Industrial Antipathy: Irreparability and Ted Kaczynski's IEDs

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> If there were no computer scientists there would be no progress in computer science. —Ted Kaczynski (1993)
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> There's a little bit of the Unabomber in most of us.
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> —Robert Wright (2001)(1)

On June 24, 1993, Yale University computer scientist David Gelernter picked up a newly delivered package, thinking a graduate student had sent him a dissertation.[1] When he pulled it open, an explosion ripped through his office. Deafened, mangled, and bloodied, he staggered across the street to the campus medical center. The staff looked at him in horror when he stumbled through the doors. He almost died.[2] Ted Kaczynski blew up Gelernter because he was a prominent computer scientist who, in the 1980s and 1990s, had helped to brainstorm and develop internet architecture that supports basic functions such as file sharing, e-commerce, cloud computing, networks, social media, and big data. Kaczynski later sent him a letter—the only time that Kaczynski contacted one of his victims after attempting to murder them—and told Gelernter why he blew him up. Kaczynski called Gelernter a "techno-nerd" whose work contributed to the general destruction of humanity by computerizing the invasion of privacy, empowering computer-facilitated genetic engineering, and generally contributing to environmental devastation.[3] "If there were no computer scientists there would be no progress in computer science," Kaczynski explained.[4] For Kaczynski, Gelernter's work was symptomatic of technology's total and dominating encroachment on human freedom, dignity, and life. Kaczynski saw only one way to avert the coming disaster that these destructive technological encroachments portended for humanity—"a revolution against the industrial system," as he put it at the beginning of his antitechnology treatise *Industrial Society and Its Future*, also known as *The Unabomber Manifesto*.[5]

I argue that Kaczynski negotiated Technē's Paradox by insisting that technology is categorically a force of annihilation. In order to control the rhetorical instability of weapons rhetoric—as Fries and West did, which was the focus of chapter 3—Kaczynski asserted only one pole of Technē's Paradox. Unlike Fries and West, who attempted to stabilize chemical-weapons discourse by categorically defending the weapons as preservative for humanity, Kaczynski categorically rejected the idea that any artifact of the "technoindustrial system" would prove preservative.[6] He insisted that all "organization-dependent technology" is destructive, and that technology will annihilate humanity,

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[1] My biographical portrayal of Kaczynski is based on Alston Chase's *A Mind for Murder*.

[2] Gelernter wrote about the attack in *Drawing Life: Surviving the Unabomber*.

[3] Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 16.

[4] Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 16.

[5] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 38.

[6] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 13.

(1) The epigraphs to this chapter are drawn from Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 16,

or at least what it means to be human.[7] "Industrial-technological society cannot be reformed," and "technology is such a powerful social force ... it can never be reversed," he wrote.[8] He was adamant and "refused to compromise" regarding these points.[9] To counter this domineering technological power, Kaczynski's rhetoric was as hard as his antitechnological stance, his industrial antipathy, and his bombs.[10] In his manifesto and throughout his essays and letters, Kaczynski used a hard rhetoric. By hard rhetoric, I mean language that does not waver from its certain and ruthless attack on the opposition and anyone who does not fight against it. It tolerates neither reform nor counterarguments. Running throughout his hard rhetoric was a dilemma by which Kaczynski forced his audience to make an irreparable choice between acquiescing to a future of technological disaster or revolting against technology. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca called this type of dilemma "the locus of the irreparable."[11] Also central to this chapter is a middleway argument in which I claim that Kaczynski's improvised explosive devices spoke for him as much as he used them to persuade. His bombs also spoke with hard rhetoric, challenging Kaczynski with an unyielding counterforce. Kaczynski hoped his IEDs would catalyze the destruction of technology. Instead, these eloquent objects ended up spurring the popular rejection of his antitechnology revolution.

Kaczynski's negotiation of Technē's Paradox differs from that of Malthus, Spies, Fries and West, and Szilard, and his thoughts about technological destruction and preservation deserve a brief overview. First, for Kaczynski, technological destruction refers to the oppressive aspects of technology that threaten humanity with losses of dignity and freedom rather than loss of life. Technology destroys what it means to be human. Although he sometimes addressed the topic of specific weapons, Kaczynski tended to direct his antitechnological attitude toward the whole of technology, including machines, systems, and techniques.[12] I claimed in this book's introduction that all technologies can be associated with Technē's Paradox, and Kaczynski mobilized this generalization by indicting all technologies with the charge that they contribute to the collective power of technology to threaten humanity with its ultimate annihilation. All technologies are thoroughly endowed with their destructive capacity. It is,

[7] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 104.

[8] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 69 and 77.

[9] So, too, does the rhetoric of Earth First!—a group that Kaczynski followed and with which he is sometimes associated—"refuse to compromise" (Lange, "Refusal to Compromise"). On the somewhat tenuous link between Kaczynski and Earth First!, see Taylor's "Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism" (28–30).

[10] Kaczynski's bombing campaign took place around the time when the neologism "improvised explosive device" was coined and became more commonplace (Gill, Horgan, and Lovelace, "Improvised Explosive Device," 733–34). I use "IED" to describe his bombs to encompass the different types of bombs he made, and to fit with the current understanding of what IEDs are and how to define them. See also The National Academies and The Department of Homeland Security's *IED Attack*.

[11] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 91.

[12] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 375.

and Wright, "Evolution of Despair."

for Kaczynski, their defining characteristic. Hence, one key assessment of his weapons rhetoric is to understand weapons, including his IEDs, as a synecdoche for technology and vice versa, where the parts represent the whole and the whole represents the parts. As technologies, all weapons are categorically forces of destruction, but the power to kill is only one of technology's destructive capacities. His IEDs were thus intended to be the ultimate destructive devices in their potential capacity to catalyze a revolution that would rid the world of all technologies and, by default, rid the world of most of its human population in the ensuing big collapse. In the end, he thus recommends a solution that is nontechnological—getting rid of all technologies, including weapons such as his own.

Second, technological preservation for Kaczynski refers to the preservation of human dignity and freedom, but not human lives. Securing humanity's freedom from technological domination will preserve what it means to be human— the "freedom and dignity" of "wild nature" and primitive life.[13] For Kaczynski, the only way technology preserves humanity is through its complete and utter absence, its postrevolutionary disappearance upon civilizations total downfall.[14] Kaczynski thus displays little regard for human life, but high regard for how life is lived sans technology. What path led him to think about preserving humanity by destroying technology and thereby killing off almost everyone?

After four years at Harvard University, Kaczynski spent his postundergraduate years pursuing an academic career as a mathematician, and he completed a doctorate in 1967 with a dissertation on boundary functions at the University of Michigan.[15] The University of California, Berkeley Mathematics Department then gave him a job but, disillusioned, he resigned from his position in 1969. Kaczynski, who later went by the nom-de-plumes FC and Freedom Club, bought a plot of land in rural Montana with the help of his brother, David. He constructed his now infamous cabin and led a simple, meager life. Then, in May 1978, he began his bombing campaign. Kaczynski's IEDs were "embarrassingly ineffectual" gunpowder bombs at the beginning, then pipe bombs, and at the end more elaborate devices armed with homemade blasting caps and an explosive similar to C-4.[16] These bombs had rhetorical intent. "In order to get our [Freedom Club's] message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people," Kaczynski wrote in *Industrial Society and Its Future*.[17] FC's April 1995 letter to the *New York Times* made the rhetorical

[13] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 38, 91, and 97, emphasis in original. See also his essay "The Truth about Primitive Life: A Critique of Anarcho-Primitivism," in which Kaczynski lauds the primitive life but clarifies that primitive life is far from utopic (Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 126–89).

[14] See Skrbina, "Revolutionary for Our Times," 27.

[15] The abstract for *Boundary Functions* and a bibliography of eight mathematics papers published by Kaczynski are available at Bullough, "Published Works of Theodore Kaczynski."

[16] Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 3. For the technical design of his pipe bombs, see his letter to the *San Francisco Examiner* (Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 4).

[17] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 65.

goals of these devices explicit. "trough our bombings we hope to promote social instability in industrial society, propagate anti-industrial ideas and give encouragement to those who hate the industrial system," Kaczynski wrote.[18] In short, Kaczynski meant his bombs to foment antitechnological revolution. To accomplish this task, he meant his *IEDs* to "hit" the technoindustrial system "where it hurts," and "to hold people's interest ... to show them that things are happening—significant things."[19] From loggers to geneticists, Kaczynski targeted seemingly random people whose livelihoods in some way supported or participated in the system he despised. His bombs exploded at advertising agencies and in computer-store parking lots. key disrupted the business of airlines and universities. Kaczynski never hesitated to call himself a terrorist. "'Ikis is a message from the terrorist group FC," began Kaczynski's *New York Times* letter, which demanded publication of *Industrial Society and Its Future*.[20] "Over the years we have given as much attention to the development of our ideas as to the development of bombs, and we now have something serious to say," FC continued.[21] His IED attacks were thus propaganda by deed. krough his bombing campaign, which lasted through April 1995 and ended with his arrest in April 1996, he ended up murdering three and injuring twenty-three. He remains imprisoned in Florence, Colorado.

As a murderous antitechnology ideologue who was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, Kaczynski was stigmatized as a lunatic, which made it unlikely that the public would have developed a favorable judgment of his rhetorical capabilities.[22] Jenell Johnson argued that the stigmatization that accompanies a diagnosis of mental illness results in the complete undermining of that person's rhetorical ethos for many, if not most, audiences. Stigmatization is both "an act of rhetorical foreclosure" and a "mark of character" that speaks "louder, and more persuasively, than words ever could" to silence the mentally ill.[23] ke stigma of mental disability thereby becomes the lens through which audiences understand the stigmatized person's rhetoric, resulting in their words being dismissed as unreasonable, irrational, unreliable, and "arhetorical."[24] But as Johnson pointed out, being "rhetorically disabled" by a diagnosis and an

[18] Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 8.

[19] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts"; Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 227.

[20] Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 7.

[21] Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 10. In addition to *Industrial Society and Its Future*, Kaczynski tried a number of different rhetorical approaches and genres to spread his message to the American reading public. He penned a short essay, "The Wave of the Future," for the *Saturday Review* that, dripping with irony, touted the benefits of speculative inventions such as the manipulation of clouds to create mass-mediated entertainment in the sky. He penned satirical fiction with the short story "Ship of Fools." He penned his famous manifesto and a number of other essays. He penned a lot of letters.

[22] Regarding the portrayal of Kaczynski's mental status, Tim Luke noted that, to say the least, "analyses indulging in psycho-babble [are] not lacking" ("Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto," 82).

[23] J. Johnson, "Skeleton on the Couch," 463. As rhetorician Catherine Prendergast put it, "the diagnosis of schizophrenia necessarily supplants one's position as a rhetor" so that "to be disabled mentally is to be disabled rhetorically" ("On the Rhetorics of Mental Disability," 47 and 57).

[24] Pryal, "Genre of Mood Memoir and the *Ethos* of Psychiatric Disability," 480; Prendergast, "On the Rhetorics of Mental Disability," 57. See also Molloy's "Recuperative Ethos and Agile Epistemologies."

audience is not the same as being "rhetorically unable."[25] When people are diagnosed as mentally disabled, they should not be denied what Catherine Prendergast called "rhetoricability"—being identified as an able rhetor—even if their actions and words alienate audiences.[26] kerefore, I suggest that granting rhetoricability to Kaczynski is vital to understanding the importance of his weapons rhetoric and his distinctive attempt to challenge the logic of Technē's Paradox.

To examine Kaczynski's rhetoricability as he negotiated Technē's Paradox, I show in section 1 how the theory of rhetorical irreparability undergirds three tactics that characterize the hard rhetoric that he used to assert that technology is always destructive and never preservative. First, Kaczynski diminished all nontechnological problems, eschewing them as mere distractions. Second, Kaczynski diminished the advantages of technologies. Third, Kaczynski amplified the destructiveness of technoindustrial society. In the following section, I describe how Kaczynski's IEDs, no longer in his control, materialized a basic facet of terrorism—the globalized presence of rhetorical violence. In this chapter's middle-way analysis of what it means to be in the presence of both a weapon and words about a weapon, I suggest that his bombs spoke in Kaczynski's stead, motivating beliefs and actions that he did not authorize. I conclude by considering how his repugnant notoriety and his IEDs are remarkable in the longitudinal history of weapons rhetoric.

1. Kaczynski's Hard Rhetoric

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's "locus of the irreparable" connects the tactics that characterize the hard rhetoric that Kaczynski used to negotiate Technē's Paradox. The locus of the irreparable refers to the rhetorical moment and place when and where a rhetor presents an ultimate choice to a precarious audience for the purpose of dealing with an urgent and dire situation. In its focus on the audience's precarious position and the finality of the choice it must make, the locus of the irreparable can overwhelm the audience.[27] Two basic "values" of the irreparable are the certitude of being in a precarious condition, and the terror of being in an unrepeatable situation. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca wrote that an irreparable decision confronts an audience with the understanding that the future is an infinitude wherein the effects of their decision will last forever.[28] Moreover, "whether the results ... be good or evil, the irreparable event is a source of terror for man; to be irreparable, an action must be taken which cannot be repeated: it acquires a value by the very fact of being considered under this

[25] Johnson, "Skeleton on the Couch," 475.

[26] Prendergast, "On the Rhetorics of Mental Disability," 56. Prendergast evidenced Kaczynski as someone who was denied rhetoricability because of his schizophrenia diagnosis (56–57).

[27] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 91. See also Perelman's *New Rhetoric and the Humanities* (160–61).

[28] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 92.

aspect."[29] Thus, rendering the proper decision at a moment when the certainty of one's future gets decided forever becomes both necessary and pressing.[30]

According to Kaczynski, everyone is poised at a precarious, unrepeatable moment of irreparable decision. Humanity is faced with the certitude of approaching bad times, either through civilization-wide collapse or total technological domination, a unique type of urgent, terrorizing certitude. So, he asked, will individuals let the technoindustrial system become so strong that it will oppress, enslave, or exterminate humanity, or will they revolt against the system, annihilate it, and control their own destiny? The results are final. People cannot revoke their decisions. They will either be tools of the machine or revolutionaries. If they choose to acquiesce to technology, technology will decide their fate. If they choose revolution against the technoindustrial system, they will be free—free but only if they survive the ensuing collapse. To drive his point home, to make humanity understand the stakes of its irreparable technological moment, and to justify his violent acts, Kaczynski diminished all non-technological problems and the advantages of technology, and amplified the destructive power of technology to insist that technology is, indisputably, a force of annihilation. In these ways, Kaczynski mobilized a generalized and one-sided form of Technē's Paradox whereby any and all technologies possess the power to destroy, while his IEDs synthesized this technological force within a specific type of weapon.

Kaczynski's diminishment of all nontechnological problems is the first tactic that characterizes his hard rhetoric. He made the unique importance and power of technology clear in *Industrial Society and Its Future*. "No social arrangements, whether laws, institutions, customs or ethical codes, can provide permanent protection against technology," he wrote.[31] With technology as the dominant social force, any attempt at altering social arrangements, reforming laws, reorganizing institutions, developing new customs and ethics, and reforming technology would fail to address the central problem of dangerous technology. Therefore, by nontechnological problems, I mean problems that are conceived of as being caused first and foremost by society, politics, tradition, culture, and law rather than by technology. "Winning" the "battle" against technology, Kaczynski wrote, "will require our utmost exertions. We can't afford to stretch ourselves too thin by concerning ourselves with other goals. Instead, we must make the destruction of the industrial system the single overriding objective toward which all our efforts are directed."[32] By dismissing all nontechnological problems as secondary or subordinate to the problem of technology, Kaczynski asked his readers to forgo attempting to overcome particular difficulties for the sake of all humanity. To Kaczynski, humanity was at the tipping point toward technological doom for the first time in its known history, so the moment of irreparability was at hand. According to Perelman, when the locus of the irreparable is at hand, choosing what do next becomes profoundly significant. "It

[29] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 92.
[30] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 92.
[31] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 78.
[32] Kaczynski, "Answer to Some Comments," 2.

is ... the unique character of the act which gives it its tragic importance," he wrote.[33] Facing the tragic importance of the irreparable technological moment, Kaczynski refused to admit that any actions—from attacks on his writing style to all leftist political endeavors—had any merit in comparison to the larger antitechnology agenda.[34] By demanding a response to his central claim before countenancing any other arguments about technology, and by including expansive preemptive counterargumentation in his works, he intimated that all other societal problems are red herrings that obscure the primary problem of out-ofcontrol technology. He thus diminished nontechnological problems as mere distractions. This tactic is observable in Kaczynski's attack on leftism, his critique of democratic flexibility, and his subordination of politics under technology. His hard rhetoric is further elucidated by contrasting it with the soft rhetoric—by which I mean rhetoric that embraces paradox, ambivalence, incongruity, polysemy, and uncertainty, and that relies on ambiguity to establish and maintain uncertainty—used by David Gelernter. Soft rhetoric helps rhetors evade taking a firm position on a controversial matter by emphasizing the ambiguousness of complex situations. The rhetoric of Thomas Malthus, August Spies, and Leo Szilard could also fall under this definition.[35]

Kaczynski attacked leftists because, in his estimation, their collective drive to solve nontechnological problems makes them incapable of overthrowing technology. Therefore, for Kaczynski, social justice writ large was a distraction. For him, leftists both thrived in the technoindustrial system and helped to make it stronger by fighting for and achieving political reforms. Leftism, according to Kaczynski, meant fighting against racism, sexism, poverty, sweatshops, neocolonialism, capitalism, imperialism, globalization, genocide, and discrimination in all forms and fighting for gay rights, indigenous people's rights, ethnic minorities, animal rights, the environment, workers, immigrants, "sex education and other psychologically 'enlightened' educational methods," social planning, affirmative action, multiculturalism, and "'social justice' in general."[36] Leftists, he wrote, are "a collection of related types" who "insist that everything is culturally relative," make their drive to enforce tolerance and acceptance a "totalitarian tendency," and include socialists, collectivists, "'politically correct' types, feminists, and disability activists."[37] Needless to say, this critique of leftism alienates much of Kaczynski's potential audience, especially academics.[38] He expressed his desire for everyone to consider how the existence of precarious populations, environmental

[33] Perelman, *New Rhetoric and the Humanities*, 160.

[34] Kaczynski expressed dismay that critics of *Industrial Society and Its Future* spent so much time disapproving of his writing style rather than addressing his arguments about technology (Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 124).

[35] A more contemporary example of soft machine rhetoric is Ray Kurzweil's ongoing technofuturist project that seeks the integration of human biology and technology ("Promise and Peril," 3).

[36] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 14–15, 108, 111, and 253; Kaczynski, "Ship of Fools," 453–54.

[37] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 39, 42, and 110. Kaczynski's critique of tolerance closely resembles that of Herbert Marcuse's "Repressive Tolerance."

[38] Kaczynski, "Ship of Fools," 453–54; Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 199.

problems, and injustice makes leftists useful to the technoindustrial system because fighting for people, the environment, and justice releases people's rebellious pressure valve and distracts people from the central technological threat. Racism served as one of his examples. He asked, "Why should we work to give black people an equal opportunity to become corporation executives or scientists when we want a world in which there will be no corporation executives or scientists?"[39] Kaczynski denied neither the presence of racism nor its bad consequences, and he lauded the ideals of social justice and equality. More important to him than the threat of racism, though, was the double threat posed by the leftist tendency to fight racism from within the technoindustrial system. "The left today serves as a kind of fire extinguisher that douses and quenches any nascent revolutionary movement," while the "realization" of leftist goals "would even make the technoindustrial system function more efficiently," he argued.[40] By empowering so many injustices and allowing for their potential elimination, in Kaczynski's estimation, technology divides humanity into an array of fighting populations that keeps them distracted from the power of technology.[41] Therefore, "revolutionaries must somehow circumvent or negate these diversionary tactics," he wrote.[42] Kaczynski thus asserted that all of the nontechnological problems that motivate leftist activism should be dealt with only after first destroying the technoindustrial system.

Kaczynski's lack of interest in promoting feminism is another example of his attack on leftism's diminishment of the technological threat. His antipathy to leftism explains, in part, why he is "uninterested in considering the condition of women in society," in the words of anarchist John Zerzan's assessment of Kaczynski's attitude.[43] He lacked interest in anyone's condition except as it related to his or her domination by technology. Yet it was here, where he took a controversial stance that diminishes the importance of social justice, that his hard rhetoric confronted his readers with the locus of the irreparable. Kaczynski indicated that he wanted all of us, including feminist activists, to stop what we were doing and to start fighting against technology. In the words of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Kaczynski was setting "the uniqueness of truth" about humanity's greatest threat "against the diversity of opinion" about what course of action to take.[44] Kaczynski, by mobilizing the irreparable locus, named humanity's seemingly perpetual and universal domination by technology as the unique truth to which humanity must react. In so doing, he also attempted to head off the many opinions about how to react to technological domination that might intersect with the oppression of race, class, and gender. Qualifying the "unique" names who or what has a "precarious existence," Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca explained.[45] By

[39] Kaczynski, "Answer to Some Comments," 3.
[40] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 14 and 229–30.
[41] Kaczynski, "Ship of Fools," 456–57.
[42] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 362.
[43] Zerzan, *Twilight of the Machines*, 97.
[44] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 92.
[45] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *New Rhetoric*, 92.

qualifying everyone's existence as precarious because of the unique threat of technology, Kaczynski demanded revolution against technology rather than systemic reforms aimed at eradicating the oppression of any particular demographic population. Fighting against the oppression of women, for Kaczynski, meant acquiescing to a system in which technology would continue to oppress women, even if major feminist social justice reforms were enacted. Kaczynski therefore "neglects" the oppression of people when a diversity of nontechnological reforms can ease or eliminate oppression, because eliminating the oppression of some would strengthen"ke System's" oppression of everyone.[46] He therefore used harsh words to describe leftists in an attempt to desensitize "hypersensitivity" to the language that people use to describe nontechnological human oppression.[47]

Kaczynski's attack on leftism is a more specific instance of his broader dissatisfaction with the flexibility of democratic governance, a dissatisfaction that compelled his diminishment of nontechnological political problems. "ke technoindustrial system is exceptionally tough due to its so-called'democratic' structure and its resulting flexibility," Kaczynski wrote in "Hit Where It Hurts."[48] As a matter of process, the normal course of governmental interaction with citizens never results in a solution to the overarching technological problem. "In a 'democratic' system, when social tension and resistance build up dangerously the system backs off enough, it compromises enough, to bring the tensions down to a safe level," he wrote.[49] Kaczynski's critique aligns well with 1960s thinkers who questioned the pluralistic concept of tolerance. Tolerance is a "state of mind," wrote political philosopher Robert Paul Wolff, that makes allowances for social disturbances of all kinds on the local level as a necessary component of realizing democratic pluralism and its promotion of overall stability, upward mobility, and social justice.[50] Yet, Wolff wrote, "pluralism is fatally blind to the evils which afflict the entire body politic, and as a theory of society it obstructs consideration of precisely the sorts of thoroughgoing social revisions which may be needed to remedy those evils."[51] 'Ikis is a question of how to balance working toward "the common good" versus eliminating "distributive injustice."[52] In the words of Herbert Marcuse, "it is the whole which determines the truth ... in the sense that its structure and function determine every particular condition and relation. kus, within a repressive society, even progressive movements threaten to turn their opposite to the degree to which they accept the rules of the game."[53] Kaczynski described technology as the whole, the truth, the structure, and the function, so any action that used political means to solve problems

[46] Luke, "Re-Reading the Unabomber Manifesto," 92.
[47] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 40.
[48] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 251.
[49] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 251.
[50] Wolff, "Beyond Tolerance," 4.
[51] Wolff, "Beyond Tolerance," 52.
[52] Wolff, "Beyond Tolerance," 52.
[53] Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," 83; see also 93–95, 107, and 122–23.

among citizens only served to use "the parts" to strengthen "the whole." The more a democratic plurality could weed out violence and oppression, the stronger technology would grow, because, in this critique of democratic flexibility, or tolerance, there would be less reason for people to fight against technology if a democratic society tolerates a diverse range of people. For Kaczynski, freedom within a democratic system of governance would become more disastrous with respect to the power of technology to absorb political change. According to Kaczynski's logic, as populations appear to attain freedom and dignity within a technological system with successful social justice movements, technology, when unchallenged, would continue to rob all people of their freedom and dignity.

Nuclear terrorism exemplifies how democratic flexibility makes the technoindustrial system more powerful. One might think that politics and war— "the continuation of policy by other means," as Clausewitz put it—would be the proper arenas in which to deal with the threat of nuclear terrorism.[54] But for Kaczynski, the political focus on terrorists and terrorism was yet another distraction from the central problem of technology. "If Al Qaeda should set off a nuclear bomb in Washington, DC, people's reaction will be, 'Get those terrorists!' They will forget that the bomb could not have existed without the previous development of nuclear technology," he wrote.[55] Just as Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" applied a reversed logic that put the effects (peaceful atomic energy use) before the cause (the quest for the Bomb), so, too, does the fight against terrorism put the effects of terroristic violence (the security state) before its cause (the development of the weapons used by terrorists).[56] As long as the United States' populace tolerates its government's solutions to the problems of terrorism, the fight against terrorists will strengthen the technoindustrial system in the long term, Kaczynski surmised, regardless of the destabilization caused by terrorism in the first place. Meanwhile, the technological power that supports both the United States and terrorist organizations would go unquestioned and unchecked.[57] "That's how it is with the 'democratic' industrial system: It gives way before protest, just enough so that the protest loses its force and momentum. Then the system bounces back," Kaczynski wrote from prison, reflecting on his own terroristic violence.[58] A terrorist nuclear blast would thus be bad for victims, but great for expanding the US security state and the technoindustrial system as a whole. In their failure to spark revolution and murderous criminality, Kaczynski's IEDs were also culpable for helping to legitimate the expansion of antiterrorist security.

Kaczynski further diminished political problems by insisting that his revolutionary agenda was apolitical and would destroy the government only as an ancillary effect of destroying the technoindustrial system. For Kaczynski, technology could dominate

[54] Clausewitz, *On War*, 77.
[55] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 268.
[56] De Kerckhove, "On Nuclear Communication," 80.
[57] See Marcuse, "Repressive Tolerance," 85.
[58] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 251.

humanity irrespective of governmental structure, so politics was, without exception, less important than and subordinate to technology. FC's 1995 letter to the *New York Times* stated Kaczynski's loose ties to anarchism, and *Industrial Society and Its Future* confirmed that Kaczynski's revolution was not, foremostly, political. Rather, "the exclusive target of revolution must be technology itself," he asserted.[59] Kaczynski was an anarchist by default, since the level of destruction entailed by the complete demise of technology would include the destruction of all types of government, or political technologies, in the quest for primitive life. Kaczynski scholar David Skrbina called this semiapolitical philosophy "technological anarchism."[60] Thus, Kaczynski saw any actions against government, religion, and capitalism in the name of anarchy as yet more distractions from the central goal of taking down the technoindustrial system, but these anarchist nemeses would be eliminated along with technology.

Contrasting Kaczynski's withering critiques of leftism, democratic flexibility, and political action with David Gelernter's soft rhetoric helps to contextualize why Kaczynski brooked no waffling and wavering on the central technological problem. Gelernter's soft rhetoric wavered about some of technology's commonplace philosophical dilemmas, such as the neutrality of artifacts, determinism, and the accountability for disaster, all while displaying an ambivalent attitude toward the inseparability of technology's positive and negative effects. Gelernter believed that he was Kaczynski's ally, owing to his confrontation with and questioning of technology's negative attributes.[61] But from Kaczynski's viewpoint, the malleability of Gelernter's soft rhetoric proliferated unresolved counterarguments that, in effect, script behavior by absorbing humanity into a life of technological domination and capitalist hierarchy.

Gelernter's refusal to reject technology categorically, after questioning its pros and cons, and his continued work inventing a computer-based human reality that displays a flippant disregard for technology's invasion into personal privacy showed how Gelernter and Kaczynski were in no way conceptual allies. Gelernter described his "mirror worlds" as "software models of some chunk of our reality" in which enormous amounts of data "mimic *the reality's* every move, moment by moment" or "a huge institution's moving, true-to-life mirror image trapped inside a computer."[62] The proposed software would visualize the infinite movements of complex physical systems and institutions, from hospitals to transportation grids, and from banks to social networks, and this visu-

[59] Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 8; Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 38–39 and 125.

[60] Skrbina, "Technological Anarchism."

[61] In his account of the bombing, Gelernter claimed that he is anti-computers and antitechnology by raising the possibility of some computer-based problems in the epilogue to *Mirror Worlds*. Yet his promotion of computer software, despite its possible negative effects on humanity, displays his technological ambivalence (*Drawing Life*, 28, 37, and 59). Owing to his questioning of technology's disadvantages, Gelernter asserted that Kaczynski's letter indicated that the bomber had chosen the wrong target (27–28), although Kaczynski's letter to Gelernter reaffirmed his distaste for Gelernter's work. Anarchist John Zerzan confirmed the reasons for Kaczynski's attack on Gelernter in *Running on Emptiness* (154–55).

[62] Gelernter, *Mirror Worlds*, 3, emphasis in original.

alization would facilitate computer navigation of these systems. Of course, to navigate a mirror world, a user must enter into it and succumb to the program, and the software would have to know every iota of available data about that user in order for its virtual banking, healthcare, transportation, communication, political, work, leisure, and education platforms to function. Gelernter embraced all of this as acceptable despite the obvious drawbacks. His ambivalence about positive and negative technological effects, for instance, is exposed in his oft-repeated assertion of the commonplace argument in technological discourse that new technologies are "inevitable."[63] In this way, Gelernter's *Mirror Worlds* exuded the type of ambivalent and neutral attitude toward technology that aggravated Kaczynski.

No, said Kaczynski—with both a word and a bomb—to Gelernter's vision of virtual humanity. "Never forget that it is the technology itself that has to be eliminated," Kaczynski exhorted again and again.[64] Unlike social justice and other political issues, Gelernter's software project was a primary element of the central problem of technology. For Kaczynski, destabilizing and destroying the computer industry with terrorism was not a diversionary action. Faith in his revolutionary program entailed stopping the implementation of mirror worlds by killing their lead designer. As J. Robert Cox wrote of the irreparable with respect to environmental rhetoric, the "sense of precariousness is captured in references to what is (1) fragile and (2) established, stable, or secure, but threatened by radical intrusion. That which is fragile requires protection or an agent's active intervention to ensure its continued existence."[65] What it means to be human—to live in Kaczynski's wild nature—is threatened by the "radical intrusion" of false reality. Human fragility requires our protection. Thus, Kaczynski's diminishment of nontechnological problems helps to lead his readers to an irreparable place where they must choose to revolt against technology or be forced to live within the mirror world.

Concomitant to minimizing the importance of nontechnological problems by portraying them as diversions, Kaczynski also used the figure of diminishment to refute and downplay any and all beneficial aspects of technology. By refuting the idea that technologies benefit humanity, Kaczynski thereby refuted the idea that weapons or any other technology can be preservative. Unless, that is, a technology has the power to destroy all of technology and, hence, itself. Kaczynski's hard rhetoric diminished technological advantages by contrasting them with the overall disadvantage of technology, subverting the difference between good and bad technologies, and attacking the idea that scientists work on new technologies to benefit humanity.

Kaczynski recognized that refuting the idea that technology benefits humanity is a difficult argument to make, especially in a society engulfed by technology. "Electricity, indoor plumbing, rapid long-distance communication... How could one argue against

[63] Gelernter, *Mirror Worlds*, 216 and 224. Gelernter's ambivalent soft rhetoric is prevalent in the book's epilogue.

[64] Kaczynski, "Answer to Some Comments," 2.

[65] Cox, "Die Is Cast," 230.

any of these things, or against any other of the innumerable technical advances that have made modern society?" he asked in *Industrial Society and Its Future*.[66] Kaczynski did not attempt to argue against specific beneficial technologies, such as medical treatments for cancer patients. Rather, he answered his question by emphasizing that technology should be judged as an entire system and not according to individual technologies. If one judges individual technologies, for which "each step" in innovation "will be equally humanitarian in its goals," as he put it in an untitled essay, then the vast majority of technologies can be portrayed as beneficial.[67] Judged as a whole, however, technology is a detriment. Kaczynski admitted that framing a multitude of benefits as a singular massive disadvantage is a "paradoxical notion."[68] However, he asserted, technology provides a simple formula for understanding this paradox. "The system makes an individual's life easier for him in innumerable ways, but in doing so it deprives him of control over his own fate," he wrote.[69] In a letter to Skrbina, Kaczynski explained how curing mental disorders and saving the environment exemplified this paradox: "ffiough improbable, it's conceivable that the system might some day succeed in eliminating most mental disorders, cleaning up the environment, and solving all its other problems. But the human individual, however well the system may take care of him, will be powerless and dependent. In fact, the better the system takes care of him, the more dependent he will be. He will have been reduced to the status of domestic animal."[70] Kaczynski further explained that the supposed increase in humanity's standard of living, which would result from these beneficial technological advances, was "the system" patting itself on the back for succeeding according to "the system's" own self-determined standards.[71] For Kaczynski, living standards were measurable by access to nature, not electronic gadgets, psychiatry, medicine, communication, plumbing, and all other technological conveniences.[72] Short-term technological successes would lead to "long-term demise."[73] Thus, for Kaczynski, the advantages of individual technologies are not as important, even in sum, as the massive disadvantage of technology as a whole.

In terms of diminishing the benefits of a particular weapon, the Bomb was exemplary for Kaczynski, who rejected the preservative aspect of deterrence theory. On the surface, "nuclear weapons," which were "perhaps the star exhibit" of the domination of humanity by "large organizations ... offer no benefits whatever—only death and destruction," he wrote in another letter to Skrbina.[74] Deterrence would not keep the peace, he explained.

[66] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 76–77.
[67] Kaczynski, "Unnamed Essay."
[68] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 117.
[69] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 117.
[70] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 291.
[71] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 291.
[72] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 291.
[73] Kaczynski, "Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself," 4 and 13.
[74] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 320.

"With the exception only of a tiny minority of dictators, military men, and politicians who see nuclear weapons as enhancing their own power, virtually every thinking person agrees that the world would be better off without nuclear weapons," he wrote.[75] Despite the nearly universal abhorrence of the Bomb, according to Kaczynski, people were not free to rid themselves and their planet of the threat, much less the geopolitical, networked technological systems that sustain it. The one benefit of nuclear deterrence, for Kaczynski, did not justify technology writ large, much less the existence of nuclear arsenals.

People should not bracket the supposed advantages of a technology such that they do not consider the technology's obvious disadvantages, according to Kaczynski. It should not be surprising that in his iteration of Technē's Paradox in *Industrial Society and Its Future*, Kaczynski, as a Jacques Ellul enthusiast, echoed the third of Ellul's four technological rules, which holds that "pernicious effects are inseparable from favorable effects."[76] In the section of *Industrial Society and Its Future* similarly titled "The 'Bad' Parts of Technology Cannot Be Separated from the 'Good' Parts," he intimated that Technē's Paradox might function as a type of gauge to help the public assess technology.[77] Kaczynski here articulated a type of risk analysis that was biased by predetermined hatred of technology. Medicine, genetic engineering, and sanitation served as exemplars of the overarching "bad" technological effect that was of more importance than many lesser "good" effects. In neo-Malthusian fashion, he argued that while medicine benefits humanity by preserving and extending life, it will do so too well, resulting in a gloomy scenario in which "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 ... but a manufactured product."[78] Good health and long life thus come with the probability that a program of systematic extermination and engineered docility will arise to temper the population expansion empowered by medicine. "The immense power of biotechnology" likewise presents humanity with "irresistible" and "obviously and unequivocally good" effects that will only serve to further enslave people to the destructive"needs of the industrial-technological system."[79] His assessment of sanitation, by which the advantages of increased health and longevity are offset by the rise of allergies, intestinal disease, and the "population explosion," follow the same logic.[80] Better to check the population now by overthrowing the technoindustrial system with one massive positive check, he averred, than to let a miserable Malthusian scenario play out over the long term. In general, Kaczynski acknowledged that technologies do solve technological

[75] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 320.

[76] Ellul, "Technological Order," 102–3.

[77] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 74–75 (see also 278, 286, and 315). See also Kaczynski's letter to *Scientifi c American* (*Th e Communiques of Freedom Club*, 11–12).

[78] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 74.

[79] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 75.

[80] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 300.

problems in limited contexts. Rather, the primary problem for Kaczynski was the new, worse problems that the technological solutions would cause as they further thwarted human freedom and dignity.[81]

Kaczynski further diminished the benefits of technology by refuting the idea that scientists who develop technologies desire to "benefit humanity."[82] Kaczynski identified three reasons why the claim that scientists work for the benefit of humanity is unviable. First, he accused scientists of illegitimate personal motivations, such as curiosity, rather than societal ones.[83] Second, Kaczynski dismissed the entire semiscientific fields of archaeology and comparative linguistics as irrelevant to "the welfare of the human race," while giving faint praise to other fields such as research into vaccines and air pollution that at least provide some form of welfare.[84] As a result, Kaczynski gave more academics a reason to despise him. His third critique of science was more important to his diminishment of technological benefits. Scientists who work for humanity's welfare still "present obviously dangerous possibilities," he wrote.[85] Scientists, Kaczynski asserted, do not arrest their research in order to eliminate or prevent technological danger, even when it is obvious. Edward Teller, who was a central figure in the creation of hydrogen bombs, exemplified Kaczynski's idea of a scientist whose "emotional involvement with nuclear power arose not from a desire to 'benefit humanity' but from the personal fulfillment he got from his work and from seeing it put to practical use."[86] Kaczynski imputed that since the destructive potentials of atomic technologies were obvious, then Teller must have developed them for personal, not humanitarian, reasons. "If he was such a humanitarian then why did he help to develop the H-bomb?" Kaczynski demanded.[87] According to Kaczynski, Teller was not at all humanitarian in his pursuit of the Bomb, regardless of any benefits that might have derived from "cheap electricity."[88] For Kaczynski, Teller was a bad person and so were his inventions. Kaczynski viewed the benefits of atomic energy as a ruse that obfuscated enormous technological harms, and his hard rhetoric brooked no prevaricating about Teller's negative contributions to the technoindustrial system. To choose acquiescence to the technoindustrial system thus entails making the irreparable choice to grant tacit support to hydrogen bombs and their inevitable use.

The amplification of technological destruction was the third main tactic by which Kaczynski's hard rhetoric confronted his readers with the locus of the irreparable. The impetus for his desire to amplify the destructive aspects of technology might have come from Kaczynski's Harvard education, as suggested by his biographer, Alston Chase.

[81] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 303.
[82] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 62–64.
[83] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 62–63.
[84] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 63.
[85] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 63.
[86] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 63.
[87] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 63.
[88] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 63.

Chase indicated that the Harvard curriculum, reformed according to 1945's *General Education in a Free Society*, emphasized the dual poles of Technē's Paradox as a type of central philosophy, or modus operandi, peculiar to twentieth-century life. According to Chase, courses at Harvard played an important role in stimulating Kaczynski's industrial antipathy by inculcating a positivist scientific mindset with a "despairing message" about the negative effects of science and its technologies.[89] The optimism exuded by positivism and the life sciences that science would forever enhance human life for the betterment of humankind competed with the dismal portrayals of technological society by the likes of Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Thorstein Veblen, Oswald Spengler, Norbert Wiener, Lewis Mumford, Herbert Marcuse, and most of all, Jacques Ellul.[90] Kaczynski even clarified that he was parroting the antitechnological views he found elsewhere.[91] One example of his education in the Paradox at Harvard is his firsthand experience of both the preservative and destructive aspects of psychological technologies as the subject of unethical experiments by psychologist Henry A. Murray. The study of psychology is taught as a way to better humanity by understanding the mind and brain. But over three years, Murray subjected Kaczynski and other undergrads to a withering barrage of interrogations and other tests meant to undermine their mental health in order to make observations about how people react to adversity and alienation.[92] These experiments seemed more destructive than preservative of the dignity of human life. Kaczynski rejected the positive outlook on technology, accepted the destructive capacity of technology as endemic, and proclaimed the detrimental effects of technology again and again. His amplification of technology's destructive capacity is observable in his demonstrations of our collective loss of humanity, his list of technologies that threaten humanity, the attribution of autonomous technological determinism to technology writ large, and the call to destroy it all as the one and only option.

Kaczynski amplified technological destruction by drawing attention to the many ways that technology destroys what it means to be human. At times, Kaczynski took an exterministic position. "he unrestrained growth of technology" Kaczynski wrote in "he Coming Revolution," was a totally annihilating force that "threatens the very survival of the human race."[93] Kaczynski, however, disbelieved that technological human self-extinction will take place anytime soon. Rather, people face "disaster of another kind" in the immediate and ongoing "loss of our humanity."[94] A purposeful human life, for

[89] Chase, *Mind for Murder*, 32 and 293.

[90] Chase, *Mind for Murder*, 204–5 and 209–13. Skrbina's "Technological Anarchism" situates Kaczynski's thought within twentieth-century philosophy of technology, and Corey's "On the Unabomber" compares and contrasts Ellul and Kaczynski.

[91] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 124.

[92] See Chase, *Mind for Murder*, 228–94.

[93] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 212.

[94] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 212.

Kaczynski, was defined by freedom and dignity.[95] Technologies like artificial intelligence and genetic engineering threaten both.[96] Sounding quite patriotic, and summoning the revolutionary rhetoric of France and the United States, he warned in his untitled essay of "the extinction of individual liberty" by technology.[97] In an "irreversible" process within the technoindustrial system, people would put their individual and collective fates into the hands of "politicians, corporation executives and remote, anonymous technicians and bureaucrats whom he as an individual has no power to influence," he wrote in *Industrial Society and Its Future*.[98] To paraphrase Cox's explanation of the irreparable locus, Kaczynski claimed that technology's destructive force entails specific consequences for everyone, for we all must decide whether to revolt against technology while at risk of being complicit in causing the "irreplaceable loss" of our humanity.[99] It might be odd to think of Kaczynski as a humanitarian, but he displayed a deep regard for what makes us human at the same time that he held contempt for technoindustrial human life.[100] hus, Kaczynski amplified technological destruction because he was confident that humans will become technology's pets if humans fail to revolt.

Kaczynski amplified technological destruction in a second way by listing the sheer number of dangerous technologies that exacerbate the technoindustrial system's encroachments on humanity. In the foreword to *Technological Slavery*, Kaczynski emphasized that one of "the four main points that I've tried to make in my writings" is that "technological progress is carrying us to inevitable disaster."[101] Moreover, "the longer the technoindustrial system continues to expand, the worse will be the eventual disaster."[102] What technologies threaten humanity? His "partial list of problems" is long:

> War (with modern weapons, not comparable to earlier warfare), nuclear weapons, accumulation of nuclear waste, other pollution problems of many different kinds, global warming, ozone depletion, exhaustion of some natural resources, overpopulation and crowding, genetic deterioration of humans due to relaxation of natural selection, abnormally high rate of extinction of species, risk of disaster from biotechnological tinkering, possible or probable replacement of humans by intelligent machines, biological engineering of humans (an insult to human dignity), dominance of large organizations and powerlessness of individuals, surveillance technology that makes indi-

[95] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 98.
[96] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 291.
[97] Kaczynski, "Unnamed Essay."
[98] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 77.
[99] Cox, "Die Is Cast," 227.
[100] Kaczynski, like the poet William Wordsworth, wanted the "restoration of our humanity" (Lentricchia and McAuliffe, *Crimes of Art + Terror*, 19–20).
[101] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 13.
[102] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 13.

> viduals still more subject to the power of large organizations, propaganda and other manipulative psychological techniques, psychoactive medications, mental problems of modern life, including inter alia, stress, depression, mania, anxiety disorders, attention-deficit disorder, addictive disorders, domestic abuse, and generalized incompetence.[103]

Throughout his writings, genetic engineering, biotechnology, mass media, nuclear energy, and the chemical industry were some of Kaczynski's most frequent targets. Each of these dangerous technologies could prove catastrophic on their own. All together, though, they represented irrefutable proof for Kaczynski that humanity is doomed. In a letter to Skrbina, Kaczynski wrote, "Even if we make the extremely optimistic assumption that any one of the [technological] problems could be solved through reform, it is unrealistic to suppose that *all* of the most important problems can be solved through reform, and solved in time" to prevent disaster.[104] In its level of amplification, the long list of dangerous technologies is overwhelming. Nonetheless, the list demands a response to Kaczynski's central claim that all technologies are destructive, and it provides additional evidence for his subsidiary claim that any responses to his arguments that fail to address the destructive capacities of technologies are tangential digressions that serve to empower the technoindustrial system further.

In terms of this book's middle-way argument about the mixed agency of rhetors and technologies, Kaczynski can be seen as attributing a much more powerful causal agency to technology than he does to either humans or human/ nonhuman assemblages. Although Kaczynski believed in the power of humans to revolt against the technoindustrial system, he was a technological determinist through and through. And his promotion of technological determinism was a third way that he amplified technological destruction. "The development of the technoindustrial system cannot be controlled, restrained, or guided, nor can its effects be moderated to any substantial degree," Kaczynski wrote.[105] After all, he was a student of nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophers of technology who conceived of technology as an all-powerful, dominating force. Citing Marx, Ellul, Samuel Ramos, and Samuel Butler, Kaczynski wrote, "it is technology that rules society, not the other way around."[106] Industrial society was, hence, a "social machine."[107] And when the social machine destroyed, it did so of its own accord and could destroy as much as it willed. Kaczynski was adamant that neither more technology nor reforms of the technoindustrial system would stop the destructive impulses of autonomous technology. It threatened humanity's survival and pushed us to the brink, the locus of the irreparable.

[103] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 317.
[104] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 317.
[105] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 13.
[106] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 14.
[107] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 66.

Whereas nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophies of technology tended to look to capitalistic, communistic, or environmental politics, more technologies, new attitudes, refusal, or God to get out of the technological dilemma, Kaczynski exhorted violent "revolution against the industrial system."[108] he amplified destructive character of technology both warranted and necessitated it. "If we want to defend ourselves against technology, the only action we can take that might prove effective is an effort to precipitate the collapse of technological society," Kaczynski wrote, again announcing the terms of irreparability.[109] Cox wrote that the locus of the irreparable warrants "extraordinary measures," or "actions which go beyond the usual, customary, or what most people would approve."[110] Revolt against technology is such an extraordinary measure. But a problem with invoking the locus of irreparability, as noted by David Zarefsky, is that when delivering the news of a tough dilemma to a "diverse audience," many people will oppose the argument, most "will be uncommitted," and only a few will make the difficult choice to, in this case, revolt.[111] Hence, the moment of advocating revolt is a key moment when Kaczynski's rhetoric is at its hardest. "Only the collapse of modern technological civilization can avert disaster," he wrote as one of his "four main points." And in *Industrial Society and Its Future*, he wrote that "it would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences."[112] Kaczynski was not diverted from his goal of bringing down technological society, and his rhetoric did not waver. In "he Coming Revolution," Kaczynski wrote that the "scientists, engineers, corporation executives, politicians, and so forth, who consciously and intentionally promote technological progress and economic growth are criminals of the worst kind," even "worse than Stalin or Hitler."[113] He would "hit them where it hurts" and he urged everyone to do likewise in order to ensure that "when industrial society breaks down, its remnants will be smashed beyond repair, so that the system cannot be reconstituted. he factories should be destroyed, technical books burned, etc."[114] hus, Kaczynski amplified technology's destructive capacity in order to goad humanity's destructive capacity into action.

Taken together, Kaczynski's diminishment of nontechnological problems, diminishment of technological benefits, and amplification of technological destruction demonstrated both how unwavering his hard rhetoric was and how the locus of the irreparable depends upon uniqueness, precariousness, and timeliness.[115] As a manifestation of the generalized form of Techne's Paradox, these rhetorical tactics meshed well with a strategy meant to tap into commonplace anxieties about technologies, and demonstrated

[108] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 38.
[109] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 14.
[110] Cox, "Die Is Cast," 234 and 236.
[111] Zarefsky, *Rhetorical Perspectives on Argumentation*, 95.
[112] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 13 and 96.
[113] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 216.
[114] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 90.
[115] Cox, "Die Is Cast," 229.

that, in the words of Skrbina, we are all "morally required to work to take the system down, by any means necessary."[116] Kaczynski's negotiation of Techne's Paradox as a generalized technological predicament, rather than one bound to a particular weapon, revealed the irrevocable, irreparable action that the precariousness of the overarching technological situation required. Revolutionary violence should be afoot for those who concur that nontechnological problems are subordinate to technological ones, that the advantages conveyed to humanity by technology are overblown, and that technology is too destructive. Yet the advocacy and perpetration of terroristic violence was the point at which Kaczynski lost his audience. He might have tapped into a generally popular technological antipathy, but he had murdered and maimed people with indiscriminate terror.[117] Thus, the moments when his IEDs ripped into unsuspecting victims not only marked the step from condemning the technoindustrial system to blowing it up, but also marked the point at which people judged Kaczynski for his "specific misdeeds" rather than his "general principles."[118] The moments when his *IEDs* exploded, his hard rhetoric became subordinated to his bombs' own particular rhetorical force as eloquent objects.

2. Rhetorical Violence: Talking Bombs

This chapter's middle-way approach to the rhetorical character of weapons examines the presence of Kaczynski's IEDs as a type of entailed rhetorical violence. As a textual analysis, one might say the preceding section examined Kaczynski as a type of "literary terrorist" who dropped "cultural bombs" and set off "literary explosives."[119] But revolutionaries, terrorists, and states do not only persuade and dissuade the commission of violent acts with spoken and written weapons. They commit violence at the same time they enunciate it.[120] Most of Kaczynski's IEDs, though, exploded long before his words did. The tendrils of his infamy spread along flight paths and postal routes before materializing in an FBI dossier and the mass media. In this materialization, Kaczynski's words and his IEDs are as inseparable as they are discrete entities. Rhetoric and violence in general are also both inseparable and discrete insofar as they both motivate belief and actions. Rhetoric and violence—words and weapons—"are at once both irreducible to each other and inextricably interrelated," to borrow Jean Baudrillard's gloss on the relationship between good and evil.[121] As discussed in chapter 2, August Spies lost control of the meaning of the word "dynamite" but retained the power to control his identity if not his biological fate. In contrast, the vexed interactivity between

[116] Skrbina, "Technological Anarchism," 104.

[117] Chase, *Mind for Murder*, 100.

[118] See Kaczynski, *Communiques of Freedom Club*, 8.

[119] Lentricchia and McAuliffe, *Crimes of Art + Terror*, 19 and 23.

[120] On mere "men of words," see Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery* (355–56); and Kaczynski "Hit Where It Hurts" (8).

[121] Baudrillard, *Spirit of Terrorism*, 13.

rhetoric and violence disempowered Kaczynski, who lost control of the meaning of his IEDs as much as he lost control of his identity when the FBI dubbed him "unabom."[122] He had particular goals when he constructed each IED, but Kaczynski did not know "what its precise powers would be," although he might have surmised that the ensuing events would adhere to a "graspable pattern," to use the words of Andrew Pickering's description of the "emergence" of material agency.[123] Once Kaczynski remade himself by exploding his IEDs, he found himself remade once again when they were turned back against him.[124] To understand Kaczynski's *IEDs,* I define their rhetorical violence as the motivation of human thought and belief that can be traced to violent events and to weapons, and that escapes the control of those who perpetrate the violence. The unintended consequences entailed by the presence of weapons sometimes displace the agency of those who wield them. By naming and defining rhetorical violence, I do not intend to equate violence and rhetoric, nor do I intend to separate them. Violence and rhetoric are at odds, and yet they work in tandem as rhetorical violence. Examining the concept of rhetorical violence with respect to Kaczynski's aim to "hit where it hurts," the reactions of the FBI and of the legal apparatus to his IEDs, the confusing interchangeability of humanity and technology as his targets, and the terroristic omnipresence of the bombs demonstrate that Kaczynski's rhetorical agency was displaced by the Unabomber's IEDs.

There are several ways to define rhetorical violence from a material perspective. Violence and weapons are not rhetorical figures or tropes, at least in the classic Greco-Roman sense, although they can be used as such. Violence and weapons possess a motivational force, and it is not for unjustifiable reasons that violence, war, and weapons have served as metaphors for rhetoric, debate, and coercion. The history of rhetorical theory is littered with examples. The mighty figure of Rhetorica appears with her sword drawn. "To be injured by speech," in the words of Judith Butler, happens when someone enacts a violent agency via the force of words, such as with hate speech, which puts "the addressee out of control."[125] Moving from the results of biological injury and death to their causation in persuasive exhortations to maim and kill is another form of rhetorical violence.[126] Human bodies can become "an extension of the weapon" via the language of killing.[127] Then there is symbolic violence, or the mobilization of violent events for persuasive purposes. One might also commit an act of violence with the

[122] The FBI coined the term "UNABOM," sometimes fully capitalized, with reference to the unknown bomber's crimes: "'Un' for universities, 'a' for airlines, and 'bom' for bomb" (Chase, *Mind for Murder*, 55).

[123] Pickering, *Mangle of Practice*, 24.

[124] This sentence paraphrases John Tresch's description in *Romantic Machine* of the protagonist in a Balzac novel, *Lost Illusions*, whose experience with the press leads to ruin, and although the example comes from far afield, it is an apt description of Kaczynski's fate after his violent mobilization of newsprint (xv–xvi).

[125] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 4. See also Scarry's *Body in Pain* (43).

[126] Yellin, *Battle Exhortation.*

[127] Scarry, *Body in Pain*, 67.

intent of using the event as a symbolic means to motivate belief and action, which is propaganda by the deed.[128] Kaczynski used the symbolic violence of his own terrorism to, for instance, negotiate the publication of *Industrial Society and Its Future* and ensure that people would have a reason to read it, which is an act of coercion or blackmail. All of these forms of rhetorical violence pertain to weapons rhetoric, and even casual readers of this book will recognize that rhetorical violence has been present throughout its pages. Kaczynski's case, however, provides a peculiar opportunity to consider rhetorical violence with respect to a person who designed, built, and detonated his own weapons in addition to perpetrating a guerilla mass-media campaign to legitimate their use. Unlike the other weapons rhetors in this book, Kaczynski controlled the lifespan of his weapons from idea to explosion. Furthermore, the difference between the presence of words and the presence of words about weapons marks the point at which Kaczynski's terrorism splintered away from the antitechnology philosophy of Jacques Ellul.[129] Once his bombs exploded, when they started to talk, they took on a different type of presence than that which was authorized by Ellul or designed and rationalized by Kaczynski.

The essay "Hit Where It Hurts" shows that Kaczynski understood violence as rhetorical and vice versa. More than just listing "the vital organs of the system" that "radicals must attack" (the electric power industry, the communications industry, the computer industry, the propaganda industry, and the biotechnology industry), the essay focuses on the uses of and occasions for persuasion.[130] He even used the rhetoric-violence metaphor to structure the essay's purpose: "I have to explain that when I talk about 'hitting where it hurts' I am not necessarily referring to physical blows or to any other form of physical violence. For example, in oral debate, 'hitting where it hurts' would mean making the arguments to which your opponent's position is most vulnerable. In a presidential election, 'hitting where it hurts' would mean winning from your opponent the states that have the most electoral votes. Still, in discussing this principle I will use the analogy of physical combat, because it is vivid and clear."[131] Although Kaczynski might not have been "necessarily referring" to physical violence, he was by implication referring to violent acts. As he noted, he could not "recommend violence of any kind," owing to his incarceration.[132] His caveats about not recommending violence and criminality while attacking technology through "legal means, of course," were ironic.[133] To extend Kaczynski's pugilistic metaphor, "hitting where it hurts" does not refer to knocking out any particular industry or the entire technoindustrial system. Rather, the rhetorical purpose of "hitting where it hurts" is to goad a particular industry or

[128] Bolt, *Violent Image*, 199–224.

[129] See the nonviolent "revolutionary plan" against "technological society" that Ellul described in *Autopsy of Revolution* (281–91).

[130] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts," 6 and 8.

[131] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts," 3.

[132] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts," 3.

[133] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts," 4.

institution into a long, grueling bout that will give the underdog a chance at, in the end, defeating the champion. Owing to the "flexibility" of the "democratic structure" that defuses public worry and anger about industrial society, "in order to hit the system where it hurts, you need to select issues on which the system will *not* back off, on which it will fight to the finish ... the vital organs of the system," he wrote.[134] In juxtaposition to such blows that draw an opponent into a fight to the death, "trotting off to the next world trade summit to have temper tantrums over globalization" will neither hurt the technoindustrial system nor force it to react.[135] The World Bank can just ignore such protest, and leave skirmishing with the protestors to an overmilitarized security squad. The idea of the World Bank fighting to the finish with protestors who use traditional means of dissent is unthinkable. Instead, winning the key issue of the debate—or, rather, bombing the most vulnerable key personnel—of critical industries will "hurt" the system.[136] Thus, "hitting where it hurts" entails seeking engagement with power and authority in order to elicit an aggressive response that revolutionaries can turn into both a public debate and a violent conflict. But while persuading the key people who sustain the technoindustrial system to desist from their livelihoods is within the realm of possibility, it is more plausible according to Kaczysnki's logic that IED explosions will force the technoindustrial system to react by "fighting to the finish."

Consider the technoindustrial system's reaction to the Unabomber's IEDs as a way to gauge the power of his weapons to instigate the type of "fight to the finish" he imagined. His IEDs functioned beyond the scope of the rhetorical goals he identified, and instead he ended up instigating a fight to his own finish. Kaczynski's blackmailing of the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* to secure publication of *Industrial Society and Its Future* succeeded, but his additional demands to continue publishing responses to his critics in the same newspapers never materialized. His arrest weeks after the publication of the treatise ended his chance to continue writing for the media from which he had, with the FBI's approval, coerced initial cooperation. In the long run, his terrorism was as effective as throwing antiglobalization tantrums even though he, according to his own definition, "hit where it hurts." Instead of motivating either a pervasive national conversation about technological dangers or a withering debate within the news media, his IEDs told the state and the mass media to stigmatize his antitechnology attitude as insane. His methods hit him where it hurts.

When his bombs spoke for him, they did so as a type of rhetorical violence that spoke more directly to much of his audience than his words did. Arguing that Rorschach-test cards speak as objects, Peter Galison made a cogent statement that bears upon the rhetorical violence of Kaczynski's IEDs. "Just insofar as these cards are described, they describe the describer. Not only do these objects talk back, they immediately double

[134] Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 251 and 253, emphasis in original.
[135] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts," 8.
[136] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts," 8.

the observer's language with a response that pins the speaker on a psychogrammatic map. These are the cards of the Rorschach test; and they don't mind sending you home, to the clinic, or to prison," Galison wrote.[137] Furthermore, such "objects also make subjects: depressive,' 'schizophrenic.'"[138] As much as Kaczynski described his *IEDs,* they in turn described the describer, with perhaps greater rhetorical effect. When they spoke, they sent him to prison and pigeonholed him with a damaging psychological diagnosis by helping to label him a paranoid schizophrenic. If one believes in the validity or sanity of his rationalizations, then his bombs offered a counterargument, even as they corroborated Kaczynski's thesis that technology is categorically a force of destruction. His IEDs destroyed the Freedom Club. Kaczynski might have surmised that would happen.

Weapons force governments to respond to their presence.[139] In Kaczynski's case, his IEDs helped to determine his legal fate by warranting the state to brand him a paranoid schizophrenic, which forced him to abandon his intent to justify his actions at trial. Upon his arrest, the legal proceedings and Kaczynski's official psychological assessment took many twists and turns. Confronted by the media's insistence that he was a deranged killer, he was adamant that he was not. Court-appointed psychologists at first agreed with Kaczynski, but that assessment was overturned by a second psychological profile created by Sally R. Johnson, who based her diagnosis of Kaczynski's schizophrenia on his antitechnology views, the facts of his bombings, and his belief in his sanity. Xavier F. Amador, an advisor who helped to manufacture Johnson's state-sponsored "mental defect" defense, declared Kaczynski to be suffering from schizophrenia complicated by anosognosia, the belief in one's own sanity and the desire to prove it in the face of "life threatening consequences" that instead constitutes proof of one's insanity.[140] In sum, Johnson's report labeled Kaczynski's industrial antipathy insane, his violence insane, and his belief in his sanity insane.[141] Kaczynski tried to circumvent this official diagnosis by asserting his right to represent himself in court. Michael Mello, one of Kaczynski's legal advisers, noted, however, that allowing Kaczynski to defend himself was tantamount to assisted suicide, because mounting a political defense of his crimes was destined to fail.[142] His court-appointed lawyers' staunch at-

[137] Galison, "Image of Self," 257.

[138] Galison, "Image of Self," 259.

[139] Historian Tami Davis Biddle made this argument regarding the invention of the airplane (*Rhetoric and Reality in Air Warfare*, 289).

[140] Amador and Paul-Odouard, "Defending the Unabomber," 368 and 364. See also S. Johnson, "Psychiatric Competency Report," 24; Kaczynski's assessment of his legal treatment in "Explanations of the Judicial Opinions" (Kaczynski, *Technological Slavery*, 410–14); and Kirk and Kutchins, *Selling of DSM*, 20–22.

[141] Kaczysnki's psychological profiling exemplifies rhetorician Cathryn Molloy's argument that one type of psychiatric "over-diagnosis" involves "the language and rhetoric of esoteric medical expertise eclipsing the voices and experiences of mentally ill persons" ("Recuperative Ethos and Agile Epistemologies," 140).

[142] Mello, "Non-Trial of the Century," 505–7.

titude against the death penalty provided a further obstacle for Kaczynski. Led by attorney Quin Denvir, they would do anything in their power to keep Kaczynski alive. Kaczynski was deemed capable of self-representation, but Judge Garland E. Burrell Jr. denied his motion to defend himself by depicting it as a stalling tactic, which forced Kaczynski to be represented by lawyers whose only option to keep him alive was to mount the insanity defense provided by Johnson. Kaczynski thereby found himself confronted with a classic catch-22 situation in which the only way to espouse his views in court was to be labeled insane, and the only way to remain sane was to avoid a trial. Unable to fight the sudden fact of his insane criminality, Kaczynski accepted life in prison in order to avoid the indignity of casting his words and his bombs as the mere ravings and weapons of a lunatic. Unlike August Spies at the Haymarket trial, Kaczynski was denied the chance to explain his revolutionary program, to "call the hangman," and to be martyred for his cause. Thus, the court's refusal to let Kaczynski mount a political defense and its insistence that he was simultaneously insane and competent to both stand trial and represent himself showed that labeling him as insane was a "political diagnosis,"[143] a diagnosis that I suggest derived from the moment his first IED exploded. By using a scientific discipline that can find requisite symptoms to diagnose almost anyone with mental problems, the court used the technoindustrial system to bury Kaczynski's antitechnology terrorism and preempted mass media coverage of the ideas behind his bombs.[144] Kaczynski's attempts to "hit where it hurts" thus empowered the state to reinscribe its own subjugating power.[145] His bombs spoke louder than his words, indicating how the state could muffle Kaczynski's attempt to preserve humanity by destroying it.

In addition to dictating the course of his legal comeuppance, Kaczynski's IEDs triggered a series of systemic repercussions that "entangled" a motley assortment of people in his agenda, "entrapping" them in the FBI's Unabomber investigation, to use archaeologist Ian Hodder's materialist terminology.[146] When unabombs exploded, they motivated specific actions on the part of the technoindustrial system to recover from its brief destabilization. Over seventeen years of fruitless searching, the FBI investigation became broader and broader, sweeping a variety of possible suspects and targets into its purview. The FBI entangled the entire field of STS, going so far as to infiltrate the 1994 Society for Social Studies of Science conference and enlisting STS scholars to

[143] Skrbina, "A Revolutionary for Our Times," 34.

[144] For a contemporaneous critique of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*), see Kutchins and Kirk's *Making Us Crazy* (21–54).

[145] Daniel Kevles wrote, "The Unabomber combines the views of the Luddites with the cruelty of their repressors; to him, industrialism is not only an offense, it is an offense punishable by death" ("E Pluribus Unabomber," 2).

[146] Material-culture scholar and archaeologist Ian Hodder defined "entanglement" as the process in which "the social world of humans and the material world of things are entangled together by dependences and dependencies that create potentials, further investments and entrapments" (*Entangled*, 89 and 95).

help figure out the Unabomber's identity.[147] The list of people who could and might build such bombs was long. Novelist William T. Vollmann became a suspect, owing to loose similarities between his fiction and what little the FBI knew of the terrorist FC, similarities that in the past would have made a hardened conspiracy theorist blush but that now are the banal entanglements potentially faced by everyone living in a hyper-surveilled society.[148] Kaczynski's *IEDs* entrapped certain environmental groups, such as Earth First!, the Earth Liberation Front, green anarchists, and anarchoprimitivists. The state and the mass media used these groups' tenuous association with Kaczynski as a means to justify stigmatizing them as ecoterrorist organizations.[149] These are just a few of the entrapments compelled by his IEDs that did not force a "fight to the finish" with the technoindustrial system.

As Kaczynski's IEDs entangled various people, they also swept technologies into the purview of his antitechnology program, even though, unlike the Luddites, he did not encourage people to smash machines. Yet by threatening the human supporters of machines and systems, unabombs also threatened technologies with destruction.[150] Although he did not aim to blow up technological objects as his primary targets, nonetheless he blew them up. By exploding people and machines, unabombs framed both as equivalent threats to humanity. The various human and nonhuman objects that exploded in unabomb blast radii confused the distinction between the people and the technologies of the technoindustrial system and warranted understanding them as somewhat interchangeable with respect to both the causes and the effects of rhetorical violence. Kaczynski used a bulldozer metaphor to describe how to "hit where it hurts," which demonstrated how technological targets and threats and human targets and threats started to become interchangeable within the context of Kaczynski's terrorism. In short, to destroy a bulldozer (the technoindustrial system), a revolutionary must target the vulnerable engine for attack with the proper tools, and not target the invulnerable blade with a blunt object.[151] Both the bulldozer engine (people) and the bulldozer blade (technologies) threaten humanity because they are operational components of the entire bulldozer (the technoindustrial system). Kaczynski's metaphor clarified that the "vital organs of the system" are not machines. They are people. Machines don't feel pain or coercion, but people do. And the most vulnerable population is the most random—the open target rather than the secure. Instead of sledgehammering computers or blowing them up with IEDs, Kaczynski blew up computer-store

[147] Benson, "Unabomber and the History of Science"; Shrum, "We Were the Unabomber"; Restivo, "4S, the FBI, and Anarchy."

[148] Vollmann, "Machines of Loving Grace," 69–70.

[149] On the ideological and verbal links between Kaczynski and these environmental movements, see Taylor's "Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism." In *Th e Pyrotechnic Insanitarium*, Mark Dery argued that Kaczynski's appeals to wild nature have more in common with the social-Darwinistic appeals of the probusiness elite who mobilize nature to justify their nonhumanitarian goals (227–45).

[150] S. Jones, *Against Technology*, 212.

[151] Kaczynski, "Hit Where It Hurts," 3.

workers and computer scientists. Yet at the same time, he also blew up or tried to blow up technological artifacts. When his IEDs exploded, they entangled technologies and superseded his words, which empowered the mass media to charge Kaczynski with being an anachronistically foolish Luddite.[152]

Kaczynski's targeting of the airline industry, its people, and its planes is another example of the interchangeability of people and technologies that the presence of his IEDs entailed. He bombed American Airlines flight 444 in 1979. Twelve passengers were treated for smoke inhalation, and the pilot had to make an emergency landing. Then in 1995, Kaczynski issued a new threat via a letter to the *San Francisco Chronicle*: "warning. The terrorist group FC, called unabomber by the FBI, is planning to blow up an airliner out of Los Angeles International Airport some time during the next six days."[153] But with the interchangeability of people and technologies as both threats and targets, the bomb and bomb threat failed to clarify whether the Unabomber's intended target was an airplane, the airliner, its passengers, or the entire industry. The bomb and bomb threat failed to clarify what the aviation industry's invulnerable and nonvital blade and its vital and vulnerable engine were since airliners combine human ingenuity, aviation science, the planes themselves, and the system that sustains them. Hitting an airliner where it hurts—a plane in midflight—established interchangeability between people, machines, and systems via Kaczynski's apolitical terrorism. The attempt to goad a fight to the finish with the airline industry was a lost transmission, disrupted by the ambiguous rhetorical violence of his altitude-sensitive IEDs.

The interchangeability of humans and technologies as targets and threats revealed by Kaczynski's IEDs also demonstrated how rhetorical violence threatened everyone as a universal societal condition of living in a technoindustrial system. Kaczynski's IEDs asked a number of difficult questions about society. As citizens of the technoindustrial system made complicit simply by inhabiting a particular territory and using everyday technologies, are we all targets?[154] Or if we agree with the Unabomber that technology is out of control, are we "all becoming bombs?"[155] What does it mean to be an accomplice to technoindustrial society? Or to live where one's indebtedness to capitalism and its technology make almost everyone potentially complicit in its subversion? The answers to these questions remain elusive. Kaczynski's bombs asked whether people prefer being dominated by technology or being threatened by terrorism. In terms of Technē's Paradox, both technology writ large and the technologies of terrorism threaten destruction and promise preservation. The explosion of a unabomb therefore resembles a question mark more than an exclamation point, and to take Kaczynski and his IEDs seriously entails choosing between unappealing options. The

[152] For an assessment of Kaczynski by comparison to Luddite and neo-Luddite thinking, see Steven E. Jones's *Against Technology* (211–33).

[153] Kaczynski, letter to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, reprinted in M. Taylor, "S.F., L.A. Airports Get Bomb Warning."

[154] Derrer, *We Are All the Target*, 5.

[155] Packer, "Becoming Bombs."

ambiguous purpose of Kaczynski's IEDs, though, lets people know they are unsafe. While human bodies suffer pain and injury, more critical for terrorism is to attack "the enemy's environment" in order to create an "unlivable milieu," in the words of Peter Sloterdijk.[156] Unabombs spread the threat of terrorism across the entire territory that is bounded by the reach of technology. When everyone was a technoindustrial threat and target, then a unabomb was omnipresent in its potential to explode. In this sense, unabombs punctured the American public, who bore witness to each successive event.[157] By proclaiming all people's guilt in their acquiescence to technology's domination of humanity, Kaczynski's IEDs did not prepare the way for revolution. The terrifying accountability shared by almost all people in the technoindustrial system—announced by his IEDs—motivated revulsion toward their creator rather than solidarity. The public found no reason to swap the "unlivable milieu" of technoindustrial society for the "unlivable milieu" of terrorism. The popular revulsion toward Kaczynski's IEDs, an invention of rhetorical violence, showed that the world's population was incapable of antitechnological revolutionary activity.

Unresolved questions about the instability of his talking bombs empowered critics to carve Kaczynski up into two identities, one they could vilify and one with which they could identify. Without the presence of his IEDs, Kaczynski's identity could not, with ease, slip back and forth between being known as a rational mathematician who opposes technology, the mad terrorist Unabomber, and the man who is both. Computer scientist Bill Joy's reaction to the bombings typifies this bifurcation of the culprit into the competing identities of the Unabomber and Theodore J. Kaczynski. "Like many of my colleagues, I felt that I could easily have been the Unabomber's next target," Joy wrote, while also announcing his allegiance with Kaczynski's misgivings about technology.[158] Specifically, Joy agreed with Kaczynski, but disagreed with FC. Other critics noted that Kaczynski's anxiety about technology lent *Industrial Society and Its Future* a nearly ubiquitous popular appeal and an authenticity that can be traced to the classically rebellious American writings of Henry David Moreau.[159] "There's a little bit of the Unabomber in most of us," wrote journalist Robert Wright.[160] "Why did someone so like me commit murder?" mused Keith Benson.[161] Daniel Kevles titled a *New Yorker* editorial "E Pluribus Unabomber: There's a Little of Him in Us All." As Baudrillard surmised, the endemic violence of contemporary culture has fomented "that (unwittingly) terroristic imagination which dwells in all of us."[162] Imagining the

[156] Sloterdijk, *Terror from the Air*, 14 and 16.

[157] See Rozelle's *Ecosublime* (88).

[158] Joy, "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us."

[159] Oleson,"'Evil the Natural Way.'" Oleson suggested that Thoreau might have approved of Kaczynski's bombings depending on whether the mad bomber or the philosophermathematician was deemed responsible (224–25).

[160] Quoted in Chase, *Mind for Murder*, 32.

[161] Chase, *Mind for Murder*, 128.

[162] Baudrillard, *Spirit of Terrorism*, 5.

downfall of a global power structure is easy enough for a society steeped in multiple genres of post-apocalyptic fantasy.

The presence of the terrorist's weapon, however, locates complete societal breakdown within one's living room, office, bus, or marketplace. Kaczynski's logic was "insightful," but "divorced from ethics," according to journalist Kevin Kelly.[163] Although Benson was able to identify in part with Kaczynski, his colleagues saw only a bomb threat. "I was stunned when I was confronted by the acting chair of my department and was profanely accused of 'recklessly endangering the lives of the faculty and staff in my department [who] perceived' they were in danger and, therefore, experienced great discomfort," he wrote of being entangled with the FBI's Unabomber investigation.[164] So as much as people were able to identify at least in part with Kaczynski, they, for the most part, rejected the Unabomber's violence. Thus, the presence of unabombs in a society engulfed by problematic technologies caused a strange fracturing of Kaczynski's identity, whereby everyone is provided with the grounds both to be able to like him and to despise him. When the Unabomber's IEDs punctuated Kaczynski's antitechnology writings, the inseparability of rhetoric and violence was thus less apparent to those who encountered his writings and his bombs as discrete objects.

So for all of Kaczynski's efforts to direct the meaning of Freedom Club's terrorism, the IEDs pushed back, not empowering a withering "fight to the finish," but instead empowering a debilitating psychological diagnosis, the entrapment of random civilians in his investigation, confusion about whether people or technologies are the most vulnerable and vital elements of the technoindustrial system, and the bifurcation of his identity into that of a reasonable skeptic or a despicable terrorist. Thus, his IEDs manifested rhetorical violence, or the unforeseen ways that being in the presence of a weapon entails responses to violence within a system. And Kaczynski's IEDs teach a lesson about how difficult it can be to negotiate Technē's Paradox from within the context of terrorism. Terrorists' weapons materialize Technē's Paradox by bringing world-ending violence into the places where people live, and by sustaining state violence in the name of world-preserving counterterrorism. The presence of a terrorist's weapon is as obligatory as the weapon's capacity to legitimate the suppression of terrorism. For Kaczynski, the IEDs, the objects themselves, seemed to show as much contempt for their creator as Kaczynski had for technology.

3. Conclusion

Regardless of his ability to tap into societal misgivings about technology, Kaczynski, the Unabomber, is an unapologetic terrorist whom most people despise. Hence, I conclude by pointing out how two of the more odious characteristics of his antitechnology agenda are important for the longitudinal history of weapons rhetoric. First, the

[163] K. Kelly, *What Technology Wants*, 199.

[164] Benson, "Unabomber and the History of Science," 104–5.

choice either to submit to technological domination or to revolt against it was not the only irreparable locus that Kaczynski's hard rhetoric made his audience ponder. The dilemma of whether to commit violence also confronts anyone who chooses to side with Kaczynski, to act with neo-Malthusian intent, to take up arms in the vein of Spies's and Fries's advocacy, or to produce the means of violence in the vein of Szilard. The choice to spill blood is its own irrevocable, permanent decision, and sometimes, so too is the choice to promote violence. When he left his first bomb in a parking lot outside the University of Illinois at Chicago's Science and Engineering building, Kaczynski thus faced his own irreparable locus. The violence committed by the Unabomber discomfits those who share Kaczynski's industrial antipathy. Few are the technology haters willing to become terrorists. Many are the technology critics willing to diminish nontechnological problems by insisting on the centrality of technology to human life, to diminish the beneficial aspects of technology, and to amplify the destructive effects of technology. Kaczynski's hard rhetoric, I suggest, incorporates commonplace rhetorical tactics used by rhetors who resist and who dissent against weapons. Kaczynski presented humanity with the irreparable locus of violence, and he offered himself as its terroristic provocateur. And that is exactly what distinguishes his conception of technology from so many philosophers of technology. Kaczynski's rhetorical violence marks him as remarkable and highlights the unlikelihood that antiweapons rhetors will take the step of preparing for battle.

Second, Kaczynski's simultaneous disregard for human life and high regard for the freedom and dignity of humanity manifested as an extreme version of neo-Malthusianism. Kaczynski's neo-Malthusianism, however, exemplifies how governments can lose or cede their thanatopolitical power to authorize the death of particular populations to nonstate actors and terrorists. Kaczynski was neo-Malthusian in the sense that his terrorism aimed at the total annihilation of the technoindustrial system, which would entail an enormous check to global population levels as an unavoidable result of civilizations collapse.[165] Kaczynski often argued that violence is not bad but necessary. When dealing with the technoindustrial system, "non-violence is suicide," he wrote.[166] Yet if his antitechnology program ever succeeds, violence will end up compelling mass suicide as a matter of course. His revolutionary advocacy thereby promoted the lives of a very small minority of survivors above the vast majority, who would neither survive the big technological collapse nor the resulting primitive life. But Kaczynski recommended purging the earth of most humans because of the presence of too many machines and technological systems, not because of the presence of too many humans. The survival of freedom and dignity thus was promoted above the survival of biological life in Kaczynski's version of Malthusian thinking, and technology and weapons would bring destruction in both their presence and absence.

[165] Kaczynski's social-Darwinistic tendencies are evident in "Why the Technological System Will Destroy Itself," an essay in which he conceived of a type of technological Darwinism.

[166] Kaczynski, "When Non-Violence Is Suicide," 2.

In the end, even detestable neo-Malthusian projects such as eugenics and forced sterilization seem more palatable than Kaczynski's global death wish that reminds all people that they are potential targets of technoindustrial, governmental, and nonstate violence.

When Kaczynski's IEDs spoke in his stead, they corroborated the public's negative assessment of his campaign. Like the mustard gas of World War I proved recalcitrant to Fries and West's attempts to proclaim the humanity of chemical warfare, Kaczynski's IEDs proved recalcitrant to his revolutionary message. His eloquent objects communicated the inhumaneness of terrorism rather than the bombs' capacity to catalyze a humane postapocalyptic society; they communicated the indignity of randomly being murdered rather than the dignity of living in what he called "wild nature"; they communicated the oppression entailed by living under the threat of terroristic violence, rather than freedom from technology.

Kaczynski's case subverts and reaffirms competing reasons to affirm or reject violent revolution, terrorism, and the presence of weapons, all of which makes summing up Kaczynski a somewhat difficult task. His rhetorical self-portrait is blurred.[167] He is not easily categorized because he forces people both to agree with and to disagree with his hard rhetoric, and because he forces people to consider irreparable decisions. "His rhetoric notwithstanding, he was not a technocritic, nor was his primary motivation technosocial criticism in the interest of progressive social change. And strictly speaking, he wasn't an anarchist. He was a mathematician," according to Sal Restivo, whom the FBI enlisted to help locate Kaczynski.[168] But he wasn't exactly a mathematician. Or a philosopher of technology. Or a Luddite. And he wasn't exactly a neo-Malthusian. Even to call Kaczynski a terrorist does not quite fit his rhetorical self-portrait. The old cliché that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter tramples upon the nuance and complexity of armed conflict, yet it seems like a fitting piece of the legal defense that he was never allowed to mount. Although no one authorized him to do so, and some might despise him for it, he murdered people to liberate people from technology. And his bombs say that he was insane and, therefore, easily dismissed. To take Technē's Paradox seriously, though, one must also take into account Kaczynski, his bombs, and his unwavering assault on the idea that technology is preservative.

[167] On the rhetorical self-portraiture of weapons advocates, see Medhurst's "Rhetorical Portraiture" (52).

[168] Restivo, "4S, the FBI, and Anarchy," 90.

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