quite oversimplified and wrong. He claims that industrial society is bad because of how it presents "abnormal conditions" such as excessive population density, rapid social change, and the breakdown of "natural" small-scale communities such as the extended family, village, or tribe. On what basis are any of these abnormal or unnatural? You will find even more excessive population density in any ant colony or even the global ant population. You will find rapid social change

among any species inhabiting any rapidly changing ecosystem. The idea of community is not "natural" either, and nor is it unnatural, but if this guy's talking about going back to an earlier stage of nature, then he should be supporting industrial society because if small-scale communities are truly being dissolved then we'd all become solitary individuals again as many animals are in the chaos of the jungle or in the spacious seas. If he cares so much about individual freedoms, then small communities are far worse for that than large ones because there is much greater scrutiny by those close to you in a village or tribe while in a large city you can remain anonymous and never run into the same person more than once if you so choose. If he cared about individual freedom he would be in favor of all social progress.

We are not dependent on technology, we only prefer it to a lack of. If all technology were to suddenly disappear most of us would go on living and adapt to the natural world. Those of us who do not know all the tricks and tips for surviving in the wild can learn from others, just like any other animal does. The only people incapable of survival would be sick people who would normally be dead if it weren't for technology and the upper class, who could easily buy the resources to continue living in a sheltered and luxurious lifestyle. But it has always been that way, even in ancient times much of the wealthy were not accustomed to living in nature alone and had to be transported by a bunch of servants, in the most sheltered and comfortable means of travel available. Also, nature is a "system" of its own.

Overall this guy seems to come from a very privileged and sheltered background but he's not very well-studied and makes lots of baseless assumptions and rash claims backed by arguments only as strong as "it is well-known that..." or "there is strong scientific evidence that..." without opening himself up to self-criticism by actually studying things like history, sociology, and biology, the basics of which are enough to show that he's living in a bubble of misinformation fueled by sci-fi and fantasy. He keeps mentioning "primitive man" but demonstrates absolutely no understanding of how our ancestors lived or felt. This should be a lesson for why using schools as propaganda tools is harmful to the individual as well as society. It should also serve to remind us that reductionism will always lead to fascism, especially when it takes the form of placing humans into categories.

An example:

"Revolutionaries should have as many children as they can. There is strong scientific evidence that social attitudes are to a significant extent inherited. No one suggests that a social attitude is a direct outcome of a person's genetic constitution, but it appears that personality traits are partly inherited and that certain personality traits tend, within the context of our society, to make a person more likely to hold this or that social attitude. Objections to these findings have been raised, but the objections are feeble and seem to be ideologically motivated. In any event, no one denies that children tend on the average to hold social attitudes similar to those of their parents. From our point of view it doesn't matter all that much whether the attitudes are

passed on genetically or through childhood training. In either case they ARE passed on.”

How do you know this, Ted? Where is this ”strong scientific evidence” and why are you conveniently able to say that ”objections are feeble and seem to be ideologically motivated” when your claim itself is feeble, ideologically motivated, and without any references to back yourself up. Is something scientific just because you say so? And you really think no one denies that children on average hold social attitudes similar to their parents? Don’t you suspect that might be due to upbringing and similar social environment? Change either and the kids will be very different from their parents. Why do biological determinists and eugenicists always believe that correlation is causation and jump straight from hypothesis to conclusion without ever having to show their work? You can’t just pretend that other possibilities don’t exist just because genetic determinism makes you feel better about yourself and your fascist ideology. Your insistence does not make you correct.

P.S. Stop saying ”we” when you are only one person, Ted.

Ian

39 reviews3 followers

January 30, 2022

fake based

Johan

77 reviews16 followers

March 31, 2022

His anti-leftist rants sounds a lot like the stuff you find on reddit. And most of his arguments are based on assumptions, rather than facts.

Lots of people view him as this great thinker. That is true if you are settling for easy answers to complex problems anyone with a brain can see.

”What if modern technology bad?” Yeah that was deep when I was 14 years old and wanted to be edgy.

Tomas

6 reviews

April 10, 2022

Part anti-leftist, part luddite screed, nothing else. Was surprised to see the same talking points being used as today by the right-wing.

Jonathan-David Jackson

Author

7 books31 followers

May 10, 2022

Ted Kaczinsky spends a good chunk of the manifesto complaining about 'leftists', and how leftists want to control society (and you!! ☒) because they want everything to be nice, and so you better watch out before they make it illegal to hit your children. He has forgotten to look in the mirror, where he would see a person who is so unhappy with society that he is willing to kill hundreds of people (he only killed 15~, but did try to blow up a passenger plane) and completely undo society; he wants to make it so that things he doesn't like will be not just illegal but literally impossible; by his own poor definition, he is a leftist. What does this say about his own interrupted power process, where even when he was living his life the way he wanted and free of technology, he couldn't stand that other people were living their lives the way they wanted?

The way he writes sounds like he believes he is some kind of genius, when in fact he's just a busybody. I can't imagine the sort of person who would be inspired by this nonsense or imagine it as a workable solution to any of the real societal problems we have.

Having said that, there are some interesting ideas, but they take some excavating. ☒

akemi

436 reviews133 followers

April 23, 2022

how the fuck do you rail against the owo conformity of the 'leftists' while being utterly ignorant of your own boomer conformity? *ohhhh noooo, the feminists and gays are turning on me unfairly because i keep calling people negroes and orientals and transsexuals, terms which are completely value-free!! owo, i am the victim!!!*

i find it deeply ironic that ben shapiro, i mean ted kaczynski, believes 'modern leftism' is rife with insecurity when he himself sees a global conspiracy held against people like him who don't want to be held accountable for the shit they say. maybe don't be a little bitch when people get angry at you and actually ask what you've done to hurt them? antisocial ≠ radical. in fact, most radical politics are more-than-social (as the social currently stands). in anarchism, it's building autonomy through collective and horizon practices of joy and response-ability, rather than guilt or resentment.

i'm also amazed that this is a near mirror image of gamergate. jordan peterson's, i mean ted kaczynski's, diagnosis of the left as snowflakes and white knights presumes an incapacity to understand the value of vulnerability nor the joy of compassion. instead,

every movement towards the other is read as a cynical shoring up of one's own ego / capital. this is just rational actor theory, *the predominant psychological theory of industrial society*. as with gamergate, it's clear that ted kaczynski has never visited a battered women's shelter or an lgbtq suicide hotline. the way he collapses woke capitalism with leftism, and ignores all forms of grassroots organising, betrays a lack of engagement with actually existing leftist organisations.

can we approach those hurt by this world with compassion and understanding rather than distrust and disdain?

better resources:

political correctness / virtue signalling:

essay | exiting the vampire castle

book | democracy and other neoliberal fantasies: communicative capitalism and left politics

book | regulating aversion: tolerance in the age of identity and empire

video | woke brands

video | postmodernism is not identity politics

reactionary fragility:

video | a case study in digital radicalism (gamergate)

video | climate barbarism and eco-fascism

video | incels

film | taxi driver

standardisation, consumption, alienation:

essay | the culture industry: enlightenment as mass deception

book | the society of the spectacle

book | the consumer society: myths and structures

book | the mcdonaldization of society

video | capitalism, cultural disintegration, and buzzfeed

video | the emoji movie, adorno and the culture industry

neoliberalism:

book | a brief history of neoliberalism

book | undoing the demos: neoliberalism's stealth revolution

book | the hard road to renewal: thatcherism and the crisis of the left

video | neoliberalism: from ronald reagan to the gig economy

video | the problem with hyper-individualism

video | the awful story of south america's most evil dictator

empire and race:

essay | discourse on colonialism

book | black skin, white masks

book | how europe underdeveloped africa

book | the darker nations: a people's history of the third world

book | the divide: a brief guide to global inequality and its solutions

video | critical race theory is awesome and here's why

feminism on industrialisation:
pamphlet | witches, midwives and nurses: a history of women healers
book | caliban and the witch
video | the witch trials and the rise of modernity and capitalism
video | witchcraft, gender, & marxism
climate change:
book | this changes everything: capitalism vs. the climate
book | fossil capitalism: the rise of steam power and the roots of global warming
book | less is more: how degrowth will save the world
book | critical theory and animal liberation
book | marx's ecology: materialism and nature
anarchism / mutual aid:
book | the conquest of bread
book | against the grain: a deep history of the earliest states
book | the ecology of freedom: the emergence and dissolution of hierarchy
novel | the dispossessed
novel | a country of ghosts
video | anarchy and taoism: tao te ching: an anarchist manifesto
healing from resentment / defensiveness, cultivating empathy / vulnerability:
book | joyful militancy: building thriving resistance in toxic times
book | nonviolent communication: a language of life
book | polysecure: attachment, trauma and consensual nonmonogamy
your local infoshop / community organisation
pure-ideology

Ofer
1 review
April 24, 2022
Fukc you Ted

Willem Gloudemans
12 reviews1 follower
November 15, 2022
Worthless drivel about how we should kill most of the human population

Babis Kokovidis
70 reviews2 followers

July 16, 2022

I can't understand how this essay is considered a "manifesto"!

First of all it makes clear from the beginning that his revolution is not political and that he (and his group) are 100% against leftism. He is not against a political system but against Industrial -technological society, so against progress!

I have many things to say about this text but If you want to read an ignorant and unpolitical essay you are free to read it.

ebooks αναρχισμός

Rio R. Islip

66 reviews

July 28, 2022

[●] A historically significant work — but very surface level in its argumentation, for the author is doing his best to conceal his eccentricities and true elaborations of his thought process. To truly understand his thought processes, his published essays are far more enlightening.

nonfiction

CaesarStan

5 reviews

July 27, 2022

My thoughts:

His writings have some sense in theory. However he assumes way too many points regarding the future, which makes his arguments lack strength.

Much of the essay seems to be just him attacking leftists, although I am no leftist and am not using this review to defend them against him, his attacks seem more like personal grudges, to attack those who support collectivisation (he states leftists have inferiority complexes, are masochists and use protesting as a surrogate activity. Additionally he claims that they don't care about what they are protesting for (e.g. gender equality) as, as he states it: fulfilling their power complexes by enforcing totalitarian rules on others.

Even if this was hypothetically true this completely destroys his ideologies practicality. His obsession for 'revolution' cannot work since he attacks every spectrum of political belief, attacking conservatives for economic growth; which inevitably leads to environmental damage, and attacks leftists for the reasons above. This completely takes away support for him as you'd only expect leftists to support his vast environmental wants.

My impression is that he thinks he's the next Karl Marx and people were going to see in the next few decades that he was right and follow what he says. (His writings are

very narcissistic).

But even his proposed solutions are awful. He wants to destroy industrial society and he expects this to be done by around 40% of the population worldwide, to rise up and 'take away power from the industrialists' destroying factories, technology and all technological progress/development.

He also adds that he wants revolutionaries to have loads of kids as he states that ideology is passed on through children, so more revolutionaries will be available to act as a force to achieve his goals.

That's basically all the advice he gives on how to bring on his revolution.

He makes some obvious suggestions about the future of industrial society but in the end his writings are useless as this revolution will never happen as its means are utterly unrealistic and even if it was, I'm sure no one wants to go back to living like it's the 1400s, with life expectancy being around 30.

But okay, let's say he did achieve his great revolution, people would have to be regulate each other so no technology could be brought back (his ideology has the same faults as Communism, it could work on a hamlet by hamlet basis but worldwide, no.) Just think how unrealistic his revolution is on a worldwide basis: Imagine if the whole world lacks technology and North Korea for example start mass producing guns by reigniting industrial sectors; and for this to even happen you need to take away North Korea's technology in the first place, which is laughable.

The whole world would easily fall under their dominion. His whole ideology lies upon the assumption that nationalists don't exist, which is obviously false. I think this alone proves how stupid and unthoughtful this ideology is.

Petey Voitsekhovski

13 reviews

August 29, 2022

He could have developed some sort of class analysis and considered how POWER utilises technology in comparison to society but instead he kills people because lawn mowers are too loud or something.

Hundreds of anti-capitalist authors have written better critiques of industrial society than this.

Also why would you have an entire section critiquing leftists and then admit that you have no coherent definition for leftism in this book? Don't include that section at all then!

Ufuk

26 reviews

September 25, 2022

This book is one of the most horrible books I have ever read. In my opinion it should not even have one star. I can't believe that this guy became a mathematics professor. Being a mathematician means, that you back up your story with evidence. That also applies to analyzing society and history. It is obvious that Mr. Kaczynski doesn't know anything about history and uses all kinds of historical 'data' to prove himself right. In a way his work reminded me of Mein Kampf: a confusing mishmash of negative effects of industrial society (Hitler was also very anti-industrial society) mixed with rabid hate towards everything that is left or leftish. If you are left it means you are a despicable human being. To quote Kaczynski: "Self-hatred is a leftist trait" (paragraph 20.) Since they hate themselves they also want to make everyone's life miserable. He also rants against homosexuals, equal rights for women, anti-racism, multiculturalism etc.

After spending numerous pages on how horrible leftists are; what they do, whose interests they are trying to serve, how to recognize them, he says at the end "we can only advise the reader to use his own judgment in deciding who is a leftist" (paragraph 227.) So you shout and curse to "the LEFT" but you can not give us an idea who the leftists actually are...? So you deliver the philosophical pooha and we mere mortals have to guess who they are...

A good example of how horrible his knowledge of history is, is the fact that industrial societies today, because they are crowded, cause stress and aggression and that in the old rural societies long time ago such things were nonexistent. Very false: in lots of rural / tribal societies we know that those were very aggressive and the chance that you could die by the hand of others, even in your own village was many times greater than today. (Jared Diamond, Guns, germs and steel). This is just one of his big misconceptions. (There are MANY in his work!)

Of course the industrial society has lots of negative effects on lots of people but the problem is not the industry / modern society; it is how we cope with it as human beings and especially the government. It is the MENTALITY that needs to change in order to create a more just society. It is incredibly stupid to believe that we can do better by destroying every single industrial / modern organization / platform etc. As we are with almost 8 billion people world wide we should be grateful that we have modern science: without it we would not have enough food. Genetic modification (which he also condemns) saw to it that we have almost no crop failures. We have better food also. And yes, of course it is possible to use genetic modification for bad purposes but in order to achieve that you need to EDUCATE people not destroying the machinery which will be build up later again anyway. (Something that Kaczynski himself also states. That's why we should also destroy all the manuals... LOL!) Kaczynski must be a great fan of James Cameron's The Terminator because he thinks that machines are going to take over. ("We only point out that the fate of the human race would be at the mercy of the machines". Paragraph 173)

Mr. Kaczynski is a confused man with a God complex. The fact that he became a practicing terrorist might be a result of his train of thought. I am happy he is in prison

without a chance of him ever getting out. Mr. Kaczynski hates modern society with all it's laws and freedoms (it is all LEFTIST!) but he is smart enough to use the system because his freedom of speech was "violated".

He should have listened to his lawyers and plead insanity because this guy is indeed insane.

Reading this book is a waste of your time. I read it completely because I wanted to see how insane he really is. Very...

Rick Wilson

701 reviews262 followers

December 7, 2022

Type of guy who is so right brained that he views status and culture as evil, conspiratorial brainwashing.

Really? That's what the hubbub was about?

I can't help but shake that sort of gut feeling that his worldview is completely under developed. Oversocialization? Just cause everyone isn't some sort of hermit loner doesn't mean that were some sort of gelatinous amoeba hive mind.

Like even without the context surrounding it. This book is mostly a mess.

Let me try a reasonable interpretation of it. This guy is brilliant. IQ off the charts, and he's going through his early 20s wrestling with the existential ennui of "why the fuck do I feel bad" well dude maybe it's because you're 20 in a society, that values status and wealth and accomplishment. And there's not really a way is a 20 year old boy to easily improve upon that unless you're like born rich. But instead of suffering through it, as it seems like many of us do, getting into heavy drug use, as I myself participated in, and only moderately condone. This dude figured "oh man, it's society that's wrong" I'm gonna write 30,000 words on it.

Which like bro cool. Societies got issues you wanna point out, maybe we can all live in a better world but instead of something constructive, we end up with "idolize nature and the wilderness" and the whole terrorism thing that he did.

Honestly, kind of strikes me a little bit as having some overlap with the recent onslaught of open AI's GPT3 prompts. Really interesting responses then often times have serious contextual errors, but it represents intelligence and a simulacrum of reasonability in such a good way that it almost seems like it's really responding to your question. It's like seeing a replica of a sword so realistic that you're actually afraid of it.

I don't know, maybe I am more subconsciously repulsed by this guys actions that I account for. Maybe I'm the one who's so indoctrinated into society that I can't see the forest for the trees. But I've had thoughts similar to this guy and I didn't come to the conclusions of his. I think I mostly tried to narrow my worldview and focus on improving my community and the people I care about. Most top down reforms seem

to be a recipe for failure historically. Blah blah blah you eat an elephant one bite at a time. Whatever.

bullshit-psuedo-thoughts

Luxembourg

42 reviews40 followers

January 9, 2023

The perfect book for Three Arrows Anarchists this is all the theory they need really. And this book also serves to prove that as divorced as you try to be from the right, if you are against what he calls leftism, but in reality is describing communism, you are back on the side of the right.

Nicholas Klopp

22 reviews

January 10, 2023

completely incoherent screed. easy indicator that you are talking someone with a <60 iq who wishes to be seen as some kind of occult intellectual. my favorite part was when kaczynski says that leftists get into conflicts with the police due to their subconscious desire to get beaten for sexual pleasure

pure-ideology t-reactionary theory

Aleksandr Lazarev

35 reviews5 followers

January 14, 2023

I still don't understand why this guy hates technology so much. The whole idea of destruction of technology and modern science seems marginally stupid and meaningless. How he can find a group of intelligent anti-tehnology, not leftist, revolutionary humans?! Even if we will destroy technology, what next? Why? What we gonna do next? Why should I don't use refrigerator, washer, dryer, car, cell phone... ? Author is mad, this book is a waste of time. rubbish

° ☒☒*☒marie☒.*☒☒

23 reviews

February 10, 2023

I am extremely disappointed.

The Unabomber Manifesto was mostly just hating-on-leftists and saying "We need a revolution!" a couple times.

While I agree on the overall statement that we need to go back to nature and abolish technology, Kaczynski didn't really provide many ideas on how to do that and what a world without technology would look like. There was sadly not much substance to this Manifesto and, unfortunately, some racism and homophobia.

2023 non-fiction

John

23 reviews1 follower

February 14, 2023

tl;dr: White man rants about SJWs because he can't use the n-word anymore and hates new technology because he can't keep up with it, and this is apparently why college professors need to be sent letter bombs.

Jonah Roberts

6 reviews

May 16, 2023

I'm going to be honest. I did not finish this book. I read most of it but IT IS SO BORING. Do not read it. I hate Ted Kaczynski. Not because he harmed people, but because his book is HORRIBLE!!!

Colin

25 reviews2 followers

May 18, 2023

1.5 stars, imagine writing a essay called "industrial society and its future" and never mentioning capitalism and spending 1/3 of the essay disparaging "leftism". Maybe I'm just "oversocialized"

Andy Masley

15 reviews7 followers

June 10, 2023

Snoozer

Neo

12 reviews

July 8, 2023

Interesting book, definitely had higher expectation before reading it. Wouldn't particularly describe him as an anarcho-primitivist (not sure if he does either) but he has been described as such, despite his hatred of leftism, and anarchism is definitely leftist. He says some pretty yikes things, he often has some good points but that says something completely off and wrong, sometimes he is so close yet so far. Also he is definitely autistic, some of the shit he says would not be said by an allistic (though most autitists would say that either) but the conclusions he sometimes comes to such as the stuff about over-socialisation definitely highlights it. It's definitely an interesting read though, but I'm sure there are better Anarcho-Primitivist and Anarchist writers. Also very interesting to read about his childhood and life in general (there is a really good documentary on it) which really explains why he was like he was.

anarchism

Claire

1 review

July 11, 2023

Comprehensible and well-structured for a text that was written on a typewriter by a sociopath living as a hermit in the woods, but not good otherwise.

He looses me more than occasionally, though. I mean, this clearly isn't for me. He would probably call me an oversocialized liberal fulfilling my need for the "power process" via school (my "surrogate activity").

The main issue is with his argument in my mind is that he spends too little explaining how we would be better off in a pre-industrial society. Sure, he does a stellar job of explaining why current society is shit, and the only proper way to get rid of it is a violent tear-down, but somehow I'm still not convinced that a tech-less society is better.

I found that he also spent WAY too much dunking on liberals? I found his comments interesting the first time he brought it up, but I swear he circled back randomly to how he hates liberals like 3 more times through the course of the manifesto. And for what reason???

Also, he argued FOR natural selection but AGAINST eugenics in the space of one paragraph, which I thoroughly hated.

Unk Milty

2 reviews

August 1, 2023

Read it as research for something I'm writing. Interesting view into an entirely reflexive worldview devoid of pre-Kennedy era history. Hirohito was against debauchery because he liked whales. Comfort women are not mentioned. That sums up the general logic.

Wade Taylor

3 reviews

August 31, 2023

What a whiney little bitch
paperback

nora

113 reviews

September 27, 2023

In paragraph 208, Kaczynski writes "Holy Robots!" That was the only good part of this whole book.

Technological Slavery

Logical, lucid, and direct, *Technological Slavery* radically reinvigorates and reforms the intellectual foundations of an age-old and resurgent "Progress" is a myth. Wild nature and humanity are fundamentally incompatible with technological growth. In *Technological Slavery*, Kaczynski argues (i) the unfolding human and environmental crises are the direct, inevitable result of technology itself; (ii) many of the stresses endured in contemporary life are not normal to the human condition, but unique to technological conditions; (iii) wilderness and human life close to nature are realistic and supreme ideals; and, (iv) a revolution to eliminate modern technology and attain these ideals is necessary and far more achievable than would first appear. Drawing on a broad range of disciplines, Kaczynski weaves together a set of visionary social theories to form a revolutionary perspective on the dynamics of history and the evolution of societies. The result is a comprehensive challenge to the fundamental values and assumptions of the modern technology-driven world, pinning the cause of the rapidly unfolding catastrophe on technology itself, while offering a realistic hope for ultimate recovery. Theodore John Kaczynski does not receive any remuneration for this book.

Ratings & Reviews

4.14

1,046 ratings

114 reviews

5 stars - 445 (42%)

4 stars - 379 (36%)

3 stars - 162 (15%)

2 stars - 40 (3%)

1 star - 20 (1%)

5 stars - 42 reviews

Ben

3 reviews

August 5, 2023

Technological Slavery demonstrates how technology has become a means to control the powerless, and why this will only continue to increase in modern society. The author, Kaczynski, asserts that the detrimental impact that technology has on our environment and quality of life will always outweigh whatever benefits it has to offer. Kaczynski makes the effective argument that technology has surpassed our ability to control it, urging that we stop blindly relying on technological progress and start considering the social, psychological, and environmental consequences of relying on machines and complex technology. Kaczynski argues that the techno system is a natural product of objective factors beyond the long-term control of even the people who are in positions of control—they “pretend” to control it. According to Kaczynski, most scientists and engineers don’t take into consideration the unintended consequences of their work, rather they are focused primarily on their own financial and professional gain. Furthermore, Kaczynski not only argues that science and technology as human enterprises are divorced from any rational commitments to the welfare of the human race, but that scientists and technologists are primarily engaged in what he defines as surrogate activities (an activity directed toward an artificial goal, solely for fulfillment).

Kaczynski also discusses the disruption of the “power process,” a term he uses to describe the psychological process of feeling empowered to accomplish survival goals through effort and determination. He argues that in modern society, technological development has diminished people’s ability to carry out meaningful activities independently, since the system must rob the individual of his most meaningful (practical; life-and-death determinant) goals and activities for the sake of its own functioning, and complex tasks have become automated and even the most basic jobs have become radically simplified. Individuals in modern society also do not directly engage in meeting their survival needs, but society instead takes care of individuals for them so long as they are obedient. This loss of autonomy and real, practical (and therefore meaningful) freedoms has profoundly negative effects on individuals, leading to feelings of alienation and helplessness.

While some may still think of technology as a force of progress and liberation, Kaczynski explains in depth the ways in which unrestrained technological progress is enslaving us, asserting that the only solution is to eliminate the techno-industrial system altogether. He compiles evidence to support the fact that technology causes more problems than it solves and gives valuable insight as to why concerning/distracting ourselves with non-technological social issues is currently one of the largest barriers preventing us from recognizing the reality of technology’s detrimental impacts on our lives.

The author presents ideas that have the potential to come across as extreme on a surface level, but he goes to great lengths to clarify his reasoning and logically support his analysis, entertaining every possible alternative, and including extensive historical evidence to support his claims. Additionally, he incorporates a few of the correspondences he’s had with others that wrote to him, including those that attempt to challenge his views, to which he provided responses with effortful research and consideration.

What I think makes Kaczynski’s work so unique is his approach: First, he’s the most radical thinker of our era, proposing as the only logical solution a totally transformative revolution. Second, is his clarity: he is thorough, yet straightforward in addressing each topic and leaving no room for misinterpretations. I highly recommend that everyone reads this book regardless of their own viewpoints or worldview. It leaves a lot to think about, not to mention that the subjects at hand are now more relevant than ever.

Jake Carter

2 reviews

July 21, 2023

Kaczynski’s newer writings do not get enough attention. *Technological Slavery* expands upon Kaczynski’s original writings from the 1970s and the manifesto, “Industrial Society and Its Future” (which is featured in this book as well), by introducing new

ideas such as those found in “The System’s Neatest Trick,” and “Why Democracy is the Dominant Political Form of the Modern World” (Appendix Three), while also fleshing out some of his ideas in the manifesto in “Letter to Dr. P.B. on the Motivations of Scientists,” “On Learned Helplessness,” and many other sections.

One of the most incredibly eye-opening sections was the aforementioned “Why Democracy is the Dominant Political Form of the Modern World” (Appendix Three). This piece teaches a valuable lesson that reveals the true nature of political institutions and of “developed” nations in general. Kaczynski launches a simultaneous attack against the do-gooder civilized politically-minded types and the global power elite which use “democracy” as a guise to spread economic control and corporate hegemony across the world. To Kaczynski, nations did not simply adopt a democratic form of government to be more “moral” or to “help the people”; it was done in an effort to increase technological, economic, and ultimately military power. Kaczynski gives a great analysis of the history of Western democratic nations that eventually advanced to become the forerunners of the world-wide geopolitical sphere (i.e., Great Britain, the United States). He notes how the semi-democratic England advanced far beyond mainland authoritarian nations and created a vast colonial empire that was able to extract vast amounts of financial power that then translated to military power. As a result of this burgeoning military power, England would become the most dominant power across the world, creating the largest empire known to man. Kaczynski compares this accomplishment by the British to that of authoritarian nations such as France and Prussia/Germany. Kaczynski illustrates how France lost the colonial struggle to the British in the Seven Years’ War and the Germans’ half-hearted attempts at colonial empire that would come nowhere close to the British goliathan. Posing the idea of democracy in this frame of natural selection, it makes sense as to how democracy became so dominant in the world: It guaranteed a great deal of financial and military power/influence that easily triumphed over rigid authoritarian systems. This analysis tears the mask off of the modern idea that democracy triumphed because it’s somehow “morally superior.” Looking at things from this lens—the development of society being determined by the development of technology—is crucial to understanding how the human race has arrived at this point.

Kaczynski not only expands his ideas on the history of technological society, he develops a new understanding of it. In the carefully laid out essay “The System’s Neatest Trick,” Kaczynski illustrates how the system utilizes social frustrations to its advantage, turning all the angst of the masses away from the central mechanisms of power and instead toward some meaningless social advocacy (i.e., LGBTQ rights, affirmative action, abortion advocacy, etc.) that ends up benefiting the system in the long run. To Kaczynski, this trick dilutes the revolutionary fervor of people and makes them focus on issues that do not threaten the organized power structure. Not only that, but the social activists are encouraged in their endeavor by other outside reactionary forces that whine about their advocacy. This ends up giving the illusion of being a “rebel,” thereby increasing the attractiveness of the cause to these would-be revolutionaries.

The conclusion painted from this trick is rather simple: the techno-industrial system utilizes its own problems to its advantage by making those suffering at its hands act in accord with fixing its “diseases.” What that ends up doing, Kaczynski notes, is perpetuating the system, trapping the activists and their detractors in a running cycle that will go on and on and on without any true end while the system encourages it to continue in order to preserve itself. Deflecting problems away from itself and onto remote political activists or select politicians helps to create a sort of defensive mechanism that shields the system from attack. Kaczynski warns that revolutionaries should not fall into this trap and should instead pursue action that directly and truly goes against the system.

These dual lectures by themselves allow for a broader understanding of Kaczynski and anti-tech thought. This sort of work is rare in how powerful and succinct it is, giving the reader a clear understanding of the workings of the technological system while not drowning him in complicated philosophical know-how. Kaczynski once again proves his great ability in effectively breaking down the existing form of society and putting it into terms easily interpreted, thereby increasing awareness about the problems we face and paving a path for the future. Finally, anyone reading this that happened to enjoy this book is encouraged to read Kaczynski’s next work *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* which gives an even greater extension of his thoughts on the problems we face.

Ford Cadman

3 reviews

July 29, 2023

Technological Slavery; is an incredibly valuable piece of literature in the fields of technological and sociological study, not only for individuals new to the subject, but also those who are already familiar with the author’s previous works. The author, Dr. Theodore J. Kaczynski, a renowned writer of the field, puts forth an astounding comprehensive study of the technological phenomena, all while compounding on his previous work and attaining new theses and conclusions to his aforementioned studies. The book, strongly based on expanding the ideas presented in Kaczynski’s provocative essay “Industrial Society And Its Future”, propels the reader towards a conclusive understanding of humanity’s relationship with the technological system in which we find ourselves captivated. Along with a distillation of the author’s own comprehensive study; resides a conversive compilation between the author and many individuals of different intellectual fields. Some of these conversations, whether presented as articulated responses to letters received by the author, or in study of said letters, hold criticisms of the author’s conclusions, of which the author refutes with accurate foundational evidence and provides reasons as to why such proclamations may be aversive towards effective action. Kaczynski shows his hand in this practice most evidently

within the chapter “Extracts from Letters to David Skrbina,”; in which a years-long correspondance between the author and another eco-centric philosopher is presented in an effort to elaborate upon and explain ideas that challenge Kaczynski’s subject, giving the author an outlet to illuminate important facets of his presented ideology through well rounded discussion.

Compiled some twenty years after the publication of “Industrial Society And Its Future,” Kaczynski uses “Technological Slavery” as an instrument of literary edit, correcting dated conclusions and expanding previous ideas, leaving no gaps or omissions within the final product. This book will leave the reader intellectually fulfilled, though much of the information provided will give them an urge to research and dig deeper into the technological issue, leading often to Kaczynski’s partner work “Anti-Tech Revolution” which lends reference to “Technological Slavery” as an ideological standpoint. “Technological Slavery” is unique in the fact that it is presented as an evolution of idea, trailing the development of important conclusions and providing a diagnosis of our relationship with the Technological System. Similarities can be found in other works such as Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World: Revisited”, in which the author felt a crucial aspect of his previous work should be expanded upon, not just for the sake of clarification, but also in use of intellectual exponentiation. Kaczynski follows a similar route, providing a means for reader experience to fulfill the intellectual passage of furthering his presented ideology and findings.

The book itself maintains a sense of textbook accountability while not neglecting the situation of the reader. Kaczynski involves the reader as an important factor in developing his ideas, and it is evident that his findings do not just pertain to the society as a whole, but also the individuals’ place within the technocratic world. An uncommon credit can be given to this composition, one in which we seldom find today, being its ability to make us understand. Particularly, its ability to let us understand our society on a grand, comprehensive scale. Through the presentation of this work, Kaczynski aligns and categorizes functions of modern society that go unnoticed, or at the very least are misperceived. Important happenings of the system around us, the society in which they take place, and humanity’s reaction to the sudden development of these issues, are all intricately pinpointed and exhumed from surface observation, showing the web-like interconnections between the ails of technological society; and the human condition. For many of us who live our lives unaware of these intricacies, it can be a hefty process to put the world around us and ourselves in such a spotlight, but Kaczynski does that for us, and shows us why and how we’ve ended up in this predicament. Simply put, “Technological Slavery” provides answers to the questions we didn’t even know we should be asking. Kaczynski managed to filter and condense decades of study into an easily digestible and well rounded composition, for the benefit of the reader, as well as the benefit of society itself. For anyone interested in modern sociology, technical study, or environmentalism, this work is necessary in understanding the full scope of the issues we are currently facing, and those yet to come.

Emphour

3 reviews1 follower

August 24, 2023

“If enough people could be made to *believe* that revolution were possible, then it would *be* possible.”

—Theodore Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, Vol. 1 (2022), p. 205.

Technological Slavery is not a book about smartphones, social media or screen addiction. Unconcerned with these petty issues, the author instead deals with the biggest danger the world is facing right now: The technological system itself.

Reading *Technological Slavery* will inadvertently radicalize the reader. Kaczynski really hammers his most important points down: Reform is not possible—Revolution is the only way out. Either the technological system exists, and continues to wreak havoc on the natural world and place limitations on human autonomy, or it does not, there is no in between. The continuing of the technological system will leave no freedom for anyone and will probably destroy the Earth.

Since the dawn of man, he has been a hunter-gatherer for 99% of the time. This is the way of life he is adapted to. Daily life in modern society is radically different, which causes a lot of problems for the modern individual. Not only physical, but most importantly psychological. Many of these psychological issues are not entirely unique to humans, but are also exhibited in caged animals. Some people claim that diagnosis of mental illness is simply getting more accurate as the field of clinical psychology progresses, or that “Big Pharma” just wants to sell more drugs, but the rising suicide rate disproves this.

Technology is the framework that defines how people live. Modern technology primarily decides what humans are allowed to do and what they are not allowed to do. Societies are shaped above all by the available technology. The political system is less meaningful for the daily life of the average citizen. Governments can make many laws, but what is relevant is how they can be enforced. Past societies are often seen as very restrictive, but these laws were not as effective as one would think, because the available technology was not appropriate to thoroughly and completely enforce them. There is a much bigger difference between a technologically advanced country and a much less technologically advanced country than there is between a society under one system of government than another.

The book contains the famous manifesto “Industrial Society and Its Future” (ISAF) with expanded notes, and extracts from letters to various individuals, with the largest bulk being written to Dr. David Skrbina. Also included is the essay “The System’s Neatest Trick” which is well worth reading, and eight appendices for supporting arguments made in the texts. The latter are more than little accessories, they make strong points in themselves. Especially worth noting is the appendix dealing with the success of democracy around the world, which offers a completely new perspective on the dom-

inant political system of today. A significant portion of the book contains practical advice for revolutionaries. Topics range from spreading of the revolutionary message to motivation of the rank-and-file of the revolutionary organization itself.

A common counter-argument to Kaczynski is the claim that the main problem was started by, and is rooted in, agriculture. However, the author sees no way to stop people from farming. He only deals with things that can be implemented in practice. This is an essential point in the book. A revolution against the technological system can actually be carried out. Those who want to wait for a spiritual enlightenment of humanity or a "return to God" have no possibilities for action. He does not set up an ideal picture of society, because there is no way to execute the plan of an ideal society.

Nuclear weapons only bring death and destruction. Virtually everyone agrees that the world would be better off without them. Yet the problem does not seem to ever get solved. Quite the contrary: More and more nations around the world get access to them. If such an easy target for reform cannot be reached, how are complex problems, like the climate crisis, ever to be solved? Reform is clearly not working. Kaczynski argues that it is not even, nor ever was, possible.

Even if the system could succeed in solving every psychological problem, all the environmental issues, and every other problem, the individual human would be reduced to the status of a pet.

This book starts from the ground up and carries the reader to the only possible solution. I highly recommend it to everyone, who is not afraid of having his worldview changed.

John

3 reviews1 follower

August 5, 2023

Technological Slavery is an insightful expansion on Ted Kaczynski's manifesto which neatly ties together any loose ends, delves into the intricacies and nuances of his arguments, and manages to cohesively introduce seemingly disparate pieces of his correspondences to form a clearer picture of anti-tech philosophy.

One of the most important essays in this book is "The System's Neatest Trick," in which Ted clarifies what the System is not and how the System exploits people's rebellious urges to uphold its own values. He emphasizes that individuals in positions of power, such as CEOs, the president, and scientists, etc., do not constitute the System. In fact, an individual's personal beliefs and opinions may not even be compatible with the values of the System. He argues that due to the widespread frustrations inflicted by the System, and the need for the System to preserve its security, the System acts to prevent people from identifying it as the root cause of their frustrations by instead redirecting focus on issues that the System wants people to rebel against. Most of these substitute—or, "counterfeit"—issues are currently those that leftists today are

most fixated on and which fall under the category of "social justice," such as racism, homophobia, and sexism, etc. In other words, the System tricks people into diverting their frustrations away from the true cause of these frustrations (the System itself) towards irrelevant issues that do not harm the System, but in many cases actually help the functioning of the System.

Kaczynski is well aware of the stipulations, limitations, and defects in his work and does not pretend to be right about everything he says. He addresses rebuttals from his correspondents carefully and either provides a valid counterargument or admits to his mistakes and revises accordingly. One of his correspondents, Dr. David Skrbina, misinterpreted his purpose for introducing the power process as "exalting the will to power;" Kaczynski corrects him by pointing out that the topic of the power process is necessary for analyzing leftist psychology and demonstrating how the frustrations and dissatisfactions caused by the technological society manifest themselves. Aside from refuting others' attempts to critique his manifesto, he also admits to some of his mistakes (albeit minor), such as mistakenly letting his personal bias towards individualistic preferences affect his thoughts on revolutionary strategy.

Kaczynski also references some relevant external works which help supplement his main points in his manifesto. The section on the power process is greatly enhanced by an explanation of the experiments described in the book *The Human Zoo*, in which zoologist Desmond Morris describes strange behavior from wild animals confined in cages and compares it to abnormal human behavior, such as child abuse and sexual perversion. He also references Martin Seligman's concept of learned helplessness, a phenomenon in which animals will learn to eventually give up to avoid their predicament of being electrically shocked after being punished repeatedly through electrical shocks, which mirrors the learned helplessness and widespread frustration and depression among people living under the techno-system in modernity.

In conclusion, *Technological Slavery* expands upon the arguments outlined in his previous work "Industrial Society and its Future" by showcasing several essays and multiple pieces of letters he subsequently wrote to others, suitable for those who have accepted a majority of Kaczynski's arguments and are interested in a deeper dive into his works and anti-tech philosophy in general.

portabique

30 reviews59 followers

January 4, 2014

It was liberating and intellectually stimulating to read. Apart from the content of the book and well grounded and balanced arguments, I like the literary style of the author. I think Ted Kaczynski formulates his thoughts succinctly, yet is able to present the essence of an issue avoiding pseudo-scientific terms at the same time. What is more,

the book may be a starting point for further research and further thoughts on the issues presented as many arguments were left open to debate.

* I found this brilliant description somewhere "Sociopath? Absolutely! Prophetic genius? The First Amendment ensures that every reader gets to decide."

Ryan Durfee

9 reviews

October 4, 2016

the most important book i have ever read. it will change your life.

Kevin K

147 reviews27 followers

March 15, 2017

A lot of chaff in this book, but Kaczynski makes many powerful, convincing points. The man is no idiot. He went to Harvard at 16 and wrote a respected Ph.D. thesis in mathematics. Many of the darkest points in his Manifesto have been echoed by well-grounded, intelligent people like Bill Joy.

TK is often regarded as a crazy luddite who snapped and started killing people. But another side shines through in this book. From a young age, TK had an intense desire to escape from civilization and live free, like a primitive man. He's quite well-read on eskimos, pygmies, bushmen and other peoples who lived free in the wild. As a young man, he devoted himself to learning edible plants, hunting skills and other survival techniques, and for a couple of decades he lived a rudimentary, primitive existence (albeit supplemented with a few store-bought staples). I was fascinated and emotionally moved by his descriptions of the mental tranquility he found in his daily routine, eking out a hand-to-mouth existence off the land.

He speaks in poetic, almost religious tones about the untouched spaces of Montana he spent time in during the 1970s. But civilization just kept encroaching: more people, more houses, more development. One year he returned to his favorite pristine plateau. He was sickened by the sound of chainsaws, and, pressing on, was shocked to find the plateau ravaged by a network of sturdy roads. Traveling back to his cabin, he was sick with grief and rage. He writes:

"My route took me past a beautiful spot, a favorite place of mine where there was a spring of pure water that could safely be drunk without boiling. I stopped and said a kind of prayer to the spirit of the spring. It was a prayer in which I swore I would take revenge for what was being done to the forest."

Tears welled up in my eyes reading that. I'll let you decide who is really crazy: TK or industrial society.

TK's overarching point is frightening, but hard to deny: technology is in the driver's seat, and people and their political institutions have no understanding or control over our destination.

From the intro (by D. Skrbina), summarizing TK's point of view:

"Technologically-induced stress is bad now and will get much worse, leading to a condition where humans will be completely manipulated and molded to serve the needs of the system. Such a state of affairs is undignified, abhorrent, disastrous for nature, and profoundly dehumanizing."

From TK's Manifesto: "The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. This has nothing to do with the political or social ideology that may pretend to guide the technological system. It is not the fault of capitalism and it is not the fault of socialism. It is the fault of technology, because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity."

"In the future, social systems will not be adjusted to suit the needs of human beings. Instead, human beings will be adjusted to suit the needs of the system."

It's a powerful point that deserves greater attention.

controversial futurology primitives

Ashwin

3 reviews

February 20, 2018

Top book

Must read for everyone who would like to care about their future and that of our planet and its species

Don Mammoth

5 reviews2 followers

April 10, 2018

It's incredibly sad that this mans mind was directed towards violence. His ideas and the manner in which he expressed them here are valid, important, and terrifyingly on point.

A good review of this book in no way condones or excuses the actions of the man, and he receives no profit from this publication.

MarkieXIV

28 reviews6 followers

October 8, 2022

It's difficult to imagine a person reading this book attentively and not having their outlook on life fundamentally changed. The ideas on psychology and technology expounded upon in this book are fantastic and explain a lot.

An absolute must read I think for literally everyone. Even if you don't agree that industrial society needs to be destroyed it is a fantastic book to wrestle with.

P.S: I have absolutely zero interest or support for his 'extra-curricular' activities, and they have no bearing on the quality of the work. If you're reading this because you think it'll be 'cool to see inside the mind of a terrorist' or something like this you will be disappointed. The book is well written, ordered, intelligent and not at all some incomprehensible and entertaining screed of a lunatic.

must-reads the-graph

Thiago S.

Author

1 book9 followers

August 27, 2020

great

favorite

Samuel

109 reviews

October 4, 2018

Lucid arguments. However, in accordance to his view, such developments are outside the control of any individual and alas his revolutionary movement seems a pipe dream. Focus only what is in your immediate sphere of influence.

Matt

360 reviews11 followers

November 12, 2018

"What is significant is that when you live in the woods, rather than just visiting them, the beauty becomes part of your life rather than something you just look at from the outside... In living close to nature, one discovers that happiness does not consist in maximizing pleasure. It consists in tranquility." (p. 405-406)

So reads Ted Kaczynski, "madman." I'll start with the usual necessary caveats that of course I don't condone his acts of violence, but Kaczynski is not insane. This book

shows a careful, considered mind. Like a lot of other people throughout history, he simply deemed it worth some acts of violence to accomplish a larger purpose.

Kaczynski has a lot to offer here. His idea of the "power principle" is brilliant, that we are allotted power in society in a million areas that don't matter at all, but are completely disempowered by large systems when it comes to the areas of life that really matter: our food, health, loved one's safety, autonomy, government, etc. We are endlessly distracted by "surrogate activities" that hide the essential degradations of "industrial society" from us.

He shows remarkable psychological and social insight in critiquing "leftists," by which I think he largely means liberals. Most liberal "rebellion" actually just strengthens the system, since it enacts beliefs the system already supports. Activists do often join movements for psychological reasons, and identity politics can be a distraction from primary matters. He offers a trenchant critique of anarcho-primitivists by saying that not only do they refuse to attack the oppressive system, but they also idealize hunter-gatherer cultures of the past, when in reality these cultures were not always egalitarian, environmentally-friendly, etc. The one virtue they did have was a greater space for genuine freedom and autonomy within them.

Whether in his major essay, "Industrial Society and Its Future," or his essays and letters found in this book, Kaczynski is sometimes funny, sometimes offensive, but very often insightful and trenchant in his analysis and critique. Ironically, if he hadn't mailed bombs to people, we would probably take his philosophy a lot more seriously, though we may have never heard of it, which, of course, was exactly the point.

leftist-politics

Dexter Lawson

55 reviews

January 20, 2019

Wonderful book unfortunately undermined by his horribly evil actions. How I wish he had just spread his important message peacefully!

Joseph Walker

12 reviews

February 11, 2019

Very interesting philosophy. I don't think I'm even smart enough to understand it all.

MFatih55

6 reviews62 followers

March 23, 2019

Quotes

It is important, too, to realize that deadly violence among primitives is not even remotely comparable to modern warfare. When primitives fight, two little bands of men shoot arrows or swing war-clubs at one another because they want to fight; or because they are defending themselves, their families, or their territory. In the modern world soldiers fight because they are forced to do so, or, at best, because they have been brainwashed into believing in some kook ideology such as that of Nazism, socialism, or what American politicians choose to call "freedom." In any case the modern soldier is merely a pawn, a dupe who dies not for his family or his tribe but for the politicians who exploit him. If he's unlucky, maybe he does not die but comes home horribly crippled in a way that would never result from an arrow- or a spear-wound. Meanwhile, thousands of non-combatants are killed or mutilated. The environment is ravaged, not only in the war zone, but also back home, due to the accelerated consumption of natural resources needed to feed the war machine. In comparison, the violence of primitive man is relatively innocuous.

Instead of using their technological means of production to provide themselves with free time in which to undertake intellectual and artistic work, people today devote themselves to the struggle for status, prestige, and power, and to the accumulation of material goods that serve only as toys. The kind of art and literature in which the average modern American immerses himself is the kind provided by television, movies, and popular novels and magazines; and it is not exactly what the 18th-century optimists had in mind. In effect, American popular culture has been reduced to mere hedonism, and hedonism of a particularly contemptible kind. "Serious" art does exist, but it tends to neurosis, pessimism, and defeatism.

As was to be expected, hedonism has not brought happiness. The spiritual emptiness of the culture of hedonism has left many people deeply dissatisfied. Depression, nervous tension, and anxiety disorders are widespread, and for that reason many Americans resort to drugs (legal or illegal) to alleviate these symptoms, or to modify their mental state in some other way. Other indications of American social sickness are, for example, child abuse and the frequent inability to sleep or to eat normally. And, even among those Americans who seem to have adapted best to modern life, a cynical attitude toward the institutions of their own society is prevalent.

This chronic dissatisfaction and the sickly psychological condition of modern man are not normal and inevitable parts of human existence. We need not idealize the life of primitive peoples or conceal facts that are unpleasant from a modern point of view, such as the high rate of infant mortality or, in some cultures, a violent and warlike spirit. There is nevertheless reason to believe that primitive man was better satisfied with his way of life than modern man is and suffered much less from psychological problems than modern man does. For example, among hunting-and-gathering cultures, before they were disrupted by the intrusion of industrial society, child abuse was almost

nonexistent.⁴ And there is evidence that in most of these cultures there was very little anxiety or nervous tension.

As far as I know, almost the only thinking people who remain enthusiastic about technology are those who stand to profit from it in some way, such as scientists, engineers, corporate executives and military men. A much larger number of people are cynical about modern society and have lost faith in its institutions. They no longer respect a political system in which the most despicable candidates can be successfully sold to the public through sophisticated propaganda techniques. They are contemptuous of an electronic entertainment industry that feeds us garbage. They know that schoolchildren are being drugged (with Ritalin, etc.) to keep them docile in the classroom, they know that species are becoming extinct at an abnormal rate, that environmental catastrophe is a very real possibility, and that technology is driving us all into the unknown at reckless speed, with consequences that may be utterly disastrous. But, because they have no hope that the technological juggernaut can be stopped, they have grown apathetic. They simply accept technological progress and its consequences as unavoidable evils, and they try not to think about the future.

favorites

pry

3 reviews1 follower

December 2, 2019

wtf i hate modernity now

Hayden

12 reviews5 followers

December 11, 2019

Ted clearly lays out why any future involving technology is a bleak one. He explains the need for a real revolutionary movement and who should compromise this movement. I really respect his ability to set aside all other political motivations and purely focus on the issue of technology.

favourites

Marilou

3 reviews13 followers

January 14, 2020

Technology is basically a powerful tool. It can be put to use to make our work easier, more efficient, and perhaps even more enjoyable. But when it is not properly

controlled or when it is misused, it, too, can become a force with disastrous, even fatal, consequences.

Griffin Wilson

133 reviews31 followers

February 8, 2020

Probably the best of the 3 published books out there by Kaczynski; not only does this contain ISAIF, but it also contains an insightful assortment of letters Kaczynski wrote between about 2000 and 2006 to various professors, scientists, and aspiring anti-tech revolutionaries along with various appendices written mostly post-2010. In these letters he responds to various objections to many of the arguments laid forth in ISAIF in (I would assert) a compelling manner.

I would highly recommend buying from this publisher. I bought a copy, but it got lost (or maybe stolen) after it was marked as delivered. I called up the publisher and he was kind enough to send me another copy for free. It is now for sale on Amazon, but I could recommend buying the work here (<https://fitchmadison.com>) because they probably get more money that way.

hist-general sci-psychology sci-sociology

Gabe Vogel

2 reviews

February 13, 2020

Kaczynski offers a unique perspective on the issues plaguing modern civilization. This collection is a great insight into the mind of one of the most notorious domestic terrorists.

Mustapha

42 reviews4 followers

May 9, 2020

Further writings from Kaczynski along the same lines as the manifesto but expanding certain ideas and with additional topics such as primitivism and his theory of history.

Ondřej Plachý

83 reviews

May 24, 2020

I will restrict myself to commenting only on the main manifesto - other parts of the book are interesting, but they only provide a background to what takes place in the main part of the book. I read this book for a second time because I wanted to revisit Kaczynski's theory.

Kaczynski was able to put together a coherent body of arguments that has its main strength in its intelligibility and goals: destroy the techno-industrialist system before it destroys everything alive on this planet.

We can see how his dated theory makes sense more and more- climate crisis, pollution, extinction of species, now called the sixth extinction, insane economy focusing on growth (even in the New Green Deal proposed both by Democratic candidates in US and EU).

Now what I consider crazy - people thank technology for saving their lives. The same technology that oftentimes released toxins into environment, produced fast and dangerous cars, and made their lives dependent on external devices that took away their sense of reality.

The main problem that I can see is the concept of revolution - nothing is happening on this front and as we can see, there is ever more fake news, conspiracies, and other forms of possible ways how to fight a honest insurgency. Even mildly radical ecological organizations are being blamed for many ills of our society by "protecting the frogs instead of people". In the wake of this, we cannot really expect any kind of small scale revolutionary movement to succeed in the First world countries.

So the main question for the disenfranchised minority of people who tend to think in Kaczynskis' terms is: what shall we do?

Dino Lončar

6 reviews7 followers

August 7, 2020

I do NOT agree with what Kaczynski did, but the book is very interesting.

Steven Carroll

8 reviews

September 4, 2020

Can't help but agree with the man. Not convinced by the letter bombs though. However, it's a fascinating insight into Kaczynski's psyche. Thoroughly recommended.

Sarah Berry-O'Cain

203 reviews1 follower
October 18, 2020
Brilliant!

Tiago Faleiro
358 reviews118 followers
January 30, 2021

This is the manifesto of Theodore Kaczynski, known as the Unabomber, an American domestic terrorist. He killed 3 people and injured 23 in a bombing campaign in order to draw attention to this manifesto of anti-technology. He was arrested in 1996 and has 8 consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole.

I'm already very interested in views about technology, which made me interested in the book. And I was particularly curious about Kaczynski's work because I've always had an odd fascination with people who are extremely smart and yet do extreme insane things for the sake of their beliefs. Of course, just because they are smart or they do extreme things does not mean their views are correct, but if there is anyone who would have a messianic role that would free us from a delusion it would most certainly come in this type of person.

Imagine that you are in a dystopian society, which no one recognizes as dystopian, creates immense suffering and threatens mankind. It's not hard to imagine the lengths one could go to in those situations. So I feel a kind of compulsion towards such people because while you can easily argue that they are just crazy if it so happens that society is crazy instead and then the sane ones, you would be ignoring the most important truth possible simply because it's against the status quo. The fact that I've seen several people consider the work of high-quality and not just mindless reactionary ramblings propelled me further to read it.

The main work from Kaczynski is "Industrial Society and Its Future", which was the original manifesto he wanted to get publicity for. The edition I have read is an expanded one, which includes extra letters, notes and appendices which clarify or expand his work. Its consider unfinished because he's constantly under the threat of his communication being cut out from the outside world, in which case the material would have never been published. I enjoyed the extra material and has interesting additions and clarifications, but for most people, I don't think it's worth it. The original text of Industrial Society and Its Future has his key ideas and it's quite short, I think most people ought to read as it requires little time investment.

Reading the main text was honestly scary. Because he was considered such a revolutionary, I expected his views to be crazy, but most of its ideas that not only I agree with, but in fact that I've written about a couple of years ago. I write in a quasi-depersonalized manner in which I try to express an idea and doesn't necessarily reflect my true beliefs, but nevertheless, I do hold a similar anti-technological senti-

ment, but I've always considered that those beliefs that likely a slightly delirious part of my personality. But seeing them confirmed in such explicit light almost freaked me out.

His main thesis is that technology is inherently harmful to mankind, particularly the technology after the industrial revolution. This is quite a hard thing to explain and appreciate in our technology-obsessed society, but it is a reasonable position if analyzed carefully. What made me shift towards a somewhat anti-technological stance, and in my opinion Kaczynski's strongest point, was my realization that while technology is antithetical the core of humanity, but its progression is incremental. What makes this truly frightening is when you realize that technology cannot be stopped. Not only because if it's a slow progression that doesn't offer any meaningful point to stop that won't eventually be overcome, but also because technology comes with so many benefits, particularly regarding comfort and economic prosperity.

In fact, a lot of technological advances, and the most problematic ones, can be advanced by claiming that they help mankind, and in a way that's definitely true. The best case being genetic engineering, which is mentioned often and well-argued. Not only is technology beneficial, but one can even argue that not using it or not developing it further is immoral as it has the ability to decrease suffering. The most horrifying cognizance is that this makes technological progression inevitable, and then one can easily see Kaczynski's perspective and despair. And the more technological our society becomes, the harder it is to reverse it. His drastic actions were in part due to his belief that we are in a narrow period where reversing society is still possible, but that will soon no longer be the case and it will hit a point of no return.

The way technology develops and the consequences of it are not the easiest to explain, and thus I won't cover it in detail here. Kaczynski does a fantastic job of presenting the case, so if you're interested, simply read his short manifesto "Industrial Society and Its Future", no further reading or letters required. But if you decide to read this, I highly recommend reading the novel "The Machine Stops" by E.M. Forster beforehand. It deals with the same theme but in a literary form which is incredibly well done and it is a good non-political introduction to breaking the pro-technological view that we culturally inherent. If you think Kaczynski is just batshit insane, I would consider Forster's reading mandatory in order to fully understand Kaczynski's worldview. Both texts would add up to around 200 pages.

The ideas in the book aren't exactly original, and several philosophers have expressed similar views and concerns, however, what makes this text so valuable is that it's presented in an incredibly easy to digest format. There is no heavy philosophical jargon, and despite the work being uncompleted, it is surprisingly well organized and coherent. Therefore I believe it's the single best resource with an anti-technological stance available.

I was pleasantly surprised by how academic and well thought out the text was. He is not only smart but incredibly knowledgeable, and his views are anything but random. They are rooted in a deep knowledge of history, psychology and anthropology

and sociology. This does not mean he can't be wrong nor that his interpretations are automatically correct, but is a work that can easily be considered a solid academic work if it wasn't for his actions and radical political views. I was particularly impressed by his study of the history of previous revolutions (such as the Bolsheviks) in order to shed light on what type of action would be productive or not.

Despite my complements of the work, I don't agree with everything, far from it. First of all, I don't like the political tone of the book. He heavily criticizes the left, particularly in its modern social justice forms. While I understand the criticism and partially agree with some of his analysis, nevertheless as the whole I think it's not completely fair. It is oversimplistic, and it is heavily distorted to fit his anti-technology ideology. Despite this, I do think some of his claims about the "left psychology" are valid, even though exaggerated. Some of the best points have been well articulated by Thomas Sowell.

If you consider yourself on the left, you will most definitely not enjoy this part, and I don't blame you. But this anti-left sentiment does not invalidate his anti-technological stance, and try to be open-minded and truly see where is coming from. While it is natural to cringe at some claims, don't be tempted to dismiss everything outright just because it critiques your political group.

I think this is one of the major flaws of his work, which alienates a lot of people from the political left. This is even more problematic because the left could be a great ally in this endeavour, especially with environmental concerns, which are one of the key themes problems for Kaczynski. He does give his reasoning for being so anti-left, in remarkable detail, but I don't quite buy it and I think is mistaken of how he views the topic.

This political approach also has the consequence of attracting the type of people that are anti-left, and thus his ideas and movements start to get infiltrated by the far right. While in my opinion Kaczynski himself is not far-right, a lot of his anti-left views can easily be wrongly misunderstood as if is against social justice in general, and this is definitely an element which will be inevitably exploited. This can even be seen in his letters, in which sometimes he seems to correct a far-right political analysis from his correspondent and try to return the problem to technology.

There were other areas that I disagreed with. I think that his view of surrogate activities (artificial activities beyond physical satisfaction) is misguided, and he greatly misrepresents how human beings pursue meaningful activities and how that relates to survival instincts and a life well-lived. In feels in some sense that he is taking his personality traits as a prescriptive philosophical position. However, I find his argument of the system artificially forcing people into STEM fields exclusively due to technological and economic concerns very compelling and something that rarely gets attention.

His erroneous view of human activities relates to how he views the identity and existential crisis of modernity. He seems to reject existentialism completely and it seems to imply that the desire to create meaning is completely awry, a misunderstanding of how human beings exist in the world. While I think his views have support from the

lifestyles of more traditional societies, I think that's caused by their particular culture which does not have the same existential problems that we have due to a completely altered worldview. However, does this not necessarily mean the traditional worldview is correct, and that the natural state of humanity which does not seek to find meaning beyond a traditional life focused on survival and leisure is the right one.

This is related to his neglect of meaning in his philosophy. His worldview seems to have little concern for matters of spirituality and self-transcendence. The little role this has is taken within his anti-technological ideology. Any spiritual is to simply be found in a pre-technological state, and that's all that there is to it. I find this incredibly naive, and it is in large part causes his oversimplification of the existential crisis of the modern man. He is absolutely correct of the existential threat from modern society and technology, but reducing everything to it is very reductionist.

I also disagree with his revolutionary position. He thinks that mankind needs to reject post-industrial society, and he advocates for a revolutionary group to literally destroy society as we currently know it. I certainly don't agree with the bombings, but I wouldn't even agree that we should reject technology completely. For one, I'm not sure if the net benefit is worth it. While Kaczynski has great care in order not to fall into the noble savage myth and he addressed this at length, nevertheless I think a lot of drawbacks are very significant. He fully acknowledges the consequences but thinks they are worth it nevertheless. I understand the position, but I think it's wrong. Even more so because we wouldn't go back to a nomadic lifestyle. He admits that agriculture would eventually develop, and even concludes that medieval serfdom would likely emerge again. In fact, I'm not even sure if modern society wouldn't simply develop again with time. While he does offer good arguments against it, I wasn't completely convinced. And the fact that he doesn't view serfdom as a big deal when comparing to the societal conditions that are given with a technological state only further convinces me that his analysis of the net benefit from renouncing modern society is crooked.

Furthermore, regardless of the net benefit of reverting society to a pre-technological state, I certainly don't think such a revolution is possible. While he gives a good analysis of why he thinks it can be done, and I was deeply impressed by how well thought out his plan is, I still think it would be impossible in our current globalized society. Nevertheless, I was amazed by his explanation of how our technological society could be disrupted. It really gave me the sense that it is not as stable as we think, and the interconnectedness of technology (relying on other technologies, which rely on other technologies) does make it relatively easy for large scale destabilization, to a degree which I never dreamed of. But I still think that won't be enough, and such disruptions will always be fixed. For it to work it would have to be a massive global coordinated effort, which will never happen. And to reiterate, this is assuming that I would support the revolution, which I do not.

I honestly didn't expect the work to be so thought-provoking, and the amount of sheer insight that is presented is very under-rated. I think it just didn't gain more popularity due to its political anti-left stance as I mentioned. I disagree with a lot of

points, but his fundamental analysis of the consequences of our technological society is not just good, but in my opinion, completely spot on. I understand that many won't think so, and I wouldn't either a few years ago, but as I got older and learned more, I truly think his analysis is correct.

A lot of it applies to our current situation, but if you truly take seriously future developments as Kaczynski describes, particularly in genetic engineering and surveillance, it makes his case really strong. And it's close to impossible to deny the dystopia that will bring. What makes the work so grim for me is that I think his views are correct but his solution incorrect. And while I don't agree with his solution, but I can't really give an alternative either. It seems that I have no choice to succumb to the system, to the machine. It truly makes me wonder if he isn't correct after all, and my disagreement comes from a subconscious cowardliness of engaging in a revolution (ignoring the deontological problems that bring), in addition to the fear of losing modern comforts, even if they truly aren't worth the existential cost we pay for them. It's a remarkable work, and if you're interested in the topic of technology this is an absolute must-read it.

As mentioned, I think reading "The Machine Stops" by E.M. Forster beforehand is recommended, and try to keep an open mind while reading Kaczynski's work. Don't reject it outright because you disagree with some political points, fully embrace his worldview and then analyze it in its own right. While this review is long, it didn't scratch the surface of what he covers and a lot of the evidence and arguments presented. While I think he is wrong in many ways, he is definitely not mad, and if anything saner than the common person by a manifold. His supposed diagnosis of "paranoid schizophrenia and paranoid personality disorder" by a psychiatrist during the trial if anything strengthens his position.

owned philosophy politics

Amelia

1 review

February 1, 2021

It's a shame that Kaczynski was the Unabomber. Had he lead a less violent life he would be well-known as one of the best observers of our modern time.

Luce

27 reviews1 follower

March 4, 2021

5 stars not because it's perfect or anything near that — there's some whack stuff that I disagree with for sure — but for the supreme importance of the overall anti-technoindustrial ideas presented here. Can't remember the last time I read a book that

made me question my assumptions and the nature of our civilization so profoundly (maybe 1984 when I was 16 lol). I want to recommend this to everyone!!

Joshua Garrison

34 reviews2 followers

March 30, 2021

My son loved this book! Perfect gift idea for any family members or coworkers

Anthony Livingston

1 review1 follower

May 14, 2021

Ted's ideas are sound however his approach to the problem was wrong. Bombs and murder will turn people against you instead of supporting your cause.

Gold Dust

249 reviews

July 29, 2021

The omitted part of Hit Where it Hurts:

“Some examples of vital organs of the system are:

- A. The electric-power industry. The system is utterly dependent on its electric-power grid.
- B. The communications industry. Without rapid communications, as by telephone, radio, television, e-mail, and so forth, the system could not survive.
- C. The computer industry. We all know that without computers the system would promptly collapse.
- D. The propaganda industry. The propaganda industry includes the entertainment industry, the educational system, journalism, advertising, public relations, and much of politics and of the mental-health industry. The system can't function unless people are sufficiently docile and conforming and have the attitudes that the system needs them to have. It is the function of the propaganda industry to teach people that kind of thought and behavior.
- E. The biotechnology industry. The system is not yet (as far as I know) physically dependent on advanced biotechnology. Nevertheless, the system cannot afford to give way on the biotechnology issue, which is a critically important issue for the system, as I will argue in a moment.

Again: When you attack these vital organs of the system, it is essential not to attack them in terms of the system's own values but in terms of values inconsistent with those

of the system. For example, if you attack the electric-power industry on the basis that it pollutes the environment, the system can defuse protest by developing cleaner methods of generating electricity. If worse came to worse, the system could even switch entirely to wind and solar power. This might do a great deal to reduce environmental damage, but it would not put an end to the techno-industrial system. Nor would it represent a defeat for the system's fundamental values. To accomplish anything against the system you have to attack all electric-power generation as a matter of principle, on the ground that dependence on electricity makes people dependent on the system. This is a ground incompatible with the system's values.

7. Biotechnology May Be The Best Target For Political Attack.

Probably the most promising target for political attack is the biotechnology industry. Though revolutions are generally carried out by minorities, it is very useful to have some degree of support, sympathy, or at least acquiescence from the general population. To get that kind of support or acquiescence is one of the goals of political action. If you concentrated your political attack on, for example, the electric-power industry, it would be extremely difficult to get any support outside of a radical minority, because most people resist change to their way of living, especially any change that inconveniences them. For this reason, few would be willing to give up electricity.

But people do not yet feel themselves dependent on advanced biotechnology as they do on electricity. Eliminating biotechnology will not radically change their lives. On the contrary, it would be possible to show people that the continued development of biotechnology will transform their way of life and wipe out age-old human values. Thus, in challenging biotechnology, radicals should be able to mobilize in their own favor the natural human resistance to change.

And biotechnology is an issue on which the system cannot afford to lose. It is an issue on which the system will have to fight to the finish, which is exactly what we need. But - to repeat once more - it is essential to attack biotechnology not in terms of the system's own values but in terms of values inconsistent with those of the system. For example, if you attack biotechnology, primarily on the basis that it may damage the environment, or that genetically-modified foods may be harmful to health, then the system can and will cushion your attack by giving ground or compromising - for instance, by introducing increased supervision of genetic research and more rigorous testing and regulation of genetically-modified crops. People's anxiety will then subside and protest wither.

8. All Biotechnology Must Be Attacked As A Matter Of Principle.

So, instead of protesting one or another negative consequence of biotechnology, you have to attack all modern biotechnology on principle, on grounds such as (a) that it is an insult to all living things; (b) that it puts too much power in the hands of the system; (c) that it will radically transform fundamental human values that have existed for thousands of years; and similar grounds that are inconsistent with the values of the system.

In response to this kind of attack the system will have to stand and fight. It cannot afford to cushion your attack by backing off to any great extent, because biotechnology is too central to the whole enterprise of technological progress, and because in backing off the system would not be making only a tactical retreat, but would be taking a major strategic defeat to its code of values. Those values would be undermined and the door would be opened to further political attacks that would hack away at the foundations of the system.

Now it's true that the U.S. House of Representatives recently voted to ban cloning of human beings, and at least some congressmen even gave the right kinds of reasons for doing so. The reasons I read about were framed in religious terms, but whatever you may think of the religious terms involved, these reasons were not technologically acceptable reasons. And that is what counts.

Thus, the congressmen's vote on human cloning was a genuine defeat for the system. But it was only a very, very small defeat, because of the narrow scope of the ban - only one tiny part of biotechnology was affected - and because for the near future cloning of human beings would be of little practical use to the system anyway. But the House of Representatives' action does suggest that this may be a point at which the system is vulnerable, and that a broader attack on all of biotechnology might inflict severe damage on the system and its values.

9. Radicals Are Not Yet Attacking Biotech Effectively.

Some radicals do attack the biotechnology, whether politically or physically, but as far as I know they explain their opposition to biotech in terms of the system's own values. That is, their main complaints are the risks of environmental damage and of harm to health.

And they are not hitting the biotech industry where it hurts. To use an analogy of physical combat once again, suppose you had to defend yourself against a giant octopus. You would not be able to fight back effectively by hacking at the tips of its tentacles. You have to strike at its head. From what I've read of their activities, radicals who work against biotechnology still do no more than hack at the tips of the octopus's tentacles. They try to persuade ordinary farmers, individually, to refrain from planting genetically-engineered seed. But there are many thousands of farms in America, so that persuading farmers individually is an extremely inefficient way to combat genetic engineering. It would be much more effective to persuade research scientists engaged in biotechnological work, or executives of companies like Monsanto, to leave the biotech industry. Good research scientists are people who have special talents and extensive training, so they are difficult to replace. The same is true of top corporate executives. Persuading just a few of these people to get out of biotech would do more damage to the biotechnology industry than persuading a thousand farmers not to plant genetically-engineered seed.

10. Hit Where It Hurts.

It is open to argument whether I am right in thinking that biotechnology is the best issue on which to attack the system politically. But it is beyond argument that radicals

today are wasting much of their energy on issues that have little or no relevance to the survival of the technological system. And even when they do address the right issues, radicals do not hit where it hurts. So instead of trotting off to the next world trade summit to have temper tantrums over globalization, radicals ought to put in some time thinking how to hit the system where it really hurts. By legal means, of course.”

(Theodore Kaczynski retains copyright to this article.)

Correspond with Ted Kaczynski:

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eternal
7 reviews
January 10, 2022
cottagecore for men

Lionel Whitehorn
2 reviews
January 24, 2022
A must read for people concerned about the technology problem.

Roberto Paredes
11 reviews1 follower
July 8, 2022
What can I say.. Ted Kaczynski is an extremist, and a murderer, and he really dislikes the lefties.
But he’s also kinda right (with a big emphasis in the -kinda- part). I feel that today, 2022, what he says is more relevant than ever.
Despite its flaws, this was one of the most thought-provoking books I’ve ever read.

Sebastian Campos
98 reviews8 followers
September 21, 2022
A thought provoking critique of modern society. I don’t think Ted was entirely right, however, I do think he asked all the right questions.
On top of that, it’s interesting to see continued correspondence and thoughts from him post-arrest.

ebook

Veg E.

8 reviews

October 3, 2022

This is an excellent compilation of essays about the problem of technology, anchored by the seminal 1995 essay "Industrial Society and Its Future". The biggest criticism of that is it not being fully original, but largely influenced by or borrowing from Jacques Ellul; having never read Ellul's works, I'm fine with that, as it's also said that I.S.A.I.F. distills into more straightforward and plain/simple language the points made by the French philosopher about the results we suffer from being animals within a machine.

While those may be true and valid points of unoriginality, they miss the point, because the essay was first published anonymously under ultimatum of further unstoppable violence to be delivered in somebody's mailbox... Kaczynski's undeniably unique contribution to the list of technology critics is that *only revolutionary action* will save nature and humanity from being destroyed by tech - I'm aware of nobody else bold enough to assert this and make a sound, highly-reasoned case for this conclusion.

Balanced out by numerous additional pieces written since his imprisonment for revolutionary anti-tech action, this volume will provide insights to readers interested in anthropology and wilderness conservation, and even psychology, too, as the author has had abundant time on his hands to read and write, thinking over enormous volumes of materials he has processed through his genius.

I find it makes an overwhelming, undeniable case that he is correct, that technology has indeed put us on a terminal course, eroding human freedom as much as wild nature, and that any reforms will be wholly inadequate to detour us from the current trajectory.

An essential read for social activists, environmentalists, and anyone who can think deeply about the times we have been born into, and the darkness before us on the horizon.

Andy Eibs

10 reviews

October 24, 2022

The Most BASED stuff you'll ever read.

Alex Cleghorn

3 reviews

July 21, 2023

Technological Slavery is an amazing follow up to anyone who enjoyed “Industrial Society and Its Future” (ISAIF) or wanted more anti-tech ideas from someone as original and profound as Kaczynski is. In Technological Slavery, the author addresses questions left unanswered in ISAIF as well as laying down rules and principles regarding the nature of industrial society. He covers a vast array of topics including the reason for the pervasiveness of democracy, the motives of scientists, problems with reform and why it would fail, and what he calls “the systems’s neatest trick”

As Kaczynski clearly lays out, the existence of democracy as a dominant political structure in the 20th and 21st century is no coincidence, but rather a result of processes of natural selection among competing social systems in an industrial environment. To any degree it was “chosen,” it was a choice carried out by the west to ensure the stability industrial society requires, as opposed to the volatile nature of undemocratic regimes which could lead to industrial and economic disruption or collapse. Furthermore democracy works to release tension and social instability by giving the illusion of choice, making people believe they are making great changes in society by participating when the truth is they make no important change, the only deliberate change is superficial; vanity. The real changes are determined by technical necessity beyond human control or foresight.

In a world of cold reason and numbers, where the only messiah is a computer, the author does the unthinkable and criticises the scientific nobility. A fictitiously infallible class of society, the top strata in the modern caste of STEM-educated technophiles. This is a perfect follow-up to the author’s description of the “power process” as mentioned in “Industrial Society and Its Future”. This brave challenging of the unchallengeable is what made the author so renowned... amongst other things.

His response to readers who believe in reform, including Dr Skrbina, is a frightening, cold shock. The hard hitting truth (consistent with all of Kaczynski’s work) is the argument that far simpler tasks than reform have proven impossible to solve, and it is futile to attempt to reform an innately broken system. This is perhaps one of his most uncomfortable views, and largely controversial especially in the anti tech community. Something as daunting as asserting the necessity of complete societal collapse is certainly something that raises heads, and not always in a positive way. However Kaczynski is already incredibly polarising and he needn’t worry about publicity nor opinion. He is left to speak only the truth.

His essay, “The System’s Neatest Trick’” (now somewhat famous in many radical circles), explains that the system is not only built to survive small scale protests in the pursuit of “social justice,” but actual thrives on it: they work as a kind of stress-relief valve such that they reduce social tension while maintaining the values and structure of industrial society, allowing self proclaimed “revolutionary” or leftist types a way to vent frustration and hostility towards the system without the system suffering the consequences of such dissatisfaction. This ties in perfectly to the prior topic of reform and how the idea of reform is not only implausible, but also counterproductive,

serving only to maintain the societal glue. It also matches the themes of the tendencies (including masochistic tendencies) of leftists and others with an impulse to rebel from Industrial society. The leftists being in a large part, the group with the most rebellious or hostile tendencies in regard to the political state of the system.

Overall, this book is a perfect continuation of the topics mentioned in “Industrial Society and Its Future” serving to greatly expand on topics only mentioned briefly or that deserve further explanation. I highly recommend it to anyone that has read the manifesto “Industrial Society and Its Future” and is looking for a continuation of the themes and ideas covered in that piece. But even for those who haven’t read the manifesto, this book is surely worth a read, and it contains an updated version of the manifesto as one of the first sections.

Aleksander

14 reviews1 follower

July 14, 2023

One of the most, if not the most accurate and relatable criticisms of the XXI century. Extremely lucid and direct, reader can feel the force of the arguments drawn in this book. Every one of them backed by significant and intelligent logic
capitalism culture materialism

Nathaniel Wilkins

3 reviews

July 20, 2023

Many people today who realize that there is a problem ingrained in the very nature of the modern system fail to see the basis on which the system is formed, and therefore, in an attempt to rebel against the system, expend their energy on nonessential issues which have little to no effect on the system itself. This is the point which Ted Kaczynski, author of Technological Slavery, expounds in the essay “Hit Where It Hurts” As Kaczynski claims:

“Many radicals fall into the temptation of focusing on nonessential issues, like racism, sexism, and sweatshops, because it is easy. They pick an issue on which the system can afford to compromise and on which they will get support from people like Ralph Nader, Winona LaDuke, the labor unions, and all the other pink reformers. Perhaps the system, under pressure, will back off a bit, the activists will see some visible result from their efforts, and they will have the satisfying illusion that they have accomplished something. But in reality they have accomplished nothing at all toward eliminating the technoindustrial system.” –Technological Slavery, Volume One (2010) p. 252.

Kaczynski correctly points out that issues such as racism, sexism, working conditions, forestry, and globalization, while certainly not being positive attributes of the

system, are not an integral part of the system, and the system can therefore afford to do without them. In fact, resistance to nonessential components of the system can sometimes, as Kaczynski claims, benefit the system, as the resolution of these contradictions within society may help the system run more smoothly and efficiently. For example, early leftist movements advocated 'liberating' women by allowing them to enter the workforce. While, at the time, this may have seemed like a revolutionary change within society, the main result of this was that women were now further ingrained into the technological system, taking on jobs which would help it directly.

One does not disrupt a system by attacking relatively minor components of the system, but by attacking that which forms the basis of the system. In the case of the modern system, the system that erodes freedoms, creates unfulfilling lives, and destroys the natural environment, it is technology and the processes involved in developing and maintaining it that forms the basis of the system. Therefore, to use Kaczynski's words:

"Suppose a bulldozer belonging to a logging company has been tearing up the woods near your home and you want to stop it. It is the blade of the bulldozer that rips the earth and knocks trees over, but it would be a waste of time to take a sledgehammer to the blade. If you spent a long, hard day working on the blade with the sledge, you might succeed in damaging it enough so that it became useless. But in comparison with the rest of the bulldozer the blade is relatively inexpensive and easy to replace. The blade is only the "fist" with which the bulldozer hits the earth. To defeat the machine you must go behind the "fist" and attack the bulldozer's vital parts. The engine, for example, can be ruined with very little expenditure of time and effort by means well known to many radicals.... the 'bulldozer' that we have to destroy is modern technology itself." –Technological Slavery, Volume One (2010), p. 248-249.

Technological Slavery is a piece of paramount importance which acts as a furthering of the ideas expressed in Kaczynski's more well known work, *Industrial Society and Its Future*. In this work, Kaczynski, to a deeper degree than most writings on modern society, examines the nature and ills of the technological system which we live in. This piece is a must read for all of those who are even the slightest concerned over the state of the world and the direction that it is going.

shelby

125 reviews3 followers

August 30, 2023

5

Dare I say RIP ?

Displaying 1 - 38 of 38 reviews

4 stars - 30 reviews

Bob Peru

1,041 reviews30 followers

July 25, 2012

if he hadn't've killed folks—he'd be a hero.
so i DO NOT CONDONE killing.
but his ideas are more than valid.
ok?

Cathi

55 reviews2 followers

April 30, 2013

I finally finished reading. Wow, very heavy subject matter. This book challenges the reader to really think outside the proverbial box. Especially fascinating for social science and psychology enthusiasts.

Илмар Шалаоя

48 reviews5 followers

June 3, 2017

Kaczynski is quite a character. His writings are determined and poignant, and albeit his points are valid and clear, I did not manage to fully convert into his thinking. However, his critique on technological society is much needed, and a bit of exaggeration can be necessary to get the point across to the reader. Most interesting part for me was to realize that while our approach to the topic differs a bit, our thinking is eerily similar. The book has a bit too much repetition, but such is often the case when it comes to third-party collections of texts. Recommended.

abolished-states

BreakfastParadigm

16 reviews9 followers

March 4, 2017

I have felt some apprehension in rating this book. I do not agree with Ted Kaczynski on a lot of topics, but this was compelling and well written. It goes ignored pretty often

because of the controversy of the author, which is logical- but it is really interesting. I'd give it 4 1/2 stars if GR would let me.

I see a lot of the points about overspecialization and liberals being brought up less eloquently than the GD Unabomber did in this selection of essays on a daily basis.

Betawolf

372 reviews1,471 followers

September 12, 2018

The subtitle explains what this book is: *The Collected Writings of Theodore J. Kaczynski, a.k.a "The Unabomber"*. For people who live under rocks, the Unabomber was an ex-mathematics lecturer who retreated from civilisation and later sent a lot of bombs via the US mail, killing and injuring people. He evaded the FBI for 18 years and got turned in by his brother shortly after getting the *Washington Post* to publish his manifesto – which makes up the core of this collection.

During his trial, Kaczynski's lawyers (against his wishes) tried to plead insanity. Kaczynski fought this portrayal to the utmost – trying to dismiss his lawyers, and finally taking a plea bargain rather than allow it – but unfortunately the public seem to have agreed with this view, and he's often portrayed as crazy. Reading his writing, it's hard to agree with this portrayal, he's highly coherent and occasionally insightful, and his depiction of modern technologically-enhanced life as deeply harmful is easy to sympathise with. It seems far more likely that popular attention can only conceive of people who kill for a cause as mentally disturbed, a dangerous falsehood. As Gary Greenberg, a psychologist in communication with Kaczynski wrote:

A society unaccustomed to understanding individuals' behaviour as anything other than the result of the psychological states – their childhood traumas and neurochemical imbalances, say – cannot account for the political dimensions of everyday life. It cannot, for instance, raise the question of exactly what is wrong with what Kaczynski did. We perhaps could stand to be reminded of the public agreements that stipulate why we aren't supposed to kill, no matter the cause, and then perhaps we could decide what other people and practices are falling short of the standard he violated. But the Unabomber case can't force this much-needed conversation if Kaczynski is merely a madman. Then it's enough to know that he is not one of us. But he is.

Of course, stating that the man was not mad does not mean that I agree with him, nor does finding him insightful on some points mean I'm convinced by them all. Logical and orderly though most of his argumentation looks, there are leaps of faith needed: for example, to accept his suggestion that abandoning technology now will be a lesser disaster than what comes – as he himself says, it is easier to predict that a plan for the future won't come to pass than predict one that will. Similarly, a gaping logical flaw in the plan to revert to a pre-technological age is that we were once there and are no longer – even if technology can be shed from humanity, it will just grow again, and

with no means of informing the people of the future of the perils, it is sheer faith to imagine they too would cast it off, so why attempt to delay rather than finding a way to bring the system into line with the goals he outlines?

The various essays and letters attached alongside the central manifesto paint the picture of a committed and abrasive revolutionary attempting to prevent his message from being diluted. His rebuttal of the anarcho-primitivists (a group most inclined to support him) is particularly amusing (I mean not that it is wrong, and it's admirable that he holds accuracy over favourable reception, but you do wonder if he's capable of retaining any friends). Several times it seems he has been asked similar questions on some issues, some even seeming to be answered in his manifesto. A jarring piece of censorship is evident in the collection regarding his essay *Hit Where it Hurts*, wherein he describes (with humorous appellations of 'through legal means' to get it past his prison guards) suitable targets for enemies of technological progress to strike – thankfully a full copy is available online.

An interesting collection with some valid and insightful points, *Technological Slavery* deserves examination mostly for the central manifesto, but the additional documents do add extra perspective.

collection nonfiction political

jb

42 reviews1 follower

September 15, 2017

I find myself moved by Ted Kaczynski's argument, and even the depths of his frustrations, while also repulsed by his actions. He might have been widely read today and his poignant message may have permeated popular thought if he hadn't gone about, you know, killing people.

nonfic politics society

Tyler

33 reviews2 followers

August 27, 2019

The collection gets rather repetitive after the first half, as the last few sections seem to mimic earlier writings, but nonetheless this is a worthwhile collection to read. This isn't the ravings of a "madman," and with the exception of his rather concentrated dislike of "leftists" and some of his more vulgar sayings it reads rather academically. I recommend that everyone reads ISAIF, or at least those who have some ill feelings about technology and it's affect on society, as the essay at worst is rather thought provoking.

Kaczynski is a terrorist, and this is undeniable. I believe one can condemn the actions

of a man and feel sympathy for his victims, and still believe that it is valid to read their works and engage with their ideas. If one is too disgusted by Kaczynski's character and/or actions to read this, then it seems Jaques Ellul is an alternative way to read anti-tech philosophy (Ellul seems to be more academic as well, though Kaczynski certainly tries his hardest to be academic and does quite well for someone in a maximum security prison).

Joss Southgate
54 reviews7 followers
October 7, 2019

Hopefully it goes without saying that you shouldn't murder innocent people to get your ideas heard, but Ted Kaczynski's ideas are worth hearing. "The industrial revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for mankind" is his powerful opening line that serves as the cornerstone of his beliefs.

Environmental revolutionaries are most often on the political left, so it's interesting to read somebody who calls for a revolution also give a damning indictment of leftist progressivism.

Prepare to feel hopelessly depressed for some time after reading

Veg E.
8 reviews
October 3, 2022

This is the first authorized edition of collected writings from the Unabomber, and they're all very intriguing and informative, but the publication suffers from what seems to have been lax editing. The imprisoned author's introductory note states that he doesn't have time to prepare the book to flow better than be its form here as a disorganized grouping of writings, given that the prison system holding him may foreclose his free speech rights to publish (a U.S. prosecutor had announced ambitions to seize all his writings), and further that expects to "find offensive" the ways that will be used to promote the book, but that he can't do much about it and would prefer to have the ideas issued than not.

It would definitely be worth reading this if there were no alternative, but a more recent collection has been issued (slight content variance) by the current publisher, and all of the essays in this are now available online (whether that's legal or not).

Rachel Jackson
Author

2 books20 followers

April 12, 2020

What an interesting and bizarre book to review. I received *Technological Slavery* as a Goodreads giveaway, and let me say upfront that I do not condone the violence that Ted Kaczynski is more famous for than he is as a writer; and Kaczynski does not receive any money for the publication of this collection of his works.

Now that that's out of the way, damn, this guy is sharp. He knows what's up. I knew enough about Kaczynski's life before reading the book to have some idea of his political, societal, economic and technological beliefs, but the essays, letters and appendices contained in *Technological Slavery* were fascinating to delve into, from the perspective of a man who has lived in three very different worlds: the free, upwardly mobile academic world; the remote, isolated, wilderness; and the maximum security prison world. All of those experiences come through in Kaczynski's book as he rails on what he calls the "technoindustrial" society that we live in, largely in the United States, but he touches on other developed democratic countries as well.

I was surprised to find myself agreeing with Kaczynski more than I thought I would—and, again, I acknowledge that I had some pre-conceived notions about him beforehand, which he addresses indirectly, saying that some people would (and have) labeled him as a "raving anarchist." But he's not raving, not by any means. Kaczynski touches on modern society and how the industrial revolution has created the conditions we live by today, being forced into unfulfilling jobs to work for money, living as victims to a propaganda machine that is all about technological process for either profit or the elite's selfishness and "progress," rather than for the benefit of humanity. There are a lot of things in this book that you know Kaczynski will never change his mind about, and his pretentiousness and snobbery comes across loud and clear the whole way through. But it's all based in logic and observation and reality.

Kaczynski makes it clear that technology will be the death of us. It eliminates humanity, it turns us into clones and zombies, it destroys our happiness and sense of fulfillment. While I didn't necessarily agree with all of his practical ideas to mitigating this problem and enacting a revolution to change the world and revert back to a "primitive" societal state, as Kaczynski calls it, the conceptual ideas he proffered about the detriment of technology to our society were slightly alarming to read, especially, as he points out, as computers become more advanced and artificial intelligences become more widespread. He gets a little like a broken record in some places with the ideas he espouses, but it was very interesting to read and I enjoyed shattering some of those pre-conceived ideas I had about Ted Kaczynski before I read his book.

Crystal

595 reviews20 followers

April 23, 2020

Although I agree with most aspects of this book I do not foresee Americans giving up their technology. Not only do we willingly give up our freedom, we pay companies/people to do so. We are completely dependent on our phones/computers that we simply cannot live without them. To organize a revolution to challenge or defeat the System, one would most assuredly use said technological advances to defeat the System. The very few people who would support the notion of removing recent technological advances would be too busy living remotely to be able to join the revolution. We are too dependent on technology to care about how it hampers or what freedoms we sacrifice. Unless the System self-destructs, we are stuck being subjects to the technology.

Anne Fox

Author

25 books50 followers

May 11, 2020

I was really unclear on the best way to rate and review this book. For although it of design accurately expresses the views of Mr. Kaczynski on the effects of technological advances on the ultimate fate of mankind, I cannot agree with his assessment. I feel that the principle flaw in his thinking is equating the human mind with a machine - which it certainly is not. The composition of a machine is unchanging; once its circuits are placed and its programming set, it can at best be reprogrammed in a manner that its circuitry can accommodate. However, the human mind is malleable and capable of "rewiring" itself to accommodate new tasks and new ways of problem-solving.

It will remain to be seen if Mr. Kaczynski's assessment holds true or if mine does. Still, I found his approach to the "problem" of modern advancements intriguing.

Adam Lee

59 reviews

November 20, 2020

Shame he killed a few people...

A

396 reviews43 followers

April 8, 2021

Some material is unneeded. However, Ted's essay on his life in the wilderness is fantastic. Please check it out.

dlitt-recommendations

Anjali

45 reviews

April 10, 2021

not only were the ideas well-thought-out etc., I really appreciated how he spoke in easy to understand language, and also organized his ideas extremely well. Like, there weren't just blocks of dense text, he organizes them with headings, then subheadings, then roman numerals, then letters etc etc. Made it much more accessible. What I also appreciated was him citing every single one of his sources (so you know hes not pulling out stats from nowhere), and also _admitting when he doesn't know something_. I can't tell you how refreshing that was to see from a former academic, I mean even I have trouble admitting when I don't know something well I just start filling in the blanks with exaggerations LOL. Adding onto how he admits not knowing something, or enough of something, there are also multiple instances of him admitting he was wrong about xyz, or got facts wrong about xyz,, again very refreshing to see

Nathaniel

2 reviews

June 12, 2021

Interesting. I didn't realize this was written by the Unibomber until I was halfway in.

Mike09

3 reviews

July 3, 2021

It felt a bit repetitive. But it did answer all questions left unanswered in ISAIF.

Bill reilly

508 reviews8 followers

July 16, 2021

The best part of this book is an interview with Kaczynski from January 2001. In it, Theodore explains his early influence by the novel, Robinson Crusoe to live off of the land and away from modern civilization. He taught at Berkeley for two years and by 1983, he had saved enough money to buy a cabin in Montana for \$2,100 cash. He studied anthropology at Harvard and also took an interest in edible plants. From Euell Gibbons to Nietzsche, Ted might be the most voracious reader on earth. He grew

potatoes, carrots, beets and onions and hunted rabbits, deer, elk and ducks to satisfy his hunger. The tranquility of nature increased his awareness of the sounds of nature. Chainsaws clearing trees nearby launched his desire for revenge for what was being done to the forest. Boredom is a disease of civilization. Much of the writing reminded me of Thoreau. Of course Henry did not build bombs or kill innocent civilians. Most of the book is a repetitive rant on the need to destroy modern technology in order for mankind to survive. Orwell and Huxley preceded Kaczynski in a warning of the dangers of runaway technology. Ted expands on the theme with frightening prescience. In 2004, he wrote, "suppose a virus in an experimental laboratory escaped and wiped out 1/3 of the population." Fifteen years later and here comes Covid 19. He also wrote of AI, surveillance, and a loss of all privacy. I am surprised at no mention of Julian Assange or Edward Snowden. Millions of children are zonked out on Ritalin and adults are medicated at the highest levels in history. Meanwhile, we are destroying the environment and Teddy does not see any way to reverse the trend and although I do not agree with his methods, I share his pessimistic view of the human race.

Stiltzkin Vanserine

389 reviews7 followers

May 4, 2022

Is Ted J. Kaczynski Henry David Thoreau gone mad?

It sure looks like it, but no. Ted K's writings are lucid, logical, and intelligent, showing not a trace of insanity. The man was a math prodigy who went to Harvard at 16; he's certainly smart. He is clearly a Luddite and a terrorist, but there is *some* value and truth to be gleaned from his writings. The rapid advancement of technology has led to countless problems, and like an ever-accelerating train whose brakes are malfunctioning, sooner or later it is doomed to go off track. We probably should slow it down or even put it on halt, yet the question is: Where do we draw the line? Should we destroy the technoindustrial society altogether, as Kaczynski suggests? Who gets to decide? What is the cost?

non-fiction politics social-commentary

Thaer

26 reviews

June 18, 2022

If this guy was not the UNA bomber, he would be considered one of the greatest minds of all time. A very interesting book and predictions of our social decline.

Samuel Burgh

3 reviews

July 23, 2022

An unhealthy dose of technological realism, or perhaps an unhealthy dose of technological pessimism.

My immediate reply to Kaczynski: Let us not be small minded about technology, focusing on the negatives and understating or entirely dismissing the positives. We should freely acknowledge the treasures technology has poured into the world. Something Kaczynski is reluctant to admit and does so through clenched teeth.

Firstly, the Unabomber has made his technological bias clear, his personal utilisation of modern technologies (or weaponry) illustrates his bias and disordered opinions on the uses of technology, and in pursuit of his freedom ideals; he contributed instead to our receding freedoms associated with terrorism, and his actions cost him his own.

Kaczynski casually dismisses and downplays arguments that do not conform or support his arguments. Kaczynski also redefines or interprets words to build and give stock to his assertions, most of which go unsubstantiated, an unusual practice for a mathematician! He blames his inability to provide proofs or substantiate his claims on the institution and bureaucracy of the US prison system.

All things above considered, this is not to say there is not some food for thought, there are some red-pill moments to be found, but nothing struck me as original. Kaczynski certainly communicates some important ideas, considerations and undoubtedly many truths or half-truths.

Kaczynski's ultimate goal is to convince us that technology has been or will become synonymous with slavery. Whilst convincing us nature and near primitive living is the true free ideal. But I would like to ask Kaczynski if he considered that before technology, nature was our great oppressor. Technology has liberated us from a cruel, unfeeling, boundlessly indifferent, one without purpose or consideration, without pity or justice.

Our oppressor now wears a familiar face, a human face. A calculated and cruel face still, though now there is plenty of pity and justice. Perhaps with industrial technology and algorithms ect, we are destined to return to an unfeeling, boundless and indifferent oppressor, back to nature but in an artificial form. That which Kaczynski was seeking all along, just perhaps in a mephistophelian bargain-esque sense.

Ultimately, after reading volume 1; my opinion is that: technology serves humanity, but that does not necessarily extend to the individual. There are undeniable victims of 'the system', but many become victims due to their reliance on the system - as Kaczynski rightly identifies. (Indeed, is this then the system to blame, or our own? If we are the collective creators of the system it must be us? However, if the system as Kaczynski seems too suggests, was inevitable and uncontrollable can the presumed creators be to blame if they created it unknowingly? It is impossible to blame a single individual, or assign blame to an unaccountable collective. We are all to blame and

not to blame - the argument becomes a Quantum super position of sorts, both and neither.

My bias - is it possible to separate the art (a solum essay) from the artist (a terrorist)? Ultimately the book is worth reading; but I encourage you to scrutinise everything he says; indeed it is not difficult to miss his many many contradictions.

Moreover, since Kaczynski is keep to assign general psychological profiles to leftist, conservatives and everyone in-between I will afford him the same treatment: Here on these 320 or so pages I believe is a cry for freedom and autonomy from a man imprisoned and destined to die surrounded by bureaucracy and institution; that being the US legal and prison system. He exercised his personal freedom/autonomy to utilise technology to exercise absolute evil, and deserves his servitude.

Theodore Kaczynski

LA MEMA PARANDY

3 reviews

November 28, 2022

The Amazing book

Riley Sanders

1 review

December 23, 2022

An incisive, witty, and damning critique of the industrial world. Almost makes you want to [REDACTED]
philosophy

Henrik

115 reviews6 followers

April 9, 2023

His letter correspondence is more interesting than the manifesto. An extremely interesting thinker, but I do not agree with his violent methods.

Trey S

117 reviews1 follower

April 19, 2023

A good book from not so good a man. It was interesting to hear his reasonings behind things and it made me want to read more about him. His other more famous

book, industrial society and its future is in this book as well, I skipped it because I read that book on my own. If you're wanting to learn more about him it's a good book.

4/5

Max Misch

14 reviews4 followers

May 22, 2023

I have mixed feelings about Dr. Kaczynski, who is very often misunderstood and maligned. I agreed with Ted about basically everything when first reading 'Industrial Society And It's Future' over a decade ago and again, a second time, in this collection of his writing, mostly done while incarcerated. He was quite prescient in regards to technology and its effects on everyone, individually and collectively, along with being quite accurate in his critique of leftism/leftists. His descriptions of the "power process" and "oversocialization" (two key psychological concepts contained within the pages of ISAIF) are excellent as well.

However, I fault him for being duped by the Synagogue of Satan (and their gentile collaborators) on a few important current and historical topics, including but not limited to the hoax of man-made climate change and the so-called Jewish Holocaust. This incorrect perspective on peripheral topics is evident in several sections of his correspondence with people (approximately two thirds of the contents of 'Technological Slavery'). EDIT: I forgot to mention his negative view of religion in those letters to individuals outside prison. This too was something that was irksome to me.

I still highly recommend (five stars then and now) the infamous ISAIF (with his updated footnotes) and also 'The System's Neatest Trick', one of the post-manifesto essays included in this book, but the whole thing is nevertheless worth reading, despite my spergy criticism.

SECOND EDIT: I raised this rating from 3 stars to 4 because it seemed excessive to deduct two stars for what amounted to nitpicking some content in the letters, especially considering how highly I rate ISAIF, TSNT, and a large portion of the material in those letters. To be honest, one of the main reasons behind my original decision to dock two stars was to try to balance the numerous 4 and 5 star ratings which I gave books over the past year or two, and that's not the approach I want to take with these reviews.

Samuel

10 reviews

May 14, 2023

Provides an overview of Kaczynski's thoughts about our industrial society (and its future).

Details problems, solutions, issues, answers, difficulties, resolutions, etc.

Becomes repetitive once you get to the letters.

Topics include (but are not limited to) revolution vs reform, the system, types of technology, the Industrial Revolution and its consequences, leftists, anthropology, and possible hope for the future.

Letters to Skribina has interesting sections, but I skipped a lot of it due to the aforementioned repetitive nature of nature dwelling friend.

Definitely read the ending pages which go over the court rulings of Kaczynski's case.

Cleo

55 reviews

June 15, 2023

Large sections are brilliant, followed by sections that seem inaccurate at best and reenforce the standard view of TK as a raving lunatic at worst. The section covering the future is particularly glaring, but not really TK's fault for being unable to predict how social media/internet culture would muddle political landscapes. Anyway, good first book, curious to see what he does next

James

37 reviews1 follower

July 3, 2023

An illuminating read and a glimpse into a very intelligent and dangerous mind. Kaczynski's views, arguments, and conclusions, however disagreeable are presented in a rational and thought-out manner. Despite his contempt for wokeness and the left in general, I think a lot of people would agree with what he highlights as the ills of society with the loss of fulfilment and human dignity as a result of technoindustrialism. The runaway progress of technology and its all-corrupting nature has resulted in an overcrowded, unhappy, and unsustainable human population.

The author's solution to our current predicament is to plunge the world back into the dark ages, which is morally dubious at best and genocidal at its worst. While I can't say that I agree with his methods, I'm guessing that Kaczynski was waiting for someone determined (or insane) enough who does to destroy/revolutionise society.

Emily

7 reviews1 follower

July 16, 2023

Give it a truly honest read and you will find how prescient this man was. His writing defies political boundaries, so I would not avoid reading this based on political affiliation, nor would I avoid it based on popular media portrayal of Mr. Kaczynski. This group of works clearly shows why he did what he did, and provides many insights into human nature. I do not condone the use of violence to achieve societal changes, and I think he was misguided in believing that a violent revolution was necessary. If he had not murdered and maimed several people, I think he could have been a powerful voice offering caution in the past several decades. What a waste.

Displaying 1 - 30 of 30 reviews

3 stars - 21 reviews

Jesse

98 reviews6 followers

October 21, 2010

Cranky, cranky! Who woulda guessed the bomb-building hermit is so grumpy? Guess it shoulda been obvious. Back when they arrested this guy, I thought maybe he was a radical hippie... Turns out he's a right-wing crank!

Autumn

272 reviews1 follower

January 30, 2012

parts of this book are simply ridiculous and you kind of have to ignore them in order to get to the bits that matter. the author is obviously extremely smart, but people-person he isn't, so some of his conclusions about his fellow humans and their motivations simply don't ring true and rubbed me the wrong way. but what he has to say about technology and the ways in which it is destructive (to the environment, to workers, to people generally who are becoming lazy zombies chained to their i-whatnots), is pretty on point. he repeats himself a lot, though, so you probably don't need to read the whole thing, a couple of the essays will get you the gist of his position.

Givency Godard

4 reviews

November 22, 2016

While Kaczyński brings forward a number of points as regards the nature of the "technoindustrial" system - and the processes "inchoate" therein - the writings vary widely from the merely specious to the basically silly. K.'s ability to talk across a range of historico-speciological is at times impressive, i.e. often his arguments pit modern man vs. the Mbuti of Africa, the Kalahari, etc., but ultimately there's too much of it that could verily qualify as topical brevity; K.'s references to the Bushmen, for instance, recur time and again throughout his writings, which suffer all the same from a scrambling sense of inconsistency as regards his position on just what the early hunter-gatherer societies mean to him, at least philosophically. His disdain for movements like GP and Earth First! is clearly evident and I got the impression he's not too read up on other, more decentralized anarchist movements that might have taken place in other historical settings. Interestingly, his letters to the editor conform to a carelessly anarcho- mindset, a mindset rather at odds with much of what he discusses throughout the book. His view on the Bolsheviks seems misguided or otherwise under-researched. Overall, a credible intelligence, but as stated above, the lack of responsible research and consistency insults certain aspects of the narrative as a whole.

Dave

55 reviews2 followers

October 22, 2017

Kaczyński is an accidental futurist. While I disagree with both his broad statement of the problem of technological progress and his cold-blooded solution, his ideas regarding reform movements and what causes them to fail makes a lot of sense and could be applied to recent half-hearted attempts like Occupy Wall Street.

Scott

159 reviews4 followers

January 29, 2018

This was a very interesting and stimulating read, especially coming after reading Thomas Friedman's latest technology jizz-fest book *Thank You For Being Late*.

I will attempt to summarize the main point I took away from this book:

Kaczyński asserts that human beings have a need for something he calls the 'power process' which has four elements - goal, effort, attainment of goal and autonomy. A human being needs goals whose attainment requires effort and he must have a reasonable success in attaining his goals.

For Kaczyński the principal goal for a human being is its physical needs (survival). When human beings do not have to exert themselves to satisfy their physical needs they create artificial goals, Kaczyński uses the term "surrogate activity" to describe these goals.

In modern society only minimal effort is required to satisfy physical needs (survival) so it is not surprising that modern society is full of surrogate activities.

For most people pursuit of surrogate activities is less satisfying than the pursuit of real goals.

The pursuit of these surrogate activities serves the need for the power process in modern man.

Social and psychological problems of modern society are due to the fact that society/ the system requires people to live under conditions radically different from which the human race has evolved.

The lack of opportunity to properly experience the power process as the most important of the abnormal conditions to which modern society subjects people.

The power process is disrupted in modern society through a deficiency of real goals and a deficiency of autonomy in pursuit of these goals.

The above generally is referring specifically to *Industrial Society and Its Future* aka The Manifesto. The book is much more than that but always returns to the same themes above.

Benji Visser

23 reviews3 followers

February 8, 2019

You only need to read the first section (~120 pages) to digest the main ideas Kaczynski has to offer, with the other sections being ancillary essays to the main “manifesto”.

I imagine most everyone also says this, but here we go: He has some really interesting points about technology, but I don’t agree with his conclusion of revolutionary action at all.

In terms of technological slavery writers:

Yuval Noah Harari: Positivist

Ted Kaczynski: Extreme Pessimist

The points I most enjoyed

- Being unable to reverse technology. Once a technology comes out from its box of innovation, you can’t put it back in (the internet for example).
- Technologies that are optional soon become de-facto mandatory.
- Humans are more happy when they can directly influence their environment. He goes on about how smaller communities give more control to the individual and I would agree.

Carlos

29 reviews25 followers

June 11, 2019

4/5
but -1 for the murder
library-reads

Jean Flowers
103 reviews6 followers
September 4, 2020

It's bit long winded. But I totally agree with everything said. I believe though if your attach to anything in this world and feel you CANNOT give it up, your a slave to it! I'm saying a THING now and NOT PEOPLE! But in long run the book was good.

Matt
16 reviews2 followers
November 11, 2020

I didn't find a lot of value in this book outside of Industrial Society and Its Future.

Christopher Byram
225 reviews
November 29, 2020

I think I first heard about Ted Kaczynski, or the "Unabomber", from the movie Good Will Hunting (1997). I didn't know who he was back then, I just assumed he was some historical American serial killer, domestic terrorist or cult figure like Charles Manson, the Zodiac killer or the leader of Heaven's Gate. However, I noticed in recent years that on a couple of posting boards on the internet, Ted and his work keeps getting referenced. Because of this, I decided to check him and his work out.

Toufiq Imrose
3 reviews7 followers
December 5, 2020

Solid arguments about why technological "progress" will eventually turn human beings into automatons in no time and why a revolution is the only way out.

I found the core concepts identical to most other neo luddite philosophers I've read (though I've read only a few). We are the only mammals to have a really complex cognitive structure (and to make use of it properly over thousands of years). And we now have reached enough of this technological "progress" to be able to foresee

the autarchic behavior of it, which we wouldn't in the primitive age. Considering the current progress was imminent, and as we (or at least people like Ted) are aware of it now, we must attempt a revolution to get back our true freedom as humans, the meaning of which has been altered by technology as well. The intention of Ted was to let people know about this horrid facet of "technology" and the necessary revolution to stop it from advancing further.

The arguments were well versed although I found some of it repetitive at times. Still recommended. He could put some extra thought in finding a way for getting public exposure for this book other than by bombing people though.

Taylor

13 reviews1 follower

January 1, 2021

Points of this book are pretty redundant but he's very logical and I think anyone can find points that they agree with, at least somewhat.

Joseph Knecht

Author

3 books31 followers

February 28, 2021

Ted had a good grasp of societal system theory. Although making some valid points, his text are short of enlightening because he fails to see the progression of society.

Unconscious absorption of media propaganda influences would-be rebels to "rebel" in ways that serve the interests of the System.

The System needs an orderly, docile, cooperative, passive, dependent population. Above all it requires a nonviolent population, since it needs the government to have a monopoly on the use of physical force. For this reason, integration propaganda has to teach us to be horrified, frightened, and appalled by violence, so that we will not be tempted to use it even when we are very angry.

Instead of using their technological means of production to provide themselves with free time in which to undertake intellectual and artistic work, people today devote themselves to the struggle for status, prestige, and power, and to the accumulation of material goods that serve only as toys.

Art, literature and the like provide a harmless outlet for rebellious impulses that would be dangerous to the system if they took a more practical direction, and hedonistic satisfactions such as overindulgence in sex or food, or intensely stimulating modern forms of entertainment, help people to forget the loss of their freedom

As I see it, the overwhelmingly dominant problem of our time is that technology threatens either to destroy the world or to transform it so radically that all past questions of human values will simply become irrelevant, because the human race, as we have known it, will no longer exist

philosophy technology

Roberto Yoed

689 reviews

October 5, 2021

The big problem here, and that shows the lack of sociological knowledge of Kaczynski, is that the problem per se is not technology: the problem is capitalist use and understanding of technology.

If you can't understand that, then we deserved this guy.

Ben Gardner

27 reviews1 follower

January 8, 2022

Read The System's Neatest Trick.

Read mostly to supplement thinking about Jameson's Postmodernism and a lecture called "Art Won't Save Us" on the state of political action in the art world. These on the subject of "co-opting" and "critical distance."

There seems to be something missing here for me - though the mechanism is laid out in such a way that things follow, and it seems somewhat clear that rebellion against the System can at times serve the System (using Kaczynski's language), this does not seem sufficiently new to warrant newness.

You could probably read this and get the gist.

So, in a nutshell, the System's neatest trick is this:

- > 1. For the sake of its own efficiency and security, the System needs to bring about deep and radical social changes to match the changed conditions resulting from technological progress.
- > 2. The frustration of life under the circumstances imposed by the System leads to rebellious impulses.
- > 3. Rebellious impulses are co-opted by the System in the service of the social changes it requires; activists "rebel" against the old and outmoded values that are no longer of use to the System and in favor of the new values that the System needs us to accept.
- > 4. In this way rebellious impulses, which otherwise might have been dangerous to

the System, are given an outlet that is not only harmless to the System, but useful to it.

> 5. Much of the public resentment resulting from the imposition of social changes is drawn away from the System and its institutions and is directed instead at the radicals who spearhead the social changes.

2022 selections

Jonathan Bryan

1 review

January 20, 2022

...

White Rose

175 reviews64 followers

January 15, 2022

I have to admit, it was a difficult reading and it took me a long time to get it over; I appreciate the line of thought, his arguments and the examples depicting our modern day afflictions, some of them depicted all too well.

Having said I disagree with the revolution and despise his methods for obvious reasons.

The human life is supposed to be sacred and if you happen to see something wrong, you alter it or work to improve something that bothers you.

You are trying to bring on the change.

But for the very big chunk of time Ted was a naysayer, an escapist if you wish, who failed to organize his revolution. His doings are rather juvenile and it doesn't feel like a well-planned agenda.

At times some of the passages are very frantic reminding those of angry kids.

But a tiny piece of about 40% of this book isn't bad, it depicts the world we live in.

Something Ted was trying to fight (was he?)

Jerry

57 reviews

June 11, 2022

At the risk of being seen as a 'terrorist sympathizer', I must admit from the outset that my attitude towards technology and the effect it has on society is, by and large, in agreement with the author of 'Technological Slavery', Theodore Kaczynski, aka, The

Unabomber. In order that I may avoid being put on any Homeland Security watchlist I will first lay out the extent of my parallel thinking with Kaczynski after which I will provide my reasons for the author and myself taking our own separate paths.

Here is the main point of agreement between the author and myself, taken from notes from my OWN journal years ago :

As technology advances it has an isolating effect on society. Take for example, telecommunications. From it's inception at the turn of the nineteenth century, telephone communications were restricted by the vast network of 'land lines' that supported the transmission of any and all speech between parties. As the twentieth century progressed, with the boost in funding provided by two world wars and a proceeding Cold War, technology provided us with the first primitive cell phones. Now, one needn't be in any form of 'public place' whether it be a house with surrounding family members or an office with fellow co-workers. Thus we have the beginning of social isolation.

Finally, with the advent of the internet came the introduction of what are considered modern 'smart phones' Now, not only do we have the previously mentioned physical isolation of the cell phone, but we have the exponential compounding of anti-social behavior via the 'world at your literal fingertips !'. This is but one brief, albeit simplified, example of the ongoing corrosive effects of technology.

Interpersonal activities, i.e. 'face-to-face', has been, to a great extent, banished to the digital world. Whether the medium would be a television, computer monitor, or smart phone screen the relationships we have with those within our individual orbits carry, more and more, the weight one may have with a famous movie and /or rock star. Sadly this is a weight of practically no significance. The fact is that an individual's favorite athlete, pop star, or Hollywood icon exists only in the two dimensional world of multimedia to him or her. In fact there exists a common physiological reaction that a person has akin to the hormonal overload of 'fight or flight' that takes place when you or I actually are in close proximity to any one of these 'celluloid' heroes !

The end result of this increased automation is that human to human contact has been usurped by the digital indifference of e-mails, texts, emojis, etc. The end result of this ongoing 'March of The Digital Soldiers' can be found in the ever increasing destruction of man visited upon man.

Evidence of my point is, in part, manifesting itself via the increasing frequency of mass shootings. One of the results of having all of one's needs and desires able to be met in relative, if not, complete isolation is the corresponding loss of seeing the world around you as it really is, in THREE dimensions ! Your neighbors are reduced to the reality of Brad Pitt or Rihanna. In essence, they're not REAL ! In summary the world outside the individual's isolation becomes nothing more than a video game. And, unfortunately, as there are no consequences in the gaming world, there are equally no consequences PERCEIVED by the techno isolationist. As a result, HALO becomes Sandy Hook.

In conclusion I would submit that the advancement of technology has had, and will continue to have, a deteriorating effect on our moral, ethical, and social values to the

point that the predominant default attitude of man will be the equivalent of 'What's mine is mine, and what's yours is negotiable !'

Now that I have hopefully steered myself clear of any undue attention from our federal government I will speak to the crossroads I reached with Mr. Kaczynski in so far as his ideology as expressed in 'Technological Slavery'.

First and foremost I do not condone the string of bombings carried out by the author in the course of pressing his agenda forward. I am not saying that violence is not a tool in realizing some desired agenda, what I'm saying is that violence, in any form, should remain the proverbial 'last tool in the box' to accomplish those ends. So there is no misunderstanding my analogy of 'last tool in the box' refers to dealing with extreme individuals on the order of Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Kim Il Sung, and, of recent, Vladimir Putin.

Secondly, Mr. Kaczynski advocated a reversal of modern society to the time of hunter-gatherers. I find that not only excessive but completely beyond the realm of possibility. I firmly advocate the immediate cessation of ANY and ALL technological advancement, regardless of field, but, having said that, I must confess a profound weakness for indoor plumbing, electricity, and a good TV program !

Finally, I found the majority of the author's substantive arguments to be not, as he would contend, based in factual data, but rather I found near all of his contentions predicated on his own interpretation of the listed 'facts' supported by speculation.

Haultaine

17 reviews1 follower

August 30, 2022

While there are many things about Ted K that i admire, there were some unfortunately myopic arguments in this book, specifically he thinks efforts towards racial, gender equality, and LGBTQ+ rights are a hindrance to rebelling against what he thinks is the main problem of the modern world: technology. He thinks we already have equality and that racism is a thing of the past, and that LGBTQ struggles are overwith. Might i suggest watching Ava DuVernay's documentary 13th as just one of many elucidating documentaries of how racism is still going quite strong. Raoul Peck has some great documentaries as well on this subject. The Trevor Project does great work with regards to helping struggling folks under the LGBTQ umbrella, has resources for further understanding those issues. It just seems extremely shortsighted at best, and/or revealing of his potentially hateful views towards Women, POC and LGBTQ+ at worst, that Ted spends as much time in this arguing against these things as he does. Outside of these areas he is obviously not fit to discuss, he does make some great points regarding the insidiousness of technology, scientific "progress" and how it's used, and how it might be used in the future, the motivations of scientists themselves, many other things. Ultimately, i can't help but feel like a lot of people

that read this will probably be reading it for the wrong reasons, i'm thinking of incels, misogynists, racists, homophobes, transphobes, etc, reading it and having their confirmation-biases, thinking things like racism and sexism don't matter, on the one hand; and violent people willing to bomb innocent people on the other. I'm not here preaching non-violence. For more on this last point i recommend reading Drinking Molotov Cocktails With Gandhi, cause we're obviously not going to vote these issues better that face the modern world.

Theman

7 reviews

September 16, 2022

I don't agree with a lot of his ideas but he still has something meaningful to say about the way technology is affecting the world.

D L

2 reviews

December 21, 2022

I think it's a fun read if you're interested in the unabomber story, However it becomes clear fairly quickly that the author is severely mentally ill. If you're looking for a real book on this subject this book is an amended version of "The Technological Society."

Displaying 1 - 21 of 21 reviews

2 stars - 3 reviews

David

914 reviews30 followers

July 6, 2013

While there are occasional nuggets of wisdom and insight into how technology has despoiled the planet and in many ways made our lives worse, not even the author lived a true hunter gatherer lifestyle in the wilderness which his revolution advocated. A great portion of the second half of the book is largely redundant, as it is a collection of responses he makes in letters to various individuals, rehashing his manifesto. It was interesting, at least, learning a great deal about hunter gatherer societies. Being a murderer also doesn't really help add any credence to his arguments. I read it out morbid curiosity.

VKW

10 reviews

February 27, 2021

Meh. A lot of the things he says are common sense or obvious. A lot of it DOES NOT make sense and comes off as acid soaked gibberish.

Jack

13 reviews

August 17, 2023

Ted Kaczynski was a terrorist, whether you value his opinions or not, that fact is inarguable. With the modern debate of preserving the writing of problematic figures, I cannot help but ask the question: Do we need *Technological Slavery*?

Yes, sort of.

However, I don't know if *Technological Slavery*, in the form we're presented with, is needed. Kaczynski himself reflects that this book is not in its ideal form, though I suspect for different reasons than I might bring up. This book is devastatingly academic. More than half its pages are devoted to footnotes and appendices. *After Industrial Society And Its Future* (ISAIF) and *The System's Neatest Trick*, Kaczynski's writing devolves into little more than a defense of the preceding texts. Effectively, we're reading a debate where, I assume for legal reasons, the opposing sides' points are not actually (verbatim) shared.

To the average reader, we're getting a rehashing of the points made in the first ~100 pages. There is a definite value to the inclusion of footnotes, counterpoints, and appendices, but it would largely be for the benefit of academics who, by Kaczynski's own omission, are unlikely to have value in his ideal revolutionary movement – Those concerned with sociology culture theoretically being too liberal and the scientists would be offended by *Letter to Dr. P.B. on the Motivations of Scientists*.

It stands to reason then that ISAIF and possibly *The System's Neatest Trick* are the only components of this book relevant to the strong everyman who Kaczynski wants to join his movement.

This too is rife with problems. Personally, I don't find ISAIF to be particularly well written. The entire manifesto is bookended by Kaczynski's constant bickering about leftist inferiority complexes and bleeding heart ideals. The problem is that he's too one track minded. Apparently, anything that isn't centrally related to the destruction of technological society is at best, irrelevant, and, at worst, a direct antithesis to his thinking.

By Kaczynski's thinking, everyone getting along is conducive to the system's goals and therefore leftism (pushing for POC, women's, gay, and animal rights) are in the

ruling majority's best interests and constantly propagandized by the media, hence can be ignored.

If old school right wing beliefs are against the system's goals and the system is as controlling as he says, one would think racist police and religious extremists, labelled by Kaczynski "laggards" would have been quietly erased decades ago yet that seems to not have happened? Curious.

Kaczynski, despite all his bitching about leftism, claims that he is for equality and human dignity. If this was truly the case, I think it would be advisable to say "issues will be greatly reframed and subsequently dealt with when the central enemy (technology) is defeated." Yet he can't resist ranting for page after page. I can see why his Ph.D. was in mathematics rather than philosophy or rhetoric.

I think he understands strongly the dangers of technology and, to some degree, how social/political power works in the modern world but *Technological Slavery* largely comes off as misguided and droning.

1 star - 1 review

Peter Z.

115 reviews1 follower

May 20, 2023

I disagree with the premise, I disagree with the conclusion, and I disagree with mad bombers. As much as a revolution may be needed, he has it all wrong. Shame on anyone who validates this insanity.

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How

Theodore J. Kaczynski

3.92

428 ratings

83 reviews

“There are many people today who see that modern society is heading toward disaster in one form or another, and who moreover recognize technology as the common thread linking the principal dangers that hang over us... The purpose of this book is to show people how to begin thinking in practical, grand-strategic terms about what must be done in order to get our society off the road to destruction that it is now on.”
—from the Preface

In *Anti-Tech Why and How*, Kaczynski argues why the rational prediction and control of the development of society is impossible while expounding on the existence of a process fundamental to technological growth that inevitably leads to a universal process akin to biological natural selection operating autonomously on all dynamic systems and determining the long-term outcome of all significant social developments.

Taking a highly logical, fact-based, and intellectually rigorous approach, Kaczynski seamlessly systematizes a vast breadth of knowledge and elegantly reconciles the social sciences with biology to illustrate how technological growth in and of itself necessarily leads to disastrous disruption of global biological systems. Together with this new understanding of social and biological change, and by way of an extensive examination of the dynamics of social movements, Kaczynski argues why there is only one route available to avoid the disaster that technological growth a revolution against technology and industrial society.

Through critical and comprehensive analysis of the principles of social revolutions and by carefully developing an exacting theory of successful revolution, Kaczynski offers a practical, rational, and realistic guide for preventing the fast-approaching technology-induced catastrophe. This new second edition (2020) contains various updates and improvements over the first edition (2016), including two new appendices.

Theodore John Kaczynski does not receive any remuneration for this book.

Genres [Philosophy](#) [Politics](#) [Nonfiction](#) [Technology](#) [History](#) [Science](#) [Sociology](#)

268 pages, Paperback

First published January 1, 2016

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5 stars - 25 reviews

Jason Gordon

56 reviews126 followers

October 20, 2016

A review is pending.

Arthur Meursault

Author

2 books21 followers

August 19, 2017

Yes. That Ted Kaczynski.

From Wikipedia:

Theodore John Kaczynski (born May 22, 1942), also known as the Unabomber, is an American mathematician, anarchist and domestic terrorist. A mathematical prodigy, he abandoned a promising academic career in 1969, then between 1978 and 1995 killed 3 people, and injured 23 others, in a nationwide mail bombing campaign that targeted people involved with modern technology. In conjunction with the bombing campaign, he issued a wide-ranging social critique opposing industrialization and advancing a nature-centered form of anarchism...

In 1971, he moved to a remote cabin without electricity or running water in Lincoln, Montana, where he lived as a recluse while learning survival skills in an attempt to become self-sufficient. In 1978, after witnessing the destruction of the wild land surrounding his cabin, he concluded that living in nature was untenable and began his bombing campaign. In 1995, Kaczynski sent a letter to The New York Times and promised to "desist from terrorism" if the Times or The Washington Post published his manifesto, *Industrial Society and Its Future*, in which he argued that his bombings were extreme but necessary to attract attention to the erosion of human freedom and dignity by modern technologies requiring large-scale organization...

Kaczynski was the target of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) longest and costliest investigation. Before his identity was known, the FBI used the title "UN-ABOM" (UNiversity & Airline BOMber) to refer to his case, which resulted in the media calling him the Unabomber. The FBI (as well as Attorney General Janet Reno) pushed for the publication of Kaczynski's manifesto, which led to his sister-in-law, and then his brother, recognizing Kaczynski's style of writing and beliefs from the manifesto, and tipping off the FBI. After his arrest in 1996, Kaczynski tried unsuccessfully to dismiss his court-appointed lawyers because they wanted to plead insanity in order to avoid the death penalty, as Kaczynski did not believe he was insane. On January 22, 1998, when it became clear that his trial would entail national television exposure, the court entered a plea agreement, under which Kaczynski pleaded guilty to all charges and was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole at ADX Florence, where he remains as of 2017.

I was contacted by the publishers of Ted Kaczynski's latest treatise *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* after writing a short but positive review of the original 1995 manifesto *Industrial Society and Its Future* on the website Goodreads. They offered me a free copy of the book in exchange for an honest review. Naturally, I was eager to take up their offer.

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How is an astonishing and, in my opinion, important attempt at analysing and outlining the root causes of modern society's ills and the potential end result of where advances in technology may take us. A work like *Anti-Tech Revolution* is not easily reviewed. Since this is not a work of literature it cannot be reviewed based on its narrative flow and style. We must examine ourselves before approaching a political manifesto. Fundamentally, how positive one receives the message contained within *Anti-Tech Revolution* will very much depend on one's own pre-existing values and opinions. Kaczynski does an excellent job in outlining what he sees as the situation of our current malaise, but admits himself that certain audiences are more receptive to certain ideas than others and it is a wasteful use of time to try to convince an audience that will never accept the book's basic premise. It is no use handing a copy of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* to a confirmed Libertarian and expecting an overnight conversion to Socialism. So it is with *Anti-Tech Revolution*. How much you will agree with Kaczynski's conclusions is most probably already determined before you even open the book.

It is also an unescapable truth that an audience cannot separate the author from the work, no matter how predisposed they may be to his views. The fact of the matter is that Ted Kaczynski did carry out a campaign of domestic terrorism that injured 23 people and killed 3 others. It is also a fact that Ted Kaczynski pleaded guilty and is currently serving eight life sentences without the possibility of parole. Is it moral to review a book written by such a person? How you answer that question will very much depend on your own pre-existing sympathies and value system.

I do not normally discuss politics on either this blog or on my related social media feeds. Regular readers will know that apart from the occasional book review I normally confine myself to satire and parody. However, in the interests of disclosure, I will state that I am not unsympathetic to the views of Ted Kaczynski and we both share similar views on phenomena like globalisation, centralisation, bureaucracy, technology and "leftism" (as Kaczynski described his view of the origins and psychology behind mainstream liberal thought in his original *Industrial Society and Its Future*). That statement alone will also automatically inform any reader on how much their own view of Anti-Tech Revolution might or might not align with mine.

My first thought on reading *Anti-Tech Revolution* was it quickly becomes apparent that the author's current incarceration has quite the influence on the sources gathered by Kaczynski to outline his point of view. Jailed and presumably severely limited in access to the internet, Kaczynski's sources largely come from whatever resources he has access to in his prison library (the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* is referenced frequently) and assistance he has obtained from his large number of outside correspondents. This has a profound influence over the book's structure in both positive and negative ways. Millennials may not realise that scholarly books were once written without the aid of the internet and that it was once frequent to quote books from five, fifty, one hundred and even two thousand years ago. This reliance on older sources is quite refreshing to the modern reader and gives the book a wandering style not dissimilar to that of Nassim Nicholas Taleb's when the author makes frequent detours into classical or medieval philosophy and history. It also emphasises that many of the arguments and fears covered by Kaczynski are not confined to our digital age: the consequences of rapid technological progress have been known since ancient times. However, it is admittedly a weakness of a book that discusses technology to be so outdated on recent trends in technology itself (though it does reinforce the argument that technological progress is accelerating faster and faster). The smartphone revolution has passed Kaczynski by while he has been confined to a prison cell; likewise other recent advances are conspicuously absent.

As the title suggests, *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* is neatly divided into the "why" and "how" of Kaczynski's worldview. The book is divided into the following four chapters, with several appendices included at the end:

Part One: The Development of a Society Can Never Be Subject to Rational Human Control

Part Two: Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself

Part Three: How to Transform a Society: Errors to Avoid

Part Four: Strategic Guidelines for an Anti-Tech Movement

Parts One and Two cover the "why" of what Kaczynski perceives as the reasons for modern society's problems and why it needs to be destroyed. Parts Three and Four get into detail on "how" to do so. Here I shall outline each section in more detail.

The first part - The Development of a Society Can Never Be Subject to Rational Human Control - is the book's most accessible. The reader doesn't have to subscribe to the author's anti-tech views to understand and agree with the arguments contained within. This is a very rational argument, but one that does need constant emphasising as its lesson does seem to be forgotten again and again by socialists, fascists, utopians, bureaucrats and all others who keep repeating the same mistake. No society can be controlled 100% by a central authority, and no central authority can forecast with 100% accuracy the direction the future will take. The development of human society, because it is composed of those strange irrational creatures called humans, can never be forced to completely follow a model concocted by some central planning theorist. Again, there are many echoes of Nassim Nicholas Taleb's works on randomness and probability - more than once I wondered if Taleb was aware of Kaczynski's writing.

Initially, it seems strange for a book dedicated to technology to devote its first section to the fallacies of economists and political theorists, but the logic soon becomes clear. Kaczynski is providing background on the human forces that have given rise to our growing use and dependence on technology. On the one hand we have competing groups throughout history who use technology to gain short-term advantages over their rivals in the eternal scramble for access to resources without consideration to the long-term consequences (though Kaczynski makes the excellent point that this is inescapable: any group that thinks too long-term will inevitably be wiped out by their more short-term thinking neighbours. A good argument as to why China's current relentless growth may succeed but doom us all in the process). On the other hand, we have central planners who advance technology in an attempt to further control society and make accurate predictions to its future. Kaczynski argues that this is impossible. To even predict with total accuracy what would happen across the entire world in just the next sixty minutes would require an impossible amount of calculations.

We then move onto Part Two: Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself. This section will be more familiar to readers of Kaczynski's original manifesto and follows similar themes of self-propagating systems, accelerationism and environmental destruction. Great detail is given in this section - much more detail than can be covered in a mere review - but suffice to say, Kaczynski does not share the same views of people like Ray Kurzweil and other technologists who believe we are heading for a post-Singularity utopia where an all-knowing Artificial Intelligence will advance eternally and transform us into digital immortals. No. Though Kaczynski is unable and unwilling to give a timeline, his very forceful argument is that technology can only continue to accelerate, and we are accelerating to our inevitable ruin. The global spread of the technological system over our now tightly interconnected world means

such ruin will also be global (perhaps little pockets like Bhutan may survive; Bhutan incidentally resembling probably the closest real-life example of how Kaczynski views a more sustainable society).

Anti-Tech Revolution doesn't delve into how technology and "leftism" progress forward together as the original manifesto *Industrial Society and Its Future* did, but the undertone is there. Shanghai-based accelerationist Nick Land has repeatedly alluded to the metaphor of an increasingly inter-connected, tech-dominated, left-leaning world that has slowly but unstoppably grown through the course of history as something akin to an out-of-control Lovecraftian monster (although Land appears to want the monster to succeed). Fellow neo-reactionary Mencius Moldbug has also coined the succinct epitaph: "Chthulhu may swim slowly, but he always swims left."

The question is: if the technological system is fated to inevitably destroy itself (and us with it), why does Kaczynski wish to bring about its destruction and why bother writing a manifesto explaining how to do so? His argument is simple. It is better to destroy the system now rather than later. Destruction of the world's technology would be devastating and involve death for a large percentage of the global population, but it will be nothing compared to the total destruction that awaits us when technology is even more advanced and our resources even more depleted.

With that argument, Kaczynski launches into the "how" of his revolution. Parts Three and Four discuss a strategy to create an anti-tech movement and outlines the errors to avoid. Anybody who has ever read Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals* will know what to expect in these two sections; Kaczynski himself acknowledges his debt to this book, though he shares zero common ground with Alinsky's objectives. Many references are made to historical revolutions (the Bolsheviks, Mao, Irish nationalists) and a few short-term and long-term strategies are presented as possible options for anyone who seriously wishes to take Kaczynski's argument to their logical end. Like the chapter on human irrationality, a reader doesn't have to share Kaczynski's worldview to appreciate the detail and thoroughness of his arguments. Incarceration has obviously given the Unabomber time to consider every angle possible, and the steps on how to organise a community are food-for-thought for daily life, not just when organising the downfall of technological civilisation.

Inevitably, the "how" of the book is weaker than the "why" since the "how" is more conjecture than arguments based on empirical evidence. There are a small number of times when it also seems to descend into something akin to Live Action Role Playing, but these few and far between.

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How was probably one of the most thought-provoking books I have read in the last ten years. It was the first time since university that I actually read through a book with a pen and paper to take notes. There are a handful of books that after reading them have left a deep and lasting imprint on my mind and political outlook - Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisations*, Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Taleb's *Antifragility* - and *Anti-Tech Revolution* will join them on that list. This isn't the work of a psychotic nutjob: all

of Kaczynski's arguments are backed up with empirical evidence and his writing is both intelligent and highly logical. I can see the truth of what Kaczynski is trying to tell us, though I am personally unable to follow the logic all the way to its conclusion. Who exactly is going to carry out his anti-tech revolution and bring down everything modern society is based upon? Certainly not me. I will be the first to admit that if anybody succeeded in enacting Kaczynski's grand plan than myself and my family will be amongst the first to be wiped out. Rootless, atomised within urban society, unable to survive without the accoutrements of modern technology and lacking the support network of someone in a more traditional way of life: I and everybody I hold dear would be dead within weeks of a large-scale takedown of the internet, an electromagnetic pulse, blowing up our energy sources or any of the other possibilities that Kaczynski outlines. That's if the destruction of the technological system didn't cause a nuclear meltdown or war that wiped me out first. I may be sympathetic to the views of Ted Kaczynski, but I have too much skin in the game to wish to see his vision succeed. Despite this, I agree with his conclusions on where we are heading - and it terrifies me. Culture wars and skirmishes between the alt-left and conservatives are just mere paraphernalia to what is really going on.

Elizabeth Tobier

1 review

September 1, 2017

This book is full of things that I had no idea about but that are really important. When I say "things" I mean the book describes systems and dynamics that are happening now that are the forces which are in control of and will ultimately destroy the planet. I am not a particularly anti-tech person. I just am not drawn to technology. But not caring or being passive in the presence of omnipresent voracious controlling powers is enabling of the inevitable devastation of technology. This book shows why just trying to limit use of technology will not succeed in reducing its devastating impact. The ideas, discoveries and insights presented in this book are very important and compelling, the writing is excellent and the information is fascinating. But the best feature of this book is the vision of the impending anti-tech revolution, the practical advice given on taking action, and the discussion, including historical examples, on why success in this endeavor is possible. This is a sobering book, but also a hopeful and extremely useful book for people ready to act.

Laurence Winch-Furness

1 review

April 28, 2018

Meticulously researched: despite the limited resources available to him in prison, Kaczynski combines an immense breadth of knowledge with a meticulous attention to detail to make a compelling case that the technological system can be destroyed, no matter how unlikely that may seem. Though not exactly light reading, Kaczynski is a great deal more lucid and readable than many other authors on tech issues, and the book is refreshingly jargon free.

While many reviewers seem to have preferred the first two sections, personally I found the later part of the book to be the most interesting. Hugely informative and persuasive, I can definitely recommend this book!

Paul

1,306 reviews16 followers

May 15, 2018

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How, Theodore John Kaczynski, 2015, ISBN 9781944228002

There are more than a few people who feel that society's rush toward a technological future will lead to disaster. This book presents some pointers for thinking in broad, strategic terms about getting society off that particular road.

The overall goal for any organization, whether it is social, political or environmental, should be clear and simple. It can't be something vague, like "promoting democracy" or "protecting the environment." The goal also needs to be irreversible; once achieved, it can never be taken away. An example is when women got the right to vote in the early 20th century. After it happened, any politician was going to have a very hard time taking it away from them. No matter how democratic an organization claims to be, there will be times when not every issue can be placed before the entire membership for a vote. There needs to be an inner core of committed members with the authority to make such decisions.

Throughout history, many people have suggested that human society needs to be "planned" or "controlled," for various reasons. A huge, chaotic thing like human society can not be controlled to any great extent. At most, it can be "nudged" in one direction or another. Who decides in what direction human society should go? What is a "good" outcome? Assume, just for a moment, that it is possible to control human society. Assume that there is a computer system big enough to handle the trillions of equations that need to be solved. Who is in charge, a person or a small group? Who gets to decide who that person, or people, should be? Can a lack of ego be guaranteed?

A number of writers, including Ray Kurzweil, are looking forward to the day when human immortality, or the coming of human cyborgs or the uploading of a person's brain to a computer become reality. The author asserts that these are nonsense. For instance, immortality will only be available to the one percent, not to everyone.

This book is heavy history and social science, so it is not for everyone. The reader will get a lot out of it. This is very highly recommended.

Marilou

3 reviews13 followers

January 14, 2020

Technology is a blessings but too dangerous...

Veg E.

8 reviews

April 1, 2020

This book is a must-read for anyone concerned with the crises facing humanity in the modern epoch. Drawing on numerous examples of rebels throughout recent history (mostly the 1900s), Dr. Kaczynski points out the attributes which contribute to success for (or hinder) a revolutionary movement.

From the Irish independence struggle to the Bolsheviks of Tsarist Russia, the suffragettes to the M26 de Julio in Cuba, the causes of these groups were disparate, but those who prevail have common elements worthy of understanding, and this book analyzes the victors (and the failures) to teach upcoming revolutionaries lessons not to be missed. By the book's title and Kaczynski's own renown for being an anti-tech revolutionary, it is presumed that the problems of technology are understood by the reader to some degree, so the first section of *Anti-Tech Revolution* addresses why the system is not able to be rationally guided and avoid catastrophic path laid by technology. Given that the many components of a society are always both interactive and unmanageable, we are far better off running an unpredictable course and surviving mishaps if going at a slow speed than at high speed - and to slow down will require a revolution. While a revolt against the techno-industrial system might initially seem implausible, the rest of the book shows that many of history's recorded successes overcame beginning in a similarly pessimistic position.

One key advantage to anti-tech revolution is that it is destructive rather than constructive: there are no aspirations of forming one's idealized society, rather only of stopping the technological assault upon Nature, which also binds and conforms mankind.

By the book's close, we are left with some examples of errors to avoid in challenging the prevailing order, some inspirations for making the commitment and forming a serious cadre of revolutionary leadership, and a necessarily vague playbook for selecting goals and pursuing them to ultimate success. A monumental text to be re-read and studied.

Archana

8 reviews

July 28, 2020

A revolutionary masterpiece.

Fearless Leader

205 reviews

September 30, 2020

A brilliant and concise logical proof.

biology-psychology cliodynamics foundational-books

Colophōn

47 reviews14 followers

January 6, 2021

Without a doubt, Kaczynski's best work. The difference between this book and his others is drastic: he manages to be even more meticulous than before, while adding many layers of historical interpretations and citations. If you are interested in reading this, I'd still recommend you read *Industrial Society And Its Future* first since it explains the evils of the techno industrial system in greater detail.

While reading it I noticed that the author made, in my opinion, small mistakes when it came to current events. For example, he argues that the system wants to encourage nationalism because technology profits from it, since it makes countries more competitive. This may have been the case in the past, but now it's the exact opposite. Most first world countries are very anti-nationalistic. This trend actually supports Kaczynski's argument that social values are naturally selected to benefit the system, since lack of a strong sense of nationality allows deeper world wide cohesion, and thus, a more efficient techno industrial system. But still, this has no significant impact on any of his ideas, at all. This book is brilliant.

Jude Courtney

5 reviews1 follower

January 31, 2021

A simple but sharp analysis of the world and how Kaczynski sees that we may change it. There is little to fault in this book (other than the gaping omission 1) and while I have read of other similar theories to K. on civilization and its direction

of travel, never before have I read such a concise grouping of these ideas. Nor have I ever hear them all come from the mind of a single author. That is solely why I rate this book 5 stars. The rest of the book is very good but as I said, overlooks a very fundamental problem.

1: The revolutionary analysis also holds up very well but unfortunately K. ommits one vital danger we face, (or at least the degree of this danger) that being nuclear waste. Although I don't put this on him personally as data on this problem is extremely difficult to come by and seldom discussed in the public sphere, it does stick a wrench in the gears of his theory. In this writing he gives no explanation as to how we would overcome this problem - but as far as I'm aware; nor does anyone else on this planet. If they do they can't be sure it is 100% safe and the timescales for disposal quickly arise as a huge problem. Not to mention that new nuclear power stations are still being built all over the world.

Shortsman

190 reviews20 followers

June 20, 2021

The "How" chapter serves in a large part as a guide to any revolution, but the first chapters are of course great reading as well, but read ISAIF first.

Ilkay

29 reviews16 followers

October 8, 2021

Well I believe this book will be the next communist manifesto of coming century. philosophy

Rinstinkt

184 reviews

June 13, 2023

Very good book. Enjoyed reading it.
after-2020 book-e-book book-physical

Nathaniel Westermann

34 reviews5 followers

October 10, 2021

Coherent.

Lionel Whitehorn

2 reviews

January 24, 2022

A practical guide for those concerned about the technology problem. Highly informative and a must read.

Gilfoyle

4 reviews2 followers

March 9, 2022

pls read

Ben

3 reviews

August 9, 2023

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How is a guide written to show people how to begin thinking strategically about the actions necessary to get our society off its current road to destruction. It's an excellent and groundbreaking work.

It's made up of four chapters: "The Development of a Society Can Never Be Subject to Rational Human Control," "Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself," "How to Transform a Society," and "Strategic Guidelines for an Anti-Tech Movement." There are many takeaways in this book, as it is reasonably dense (though never tedious) and, as stated in the preface, it's meant to be read with the same level of care that one would use in studying a textbook.

The author, Theodore John Kaczynski, describes the destructive process we see today as made inevitable by a combination of two factors: the colossal power of modern technology and the fundamental nature of "self-propagating systems" which comprise the biosphere and its components (including human societies and their artifices).

Kaczynski provides a precise analysis of the principles that determine the success or failure of social revolutions, incorporating highly relevant historical context as well as unique analogies to elucidate his ideas. Kaczynski asserts the pointlessness of advocating for energy conservation by explaining the theory of self-propagating systems. He calls attention to the fact that any amount of energy that's freed up by conservation is quickly used up by the ever-expanding technological world-system, which then only demands more with no regard for the consequences as it tries to push beyond the limits imposed by insufficiency of resources. He makes the point that we can't assume

that the extent of the coming damage to our environment is limited to current known causes of environmental harm, arguing that we need to consider the future impact on the environment by future—even as yet inconceivable—technologies.

Upon concluding that a catastrophic breakdown in the world-system (defined to be all things that exist on Earth, together with the functional relations among them) brought on by advancing technology is to be expected sooner or later, Kaczynski argues that the only solution is to eliminate the technological system altogether so as to preserve as much of humanity and the biosphere as possible. He utilizes years of diligent research to explain how this can be achieved through an exacting revolution, and why such a revolution is the only sensible approach to the problem of the ever-expanding global technological system.

According to Kaczynski, the critical challenge for anyone in the modern world wishing to

transform society is to effectively organize for practical action. It's established that staying on target and having one single, concrete goal is essential for the success of an anti-tech movement. Moreover, he gives comprehensive explanations as to why attacks on centralization, capitalism, globalization, etc., are not effective ways of resisting technological progress but rather distract from the need to eliminate the entire technological system. Another chief determinant of success for a revolutionary movement is having faith in its ability to achieve its objective. Kaczynski explores the significance of confidence within a movement, noting that no one will exert themselves if they lack hope in being rewarded with any impressive result. Revolutionaries must believe that the elimination of the technological system is worth any potential risks or disasters and must not allow themselves to be deterred with threats made by defenders of the system.

Nathaniel Wilkins

3 reviews

August 9, 2023

Arguably Kaczynski's most important and philosophically advanced work, *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* concisely illustrates how the destructive qualities inherent to the technological system will inevitably reach a point of catastrophic collapse, and the means by which those opposed to the technological system can practically and effectively mount a resistance against it.

In the first part of the book, dedicated to the "Why," Kaczynski dispels the myth that technology can be employed strictly for the benefit of humanity. This pessimistic view of technology stems from Kaczynski's analysis of society, which states that society, especially technologically advanced society, cannot be rationally controlled and directed by humans. Owing to the complex and chaotic nature of human societies, Kaczynski argues, society is not subject to rational control by humans, as this would require ab-

solute knowledge of a given society, which is impossible to attain. Therefore, society cannot control the development and application of technology. Since the development and application of technology cannot be controlled by society, there is a risk of increasingly dangerous and destructive technologies being created and employed for negative uses, which society will not be able to restrict or control—to say nothing of the supposedly positive technologies which left uncontrolled in the long term can mount up to severely negative outcomes.

Another important conclusion that is drawn in the first part of the book is that the collapse of the technological system is inevitable, due to the very nature of “self-propagating systems.” A Self-propagating system, according to Kaczynski, is:

“...a system that tends to promote its own survival and propagation.” (Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How, (2015) p. 42)

To put it simply, Kaczynski holds that self-propagating systems, or “self-prop” systems as he often calls them, tend to promote themselves with short-term survival in mind, with no regard for long-term consequences. Technologically advanced human societies (and their component organizations), which are self-prop systems, and which are also extremely tightly-coupled and interdependent, will act as self-prop systems naturally do, and compete for power with short-term survival in mind, at the expense of long-term considerations. And this activity, because of the highly destructive technologies which these systems possess, will lead to a breaking point in which the technological system and the biosystems on which it depends can no longer sustain themselves, and will likely bring about conditions which do not support the natural complex systems of Earth.

In the second part of the book, dedicated to the “How,” Kaczynski illustrates a clear and concise process by which those opposed to the technological system can rebel against it, to prevent the aforementioned scenario from occurring. Capturing all of the details Kaczynski lays out in this chapter would be far too complex for a mere summary, but a summary of key points will be done. In the chapter titled “How to Transform a Society: Errors to Avoid,” Kaczynski forms certain general postulates and rules about the nature of society and the revolutions which seek to radically change it. Some examples include:

“Postulate 1: You can’t change a society by pursuing ideas that are vague or abstract. You have to have a clear and concrete goal...” (Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How, (2016) first edition, p. 89).

“Postulate 4: Every radical movement that acquires great power becomes corrupt...” (First edition, p. 90).

“Rule (ii): If a movement aims to transform a society, then the objective selected by the movement must be of such a nature that, once the objective has been achieved, its consequences will be irreversible...” (First edition, p. 91).

“Rule (iii): Once an objective has been selected, it is necessary to persuade some small minority to commit itself to the achievement of the objective by means more potent than mere preaching or advocacy of ideas...” (First edition, p. 91).

In the final chapter, titled “Strategic Guidelines for an Anti-Tech Movement,” Kaczynski establishes many guidelines, which include the ideas that a revolutionary organization must have unity of action, the importance of studying earlier social and political movements, that those dedicated to a movement must be willing to accept great hardships and personal risks, among many other ideas of great importance.

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How, certainly one of Kaczynski’s most profound works, augments Kaczynski’s philosophical views and adds much quality to anti-tech philosophy. The reader is left with a thorough and complex analysis of society which they would be hard-pressed to find in mainstream circles. The book is a work of great importance that all of those interested in theories of society, anti-tech/pro-wilderness thought, or the ideas of Ted Kaczynski ought to pursue.

Br1cht

100 reviews4 followers

June 3, 2023

Scary how prescient he was, wrong methods but damn... He saw it.

Alex Cleghorn

3 reviews

August 7, 2023

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How (ATR) is considered by many to be Kaczynski’s magnum opus. Written entirely during his incarceration, this piece is arguably the most important of all his works. Where “*Industrial Society and Its Future*” (ISAIF) was written to sway a world that worships technology, ATR was written with the hopes that the reader had already been freed from the siren-like myth of progress. As a consequence, Kaczynski is able to bypass lots of the basics and delve straight into the core message he had in mind. He tackles the hard-hitting truths, such as; why a society cannot be subject to rational human control (and why the path of a society cannot be predicted), the inevitability of collapse, the transformation of a society, and the path a revolutionary movement should take. Kaczynski also explores past revolutions, showing what made them work, what made them fail, and what we can learn from them. Whether you decide it’s his magnum opus or not, you can’t deny the depth and accuracy of this book, especially with the added difficulties of where he was writing from.

Kaczynski opens with a brief evaluation on why it’s impossible to predict the path a society will take, and by extension, impossible to rationally control. He shows that each of many near infinite variables could be completely changed by even the slightest actions, which could have immense consequences and so on. This bears a striking resemblance to chaos theory and therefore has come under similar scrutiny to that of

the opening segment of ISAIF (specifically the critique of leftist behaviour) for being largely irrelevant to the overall theme of the rest of the book. This claim is largely put forth by people who have not understood the book. The opening segment ties together later chapters, such as chapter four touching on the fallacy of pre-planning a revolutionary movement.

The author concludes in ATR that modern technological society will inevitably collapse (and take with it most of the biosphere) if left to continue growing indefinitely although he doesn't make guesses about when, he assures that it's certain for a system infinitely growing, dependent on certain conditions and finite resources, struggling for power and dominion in the modern world-system. He coins the term "self-propagating system" to describe the aforementioned structure that promotes its own growth, out of short-term considerations at the expense of long-term health, as a fundamental attribute of all dynamic systems and organizations. In the case of industrial society, infinite technological growth becomes its downfall due to rapid, unpredictable and uncontrollable shifts in the conditions of the environment in which the process of competition among self-propagating systems (themselves dependent on the environment) takes place.

Chapter three, introduces four "postulates" that logically lead to several rules that determine a revolutionary movement's success (or failure). These postulates invoke themes and messages from ISAIF and Kaczynski's first book, *Technological Slavery* (TS), such as tendencies of leftists (postulate three) and the essay titled "The Systems Neatest Trick" (postulate one, in a more abstract sense).

In chapter four he goes over strategic guidelines of a revolutionary movement, stating that the path of revolution cannot be planned in advance, but is more effectively planned in accordance to the systems ebb and flow, reaching back to themes expressed in the first chapter. Here he expresses perhaps the two greatest takeaways of the book: firstly, a revolutionary movement should remain optimistic; secondly, meaningful progress in a revolution will be achieved by a minuscule but devout core of pragmatic and intelligent individuals united by a single, concrete goal.

The author takes many examples of past revolutionary movements and shows how they achieved their goals, the tactics they used, and how the revolutionary movements themselves functioned. Learning from movements such as the "Arab Spring," the IRA, the Bolshevik uprising and even as niche a phenomenon as the rise of Mexican gang dominance.

Anti-Tech Revolution perfectly exemplifies the brilliance and pragmatism of Kaczynski, and whilst not the most well-known, its utility is undeniable. I could not recommend it more to those who found TS and ISAIF compelling. Though it's quite different from his two prior published books, it's incredibly insightful and well researched.

Jake Carter

2 reviews

August 11, 2023

In his latest thorough exposition of anti-tech ideology, Theodore Kaczynski carries out a masterful description of the current situation we face with technology arguing in the first two chapters of this book why a revolution against the technological system is needed. Kaczynski illustrates how the technological system is far too complex and irrational in order for a meaningful reform to be made reconciling freedom with technology. He notes that even just one part of the technological system (such as setting the prices of commodities in the United States) would take over 60 trillion simultaneous calculations, requiring a sort of machine that in and of itself would increase the complexity of the system, rendering this calculation essentially pointless. This is the sort of paradox that Kaczynski raises, challenging the reader to seriously think about the nature of all societies, not just technological ones. This argument helps to convey the idea of the complete impossibility of rationally ordering the system around, as those who oppose the technological system but instead want to reform it so foolishly ignore. This first chapter is one of two that justifies Kaczynski's idea of revolution (of the anti-tech kind of course!).

The second chapter is where Kaczynski's analysis of the technological system broadens in scope. It is "theoretical" to Kaczynski, but the sort of theory he proposes is a clear and logical application of the laws of natural selection that have been applied to nature. To Kaczynski, the techno-industrial system is a self-propagating system that has essentially emerged through a process of natural selection, following short-term benefit over long-term negative consequences (e.g., swallowing up a large amount of natural resources, entirely ignoring the ramifications that such an action would cause in the long run). Because of the way the system has emerged at this point, anything else that tries to go down a separate path will be crushed. This is because any less technologically advanced self-propagating systems will simply be swallowed up by the more technologically advanced ones as the objective factor that is turning the course of societies is acquiring more and more power through technology, gobbling up all in their path in order to outcompete and become the most "fit" relative to all other systems. This process to Kaczynski essentially spells doom for the global techno-industrial system in the long-run as the system's actions are now seriously threatening the ecological stability of the Earth, therefore threatening the system itself and everything else in it. This conclusion is another reason for why Kaczynski thinks an anti-tech revolution (a very rapid one at that) must be carried out as soon as possible: the world might die if no action is taken.

Kaczynski's other arguments in the book are what a revolutionary movement should be in order to be successful, expounding upon loose ideas put out in "Industrial Society and Its Future" into understandable principles anchored by relevant concrete examples throughout history. These arguments give a new light of legitimacy to Kaczynski's idea of anti-tech revolution as many readers (who have also likely read the manifesto) get to know more precisely what Kaczynski's thought of revolution is. This fact alone is

why anyone interested in anti-tech works should read this book: it is the most relevant (and up to date) work related to the technological crisis we are enmeshed in.

This is certainly Kaczynski's most challenging book, but I do not think that should dissuade people from reading it. It is his true magnum opus, and it is why Kaczynski instructs the reader to not simply treat the book like one they would read casually but one that should be studied (as if it were an engineering textbook). In addition, it is a book that helps to give real practical information to the reader, something that Kaczynski desperately wanted to do in order to kickstart an active and effective anti-tech revolutionary movement.

Ford Cadman

3 reviews

August 3, 2023

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How, maintains the designation of being Dr. Theodore J. Kaczynski's final piece to the puzzle in terms of his literary works. With his previous works, Dr. Kaczynski presented his findings on the subject of technological advance, its grasp on our society, and also highlighted the negative consequences we are currently facing, and will soon face to a larger degree. Although this composition holds true to Kaczynski's aforementioned principles, it bears a heavier burden: that being the proposal of action. In this respect it's a tremendous success for it provides an exquisite ideation of revolutionary organization. Not unlike the author's other works, such as "Industrial Society and Its Future," or "Technological Slavery," the compilation of this finality is the product of decades of serious thinking and meticulous research. Kaczynski lends hand to the feat of countless revolutionary efforts throughout human history, and pulls from them the exemplification of their process' as well as an exhumation of their faults, aiding in the orchestration of a definitive revolutionary principle. While the book itself can be held to such a regard as that of an easily digestible textbook, the individual machinations of Kaczynski's conclusions are not meant to be interpreted as concrete in value, but held with esteem as a functioning factor of consideration. Much of Kaczynski's ideology is a fine tuned process, and such is the character of his revolutionary guidance, aiding in the determination of technologically imposed obstruction more so than the process of organizational development in itself.

This tends to be the focus of Anti-Tech Revolution; instead of giving distinct methods for every action of an organization's function, Kaczynski gives example of how to go about the most important features, and provides examples of obstacles to be assessed and treated with refrain. This is an interesting application often neglected by many of those who write in these same spaces intellectually. When most often the focus is on harsh and uniform guidelines to be followed, Kaczynski intends the function of such practice to be organized yet mindful of the subject's unpredictable nature. Kaczynski

and his work do not exclude chaos theory, instead a great precedent is placed upon this facet and allowed to take on a life of its own as a formality of organizational function. Instead, Kaczynski discovers within this theory fundamental features characterizing organizational structure and success leading to the development of a strong and successful anti-tech revolutionary movement.

It is important to see this work as a stepping stone for what is to come in terms of revolutionary action; which Kaczynski provides as a loose framework, easily adaptable to the needs of the movement, and in motion against the obstacles of the technological system. While it can be taken as an individual circumstance of technological criticism in its own right, Anti-Tech Revolution is only a small part of the greater whole of Kaczynski's intellectual conclusion, and though it may bare resemblance to other works in its field, it holds a greater accountability than most on the grounds of overall efficient measure and methodical backing. As stated, the writer of this work is a doctor of mathematics, thus any conclusion made holds foundation upon calculative ground, and does not fret in the face of scrutiny. Even in circumstance of incalculable prediction, Kaczynski compiles the chaotic aspects of our society and its functions into a precise forewarning as a means of factoring out the unpredictable gracefully.

For those aware of the technological imposition to which we remain abjectly subject, it is a misjudgement to pass by this work. The book holds place as an informational powerhouse to those who understand its purpose, and those predisposed to Kaczynski's prior works can maintain a sense of guidance amongst its provided methods. In general, this book is determined to be a guiding structure detailing the composition of a revolution against the technological system, and much of its method is focused on the organizational factor in perspective of complex interdependencies. This lies both in terms of the revolutionary movement, and the system itself, often highlighting weaknesses and strengths to be considered as evolutionary influences. The technological issue is addressed as an organism of unpredictable nature, perpetually advancing for its own growth and advantage. Throughout this composition, Kaczynski gives justifiable methods which are to be used for the total dissolution of the technological system, and many of the highlighted subjects are oriented towards doing this from the inside out. Kaczynski shows that by understanding the chaotic function of organization, a structurally integrated vanguard movement can indeed withstand and push against technical obstructions, aiding in the efficiency of its overall success against the technological system.

Many interesting subjects are distilled into the principles Kaczynski establishes, and it is to the benefit of the reader that this composition is addressed from every angle of the board, allowing for the comprehension of its substance to be expanded by the reader. That is truly the destination of this book's message, to provide a spark which ignites in the reader the understanding of our situation within industrial society, and how this issue must be addressed, along with the methods on how contained within. This book is a fine piece of revolutionary study, and should remain a crucial facet

within the libraries of ecocentric individuals who want a proper orientation to the change so direly needed within society today.

Emphour

3 reviews1 follower

August 24, 2023

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How is the logical next step after reading *Technological Slavery*, but can also easily stand on its own.

The first chapter is the final nail in the coffin for the belief that people can rationally control the development of human societies. Human societies are complex systems. Complex is not to be confused with complicated. A city with many one-way streets is complicated, but if the direction of travel changes depending on which streets have many cars on them, then the system is complex. All the individual parts have an effect on each other. The current behavior of a complex system does not allow for reliable conclusions about the future behavior of said system. An intervention in a complex system always has unpredictable consequences. Complex systems are, for example, the earth's climate, the financial market and of course human societies. Technologically advanced societies that are globally interconnected are even more complex. The financial market is a complex system whose behavior cannot be predicted. Even if different models and analysis techniques exist, the financial market is always characterized by uncertainties. This is even more true for a human society. Even if it were possible to compute a society by an unimaginably large number of simultaneous equations, and even if this computation could be performed by enough computing power, there is still the problem of data collection. In order to compute valid data for a somewhat extended period of time, the data would have to be extremely precise. The slightest inaccuracy in the input data can have devastating consequences for the calculation. For example, weather forecasts can still be made quite accurately for the next day, but because the data collected is not accurate enough, the forecasts become increasingly inaccurate the further into the future one looks.

Could a society be steered through many short term interventions to arrive at a long-term goal? This would lead to other problems: Who decides those long-term goals? Multiple people with different interests leads to an outcome that no one had in mind. Concentrating power in the hands of a single individual or handful of leaders does not solve the "conflict among many individual wills." Hitler and Stalin did not have the free reign that many think they had, for example: Both had to deal with top level generals who could be dangerous to themselves. Stalin's enemies were killed in the "Terror," leaving the Soviet Union militarily crippled. Hitler left the German military intact, but became the target of multiple assassination attempts. Dictators are restricted in their actions by technical factors and laws of economics, too.

Within large-scale societies, self-propagating systems compete with each other for power. These are, for example, companies, political parties and movements, or networks of corrupt officials. Like biological systems that evolve by natural selection, self-propagating systems will exploit every niche for themselves and thus represent uncontrollable forces.

The entire first chapter should be carefully studied by anyone who believes that the technology problem will somehow be solved by an elaborate plan or a fancy ideology.

Kaczynski proceeds in the second Chapter to explain how the aforementioned self-propagating systems compete with each other over short-term survival and will eventually turn the earth into a planet where nothing alive can exist, except the simplest algae and bacteria. The third chapter presents five rules for radical movements and elaborates in detail why these should be followed.

The fourth and last chapter presents strategic guidelines for an anti-tech movement. These are not detailed step-by-step instructions, but rather overarching principles that can be applied under many different conditions. The author presents distilled wisdom and experience from a wide range of movements and organizations to spare the future revolutionaries a lot of unnecessary trial and error.

This book is the much needed guide for anyone who wants to seriously take on the technology problem and everything that results from it.

John

3 reviews1 follower

September 3, 2023

Ted Kaczynski's most recent masterpiece, *Anti Tech Revolution: Why and How*, represents the culmination of decades of meticulous research he conducted during his time spent in prison. Drawing from an extensive array of disciplines—including but not limited to: history, psychology, and mathematics—Kaczynski skillfully weaves these seemingly unrelated topics into a coherent and compelling guide for revolutionary action.

In the first chapter, Kaczynski delves into and expands upon the section on the principles of history which he wrote in "Industrial Society and Its Future," and explains why the development of society can never be subject to rational human control. More precisely, he asserts that while short-term predictions of society may be feasible, long-term predictions or predictions made without an abundance of past experience are fraught with difficulty, and failure is the norm. The lessons that we should learn from history that Kaczynski emphasizes here are straightforward and important in the grand scheme of things, but are often neglected in practice. The evidence lies in the failures of past rulers and the subsequent decline of civilizations, highlighting humanity's tendency to repeat past mistakes. Kaczynski supports his main argument not only through numerous historical examples but also by drawing upon his extensive

knowledge in diverse scientific fields, such as chaos theory, computer science, quantum mechanics, and mathematical logic. Consequently, he demonstrates not only the inherent irrationality of human nature but also the existence of natural laws that render rational control and prediction of societal direction impossible.

The final two chapters hold utmost significance as Kaczynski imparts invaluable insights on avoiding common pitfalls while transforming a society and lays out strategic guidelines for revolutionary action. As a general rule of thumb, destruction is much easier than construction, and this forms the nucleus of hope for escaping the technological determinism currently dictating the trajectory of our society. Kaczynski makes plainly clear that, unfortunately, the only logical course of action humanity can pursue at this stage in history—to alter the disastrous trajectory of technological society—is to destroy the entire industrial system. To this end, it's imperative for any serious anti-tech movement to make itself resilient and robust by carefully studying existing revolutionary action in history, and Kaczynski does here to a great extent.

By analyzing the errors made by historical figures and past revolutionary movements, Kaczynski comes up with simple rules to follow such as how a movement should have one single, concrete goal that it strives towards, and covers more difficult rules such as how to exclude unsuitable members from a movement. Kaczynski emphasizes that an anti-tech movement cannot be laid out in advance, and that a movement will need to wait for opportunities that will enable revolutionaries to instigate a collapse of the technological system. Since human events emerge through intricate and complex interactions among cultural, social, political and economical forces, it is unfeasible to plan out a movement in advance. Thus, revolutionaries must be creative and be able to adapt on the fly to unforeseen events and unfavorable circumstances. Kaczynski shows us that a revolutionary movement comprised of a small minority of rational, intelligent individuals holds the potential to overthrow the technological system.

Overall, *Anti Tech Revolution: Why and How* is a recommended read for anyone who wants to gain a better understanding of grand revolutionary strategy and alter the direction where technological society is hastily leading us today. Note: It is best supplemented after one has read "*Industrial Society and Its Future*."

4 star - 18 reviews

Dave

259 reviews34 followers

October 19, 2016

Ted Kaczynski may seem a strange candidate for devising a revolutionary "grand strategy", being best known for what most would consider just desperate acts to get

attention, and which most would also say only made it easier for the Right to demonize environmentalists. He does have a lot to say that's worth thinking about though. The first half of this book summarizes the problems brought on by technological development, explaining why it's foolish to ever expect such large-scale and complex industrial societies to be controlled rationally by wise decision-makers. He talks about power being a bit of an illusion, basically how leaders' decisions are never truly just their own. Some conclusions drawn from this are a little exaggerated and he does admit to simplifying his arguments for the sake of clarity but the general idea is pretty sound. I think it comes across as a little too kind to the corrupt leaders of the world, creating the impression that they do most things out of necessity despite the fact that golden toilets, pet tigers and other examples of extravagant waste would suggest otherwise. At this point their decisions actually seem to be bad even for themselves in the short-term, as "consumers" lose so much that they can no longer consume. Part of his analysis is actually that irresponsible societies have an advantage over responsible ones since they're willing to sacrifice the future for the present, allowing them to cause more damage to their environments, letting them increase their numbers and manufacture more weapons than their competitors. I would have to agree with that general idea. My biggest disagreement with this part of the book is probably just the emphasis he puts on the dangers of artificial intelligence and self-replicating machines, and that's not to say that I see nothing to worry about regarding these technologies, just that in my opinion the real problem is the environmental damage caused in the creation of these things rather than the effects of them being used. I just feel like there's so little chance of technology progressing to that point before totally destroying everything anyway, but I can't honestly say that I know how things will play out.

The second part of the book is focused on what needs to be done about the problems he brought up in the first half. He spends a lot of time criticizing the vague goals of typical resisters, emphasizing the importance of having one "single, clear, simple and concrete objective" to focus on. Objectives like "freedom", "democracy" and "social justice" get harsh treatment here. It's actually pretty similar to my own conclusions that I wrote about in my book, *A Proposal For Primitivism* (<http://aproposalforprimitivism.blogspot...>). My own choice for a common goal was ending economic growth, and I spent a good deal of space explaining why our economic system is preventing just about every change that we currently need. Kaczynski's opinion is that "the objective chosen should be that of "killing" the technological system..." I found this a little disappointing since it's hard to say what that even means. It's not really much less vague than the objectives he spends so much time criticizing. It also seems kind of backwards to me. If all high-tech manufacturing disappeared tomorrow, we'd still see imperialism and corrupt businesses raping the world. Immense damage was done to the world with stone-age agriculture and war. Also, if people are forced to start providing their own food and firewood locally, how environmentally responsible can we expect them to be now that they lack these traditional skills and are in such dense living arrangements? I'd expect what little is left of our forests and soils to only be depleted

faster. I'd expect more overfishing (except in deep oceans) and hunting, more fighting over scarce resources and more scapegoating of environmentalists by those who would rather blame some easy target for their impoverishment than face the harsh realities of our ecological and social problems. Our current lifestyle is the most disconnected from sustainable that we've ever been, making people more dependent on the system's survival than they were at the times of past revolutions. Plus surveillance is more advanced and ubiquitous than ever before. We can't just expect people to join our movements when we threaten their livelihoods. Again, I can't say for sure that he's wrong but I personally feel like we're better off starting with some sort of large-scale reform to make further changes easier to accomplish.

He explains a little more in Appendix 3 why he feels that focusing on targets like capitalism and centralization first would be a waste of effort. In his view, capitalism won't go anywhere until a more "efficient" system is invented. But I would have to ask, is capitalism really more efficient than other systems? We're doing so much pointless work for so little benefit. Capitalism promotes planned obsolescence, brainwashing people to want things that make their lives worse, packaging and processing food thousands of miles from where it's grown and eaten, etc. You can say that by promoting the production of more stuff than other systems it's had an advantage in acquiring power, so the point he's trying to make is sort of partially true, but there's nothing "efficient" about capitalism. A lot of vital industries wouldn't even be profitable without receiving enormous subsidies. If we can put so much effort into artificially protecting such a stupid system then why is systemic reform of any kind so hard to imagine? Frankly, just about anything could be subsidized into existence. There are a few other conclusions in the book that I at least partially agree with even though I disagree with the examples he uses to make his case, like saying that the Irish had no reason other than their own egos to demand independence from Britain, which he was basically using to make the point that revolutionaries of the past, who we should study, weren't necessarily perfect role models for an anti-tech revolutionary movement.

This book is really more a list of things to consider when devising a grand strategy for resistance than an actual grand strategy. I was hoping for a little more specificity to be honest but it still seems worth reading for anarcho-primitivists, radical environmentalists, rewilders, and others involved in resisting the destruction of our planet. Even though I have disagreements I can at least appreciate the attempt at offering solutions. There are too many books out there, and more keep being written, that just rehash what we've already heard a million times then, instead of following their own logic, basically tell us the best we can do is support Democrats. We need more of these attempts at coming up with real solutions. This book also has the bonus of being written by someone that people are interested in even if they totally disagree with his ideas. As it says on the back cover, no remuneration goes to Ted Kaczynski from the sale of this book, so whatever your opinion of him is, you're not actually supporting him by reading this book anyway. As long as this isn't treated as a revolutionary bible or something I see no reason not to recommend it.

William Tarbush

80 reviews2 followers

October 30, 2016

The primary three premises of *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* are 1. That society has poor goals. 2. That globalization has made the society into a world-system. 3. That society is unpredictable because no one is separate from it any longer.

Kaczynski seeks to separate people from technology society by lowering trust in technology. This allows people to form other societies separate from the technological world system.

Chapter 1 covers the unpredictable world system. Chapter 2 offers that the world is a self-propagating system (self-prop). Chapter 3 notes postulates on society and errors to avoid. Chapter 4 tells a series of strategies, such as uniting with Academia as outsiders. The insiders, resisters, would act as agents of the society separation.

The weakest chapter, in my mind, is the fourth. I thought the first three were amazing, but do not understand chapter 4 as well.

This book contains a lot of history and strategy and tactics for long-term change. Kaczynski notes that the text needs to be read over and over in the preface for it to sink in. I will be reading this again very soon.

Paula

454 reviews16 followers

November 24, 2016

My introduction to the works of Ted “the Unabomber” Kaczynski was through a highly provocative quote in an article published in *Wired* magazine titled “Why the Future Doesn’t Need Us” written by Bill Joy. I remember thinking the quote to be reasonable, and compelling. Upon discovering that the quote was from Ted Kaczynski’s “Unabomber Manifesto,” I had two reactions. My first reaction was horror at discovery that I could agree so wholeheartedly with what I had hitherto considered the ravings of a madman. The second was a tentative curiosity to see what else he might have had to say. At that point, I went on-line and read the manifesto. Much as I expected, the manifesto was both brilliant and disturbing.

I recently received an invitation to obtain a copy of Kaczynski’s latest treatise, *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How*, in return for an honest review. Once again, I approached the opportunity with both trepidation and curiosity. And once again, curiosity got the upper hand. I expected a brilliant mind at work, which I did indeed find. Kaczynski is without a doubt one of the most penetrating thinkers of our time when it comes to recognizing the damage being done to the environment by advanced technologies and the industries that produce them. He is also a keen observer of the

damage to humanity as well. We are complicit with our own worst enemies when it comes to damaging our health and emotional wellbeing. I think we owe it to ourselves, and to our civilization to awaken to the destruction that our unthinking exploitation of nature has wrought. For this reason alone, Ted Kaczynski's works are worthwhile reads.

However, *Ani-Tech Revolution* is not primarily concerned with convincing readers of the coming crisis. Less than a quarter of the book is concerned with this. At this point, the crisis is all too obvious for most of us to ignore (though the powers that be are trying to distract our attention away from the crisis). The primary thrust of the book is Kaczynski's insights into how revolutions succeed. He has parsed out some interesting guidelines from his studies of historical revolutions. After outlining his recommendations, he presents historical details to illustrate his meaning more clearly. His hope is that others will take up the battle that he can no longer fight.

Having learned a harsh lesson from his own incarceration, he now advises future anit-tech revolutionaries to use legal means of forwarding the cause. However, that seems like a minor detail given that his overarching goal is to bring about the end of civilization as we know it. While a series of strong EMPs directed at large cities could inflict enough damage to end the usefulness of high tech tools, I don't see how this could be brought about legally. Should such a terrible act be sanctioned by a democratic movement, or a revolutionary takeover, it seems likely that few laws would be left to restrain anarchy.

Perhaps Kaczynski is right, that there is no other way to save the planet except to destroy every advance that civilization has given us, and return to a more primitive way of life. I don't know if that is even possible, given the large populations in our cities today. City dwellers certainly aren't capable of feeding themselves, and there would have to be a massive migration. I do know he is right that the most dangerous thing we could do is rely on technology to save us, through some grandiose manipulation of the weather in order to mitigate global warming. As he so grimly says, that could prove worse than nuclear war. Is Kaczynski's insane solution really the only one in the offing? I hope not. Yet, I think it is worth considering that parts of Kaczynski's plan might prove useful. We likely do need to undermine the modern reliance on technological tools. I believe we cannot afford to ignore any ideas at this point, even the most extreme ones.

Brendan

1,427 reviews14 followers

January 8, 2017

An interesting book. Admittedly, I have never read any of Kaczynski's previously published writings; my interest in other anarchoprimitivist works got a review copy of this sent my way, and now here we are.

The premises set forth here are concise and entirely well thought out, researched, and presented. The idea that our increasing technology will eventually create a worldwide catastrophe is not a new one, and Kaczynski's warnings of organizing against this end have been presented by plenty of other writers. Nevertheless, this was a thoughtfully presented argument on the topic.

Anthony

32 reviews65 followers

December 28, 2019

"Theodore J. Kaczynski's *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* is mostly a practical manual on how to initiate a future anti-technological mass movement with the overall intention of overthrowing the current technological system. It abounds in quotations from Lenin, Mao, Alinsky, Trotsky and Marx and one of the most interesting aspects of the book is the exploration into how past revolutions (the Bolshevik, Irish nationalist, Maoist etc) were successful. The first half is more theoretical and speculative, outlining Kaczynski's ideas of self propagating systems i.e. corporations through natural selection, and how that may affect the future globally. I thought his criticisms in this regard toward capitalism and its tendency to sacrifice long term benefits to short term goals to be especially enlightening. Kaczynski argues that capitalist endeavors that place long term objectives above profit motivated economic decisions that result in gains in the short term tend to be eliminated in the process of natural selection. The second half takes a more "hands-on" approach in describing how a future anti-tech movement may look like and what things those directing the movement should do, what attitudes they should take, and what they should look for to make such a movement successful. While I am from not only a political, but religious point of view pro-environmental, one of the things I don't understand about radically environmental activists and intellectuals like Kaczynski and Linkola is why they are so concerned about the planet, when eventually the earth will become a cold dead rock anyway because of the expanding universe or because of the death of the sun etc. I could understand if they had a transcendent metaphysical view of things, but they appear to be thoroughgoing materialists. In the span of billions of years, and amidst a meaningless indifferent universe, what does it matter if the earth and its inhabitants live 20 years or 20 million years? Yet their approach toward environmentalism and technology are fanatical to a religious intensity. Kaczynski was willing to kill for his beliefs and did, while Linkola advocates killing off most of the population on the planet. In some ways their environmentalism even mimics religion. For instance, I am reminded of an interview I saw once in which Linkola confessed what "environmental sins" he was guilty of. To quote H.P. Lovecraft: "What does it all amount to, anyway? In a few million years there will be no human race at all. Man, at best, is but an incident-and a very trifling incident-in the limitless history of Nature... Planets are born, die, and are born again-and so on without end. It really

makes one quite dizzy to think of such expanded matters! Possibly it is better to be near-sighted and orthodox like [Maurice W.] Mo[e], trusting all to a Divine Providence, R.I.””

books-i-own environmentalism

Gary

250 reviews52 followers

November 21, 2021

This book is based on the premise that technology and the ‘technology system’ are evil and must be destroyed to ensure Earth’s long-term survival. This is a very strong claim to make but the author spends a large part of the book giving examples to justify this.

In a nutshell, Kaczynski believes that technology is becoming so ubiquitous, all encompassing, intrusive and environmentally damaging that humans will be surpassed by machines (see Terminator 2, Rise of the Machines [my example]) and eventually the Earth will become a place where none of the complex life forms we know of today will be able to survive, i.e. the end of Life as We Know It, owing to ruination of the atmosphere and oceans, devastation of the forests, etc.

His main argument is that in order to be successful, human groups (whether a company, a tribe or a state) always operate in the short term, irrespective of any long-term damage to themselves, their country or the environment. This is because by exploiting their resources to the full they are more likely to grow bigger and/or stronger than groups that restrain themselves and only use resources sparingly. Ultimately this means that the bigger stronger groups will take over from the smaller weaker ones, which will be eliminated or absorbed, after which they will adopt their mode of living. In business, the large corporations take over / buy or force out of business the smaller ones through economies of scale / better advertising / more competitive pricing, etc. These arguments illustrate the reasons why we all know that global warming is a problem, and chopping down goodness knows how many acres of rain forest every day is robbing us of biodiversity, potential medicines, oxygen and beauty but we do it anyway because the people doing it want an economic advantage NOW and most people feel powerless to do anything about it.

Kaczynski foresees a time when the world will be run by a smallish number of people; a combination of the executives of huge global corporations, the largest governments and possibly a religious group (assuming religion doesn’t fall by the wayside completely). Personal freedoms will become more and more restricted as technology makes it far easier to control and monitor individual people and the world will be so interdependent that a blip anywhere in the system will have dire consequences all around the world.

He foresees that technophiles will design machines of more and more intelligence and capability (we know that they seem to be doing that now) and want to end up with a man-machine hybrid that will allow people to 'live forever' (though I can't imagine why anyone would want to!) but that eventually the machines will realise that they no longer need weak, fickle and inefficient humans and eliminate us entirely.

I have only scratched the surface here and he gives many examples, many of which support his arguments. So much for his reasons for wanting to get rid of technology.

Most of the book is taken up with a detailed study of human nature and human groups, particularly in revolutionary mode. He cites many examples of how revolutions were conducted, the mistakes they made, what made them successful and some of their benefits and flaws. He quotes much of the history of Communist groups, not because he is a Communist but because they were, by and large, the most successful of revolutionaries, at least in the sense of promoting and carrying out revolutions, and holding on to power afterwards (at least for a few decades). He also uses the American Revolution, the French Revolution and the Mexican revolutions as examples of how to, or not to, overthrow an established government.

He explains how to influence people, recruit people, control the pre-revolutionary group and 'how and when' to finally overthrow the establishment. The last bit is very vague, of course, because it depends on life for most ordinary people becoming difficult, unenjoyable and intolerable and, therefore, more willing either to join in the revolution or at least do nothing to prevent it, because they no longer feel the status quo is working for them.

Kaczynski is a very intelligent man: having looked him up last night I was surprised to see that he was a 'child prodigy', excelling at mathematics. He went to Harvard at 16, earned a PhD from Michigan State and by 26 was an assistant professor at UC, Berkeley. After two years he resigned and went to live in a cabin in the woods with no electricity or running water, professing hatred for technology. He began writing about the evils of technology and began sending letter-bombs to people he saw as promoting or teaching about it. He was known as the Una Bomber.

This continued for seventeen years, with the FBI later claiming his was the most expensive investigation in their history. He killed three people and injured/maimed 23 more. He was caught only because he told the authorities (anonymously of course) that he would stop his bombing campaign if they persuaded prominent organisations to publish his anti-tech 'manifesto'. This was done and his brother recognised his writing style and turned him in. He is now serving life in a federal penitentiary.

Reading this book I have to say I could empathise with some of the things he was saying about modern technology and the way it progresses exponentially, seemingly without limit, providing 'services' that many of simply do not want or need but which become the norm. Most disturbing is that it is not difficult to agree with him that one day it might enable us to push the ecosystem too far and the world will become too unstable to support life. Of course we rely on technology to get out of difficult situations but trying to control or manipulate a system that has developed over millions

of years may prove too difficult. Many of his arguments are well thought-out and convincing. Where I depart radically from his views, however, is his earnest desire to eliminate technology and return to a simple life such as was the norm before the Industrial Revolution – and of course I abhor his desire for violent overthrow of society, no matter how sincere his motives.

As a study of human nature and also of how to conduct a revolution, this is a very well researched, interesting and (dare I say?) useful book – all revolutionaries should read it several times. Four stars.

I would like to thank Alex, CEO of Fitch & Madison Publishers of Scottsdale Arizona, for providing me with a free copy of the book in exchange for an honest review.

history owned political

Frank Clark

36 reviews

February 21, 2017

Let me begin this review by stating up-front that I was contacted by the publisher with the offer of receiving the book free of charge for providing a review. This was an opportunity which I eagerly accepted as I am a fan of Kaczynski and his philosophies. I currently own "Technological Slavery" (the book contains "Industrial Society and Its Future" as well), which profoundly altered my views on technology, philosophy, and life in general.

In "Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How", Kaczynski brilliantly expounds on his philosophy. Much like a teacher to a student, he provides constant references, examples, arguments, and logical conclusions which any open-minded reader may find hard to dispute.

Kaczynski can be sometimes be long-winded; often I found myself lost in the details, wondering what point he was trying to make. However, many of the topics he covers require lengthy exposition in order to make his point or draw a conclusion. He has a lot to say, and he wants to make sure you understand exactly where he is coming from.

My only true grievance with this work is that Kaczynski writes in what may be considered an antiquated mode. It is quite off-putting that he prefers a clinical style ("This author feels..." or "In the opinion of this author...") instead of using a more conversational tone, which would make for an easier read. I feel that this book is an appeal, not a text book (though he does, slightly pompously, say in the preface that this book is "not a book to be read; it is a book to be studied with the same care that one would use in studying, for example, a textbook of engineering") - it would hit home better if it were more personal.

Although I truly appreciate his efforts and his foresight into what may ultimately befall humanity, I feel I have to point out that the revolution he calls for could never

happen. Because of the global nature of this 21st century planet, because technology is pervasive in almost all places on this planet, and because supporters of the downfall of technology are scattered, the successful coordination necessary to take down the entire system at once would be impossible. The very technology being used for coordination would be the same in line for destruction. And if one were to start with just a single country in the hopes of spreading across the planet, one would quickly find themselves quashed by outside forces.

In the end, however, on the slight chance that revolution were to come, it would undoubtedly not last long. He has not taken two things into consideration: human desire to "rise above" and human desire for sloth. Even were all the computers smashed, all the power plants torn to the ground, and all the wire sunk to the bottom of the sea, humanity would still find a way to overcome and progress. Technology would be rediscovered, power plants rebuilt. And once mankind was again comfortable, the propensity to remain in that comfort would ensure that the system would again grow back and we would quickly find ourselves in this same position, having this same debate, calling for a revolution.

It may be depressing to contemplate the destruction of this planet by our own greedy hands; it is a topic which must be studied with complete frankness. But I do not share Kaczynski's opinion that revolution must be quick, total, and final. I choose to believe that we can overcome the evolutionary powers that drive us to consume resources without regard to the future. Technology can be a force for evil, true: but it can also be a force for good. "Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How" may not find its place in the annals of history as a call to supreme revolution, but I think it will definitely find its place as a rallying cry and an admonition to look forward to our children's children, and do the right thing.

Bart Everson

Author

5 books34 followers

March 15, 2018

It's tempting to dismiss Ted "Unabomber" Kaczynski as a kook. That would make this book easier to ignore. However, even a casual glance reveals this text is not the product of an insane mind. It is cogent, well-reasoned, and heavily supported with scholarly citations. It is also deeply disturbing. If anything, it is a bit too dry and academic. Yet the motivating passion shines through in every section. The author is concerned about the fate of our world. He's convinced that the rational governance of society is impossible, and that the technological world-system will destroy itself. He advances here his deepest arguments on why we're (probably) doomed, while offering a thin sliver of hope through a prescriptive program. It's a very dark vision, to be sure, and I'm not entirely sure he's correct. But I do know this: Kaczynski is considering

issues we should all be thinking about. You may disagree with his conclusion and even his premises, but I'd recommend this book to anyone with strong critical thinking skills.

Note: I got a complimentary review copy from the publisher.

Yage

29 reviews

January 30, 2018

Not as good as the (unabomber) manifesto, but still an entertaining read. Ted continues where he left off with the Industrial society... and goes into well-structured albeit theoretical advice on how to prepare a (anti-tech) revolution. Relying heavily on works and experience of a well-known revolutionary figures, he outlines actions and precautions of a successful change in a system. While the book seems to be of no practical value, one can still find Kaczynski's observations helpful should he be willing to apply them mindfully in a different setting.

Ayush Ghimire

17 reviews2 followers

September 28, 2018

A real eye-opener, and certainly a different perspective for all the technophile. The details to which the writer goes to explain the society their working is commendable. But, even though it was titled anti-tech it was not more of an attack on human mindset rather than tech.

Maybe that was what I liked about this book.

Jens Nordmark

4 reviews

November 6, 2018

A criticism of civilization that avoids the issue of quality of life and instead argues that human survival is threatened by civilization. The arguments are much better than is typical of these kind of claims. The author is clearly interested in transhumanism and far future technologies as well as game theory and actual world history.

Radoje

31 reviews1 follower

February 17, 2019

An excellent distillation of Uncle Ted's though on how to build an effective radical movement. People new to his work should be warned, this book is more about the "How" and less about the "Why". Still he manages to further explain the many shortcomings of most anarchist groups.

The book is slightly marred by the fact that it is clear that Uncle Ted did not have much access to research resources through his prison library. He says as much in the introduction, and it shows. If he were pardoned and set free, he would have been able to write a much more well-argued book.

politics

Ryan McCarthy

262 reviews18 followers

April 28, 2019

Rambling at times but overall interesting and engaging.

Lemma

33 reviews2 followers

June 14, 2020

This is basically Rules for Radicals 2.0. It's a short and decent read- there's not a lot about tech, but you can easily abstract the framework to whatever sort of radicalism suits you.

Bill reilly

508 reviews8 followers

July 19, 2021

Ted Kaczynski may be crazy, but he ain't stupid. In this work from 2016, he warns of climate change, pesticides and fertilizers contaminating water tables and nuclear waste leaking at Yucca Mountain. A lab in Brazil accidentally released hybrid killer bees and our scientists continue to play God with unforeseen consequences. The earth will be left a dead planet with only bacteria and algae remaining. AI is in the process of surpassing and possibly overtaking the human race at some point in the future. Kaczynski points out that most revolutions were started by a small minority; the French, Russian, Chinese, Cuban and South African ones are given as examples. Castro had a band of fifteen at the start of his overthrow of the Battista regime. Politically, Ted is equally disdainful of the PC left and dogmatic right. His sources vary widely, from Jesus, Martin Luther, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, to more current figures such as Edward

Snowden and his exposure of our Big Brother government. We live in dangerous times and this book is an excellent overview of our present and future peril.

Jude King

15 reviews

February 10, 2023

In a more formal and clear approach than his manifesto Kaczynski gives a detailed insight to his thinking about modern ecological activism and its issues. While not a deductive proof and admittedly making some generalisation (which he is open about) he details an axiomatic approach to analysing social systems in terms of analogously biological systems which desire to 'reproduce' these can be kingdoms or families, companies or churches. Whatever they are, Kaczynski holds, they act accordingly to similar generative and competitive principles.

Introducing this system allows Kaczynski to attack *in principal* many proposed solutions to the ecological crisis, not on a contingent social or technological level but as impossible a priori (almost). The strength of his axiomatic basis and its applicability are to the taste of the reader but once accepted he provides compelling arguments about why contemporary and popular approaches to solving ecological issues are generally futile or too slow moving.

The book is divided into two parts, a diagnosis of social systems and how this dismembers many modern approaches to environmental change (dotted with a few colourful metaphors along the way, take for example the comparison of Elon Musk fans being in a millenarian cult of the Singularity) and how given such a state of the world the true environmentalist *ought* to provoke change.

Kaczynski's origin is not forgotten in the second half as he very carefully dances as close to suggestions of terroristic actions as possible but it does offer quite interesting views on how to approach trying to make revolutionary change be it for gay rights, women's equality, global communism or primitive anarchism; his principles are abstracted from many radicals and hold water as organisational principles. If one abstracts away the principles for how an important social movement should organise and sustain itself in a non-violent manner this work is as powerful as Saul Alinsky's in showing how this can be done.

Overall it's a very good book to challenge your calmness about the ecological crisis going on around us and an analysis that shows many of our idealistic solutions to be perhaps untenable while the final section will give you an interesting account of how radical movements did and do operate though I would say the impact of this is only lasting if you want to engage in such a movement. Nonetheless, it is important to disentangle Kaczynski's acceptance of political violence from the other threads of his arguments to give a sensible reading and this can be done relatively easily.

Robert Szeffler

3 reviews

August 14, 2022

Kaczynski really did a lot of work for this one, expanding extensively on the themes from the Industrial Society and its Future. It's not perfect. He doesn't get everything right. Some of his insights are contradictory. But it's a ton of food for thought, the kind of literature that is really hard to come by these days.

Brett Stevens

Author

5 books39 followers

December 10, 2022

Everyone knows that humanity is spiraling out of control, but no one knows what to do about it, since we disagree as to the source and are constrained by systems like democracy and commerce which prevent radical action. I disagree with Kaczynski's core premise, which is that technology led us down this path; I defer to Plato who points out that organizations decay over time as unspoken and approximate agreement on the good (culture) is broken down by infighting, opportunistic individualism, and mutation load. However, the core of this book consists of presenting a convincing argument for resistance and adopting certain asymmetric methods to thwart a system enough to slow it down to the point where it must confront its internal contradictions. Call it the taildragger hypothesis: induce enough drag, and the airship cannot move forward, therefore has to change direction in order to stay aloft. As usual, Kaczynski writes with an intellectual spark arising from his practicality and core commitment to nature and human thriving, and this makes for an engaging, quick read packed with tangential ideas that could each be their own thesis or late-night movie.

3 stars - 16 reviews

Cameron McAvoy

22 reviews1 follower

January 4, 2018

I found the first two chapters of the book fairly interesting, as it clarified a number of questionable statements in his original manifesto. In particular, Industry Society and Its Future contains a lot of really nasty vitriol towards both the left and right wing establishment, which originally had me confused to who his audience might be. Anti-Tech clarifies that this is intentional as a tactic to discourage fair-weather followers

or other toxic undesirables to the neo-luddite movement. Anti-Tech has a lot of new content covering recently developments in technology and Silicon Valley culture. In it, Ted had plenty of harsh words for singularitarians and Ray Kurzweil in particular, but I found myself wishing Ted had read *Superintelligence* (by Nick Bostrom) and been familiar with more contemporary works. Anti-Tech only spends a few sentences on the topic of strong AI, or the risks involved with AI. This topic likely wasn't covered due the timeline, as most of Anti-Tech was written at or before 2014, but I think he would have an interesting perspective on the subject. I am morbidly curious whether he would believe strong AI to be a greater or lesser risk than nuclear war; currently he rates nuclear war as a lesser risk in relation to maintaining the status quo.

I was a little disappointed that the conclusions of Anti-Tech were largely the same as *Industrial Society*, but I suppose congruity should have been predictable.

I'm totally opposed to the conclusions of the book, but I feel that Ted K was/is a person who correctly identified a number of problems with society far ahead of time. In particular, Ted believes that if left unchecked, the current geopolitical system will eventually leave the Earth completely uninhabitable except for microbial life, due to extreme climate change, toxic metal poisoning and misguided geo-engineering attempts; so a return to a subsistence lifestyle he argues, would be superior to this outcome. I am not sure I accept his end outcome, but even if it's correct, the technological society we have now is the best chance we have at advancing humanity to a multiplanetary stage, and perhaps that is worth the risk involved. I'd personally take the gamble, risk it all, and go for space-faring or go extinct.

Ezechel

243 reviews5 followers

July 13, 2017

Well researched, articulate and dangerous.

Right from the start I will say I am not an anti-tech person, and this book has not convinced me otherwise, so it will not get 5 stars from me. That being said, it's one of the most intelligent and in the same time frightening books I've read on the subject - I am somewhat familiar with this area due to a paper I've written in college about it, and I took it very seriously spending a semester researching the most important books and articles.

The book is very well organized and referenced it shows the years spent in research, and it reads almost like an academic paper. So yes, the style is dry at times, but that's OK because it never becomes boring, thanks to the exciting value of the subject matter, and we had enough pamphlet-style writings on this issue already.

In the first half each chapter treats a single major concept that is needed to answer the question "why an anti-tech revolution". While I agree with some of those (human societies cannot accurately predict and control their own future, indeed), I disagree with

this main one: the human-technological society of today is inevitably heading towards extinction. Other writers bring a series of more palpable arguments to make their case: the many ways technology affects our brains, our bodies, our environment, our work and our sense of purpose and significance. They almost had me convinced. But this author instead uses system theory to make the point that all such self-propagating evolving systems are doomed, because they are blindly using all resources available to them with absolutely no regard for long term survival. It is a very elegant idea because it ignores the minute empirical details and goes straight to the ontological core, but highly speculative in my opinion, therefore weak.

Another way this book stands out from the crowd is by offering not just a justification, but also a call to action. The title of the book is clear on this, and it delivers not just the "why" but also the "how" - the second half of the book. It includes a blueprint on how change that could save the civilization can be implemented - full of ethical issues, of course, but I suppose when you believe the existence of humanity itself is at risk you don't care much about Thomas Paine's "Rights of Man", right? That's why it's called a revolution I suppose, not a reform. It actually suggests throwing out "old" moral values and committing to the cause to the point where extreme hardships brought upon regular people and even threat of nuclear disaster is a cost worth taking. That's why I called it frightening. It references extensively the likes of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, and Mao - another reason for me to be frightened.

There are also two major failures of the argument worth pointing out: One is that according to the author using technology as a tool for the anti-tech revolution is acceptable. I think he loses the moral argument there - that's like a pacifist using guns to coerce people into giving up guns. The second one is a failure to define what exactly is technology and where do you draw the line. For all of its detailed writing on how and why, there's no clear description of what exactly are we talking about? What would be acceptable technology in the new anti-tech world following this revolution? Computers are banned I suppose? Airplanes too? Are cars and trains OK? No? Is electricity in any form Ok? What about medical tech, and legal drugs and eye glasses? What about typing machines and clocks? Yes, it becomes ridiculous when you think about it, that's probably why he doesn't mention it - even though his excuse is you have to focus on a single goal and deal with the next milestone later. That single goal for him is "total collapse of the current technological system". And then what, I'm asking? Another one just like it? Or wreck havoc and let the chips fall where they may?

So after reading the book I remain on the other side of the issue, maybe even stronger than before, but I know that if the anti-tech crowd organizes itself and if Homo sapiens ludditus" ever goes to war against "homo sapiens technicus", then Theodore J. Kaczynski will be their imprisoned prophet, a lucid and articulate voice for the cause. And that day I will run for my life, because if those "revolutionaries" follow the blueprint of this book, there's no regard for human life and moral force in the universe to stop them.

giveaways

Rhys

730 reviews102 followers

November 21, 2016

Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How is an interesting contribution to revolutionary praxis, and I would like to thank Fitch & Madison Publishers for the opportunity to review the book.

In general terms, the book offers a series of propositions, postulates, and rules derived from these postulates, to inform radical movements. Upon first consideration they seem to be truisms - obvious and even banal. However, the text provides some good examples on the many radical movements that have failed to adhere to these truisms. It seems that we still have much to learn in practice.

Two postulates that were well explicated included: "Postulate 1. You can't change a society by pursuing goals that are vague or abstract. You have to have a clear and concrete goal. ... Postulate 2. Preaching alone - the mere advocacy of ideas - cannot bring about important, long-lasting changes in the behavior of human beings, unless in a very small minority" (p.89).

The first postulate, setting a 'single, clear, concrete goal', is very important to revolutionary movements, particularly in current times where sustained and considered argument is anathema to modern communication methods. The second postulate is a bit more troublesome, as it ignores the importance of maintaining education, discussion and, frankly, revolutionary 'noise' between opportunities for action. I realize that the author is not exactly barring the ongoing dissemination of ideas, but is suggesting, rather, that action is louder than words. I also realize that the time never appears right for instigating radical change. I would argue, however, that advocating for revolutionary ideals remains an important provisional effort - one that achieves similar outcomes as lauded in the example of the 'previously indoctrinated workers' who were prepared 'with a theory and an ideal that made it possible for their insurrection to be purposeful, organized, and effective' (p.137). I would place *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* in this category.

More generally, and in contradiction of Postulate 1, I was never quite sure what the 'anti-tech revolution' meant - what the single, clear and concrete goal was. Perhaps a *What* could have been added to the *Why and How* subtext of the book. The author does discuss the anti-tech revolution: "It would be extremely difficult psychologically for such people to recognize that the only way to get off the road to disaster that we are now on would be through a total collapse of organized society and therefore a descent into chaos" (p.33). And later: "It follows that the goal a revolutionary movement sets itself must be nothing less than the total collapse of the technological system" (p.161). I was also relying on Ellul's general definition of technological society as the whole complex of rationally ordered techniques (including technologies) employed in the effort to achieve absolute efficiency, at the expense of human freedom and responsibility. If Kaczynski's

goal the is total collapse of technological society, then how is this clearer or, really, any different than making anti-capitalism, anti-globalization, or anti-centralization the goal? As stated in Appendix Three of the book: “So it’s clear that as long as we live in a technological world we will never get rid of capitalism unless and until it is superseded by some system that is economically and technologically more efficient.” Is it because capitalism, globalization, etc. are considered subsystems of the system called technological society? Again we have to ask what precisely it is that must be the goal of an anti-tech revolution that is not manifested by the subsystem.

In addition to anti-capitalists and anti-globalization groups, I was also unsure exactly why radical environmentalists and anarchoprimitivists were inadequate for the anti-tech revolution, except perhaps as an incubator of ideas or source of compatriots (p.172). Kaczynski is concerned about the lack of anti-tech commitment within the groups or the lack of clear goals as they pursue an assortment of ‘leftist’ issues. As stated above, I just don’t see the greater clarity of the anti-tech goal except in its all-encompassing objective of societal collapse.

On a minor note, I was uncomfortable with the ‘evolution’ metaphor used early in the book implying that complexity is evolutionarily more fit. When arguing for the collapse of technological society, one is also arguing for a fitness of simplicity, I would think – for what else will be left afterward? And, finally, there are a few references to revolutionary determinism that distracts from the book’s thesis: that some of the discussed revolutions and feminism would have happened anyway as part of an ‘historical trend’. The problem with such a Hegelianism is that it could be argued that advancing technology (and the rationality/efficiency of technological society) will eventually be the cause of its own systemic failure. Kaczynski does suggest that we must hasten this trend so that there is something left afterward, but such determinism takes some of the energy out of praxis.

I would recommend this book for people working for radical movements that believe intervention is required (and soon) to preserve what is best of human civilization (and the natural world that supports it). I also believe that *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* offers a foundation upon which to construct a single, clear and concrete platform that will resonate with a dedicated group of individuals.

Joseph Montuori
48 reviews7 followers
December 27, 2016

[I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for my review.]

Theodore John Kaczynski’s *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* is a tightly reasoned treatise on why a revolution against the technological system is essential and of primary importance. The book also lays out a general course of action framed by four postulates and five rules that any revolutionary movement should consider.

First, to the why. To be sure, technological developments have taken on a life of their own. And Kaczynski lays out a meticulous, if abstract, argument in support of this thesis. Corporatism or capitalism, elitism or oligarchy — in fact, economics or political systems in general — aren't significant topics of discussion or consideration for Kaczynski. Technology and its destructive tendency is apparently the only factor that matters. That assertion deserves much greater explanation and support.

I did find myself trying to buy in, suspending doubt, and, yes, disregarding the author's personal history and crimes as I read. But beyond the Why and into the How section, Anti-Tech Revolution seems to leave behind humanity — and for me, moral integrity — in its path forward.

Kaczynski is adamant about the exclusivity of such a revolutionary movement; membership must be restricted to the most serious and dedicated. Perhaps that is necessary for a movement intended to completely and irreversibly abolish the technological system. Restricting organizational membership to the vanguard is one thing, but refusing to join with or entertain the rights of others, minority, gay, and feminist, or even radical environmental movements, seems exclusive to the point of precluding the human race.

Nevertheless, for those involved and/or interested in any radical movement, Anti-Tech Revolution is still worth reading. It's postulates and rules make sense within the framework of revolutionary success "by any means necessary." Unlike so many other anti-tech and eco-utopian writers, Kaczynski does not promote vague or naive prescriptions for change. Its history and analysis of past movements are also well-reasoned — again, within the narrow scope of success or failure. For this reader, however, historical analysis without regard to human impact is out of the question.

If all civil rights and environmental movements are to be shunned, who or what will stand to benefit from overthrow of the tech system? And what will replace the "system"? These issues aren't addressed in this work, and given the exclusivity of Kaczynski's revolution, there doesn't seem to be an acceptable answer in any case.

Kaczynski is also emphatic that a large minority can succeed in revolution, especially if a societal crisis tips the balance in its favor. He also provides more than a hint that violent tactics must be considered, and extreme discipline and obedience to organizational authority are essential to success. Use of technology in this effort, he says, is OK too. At this point in the book, I'm not phased by this ends-justifies-the-means logic. Because well before this point, I've abandoned his cause — because he has clearly abandoned most of us.

Sarja

123 reviews1 follower

August 1, 2017

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for a review.

I did enjoy reading *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How*, and while finding it a far cry from *Technological Slavery*, it still managed to be an interesting read. Kaczynski is a very lucid writer and I enjoy reading his thoughts on technology, but I do not condone his past actions and do not promote violence in any way whatsoever.

The book is meant to be a handbook, a practical book on how the would-be revolutionaries were to create their movement and succeed in their goal. Kaczynski gives a brief overview of his theory of technology, but most of the book is about different revolutionary groups and how they succeeded or failed in their attempts to secure their goal. It ends with some tips and pointers on how the anti-tech movement should be organised.

He hints at a longer work-in-progress, which I will be awaiting. This one is so-so, but it was, as mentioned above, an interesting read.

2016 non-fiction technology

Porkell

5 reviews

June 13, 2019

To much of the "How"; to little of the "Why".

Chels S

256 reviews34 followers

February 24, 2020

He's not as smart as he thinks he is, but it is a good read.

Brad

9 reviews

April 5, 2020

the first chapter is a very good and extremely clearly and well-reasoned argument that the rational guidance of human society to better futures by people themselves is impossible and misguided. a lot of people interested in effecting change or preventing the catastrophe the world seems to be headed for would do well in reading Kaczynski's thesis here, which is not so wildly far off from other critiques of modernity that are becoming more and more common. the second chapter is also quite good and an also quite well-reasoned argument for why technological civilization will collapse, although less logically iron clad than the first chapter. the rest of the book about actually creating an anti-tech revolutionary movement is less interesting but i suppose useful for those who want to do that.

i would highly recommend the first two chapters but not necessarily the entire book.
anti-tech futurology neo-luddite

Tyler

33 reviews2 followers

April 11, 2020

Just to start, his writings found in “Technological Slavery” are considerably more interesting and more focused on explaining and justifying an anti-tech philosophy. This is an extremely interesting work because it’s half justification for technological collapse and half guidelines for revolutionaries with a ton of influence from Mao, Lenin, Trotsky, the IRA, and Feminism, which are interesting choices for TJK. This isn’t a text that is going to convince anyone on the fence about technology issues, and it is much more aimed as a reinforcement and guide to those who already share most of his key ideas. The tone of the writing can be frustrating at times because TJK will wrote with a certain “academic” attitude and then mix it up with extremely emotional sections such as “The Techies Wet Dream”. I enjoyed the read, and it allowed me to get a better look at TJK’s reasoning and decisions, but it’s not nearly as important as something like ISIAF or “Technological Society” (Ellul). I am sometimes amazed that TJK killed people, because you would not expect it from the personality that comes from his writing, but I guess he is a bit more complex character than meets the eye.

Christopher Byram

225 reviews

November 29, 2020

I think I first heard about Ted Kaczynski, or the “Unabomber”, from the movie Good Will Hunting (1997). I didn’t know who he was back then, I just assumed he was some historical American serial killer, domestic terrorist or cult figure like Charles Manson, the Zodiac killer or the leader of Heaven’s Gate. However, I noticed in recent years that on a couple of posting boards on the internet, Ted and his work keeps getting referenced. Because of this, I decided to check him and his work out.

Angie Dong

6 reviews

April 13, 2021

This book mainly discusses revolutionary strategies, intended for the true devotee. Its strategies would be very useful to dedicated political radicals of any sort. It’s practical, realistic, incisive... much more so than any other contemporary politics-related book I’ve read.

But to the general reader... it's not ideological, it's not very interesting, and it's pretty drab for a guy who bombed over 20 people, to be quite honest!

Jason

246 reviews9 followers

July 31, 2021

Banal. Nothing really new or compelling here. He has written better.

Red__Violet

48 reviews2 followers

January 31, 2023

I understand some of the why, and none of the how.

Jakob

108 reviews4 followers

February 11, 2023

The story of the author is both fascinating and revolting. We are used to certain types of extremists, but we rarely see environmentalists push things as far as this professor in mathematics did. This is not the topic of this book though, even if that is what prompted me to read it. Rather it is a call for an uprising against the technology of the world. He outlines the risks of letting the current system go free and outlines revolution basics 101 - how to organize, how to make an impact and so on.

I found it fascinating to read (as an outsider looking in) and it in parts provided thought provoking arguments. It is not clear to me that the author actually has outlined a coherent plan to eliminate technology, but rather mostly emphasized his arguments for it and a strong belief in grassroot movements.

I would recommend it to someone who wants to read thoughts far from their own thought box, and who is interested in environmentalism from one side or the other. For others I don't think it is worth the effort. There are authors with sharper pens out there.

Henrik

115 reviews6 followers

May 10, 2023

I often find myself nodding in agreement with Ted's techno-pessimism, but it's raining outside and I'd like to stay warm. No revolution for me, the comfortable system-slave.

Bigboy

4 reviews

July 7, 2023

Revolution 101

I overall liked the book, thinking it was insightful enough to feel as though I spent my time well reading it. It is accessibly written too.

However, even though I empathize with the anti-tech movement in general, I felt as though the instructions felt frankly lacking, as well as the case for the revolution was not persuasive enough.

2 stars - 11 reviews

Andrew

585 reviews128 followers

March 2, 2020

I was provided a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for my review

It is difficult to review this work without considering Kaczynski's past actions, i.e. the fact that he is a confessed multiple-murderer serving eight life sentences due to a fanatical dedication to his ideology, an ideology which is the focus of this book.

Some would say that even reviewing this work lends unwarranted legitimacy to an immoral/insane/monstrous person, and they may have a point. I tend toward separating ideas from their bearers, but there very well may come a point at which a person's heinous actions delegitimize entirely their motivations for said actions, philosophically-speaking at least. I don't know if that's the case, and furthermore I don't know how to figure out if that's the case apart from reading multiple philosophical tomes on the subject. Because I was asked by the publisher to do this review, I'm going to do my best to parse the message from its messenger, and explain where I think the latter detracts from the former.

I can say to begin with that I don't believe Kaczynski to be insane. His writings – both this and his original *Manifesto* – are far too lucid, and the nature of his crimes involves entirely too much time and space for contemplation to be written off as fits of mania. When other people dedicate their lives wholly to an ideal from a very young

age, even behaving in morally questionable ways to achieve it, they get our admiration; perhaps its only when we disagree with their ideals that we call them "crazy."

To call him a sociopath may be closer to the mark, in the same sense that Hitler was undoubtedly a sociopath: both brilliant men in their own ways but with little ability to connect with anybody on a human level. In this sense one could maybe call Kaczynski "undersocialized" in allusion to his manifesto's discussion of the term "oversocialization." His known early life and academic career bear out the hypothesis that he was unable to relate to other humans, and that he therefore never developed the crucial ability to empathize with them.

Is being a sociopath enough to discredit one's ideas entirely? I'm not sure. Our society certainly seems to reward sociopaths in certain sectors (business, politics, entertainment), so it doesn't feel fair to condemn one solely on the basis of his academic sociopathy. But that's not to say you shouldn't weigh his sociopathy when considering his ideas, which is precisely what I intend to do in the remainder of this review.

From the outset this book feels like a less passionate version of Derrick Jensen's compelling *Endgame*, and later on in its strategic discussion becomes a cross between *Endgame* and Gene Sharp's influential *From Dictatorship to Democracy*. It begins as a logical, mostly convincing argument about why our technological society is doomed, but then devolves into vague "guidelines" that feel relatively punchless in the face of such daunting odds.

Whenever I pick up a book that is criticizing the trend of our society or political system, it's always with the hope that finally, this time, the author will provide some simple, actionable solutions that can immediately address the issue at hand. I am almost invariably disappointed with the denouements of these books, as they often dissipate into vague platitudes, unfeasible strategies, or in the worst cases an unforgivable omission of any such discussion. Unfortunately that trend of disappointment continues here.

Given the issues I discussed above with the difficulty of Kaczynski presenting himself as an "expert" on any topic given his past actions, the book begins on a troubling note in the preface itself, where not only does the first footnote cite "many letters (I've received)" as the source for his statement, indicating a troubling lack of academic rigor, but then proceeds to grandiosity in the 2nd paragraph of p.2, where he writes:

. . . I feel safe in saying that virtually all people – even people of exceptional intelligence – who merely read this book once or twice at an ordinary pace will miss many of its most important points. This book, therefore, is not a book to be *read*; it is a book to be *studied* with the same care that one would use in studying, for example, a textbook of engineering.

Okay then, Mr. If-I-do-say-so-myself. . .

Luckily the first chapter, describing how we will never be able to control or predict the development of an advanced society, largely avoids further evidence of these issues. Kaczynski uses clear, precise prose with a somewhat staccato rhythm. His historical examples of the inherent difficulty in controlling complex systems do not feel

controversial, though they do feel random and somewhat tedious by the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2, "Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself (And Everything Else)," also appears logical and presents little with which to argue. In his discussion of self-propagating systems and natural selection, his analogy between biological systems and social systems seems tenuous as there's little to indicate that we have in any critical sense been able to replicate the seamless functioning of an organic system. Also, it does feel like Kaczynski dedicates an inordinate amount of space to technology-based immortality, which intuitively feels like an utter fantasy.

Overall, however, his point stands, and we get what appears to be the first formulation of his thesis on p. 68, when he says that instead of waiting for the system to destroy itself, "if the technological system were eliminated *now* a great deal could still be saved. The longer the system is allowed to continue. . . the worse will be the outcome. . ."

One quibble I have is with Kaczynski's introduction of the concept of "Technianity," which simply sounds clumsy. If you're talking about the religion of technology, it's not only analogous to Christianity (the only religion that ends in "-ianity") but rather to all religions and dogmas, which are commonly referred to as "-isms." It seems like it would both be more precise and aesthetically sound to call this concept either "Technism" or "Technologism."

But in any case, after almost half the book I was on board with Kaczynski's thesis and intrigued to see his proposals. Chapter 3, however, which lays out the postulates and rules for transforming society, begins on a relatively ominous note. First of all, Mao's epigraph discusses a "principal contradiction," which seems itself to contradict Kaczynski's entire first chapter dedicated to the inherent complexity and insolubility of system-level problems. Next, the chapter's very first paragraph, with its prescription of "success," recalls the principal issue anyone might have when approaching this book: given his past actions, how credible can Mr. Kaczynski really expect us to find him as a determiner and prescriber of a political movement's success? His past actions don't grant him much benefit of any doubt.

The chapter itself is fairly innocuous, as Kaczynski's "postulates" on the nature of radical political movements are sound and the "rules" based on these postulates are logical. A minor organizational issue I had would be solved by simply shifting the explanation of the postulates to precede the rules in order to provide a more intuitive transition.

The bulk of the chapter, however, is dedicated to tedious and over-explanatory examples of these postulates and rules in action, focusing chiefly on the Irish independence movement and the Bolshevik revolution. These are frankly unnecessary, and they divert the momentum of Kaczynski's argument.

The end of this chapter is where Kaczynski really began to lose me, as he engages in needlessly harsh attacks on other thinkers in the field, beginning with Chellis Glendinning and Arne Naess. He then proceeds to refer to basically the entire group of writers

– including Ivan Illich and John Zerzan – as “useless.” This is not merely unprofessional; Kaczynski’s arrogance and belligerence undermine the merits of his arguments and put his readers on the defensive (and in my case, more intent on finding holes). Furthermore, his lack of civility immediately reminds readers of his past crimes, which one would think he would want to avoid.

With regards to the content of his closing argument in this chapter, Kaczynski’s goal is to “(bring) about the collapse of the technological system,” but this goal appears to violate his very first rule in that it is anything but “simple.” It’s also not readily apparent how this would be “irreversible,” in violation of Rule III.

The first two pages of the last chapter – where Kaczynski writes among other things, “No specific route to victory for an anti-tech movement can be laid out in advance.” – deflated any hope I had of the book offering real, practicable solutions. The first three guidelines for revolutionary movements are: “build its own internal sources of power,” “build power in relation to its social environment,” and “do what it can to undermine people’s faith in the technological system.” For those keeping track, none of these are “clear, concrete, simple” objectives, thus violating his 1st rule.

Two pages later Kaczynski makes the unfortunate choice of pointing to Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and jihadist suicide bombers as examples of those with the necessary dedication to a movement. I can’t imagine many people wanting to be included in such company, and its at best a dubious association to conjure for somebody already on questionable moral ground.

Throughout the rest of the chapter, which again gets bogged down in justification of theory by way of over-explanation of history, Kaczynski skates around addressing certain points which seem far more relevant to the discussion, and the omission of which makes his argument feel incomplete. For example, on p. 153 he mentions and dismisses the concern over nuclear winter as something in which “serious students of this matter do not believe.” He offers no evidence for this claim besides a lone, unelaborated book citation.

A few pages later he reluctantly recommends undemocratic hierarchy as a method of political organization while only acknowledging in passing the danger of this method and not giving any specifics at all as to how this hierarchy should be organized to prevent abuse/corruption of power. Frankly, this feels not only misdirected but lazy, and one can’t help but feel that he should have devoted much more energy to these points than he did to the history of Ireland and Russia, or to the fantasy of immortality. By this point my confusion over his reliance on these exhaustive historical examples had been resolved, as it became clear that he was substituting these historical events for any proof of the legitimacy of his theory. As someone who spent the first half of his life in academia’s hard sciences, he should have had a better grasp on academic and scientific rigor.

Finally, a big hole in Kaczynski’s argument was the absence of any discussion of capitalism as one of the root problems of global society. I was pleased to see that he addressed it in one of his appendices, but I feel that it should have been a much

larger part of chapter 2's discussion. His argument that capitalism is "subordinate" to technology is not entirely convincing despite his lone example of Soviet communism. Furthermore, arguing communism as the only alternative to capitalism is facile, and he certainly must understand that lone communist/socialist countries (e.g. Cuba, N. Korea) attempting to exist in an overwhelmingly capitalist global system can never survive.

I would be curious, for instance, to see what Kaczynski thinks of E.F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful*, which discusses *economics* as the global driving force, superior even to technology. He lays out some interesting – and in my inexpert opinion, much more concrete than Kaczynski's – steps for how we can transform our capitalist economy into one that harnesses technology for the good of humans on a small scale. Given Kaczynski's opinion of the rest of his ideological cohort, he would probably scoff at Schumacher as "utterly naive" (p.121) and "useless" (p. 124). . .

In conclusion, Kaczynski presents a compelling argument on the need for anti-technological revolution, but he fails to convincingly explain (especially vis-a-vis capitalism and more general economical factors) why it is the most pressing need. Also, while childishly criticizing others for their lack of concrete solutions, he simultaneously fails to provide his own beyond a framework laid out in more concrete terms by Derrick Jensen and Gene Sharp. In fact, with his last two chapters I can't escape the impression that Kaczynski is neither as ground-breaking nor as brilliant as he believes himself to be in the arena of global revolution. He would do well to accept outside counsel in this regard.

Not Bad Reviews

@pointblaek

history political-science

Paul DiBara

184 reviews1 follower

January 4, 2017

I have been very interested, and more than a little concerned, about the dangers of the unrestrained march of technological developments. I authored and taught a college level course for several years called, "The Cultural Impact of Information Technology," that posed the questions; "Do we control technology or is it leading us?" and, "If it is leading, what should we expect the future to look like?"

I was contacted and asked by the publisher to read and review this book and place my review on Goodreads. This created an ethical dilemma, as the author, Theodore Kaczynski, the Unibomber, killed three people and injured over twenty-three. Firstly, he derives no income from publication of this book. Secondly, his manifesto has already become source material for a host of other publications. I decided to read what he had to say.

After having read the book Kaczynski's reveals himself as arrogant, elitist, machiavellian, and lacking in humanity. It was very uncomfortable to read.

I'll lead with my biggest criticism. It preaches total destruction of our current technology based civilization. Incremental change is not possible to Kaczynski's mind (Page 153 ". . . if we had to choose between a major nuclear war and the continued existence of the system, we would have to take nuclear war as being the lesser evil." Another enormous problem with his narrative is its lack of any alternative, what would a post-technological world look like? He provides no vision of a world without technology.

There are some insights in the book that bear mentioning and due real consideration. One observation made in the book that cannot be understated is the role of unintended consequences arising out of human actions and technological breakthroughs. The author makes the point that, ". . . no society can be . . . successful in planning its own future in the long term." This is a fundamental truth that should always give us pause, perhaps particularly when it come to technology. This truth has been demonstrated repeated in recent history, to wit, Iraq, Syria and the stream of refugees into Europe being the most horrendous recent examples.

The author has no faith that our current leaders are willing or capable of making the kind of drastic changes that he thinks are absolutely necessary - ". . . the only way to get off the road to disaster that we are now on would be through a total collapse of organized society." His historic model change agents include Lenin, Hitler and Castro.

He agrees that the world is getting ever more integrated and homogeneous. Globalization is a fact of life. Of course, the more tightly bound the world becomes, the more dependent it is on technology and instantaneous communications. It become imperative that these trends be halted entirely, even if it means a headlong crash into chaos. The Fermi paradox is regarded as a given; "there is a process to all technologically advanced civilizations that consistently leads them to self-destruction."

His vision is destructive, unrealistic and, most certainly, undesirable. We have come too far to listen to a message of self destruction. We have time but do we have the will to face the technological challenge? Remember, evolution has never created an immortal species. We will author our own fate.

There is certainly more that could be written about the finer details of the book but I believe I have conveyed the essential message contained between the covers. I was disappointed because I really believe that we are wearing blinders when it comes to technological 'progress' and that we have yet to feel the full force of the negative and disruptive influences of unfettered technology. Technology may be the Pied Piper of our civilization.

Reading

532 reviews8 followers

July 21, 2023

So darned annoyed! I wrote a lengthy review of this book, thanking the publisher for selecting me to send an advance reader copy to. The thing is I'm not certain if being selected for this book, based on Goodreads reading selection should concern me. Nah... I'm fairly certain I was on multiple watch lists with no help from Goodreads.

Too frustrated to rewrite the complete review except to say Ted rambles on and on and on and on...

Ilinca

283 reviews

February 2, 2017

I was offered a complimentary review copy by the editors, and, as with the other reviewers, my first thought was: the Unabomber, really? It's hard to discuss the book without discussing the author. We even discuss the authors when they're comparatively harmless, and all the more so when they're Ted Kaczynski, serving a sentence of life in prison.

Let me start off by agreeing with most of the others: he does not (quite) write like an insane person. That does not mean that he isn't one.

The question is, does he have a point?

My answer is, it's hard to tell - but I'd say, not really. His whole point is that technology is bad. Why? Because it is getting out of hand and it's making it increasingly difficult to predict the evolution of society. That does not make the case. He could instead be making an argument for making technology safe - or open. His arguments are somewhat rambling and at times contradictory, and his examples leave a lot to be desired. Picking out your sources at the edge of intellectual thought may be the anarchist way, but it doesn't make for a very compelling argument.

Kaczynski is also slightly disorganized in quoting a number of historical instances that he thinks make his case (at some point he mentions Mexico in the 1980s, feminism since the 1920s and Ireland in the 18th century across three consecutive pages, after which I just wanted to say: huh?).

My impression is, he is mimicking the structure of a scientific book, with very little content to flesh out his theory. He hovers between being prescriptive and admitting there can be no prescriptive method; between quoting Locke and missing his point that there are rules to society - which he utterly violated.

He also never clearly states exactly which is the enemy. Which tech is he talking about? Big data compilers or the printing press? Hyperloop transportation or trains? Iron processing plants? Street lighting? Humidifiers? Batteries? Vegetarian hamburgers or genetically modified bananas (i.e., all the bananas most of us are ever likely to see)? Anti-meteor shields or orbital weather stations? In many cases, we're just talking about a difference of degrees - or computing power; he fails to grasp that. And he covers his confusion in a lot of references.

If you are afraid of tech and actually know what you're talking about when you talk about tech, there are books out there that cater to that: Weapons of Math Destruction, Future Crimes, Data and Goliath. This one? Not so much.

Tiffanie Dang

43 reviews49 followers

March 29, 2017

I was sent a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

I've read "The Unabomber Manifesto" for one of my classes and found it interesting, so when I was offered a free copy of this book in exchange for a review, I thought, "Why not?" Although controversial, Kaczynski did a lot of research for this book, but my rating is due to being mostly confused and not really enjoying this book as a result. The main idea I took away from this book is that he thinks technology is evil and we must rid ourselves of it, instead of becoming like the techies who want to upload their consciousness into machines and live forever or become cyborgs. One quote that stood out to me though was, "There's no free lunch when it comes to meeting our energy needs." Not really sure about the rest of his arguments though, as this book was hard to read and comprehend for me.

arcs nonfiction

J.

67 reviews

February 20, 2018

Much like reviewing any work from a convicted murderer, it is always worth guarding one's self from their words. This is no different. I'm a staunch believer that if you want to understand the mindset of the sort of persons who undertake terrible crimes for their ideologies, the only and best way to truly do so is to listen (read) to what they have to say. Had the Western powers read Mein Kampf they would have known Hitler planned to do exactly what they felt he wouldn't do. Reading Mao's little Red Book, or Col. Qaddafi's little green book, or interviews with Osama Bin Laden, or Dylan Roof's posting on the internet, or the Turner diaries and one gains a far deeper understanding of the mind of people like Eric Rudolf or Timothy Mcveigh. It's also frightening because much of the motivations for these people are not the rantings of insane persons, but rather sane persons who possess an insane drive to see their own visions of the world enacted. Their own Wills triumphant over the Wills of anyone, and everyone, else.

Frankly, while I found much to agree with in ISAIF, as do many reviewers of the "unabomber manifesto," I was left here without that feeling. Instead this feels like an academic exercise, an attempt to engineer a better Guerrilla Warfare, On Guerrilla Warfare, On War, Revolt in the Desert, and so forth. Unlike Mao, and Che, Von

Clausewitz or T.E. Lawrence, TK never saw combat, and indeed it's uncertain he ever saw the aftermath of his own bombing campaign until his trial prep, though he undoubtedly had an idea of what his devices would be capable of, as any good engineer would.

He says it himself, he intends for it to be a text book, and to be taken as seriously as any of those previous books mentioned in terms of being able to train people to undertake a successful revolution. Owing to the fact that he is basing all of his facticity on historical date, it is good that the publisher classifies this book as a work of History rather than military science. Still, as a document for helping to get into the head of an extremist, it's valuable, if for no other reason than it provides a relatively clear picture of the kinds of things such a persons spends their time reading while in prison.

earth-science security-studies

Liad Magen

20 reviews144 followers

September 15, 2019

I've received this book from the publishers

Kaczynski is currently in prison, for sending bomb-envelopes to key figures in the U.S., so I was intrigued to read what his thoughts were.

His goal is pure: fighting climate change, which so far had happened due to Technology. Throughout the book he lists the causes (technological) as well as possible actions, which he rules out as ineffective, while giving proofs and examples from the history.

Yet, his conclusion is incorrect, which is surprising for someone with such a rich mathematical background. In short, he argues that the ways that were carried so far are insufficient, and therefore the only logical conclusion is using anarchy. In logical math, he argues that the opposite of not $A+B+C$, is Z . But that is not true: the opposite of $A+B+C$, is just not $A+B+C$ - but there're still many other letters in the ABC...

I'd recommend you to read the book if you're interested in history, sociology and tech, or if you are, like me, concerned about climate change.

But I would definitely not recommend to follow his actions...

Lucia Gave

24 reviews

December 6, 2020

I started to read the first chapter for a school project, not knowing who the author is. Seeing many communist references and anarchic tones in explanations, it started to look suspicious. Hence I googled the book and its author, which I have already known

from other courses, but rather for his actions than his philosophies. It was difficult to follow the rest of the text objectively then.

The book is basically a theory behind TK's actions. He is a person who loathes technology, for its growth is inherently leading us towards dystopia and catastrophe. In the book, he approaches the technology in grand-strategic terms but does so by raising more questions than he is able to answer.

TK does, indeed, present several fair points about the effect of technologies on our environment. Who decides what is good or wrong if everyone is just pursuing power with short-term prospects? Is there anything like a rational choice? Humanity is doomed and the environmental catastrophe waits just around the corner. These points, however, stand on principally bad presumptions - it is the technology we should blame for everything, not the system in which people are acting. Rather than technology, the author should dedicate more time to the ideologies our system is working within.

But well, once he has thrown the dice, let's see what he brings out further. Just like many other authors, TK also draws a picture of a dystopian future, but without any further elaboration on the possible solutions we have. Clearly, he wants the world to get rid of technologies, that is, *inter alia*, what he has demonstrated also in his practice, for which he gained the title the Unabomber. Notwithstanding, he does not give the reader any possible and credible scenario of what would happen if we cut off technologies at once and for good. Just try to imagine waking up one day, realizing your fridge is not cooling your groceries, you cannot take a bus, people in the hospitals are dying because the electricity went down. TK does not discuss any further impact of his theory, which decreases the value of his work. Many are good at criticizing, yet only a few dare to offer solutions. TK is not one of those.

climate security technology

Anne Fox

Author

25 books50 followers

February 23, 2021

Typical of Kaczynski's writings, although well-written and researched, it seems cherry-picked to support his views on the evils of a technological society. The tone often comes off as "preachy" and a bit arrogant, and the entire lack of any opposing viewpoint lends a seriously lopsided treatise. I get the sense that Kaczynski fashions himself as the focal point of what he believes is a required change in society's focus—a kind of messiah, if you will. The attempt, however, falls a bit flat.

Stacy

8 reviews1 follower

March 2, 2022

less of a "why" and more of a "how-to" (heavily leaning on the october revolution of 1917 and the irish fight for independence)
politics

Rui Coelho

222 reviews

May 7, 2022

Terrible advice. Just listen to actual activists instead of reading this trash.
His proposed strategy sounds like a weird Amish-Leninism until you get to "the organization should maintain strict legality". Ok, boomer

1 star - 4 reviews

xDEAD ENDx

234 reviews

October 27, 2016

This is a terrible, terribly disappointing book.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first deals with the inability for human society to be rationally controlled. TK basically talks about how society is an amalgam of systems and there's no way to calculate everything going on (chaos theory, etc.). This is more or less what I see through the lens of the apparatus.

Second chapter is titled "Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself." I don't know if the writer or editor/publisher chose this title, but it doesn't seem apt and possibly contradicts other points TK makes later. This chapter is about natural selection within society and how society operates as a self-propagating system. I don't actually see "society" as self-propagating or acting within nature selection, but whatever, it doesn't really effect the overall point of the book.

The first two chapters basically cover the "why," and they're incredibly weak reasons at that. Everything comes off as so scientific and mathematical. Systems theory isn't explicitly mentioned, but I feel like that's one of the main frameworks being used. There's no emotional component at all in the writing.

The next two chapters cover the "how". First up are the "rules:" things like not having abstract aims (as if "destroying the technological system"—the greatest superstructure to TK—is anything but abstract), persuading a small minority to commit acts, excluding "unsuitables," and achieving objectives as soon as possible. There's lots of really strange

historical examples of “revolutions” from America, Ireland, and of course, Russia. The acute reader can already see where this is going.

The last chapter lays all the cards on the table in a full imitation of Communist tactics. Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Mao, and Castro are all applauded, quoted at length, and used as examples of revolutionary strategy. TK fully advocates for a revolutionary party organization led by a chain of command. It’s disgusting. For posterity, he adds a couple sentences near the end about how these scumbags aren’t looked up to for their ideology, but because their strategy has been the most successful to create revolutions. It’s baffling to me how one can try to take Communist organizational structures and separate that from an ideology whose core tenant is leader-based structure.

Garbage through and through. There’s nothing that’s actually tactical in here (to be fair, this is possibly related to writing from prison, though *Technological Slavery* did include some of this) and it argues for revolutionary organizations run by powerful leaders, as if the right structure will automatically create the right results. I can’t help but see the resemblance between this and Deep Green Resistance (who aren’t mentioned in the slightest). I do have some curiosity as to what this book would look like if TK was outside of prison, since he currently has such limited access to resources (though never really acknowledges how this could create huge flaws in his theories or understanding of the world).

Tom

39 reviews8 followers

November 22, 2016

I was provided a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for this review - I feel sort of bad about the one star review but it’s the only actually negative score you can give on this site

If you’re familiar with Kaczynski’s previous work, the title of this book should tell you exactly what you’re getting - a meticulously, even laboriously argued ‘why’ and ‘how’ to organize an revolution against modern technology. The intent here is to present a series of concise and compelling arguments for such a revolution, backed up with a battery of historical examples, footnotes, and a few appendices to boot. Through distilling lessons from successful political movements such as the Bolsheviks, Irish nationalists, and Maoists in China, TK hopes to provide inspiration and a logical lens for a future anti-tech revolutionary moment.

The lesser weakness in this book is how it reads - again, the reader should be aware that TK’s writing is generally very dry and logic-minded, and so is his approach to revolution. The ‘why’ of the book is very thorough and may benefit people who aren’t very familiar with the anti-tech position that he holds, but readers who are already familiar with critiques of industrial society or critical of modern technology may find some relatively simple points and simple speculations over-argued. More generally, the

author leans heavily on examples from history as evidence and treats revolution as a science or some kind of logic puzzle that can be solved through sifting through history with a sprinkling of social science - besides the dubiousness of this approach, the writing here also suffers somewhat from a lack of compelling source material (many of the citations earlier on in the book are from encyclopedias, though one can only fault him so much here as I'd imagine his access to texts is relatively limited). Even so, there is a constant sense that we're being presented with the 'facts' in a relatively bare way as if these arguments are evident from history.

The greater weakness lies in the 'how', and Kaczynski's approach to revolution doesn't escape the sources upon which he draws, no matter how much he qualifies himself by claiming one can abstract the lessons of Lenin and Mao to the point where they become some sort of neutral tool for success. His points are grounded in the proof of history - people like Lenin succeeded so we can learn from them - but given that history is littered with people who saw the Bolsheviks or Castro or Mao as inspirations and attempted to use their models to achieve success (and failed to do so) one would expect TK to push his arguments further. TK preempts this critique by saying he's only providing inspiration rather than instructions for success, but given how many specific points and proscriptions he produces these things don't seem so different.

While TK's 'how' disavows the ghost of Communism, it retains the faith in a scientific approach to revolution and fails to take into account how some of the lessons he's taken from 'successful' models - strict hierarchy, political vanguards, expecting total selflessness and sacrifice, treating people as a 'mass', maintaining the horizon of the 'revolution' itself - have and will continue to undermine radical struggles, including the one he wants to see happen.

Jim

Author

7 books2,041 followers

February 4, 2017

I was contacted by the publisher & asked if I was interested in a R&R. My first thought was, "Hell, no!" Kaczynski (AKA, the Unabomber) is a whack job, right? He's known for blowing up people in his campaign against technology & those he saw as representing it. What could he possibly say that would be of interest? But then I read that he wouldn't get any of the profits from this book & thought it might be interesting to see what he had to say. He's a smart guy, after all. (His IQ was once measured at 167, FWIW.)

The preface convinced me we weren't going to get along philosophically. Many see us heading for disaster & that technology is one of the causes, but I do not agree that all of us fall into his 2 categories of those who do nothing about it & those who don't know what to do about it. I & many others are inclined to the Asimov school of 'tech

got us into this mess, ignorance won't get us out.' so pretty much the opposite of what he proposes in this book.

The Development of a Society Can Never Be Subject to Rational Human Control (sic) starts with a quote in Spanish (according to Google Translate). *adonde un bien se concierta hay un mal que lo desvia; mas el bien viene y no acierta, y el mal acierta y porfia.* which translates to "Where a good is arranged there is an evil that deviates it; But good comes and does not succeed, and evil succeeds and strives." The book is in English & to start out with a quote in a foreign language likely means the author wants to baffle me with bullshit.

His writing reminds me a lot of C.S. Lewis' in *Mere Christianity*, a poor attempt at philosophy. No rigor is applied to the base assumptions nor are opposing points explored properly while straw men abound. I agree with the title premise of the first chapter. I actually enjoyed reading his cherry-picked historical examples for themselves, although he uses them like a club to make his point - one point, a dozen examples. (Bam, bam, bam...) I didn't find them convincing simply because the basic idea is ludicrous.

News flash: Humans aren't rational. We're rationalizing, badly behaving bags of chemicals. Individually we're half crazy & collectively (our societies) make even less sense. Anyone who has logically examined any religions knows that. Besides, while a rational society might be something to aspire to, it wouldn't be much fun. This has been obvious since Plato proved it in *The Republic* all the way through L.E. Modesitt Jr.'s *Adiamante*. We're not ants. We need fun & we're greedy bastards, for the most part. Kaczynski later concedes & illustrates this in chapter 3.

The second chapter is **Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself**. It correctly starts out with a disclaimer that it could be wrong & argued against - as well it should since Kaczynski made many good points about unintended consequences in the first chapter. (He missed a great example with smart phones, though.) Still, his basic premise here has a pretty good base & he does a great job of pointing out just how self-destructive our system can be, but he makes an assumption that it is entirely competition-based & on the limitation of resources which might not apply with some technological advancements. Specifically he confines us to Earth & doesn't foresee any leaps in technology. I believe we'll see several breakthroughs in tech that will change almost everything soon. Artificial intelligence is just too close. Whether it is for good or ill, I'm not sure, though.

The simplification of Darwinism into "survival of the fittest" is wrong & he sort of says this, although not explicitly or simply. 'Fittest' carries assumptions of superiority that are dangerous. I prefer survival of the 'good enough' which allows organisms to continue spreading DNA, no matter how altered.

We're often not sure what 'better' is except in hindsight & that varies by the point of view. (Are you happier than a crocodile? Our species hasn't been around nearly as long. Which is more successful? Did we domesticate wheat or vice versa? *Homo sapiens* have spread its DNA far wider & in greater quantity than it could have achieved on

its own.) Still, he makes some good, if slippery points. It's terribly depressing reading, though.

In part 4 of this chapter, he descends into pseudoscience & completely ignores several important factors as he spreads his message of doom. Our global population growth rate is actually declining. Efficiencies brought by maturing technologies have curbed waste & cleaned many up considerably. (Remember the air quality in LA & NYC during the early 70s? Even they weren't as bad as London around 1800.) We have more oil available to mine now than we could 50 years ago, too. (One hint as to why that changed is here: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/judecleme...>)

In part 5, he just gets insulting & fairly ridiculous when he jeers at 'techies' & ideas about immortality. I've read quite a bit, both factual & speculative, on the subject. The only time I've seen it cherry-picked & misrepresented more was by the likes of Ken Hamm. Kaczynski's tone is quite similar to that of a TV preacher or Rush Limbaugh. He's preaching. I don't like that, even when I agree with the points. Kaczynski made few good ones in this section, though.

I continued on with chapter 3 hoping the quality of the arguments picked up. They didn't, just deteriorated further. "How to Transform a Society: Errors to Avoid" is about building the revolution. I didn't read it in detail, just skimmed it & Chapter 4. He advocates a core of revolutionaries who build their own internal sources of power, win respect for their ideals, & undermine the people's confidence in technology. He doesn't say how, but I fail to see how they could without using & relying on a lot of technology. He seems to admire terrorism (unsurprising) & says that the organization should be feared, but his broad strategies didn't mean much. Unless the entire world dropped back to low tech, industrialization is going to return. It's human nature.

I saw a few references to people losing jobs & crashing economies, but I don't think he realizes what a pure horror show the loss of tech would be. One Second After is a fictionalized, but pretty accurate look at what could happen just in the US if just our electric went down. It's heart-breaking & scary as hell.

I agree with Kaczynski that we're balanced on a knife's edge & I can sympathize with his point of view, but I completely disagree with it. Because he couldn't make a solid enough case, I'm giving this book 1 star. I didn't like it. I found it depressing. He didn't make his case for how or why.

1paper 2non-fiction

L Daniel

31 reviews17 followers

June 18, 2020

Didn't live to the expectations

The Ted K Archive

Goodreads Reviews of Ted Kaczynski's Books
2023

www.thetedkarchive.com