

Unabomber Represents Our Anarchist Within

Thomas J. Campanella

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To the Editor:

Although I deplore the criminal acts of the suspected Unabomber, I also find myself in begrudging admiration.

If Theodore J. Kaczynski is indeed guilty of the crimes that he is believed to have committed, he is a murderer and should be severely punished. But having said that, I also believe we should listen to what he has to say.

To have evaded the Government's pooled technology and manpower for so long is a feat in itself. But the Unabomber seems a prophet, albeit a misguided one, a Thoreau gone berserk, emitting a hi-tech yell in the desert.

I read the manifesto, first published in The Washington Post and now, ironically, posted all over the Internet. It is an impassioned cocktail of anarchy and radical environmentalism. But his arguments are reasoned and often brilliant.

The manifesto describes an unequal society, obsessed with and dehumanized by its machines, living beyond its ecological means and headed for disaster.

If nothing more, the essay is a testament to a man with the moral conviction and intellectual authority to question the order of things.

It is troubling that Mr. Kaczynski's reclusiveness and apparent disregard for appearance have been pointed to so hysterically.

Our society is obsessed with cheerleaders who march to the beat. We are suspicious of reflective souls and of intellectualism.

Not long ago this nation sat riveted to the murder trial of a fallen icon. It will be revealing to observe public reaction to the trial of the Unabomber and to gauge the manner in which each of us confronts the anarchist within.

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The Ted K Archive

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The New York Times, April 10, 1996, Section A, Page 18. <www.nytimes.com>

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