

Readers Favorite Texts

A list of some readers favorite and recommended texts on the
archive

Various

2023

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What are your top picks for Ted Kaczynski related texts that really hooked your interest?

It feels like Ted's life story and ideas have been used as a touchstone for discussing so many varied issues. So, it would be cool to see what different people's list of top texts looks like, and reasons why. It doesn't matter if the list is diehard anti-tech or pro-tech.

Share your own top picks by clicking here to edit this text, or posting on Discord or Matrix.

You can include anything from books and essays to transcripts and drawings. Also, it can be anything from Ted's own writings to ecology books that don't even mention Ted.

J.D.DeVore

1. Sean Fleming, The Unabomber and the Origins of Anti-Tech Radicalism
2. Ted Kaczynski, The Ship of Fools
3. John Zerzan, The Twilight of the Machines
4. Anonymous, Biocentric Anarchy
5. Zoe Baker, Means and Ends: The Anarchist Critique of Seizing State Power
6. Emma Goldman, Individual, Society and the State
7. Jack London, Call of the Wild
8. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Idiot
9. Oscar Zeta Acosta, The Revolt of the Cockroach People

hpcr

1. Donna J. Haraway, A Cyborg Manifesto; Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century
2. Gilles Deleuze, Postscript on the Societies of Control
3. Neil Postman, Technopoly; The Surrender of Culture to Technology

4. Bruno Latour, We Have Never Been Modern
5. Adorno, The Culture Industry
6. Martin Heidegger, The Question Concerning Technology
7. Ernest Braun, Futile Progress; Technology's Empty Promise
8. Andrew Feenberg, Transforming Technology; A Critical Theory Revisited
9. Michael H. Huesemann and Joyce A. Huesemann, Technofix; Why Technology Won't Save Us or the Environment

Ultimo Reducto

1. Ted Kaczynski, Industrial Society and Its Future
2. Ted Kaczynski, Ted Kaczynski's Letter to an Eco-Centrist
3. Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, Human Ethology
4. Desmond Morris, The Human Zoo
5. Lawrence Keeley, War Before Civilization
6. Shepard Krech, The Ecological Indian: Myth and History

jefycu

1. James C. Scott, Against the Grain
2. John Gray, Straw Dogs

Gus Fring

1. Ted Kaczynski, Industrial Society and Its Future
2. Ted Kaczynski, Anti Tech Revolution; Why and How
3. Henry Thoreau, Walden
4. David Graeber, Bullshit Jobs
5. Jacques Ellul, Technological Society
6. George Orwell, 1984
7. Aldous Huxley, Brave New World

Zip

1. Ellul & Charbonneau, Directives for a Personalist Manifesto
2. Bernard Charbonneau, The Green Light; A Self-Critique of the Ecological Movement
3. Bernard Charbonneau, The Garden of Babylon; Nature, a Revolutionary Force

Theo

1. Bron Taylor, Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism

Since the 1980 formation of Earth First!, radical environmental movements have proliferated widely. Their adversaries, law enforcement authorities and some scholars accuse them of violence and terrorism. Here, I scrutinize such charges by examining 18 years of radical environmentalism for evidence of violence and for indications of violent tendencies. I argue that despite the frequent use of revolutionary and martial rhetoric by participants in these movements, they have not, as yet, intended to inflict great bodily harm or death. Moreover, there are many worldview elements internal to these movements, as well as social dynamics external to them, that reduce

the likelihood that movement activists will attempt to kill or maim as a political strategy. Labels such as ‘violent’ or ‘terrorist’ are not currently apt blanket descriptors for these movements. Thus, greater interpretive caution is needed when discussing the strategies, tactics, and impacts of radical environmentalism.

2. Michael Sperber, *Dostoyevsky’s Stalker and Other Essays on Psychopathology and the Arts*

In Dostoyevsky’s *Stalker*, we discover how the arts may illuminate psychiatry and psychoanalysis. ... It makes sense to consider Asperger as a spectrum disorder. Its incidence in the population at large is far greater than is thought. The major problem is a difficulty ‘reading people,’ and those with the disorder are frequently hurt by those who misread them. As a consequence, they may become social isolates like the *Underground Man* and Kaczynski. Just as it is possible to teach people how to have a dialogue with themselves (by writing a poem, painting a picture, or playing a musical instrument) it is possible to teach a person who has no concept of another’s mind how to be in better touch with people.

3. Donald Wayne Foster, *Author Unknown; On the Trail of Anonymous*

Certain literary texts had an arguably pernicious effect on the Unabomber’s imagination during his seventeen-year campaign of terror. An avid reader, Kaczynski’s study included a wide variety of English, American, and Spanish fiction—and he often commented afterward on those stories and novels that especially moved or amused him. One such is Horacio Quiroga’s “*Juan Darien*,” a story that Ted subsequently translated into English. *Juan Darien* is a studious boy, cruelly ridiculed at school for his rough hair and shyness—but he is actually a tiger bearing a human shape. Taunted once too often, the tiger-boy renounces his sympathy for humanity. Taking his revenge on a cat-tamer, Juan catches the man in his teeth, carries him to a cane-brake, and sets him on fire. The cat-tamer begs pardon for his offenses, but it is too late. As the canes burn, the tiger that was *Juan Darien* stands by with other tigers, gazing at the colorful flames until the man is reduced to a blackened corpse.

4. Mark Dery, *Pyrotechnic Insanitarium; American Culture on the Brink*

Dery views contemporary America as “less a coherent society than a fault zone, a network of interconnected societal fractures. ... I’m interested in the unlit, unfrequented

corners of society, ... the gothic, the grotesque, the carnivalesque—in short, extremes and excess of every sort. I want to induce, in my reader, the vertigo that comes from leaning too far over the edge of the cultural abyss.”

5. Michael Loadenthal, *The Politics of Attack; Communiqués and Insurrectionary Violence*

Since the early 2000s, global, underground networks of insurrectionary anarchists have carried out thousands of acts of political violence. This book is an exploration of the ideas, strategies, and history of these political actors that engage in a confrontation with the oppressive powers of the state and capital.

6. William Gillis, *A Quick and Dirty Critique of Primitivist & Anti-Civ Thought*

Today the landscape is even more ideologically fractured and many have retreated to a nebulous “anti-civ” position that inherits most of the primitivist framework while remaining loose enough to duck most criticism. But while those identify as anti-civ may individually break with some aspects of primitivism, without any of the frameworks or narratives of primitivism, there wouldn’t be an anti-civ position to speak.

Core to the term “anti-civ” itself is a sweeping impression of “civilization” that is intensely problematic and lends itself to overly simplistic narratives. Primitivism is rife with this kind of irreductionist handwaving that dreams up big monsters from loose associations and gives them agency as magical forces acting on the macroscale, shaping every particular. Following an approach that Ellul openly termed “monism”, primitivism refuses to pick these spooks apart, to recognize any conflict between or latitude in the configuration of their constituent dynamics.

7. Sean Fleming, *The Unabomber and the origins of anti-tech radicalism*

This article uncovers the origins of Kaczynski’s ideas and examines his influence on contemporary anti-tech radicalism.

Sean Fleming is a Nottingham Research Fellow in the School of Politics and International Relations. His current project, ‘Revenge of the Luddites’, is about anti-technology radicalism. The aim of his research is to understand the ideas and ideologies that motivate terrorist attacks on scientists (such as the Unabomber’s) and sabotage attacks on infrastructure (such as pipeline bombings). His previous project, ‘Leviathan on a Leash’, was about collective responsibility and Thomas Hobbes’s political thought.

8. Ole Martin Moen, The Unabomber's Ethics

This text neatly reveals and refutes the hidden premise within many primitivist foundational arguments. That faulty premise being; the evaluative asymmetry whereby anything that happens in wild habitat is automatically less bad than anything that happens in an industrialized society.

9. Ted Kaczynski, Truth versus Lies (Volunteers Update)

A fascinatingly peculiar book for the context it was written in, it's focus, and Ted hitting 'stop the press' mid-printing, preventing the publishing of what likely would have been a fairly well-read book:

[Ted] had been interested in writing letters to counter the image being presented by his family of him in the media. He discussed this with his attorneys and although he felt some pressure to conform, he had agreed with them not to write letters to the media and draw additional public attention to him at this point in the trial process. Nonetheless he spent approximately four months preparing a rebuttal to all he perceived as inaccurate in the public portrayal of him, and focused extensively on portraying his brother David in a negative light in these writings.

Quoting Ted:

My book ... deals mainly with the lies that my mother and especially my brother have been telling about me through the media [~~crossed out: and with their motives for telling these lies~~]. In order to show why my brother and mother have been lying about me, I examine my family relationships in [~~crossed out: considerable~~] depth.

On the positive side, the book contains material of considerable human interest. I demonstrate that my brother's case is one that surely would have fascinated Freud, Jung, and Adler.

10. Ted Kaczynski, Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography

Ted wrote three autobiographies in his lifetime. All are painfully honest about his social inadequacies, his inability with women and his painful relationship with his family, particularly his parents:

He wrote his second autobiography ... at age 37 he was back home with his parents in Chicago. After nearly a decade living in his cabin in the woods and it's almost uncomfortably intimate. It feels more intimate than Ted's journals themselves. He describes a teenage sexual encounter with another boy, talks about girls he lusts after and professors he hates. His own lifelong feelings of social inadequacy are everywhere, and this document Ted says

there's a particular reason he's writing it, he's going to start killing people, and if he's captured or killed by the police, he wants people to find the document. Read his life story as he sees it.

11. Theo Slade, Normandie, etc. A Collaboratively Edited Discussion on Anti-Tech Politics

The open ended conversation that provoked me to start researching anti-tech philosophy.

12. Unpredictable, Why do People Love this Serial Killer?

The best short biographical account of Ted's life story. Uses tons of info and images from this archive.

13. Sisyphus 55, The Philosophy of the Unabomber

The best short analysis of Ted's philosophy.

14. Eileen Pollack, From the Unabomber to the Incels; Angry Young Men on Campus

Alone in his room, he was driven crazy by the sounds of the couple next door making love. Finally—and this is what broke my heart—Kaczynski decided to convince a psychiatrist to allow him to undergo the surgery and chemical treatments he thought would transform him into a woman, not because he was transgender, but because, as a woman, he might wrap his arms around himself and be held by someone female.

Kaczynski kept his appointment with the psychiatrist, only to realize he was going mad. Furious at a society that had pushed him to excel in academics at the cost of his ability to find love and connection to other human beings, he vowed to stop being such a good boy and learn to kill. Only later did he come up with an ideology that justified his murderous rage, lashing out at science and industrialization for destroying our environment, pressuring us to conform, depriving us of our privacy, and robbing us of our humanity.

15. Scott Corey, Lessons for an Anti-Terror Community

At one point, the Kaczynski family tried to persuade Ted to seek therapy, but they were rebuffed. Later, David found in the records at trial that Ted had already sought clinical help. He imagined doing it by correspondence. He was told that he would have to find a way to travel a considerable distance to the office, and that he would have to find some way to pay for his sessions. Both of these were more than he could manage.

We can do better than that, and we have been trying to do better than that. To cite one specific example, under the Affordable Care Act, mental health services finally received a decent inclusion in medical insurance. If this provision is now to be discarded, we are entitled to object on grounds of public safety and national security. There are no perfect defenses against terror and derangement, but if we know what fight we are in, we can see where to stand in it. Surely, for this struggle, we cannot justify disarming our community's mental health capacity any more than we could justify disbanding the police or the intelligence services.

The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



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