

# Critical Comments on Kaczynski's “The Techies’ Wet Dreams”

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**IMPORTANT NOTE FROM ÚLTIMO REDUCTO:** To fully understand and appreciate this text, it is recommended to first read “The Techies’ Wet Dreams”. And, even better, the reader should read *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How* in its entirety.

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I will begin by clarifying that I do not consider *Anti-Tech Revolution* (*ATR*) to be a good book. I believe that this book and Kaczynski’s texts written at later dates are, among other things, a disaster regarding logic, theoretical coherence and rigor, and definition and use of terms. *ATR* is a mediocre book for mediocre minds that should have been titled *Anti-Tech Revolution for Dummies*.<sup>1</sup> I think that when Kaczynski wrote it, either his mental faculties were already in decline or, more likely, he deliberately lowered the bar for the intellectual quality of his arguments in order to reach a wider audience; a specific type of audience, not of very high caliber. And this text, corresponding to Part V of Chapter 2 of said book, is a good example of this. I’m going to comment on some of the specific flaws I see:

- I’ll start with the most important point: Kaczynski’s overly ambiguous, contradictory, or even, at times, seemingly favourable attitude toward the techno-utopian daydreams of the techies<sup>2</sup>.

On the one hand, Kaczynski suggests that immortality is already, or at least will be, “technically” (?) possible,<sup>3</sup> and on the other hand, he says it won’t be,<sup>4</sup> or that it’s highly unlikely to ever be.<sup>5</sup> With this, Kaczynski not only sends a contradictory or ambiguous message about the viability of immortality (does he

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<sup>1</sup> In reality, the book doesn’t even reach that level. A typical “manual for dummies” is usually a guide, simplistic but more or less practical, with specific rules and advice on how to do something. However, *Anti-Tech Revolution* doesn’t even live up to its subtitle “How and Why” (and especially the “why”).

<sup>2</sup> Kaczynski used the term “techies” derogatorily to refer only to those particularly delusional and enthusiast technophiles who wholeheartedly believe in progress and proclaim the imminence of a technoutopia in which technology will allow, among other implausible things, the achievement of immortality. *Note added by UR for this post.*

<sup>3</sup> For example: “We need not doubt that it will be technically feasible in the future to keep a human body, or a man-machine hybrid, alive indefinitely”. Or “There is of course evidence to support many of the techies’ beliefs about particular technological developments, e.g. , their belief that ... it will some day be technically feasible to keep a human body alive indefinitely”.

<sup>4</sup> For example: “No one is going to achieve immortality in any form”. “[The techies’] dream of immortality is illusory nonetheless”; “The seven-hundred-year or thousand-year life-span to which some techies aspire is nothing but a pipe-dream”.

<sup>5</sup> “It is seriously to be doubted that it will ever be feasible to ‘upload’ a human brain into electronic form with sufficient accuracy so that the uploaded entity can reasonably be regarded as a functioning duplicate of the original brain”; “the chances that any given techie will survive indefinitely are minute”; “Immortality in the form (i) -the indefinite preservation of the human body as it exists today is highly improbable”.

believe immortality is possible, impossible, or merely improbable?) but at times he also gives the impression that, in terms of naiveté and credulity, he's not far removed from those techies he initially seems to despise so much. Because, deep down, judging by how he expresses himself in this text, he sometimes seems to also believe many of the fantasies and absurdities that techies believe. That is to say, it seems, at some point, he also genuinely believes that, in principle, immortality could be achieved (especially types (i) and (ii)<sup>6</sup>), but that there are some factors or circumstances *extrinsic* to the technology itself that will *likely* prevent it. These seemingly unavoidable factors include the inherent impossibility of rationally controlling the course of societal development, Darwinian selection among self-perpetuating systems, and the inherent inability of human beings to act all in accordance and in unison.<sup>7,8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In the text, Kaczynski distinguishes between three ways of achieving immortality:

- (i) The indefinite preservation of the living human body as it exists today.
- (ii) The merging of human beings with machines (cyborgs).
- (iii) The “uploading” of human minds into robots or computers.

<sup>7</sup> This inherent human tendency to always express at least some degree of discord -to never reach *total* consensus (i.e., among all human beings) or act *all* (i.e., all human beings) together toward a common goal-, while due to the inherent diversity of human nature, is not even materially inevitable *in principle*. *In theory*, it might one day be possible to genetically modify all human beings to make them psychologically homogeneous and entirely prone to consensus and cooperation. Although then they would no longer be fully human...

With other factors, such as the intrinsic uncontrollability of complex systems or Darwinian selection among systems (or, as we will see, the second law of thermodynamics or “chance”), this possibility is not even *theoretically* feasible. They are physically inevitable.

<sup>8</sup> By the way, Kaczynski even falls short when it comes to listing and explaining these extrinsic factors that will prevent immortality. Thus, for example, as far as I know, neither Kaczynski, nor the technophiles, nor all the others who also place their hopes on achieving immortality someday, take into account such basic things as entropy (the second law of thermodynamics) or imponderable factors (what we tend to call “chance”).

Entropy, a fundamental tendency of the universe, implies that everything tends to degrade if no constant effort is made to repair and maintain it. In other words, things tend to wear out, age, and break down, including the human body, cyborgs, robots, and computers. And, more importantly, this tendency toward degradation also affects the very technological devices and systems developed to carry out repairs and maintenance. So much so that, ultimately, the tendency toward degradation and aging is always more powerful in the long run than any system's capacity to prevent it and continue performing repairs and maintenance effectively indefinitely, if only because this tendency toward degradation always and inevitably occurs within these same repair systems as well.

And as for the imponderables, it's simply a matter of statistics that sooner or later, every physical system that lasts indefinitely will suffer some kind of accident, destruction, attack, or breakdown—unforeseen, unpredictable, and “fatal.” In other words, given enough time, it's a certainty that something unforeseen and unwanted will happen to any system, causing its structure to break down drastically and irreparably. It's only a matter of time before, due to an accident, a war, a predator attack, a virulent disease, a failure in the repair system, etc., the structure of the system in question (be it a human body, a cyborg, a robot, or a computer) suffers damage so significant, extensive, and/or rapid that it becomes irreparable. For example, let's imagine, for the sake of argument, that a person manages to survive for centuries through successive transplants of decaying body parts, their replacement with mechanical

All of these *physical* and unavoidable factors make it a *certainty* (not just a probability, as Kaczynski sometimes seems to believe) that the degradation of bodies and machines cannot be stopped or eliminated beyond a certain, rather restricted, time limit. In other words, even if average life expectancy continues to increase somewhat artificially thanks to technological development, this increase will likely be quite small and always limited, and therefore shouldn't even be called "immortality". It will be possible to extend "life" (or whatever we want to call the hypothetical fact of a mind being transferred to a computer) and perform maintenance and repairs on bodies, cyborgs, or computers housing human minds, to a certain extent, but not forever. Sooner or later, due to the very physical laws of reality, that repair and maintenance will fail and/or become impossible. This implies that physical immortality,<sup>9</sup> whatever its form, is *materially* impossible, both today and in the future, and under any circumstances. It will always be *physically* impossible.

But perhaps more worrying than Kaczynski's ambiguity or apparent naiveté regarding the physical viability of the techies' technoutopia is his attitude toward the moral character of certain things that this technoutopia entails. In other words, it seems that, despite everything, and like the techies and many others, Kaczynski considers immortality and the technological advances that would make it possible to be something good and desirable, if achieved. Or, at least, nowhere in *ATR* does Kaczynski suggest that immortality and the technology that makes it possible are undesirable or bad (in fact, he uses the unfortunate term "wonderful" to refer to technological advances that are already "technically" feasible). He doesn't question what is the moral and philosophical basis of the techies' technoutopia: the belief in the absolute goodness of life and the absolute evil of death. Or, put another way, he doesn't question the sacralization of life and the fear/rejection of death (especially in its individual forms). And he should have. In fact, doing so is the most important thing, because that's the narrative that serves to inspire, motivate, and theoretically justify all those techno-abominations defended by technophiles. We must begin by denying their fundamental premise: questioning, rejecting, or simply not assuming that life is

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prostheses, or the downloading of their mind into a computer. At some point, this "person" (or what remains of him) will suffer an accident that completely destroys his body -biological or biological-mechanical-, or simply his brain or the computer housing his mind. A fire that incinerates it, a blow that shatters it, the fall of a great weight that completely crushes it, a shark that eats it while swimming at the beach (assuming that large predators still exist in the wild by then), etc. And that's it! He'll be dead anyway. Or, even more importantly, the systems responsible for maintaining these bodies, cyborgs, or computers will sooner or later suffer some unforeseen "fatal" damage (that is, damage severe enough to be definitively, completely, and irreparably destructive), which will cause the bodies, cyborgs, or computers to cease being maintained and repaired, and thus to stop functioning.

<sup>9</sup> "Spiritual" immortality is not worth discussing here, because it's a purely metaphysical matter; that is, it's a matter of pure faith.

the supreme value and that death is always bad, and that, therefore, immortality is something truly desirable.

Kaczynski should have pointed out in the book that immortality, even if achieved for everyone (see below), would actually be a load of crap. If only because it would surely imply an even greater human population explosion than the one that has already occurred. If, even as mortals, there has been no natural (or artificial) population control mechanism for millennia to truly limit the super-exponential population growth of our species, making us a fucking pest, what would happen if we no longer died of old age, hunger, accidents, disease, etc.? What would happen to the rest of the planet? What would happen to wild species? What would happen to wild Nature on Earth? Death is not inherently bad. Death is the only (or at least the main) natural brake that keeps the size of populations of living beings (including humans) within limits. When it is artificially reduced, ecological disaster is guaranteed. And if we were ever to eliminate death and become immortal (in any of the versions mentioned by Kaczynski: (i), (ii), or (iii)), our already excessive expansion would accelerate enormously. A world without death would be a hyper-populated hell (by humans and/or machines), with a constantly expanding population (of humans and/or machines) occupying and destroying everything in its path. Unlike techies and many other people, I see nothing good in that.

This is without considering that the enormous degree of technological development necessary to achieve such immortality would in itself (that is, apart from the accelerated population growth that immortality would imply) entail a massive worsening of the ecological (and other) impacts that already inevitably accompany modern technology. Immortality (or any other techno-utopian trait), even if it were possible (which it isn't), could not be achieved without further destroying and subjugating wild nature to obtain the materials, energy, and space necessary to manufacture and maintain the machines and technological systems required to achieve it.

However, in this text, Kaczynski preferred to remain at the point of highlighting, at most, morally irrelevant things, such as that immortality will not be feasible in practice due to certain circumstances (or that perhaps it will be “technically” feasible?), or even morally contingent things, such as that, even if viable, immortality cannot be applied to everyone, but only to a small, minority elite. This last point seems to indicate that, for him, the problem isn't immortality (and the technology that would make it possible) itself, but only that it would be applied in an unequal and elitist way. This, firstly, leaves immortality (and the technology that would make it possible) unquestioned in reality. It's practically equivalent to saying that technology is neutral (or even good) and that the only problem is its misuse and misapplication. And, secondly, it gives undue impor-

tance to equality, democracy (the majority rule), and justice, prioritizing them in practice over the rejection of technological development.

Why didn't Kaczynski actually question immortality (or the technology necessary to achieve it) in this text, and instead preferred to go off at a tangent, talking about circumstantial and secondary issues compared to the main topic? The Kaczynski who wrote the Unabomber manifesto didn't consider life to be an absolute good, nor did he believe that death should be avoided at all costs. He didn't sacralize life, nor did he fear death.<sup>10</sup> He didn't attach much importance to things like justice and equality.<sup>11</sup> But could the same be said of the senile Kaczynski who wrote *ATR*? I don't know...

Be that as it may, it's very clear that when he wrote *ATR*, Kaczynski was primarily trying to reach the masses (or at least some segment of them) and attract them to his cause; that is, he was trying to reach, above all, ordinary, intellectually mediocre (or even downright stupid) people who tend to sanctify individual life, fear death, and attach great importance to things like justice and equality (even above everything else). So he went along with them, so to speak, and "reasoned" in a way he thought they would understand: superficially, basing uncritically on the beliefs and values of the masses, and not necessarily on his own, and telling them what he thought they would like to hear, and not necessarily what he actually thought. Nor what he should have actually said had he reasoned in a truly logical and coherent way, consistent with his own original and genuine ideas and values.<sup>12</sup>

In short, we must conclude that Kaczynski's critique of the techies' technoutopia in this text is merely circumstantial; that is, what Kaczynski criticizes *in practice* are certain circumstances that, in principle, would surround or accompany

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<sup>10</sup> For example, see: "[H]aving successfully raised his children, going through the power process by providing them with the physical necessities, the primitive man feels that his work is done and he is prepared to accept old age (if he survives that long) and death. Many modern people, on the other hand, are disturbed by the prospect of death, as is shown by the amount of effort they expend trying to maintain their physical condition, appearance and health. ... It is the man whose need for the power process has been satisfied during his life who is best prepared to accept the end of that life" ("Industrial Society and Its Future" (ISAIF), paragraph 75) or "[O]ne has to balance the struggle and death against the loss of freedom and dignity. To many of us, freedom and dignity are more important than a long life or avoidance of physical pain. Besides, we all have to die some time, and it may be better to die fighting for survival, or for a cause, than to live a long but empty and purposeless life" (ISAIF, paragraph 168).

<sup>11</sup> See, for example: "Not that we have anything against social justice, but it must not be allowed to interfere with the effort to get rid of the technological system" (ISAIF, paragraph 201).

<sup>12</sup> Although it is also obvious that Kaczynski never, not even in his best period and his best writings (for example, "ISAIF"), took enough time to think about and clarify these ideas and values and to try to define and formulate them rigorously and unequivocally, considering that investing much time and effort in it was "impractical." And so ended up even his best writings (and *ATR* is not precisely one of them): with too many contradictions, ambiguities, oversimplifications, vagueness, misused terms and expressions, etc. Beneath a superficial veneer of precision, rigor, and logical coherence.

the technological advances that the techies advocate, not the advances themselves (or their inevitable consequences). He does not question immortality and other utopian technological advances because of the inherently undesirable consequences they would inevitably and *intrinsically* entail. In the text, Kaczynski does not actually take a stand against physical immortality obtained through technological means, but only, at best, considers it too improbable in practice to be taken seriously. In reality, he merely discusses the viability of this technoutopia or, worse still, whether its application will be fair and widespread. And on top of that, as I pointed out above, he does so in an ambiguous, incoherent, and incomplete way.

- Regarding what Kaczynski calls “natural selection,” I must point out that this is yet another example of Kaczynski’s careless use of terms and expressions. The term “natural selection” should really refer only to the Darwinian selection (that is, selection that occurs spontaneously and unconsciously within an environment), *either among individual wild organisms or among groups of individual wild organisms, in natural environments and independently of humans and their social-cultural systems*. If it occurs due to the deliberate or unintentional influence of humans or their creations, in substantially humanized environments, among domesticated animals or humans, or in artificial systems, it is not “*natural* selection” but “*artificial* selection”. Therefore, when selection occurs spontaneously, unconsciously, and not deliberately in an artificial environment, among artificial entities, or among humans, it is *Darwinian* but not *natural*. And the case of competition between societies, organizations, technological systems, etc., is an example of this. So, in such cases, one could and should speak of “Darwinian selection”, but not of “natural selection”, because it has nothing “natural” (that is, “not artificial”) about it. This is so obvious that it is surprising that Kaczynski and many others insist on using the term “natural selection” to name it.

Or, to put it another way, calling the selection between artificial, self-perpetuating systems “natural selection” is to fall into the error of naming all the different constituent elements of a whole as just one of its parts, which makes it easy to end up confusing all of them with that part, even though they are actually distinct from it. The proper thing to do is to call each part something different. For example, in a set of two elements, the right thing to do is to call each part “A” and “B” respectively. And call the set something different from how the parts are named. For example, “C”. This makes it clear that, although both A and B are (part of) C, A and B are different from each other. Now let’s replace A with “natural selection”, B with “spontaneous artificial selection”, and C with “Darwinian selection”. Calling “natural selection” those cases of Darwinian selection that are actually “artificial selection” is like calling part B “A” and calling the entire set C “A.” These are basic details for rational thought and expression that aren’t that difficult to consider, but overlooking

them (for example, because it's considered "impractical" to make the effort) fosters confusion and misinterpretation.

Furthermore, when people like Kaczynski and his uncritical followers use the expression "natural selection" to refer to selection among *artificial*, self-perpetuating systems instead of using, as they should, the expression "Darwinian selection," they degrade and muddy the concept of what is natural, and with it, their own supposed ideal: Nature. Consequently, they shoot themselves in the foot. Let me explain: by calling this selective process "natural," they implicitly suggest that this mechanism and its consequences are part of Nature, when in reality it is an *artificial* process because it is carried out by human beings, or by organizations or systems created by human beings, in environments created by human beings, and acting upon human beings, groups and works. And, if (wild) Nature is to be the ideal, and this selection among artificial self-perpetuating systems is, according to them, "natural", then the technological development that occurs following this selection would in turn be "natural", part of Nature. And then, should this technological development be considered unnatural (i.e., "anti-natural") and bad (opposed to the ideal of Nature), or not? These "smart asses" are unwittingly throwing stones against their own roof, all because they don't pay enough attention to the correct use of language and stupidly consider worrying about it impractical and a waste of time. Choosing the right terms when formulating a theory is crucial not only to guarantee the soundness and logical consistency of that theory but also to ensure that it is correctly valued, understood, and applied by those who really need to value, understand, and apply it. If one expresses one's ideas poorly and carelessly, one attracts the foolish and incompetent and repels the intelligent and capable, however much sound these ideas may be in essence.

- I also disagree with Kaczynski's choice of the term "self-propagating" to refer to those systems that exhibit an internal tendency to remain functional and grow.<sup>13</sup> As even Kaczynski acknowledges in his definition, what characterizes such kind of systems is not only their tendency to expand, but also, and above all, their tendency to perpetuate themselves (what Kaczynski vaguely refers to "survival"). I.e., the tendency to maintain their internal organization and functioning by supplying themselves with matter and energy and dissipating waste and heat into the environment -something that the word "propagation", which in its broadest sense refers only to expansion, does not capture). Furthermore, while the word "propagation" can sometimes simply mean "expansion", it usually refers primarily to a very special form of growth: reproduction. That is, the creation, by certain complex and dynamic systems, such as living beings, of other systems similar

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<sup>13</sup> "By a self-propagating system (self-prop system for short) we mean a system that tends to promote its own survival and propagation. A system may propagate itself in either or both of two ways: The system may indefinitely increase its own size and/or power, or it may give rise to new systems that possess some of its own attributes" (*ATR*, Chapter Two, Ficht & Madison, 2016, page 42).

to themselves. However, many complex and dynamic systems expand without reproducing. They simply increase in size and extent (the number of constituent elements and the volume of space they occupy), and often also in complexity (the number of interactions between their elements), but they do not create new systems similar to themselves. Therefore, in my view, while Kaczynski calls “selfpropagating” all self-maintaining and expanding systems, whether they reproduce or not, a much more appropriate term to describe all these systems would be “self-perpetuating” because, although some do not reproduce, they all tend to maintain and expand if nothing prevents them from doing so.

Not to mention the ridiculousness of using abbreviations (Soviet-style) like “self-prop”.

- Another instance of Kaczynski’s (and not only his) misuse of a term is the expression “technological progress” as meaning “technological development.” “Progress” is not the same as “development.” Progress is the belief that development is good. It is merely an idea and inevitably implies a value judgment. Development is the process of growth in size (number of constituent elements) and, often, also in complexity (number of interactions between constituent elements) in any system, whether physical or ideational. It is not an idea, it is a fact, and it entails only a description, not necessarily a value judgment. They are not the same. Technological development is the development, that is, the expansion and increase in complexity, of technological systems. Technological progress would refer to considering technological development as something good. When Kaczynski mentions “(technological) progress” in the text, he is actually referring only to “(technological) development”, since he presumably did not consider such development to be something good. And, therefore, what he should say is “(technological) development”, not “(technological) progress”.
- Incidentally, I’m the one who questioned whether the term “proletariat” is typically used by Marxists to refer only to a select group of workers and not to all workers, or even to all the poor or “exploited masses”. And I still believe Kaczynski was wrong to think so. From my own observation and experience of the leftist discourses and circles I’ve met directly and closely (and I’m sure there are many more than Kaczynski ever met), I know that most Marxist-leaning leftists, or even socialists in general, including those collectivists who call themselves “anarchists”, when they talk about the proletariat, they’re not referring only to a vanguard of ideologically conscious industrial workers. In fact, there’s even the term “lumpen proletariat” to refer to the poorest, most destitute, dispossessed, and *ideologically unconscious* strata of industrial society. Not exactly a “vanguard.” The idea that the proletariat was, at most or primarily, the vanguard of industrial workers was a notion held only by Lenin and his Bolshevik cronies

(and it seems that, according to Kaczynski himself, not even always, but rather depending on their whims or what suited them).

It is not that this issue about whether the term “proletariat” refers to a minority or a majority is of much importance beyond serving as a passtime chat for debate society members and the like,<sup>14</sup> but given that the supposedly hyperpragmatic Kaczynski deigned to waste his time and efforts to explicitly mention it in the book (why?), I have commented on it, by allusions. Maybe he should have invested that time and energy in being more careful choosing, defining and using other concepts and terms that are much more practically important for his theory and cause, like the other ones I am commencing in this text.

- This leads me to comment on something else more generally: in this book, Kaczynski repeatedly tries to support his claims with footnotes and references to supposed intellectual authorities. But sometimes he does so in a clumsy, unclear, and rather unconvincing way, saying “yes,” “no,” and “quite the opposite” all at once in the same note.

For example, Kaczynski’s interpretation of Benton’s quote, “Species come and go continually about 99.9 percent of all species that have ever existed are now extinct,” by assuming that 99.9 percent of species that have ever existed have left no “direct”<sup>15</sup> descendants living today, is more than questionable.<sup>16</sup> If only because the two ideas are not necessarily the same thing. That a species no longer exists does not mean it has no living descendants today in the form of other species derived from it, just as the fact that my great-grandparents no longer exist because they died many years ago does not mean I no longer exist. For example, the australopithecines became extinct, but we, the genus *Homo*, who descended from them, are still here (and thriving). Or, to put it another way, and quoting other author: “Another cliché... claims that extinction is so common that most species that have ever existed are extinct. This banality often forgets to add that one of the significant ways in which species ‘go extinct’ is through transmutation into new ones”.<sup>17</sup>

And, as if that weren’t enough, Kaczynski then says that “Independently of that assumption, it’s clear from the general pattern of evolution that only some minute percentage of all species that have ever existed can have descendants that are alive today”. In other words, he himself assumes it might not be true, but he doesn’t

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<sup>14</sup> In fact, it does not in any way affect the validity or invalidity of Kaczynski’s argument that Technianity, like Marxism or Christianity, has its own Chosen Ones –the Elect. What difference does it make actually whether the Elect of each of these movements are many or few, a majority or a minority?

<sup>15</sup> One might also wonder what on earth Kaczynski meant by “direct” in this case. Is there such a thing as “indirect” descent in evolution?

<sup>16</sup> See *ATR*, Chapter Two, “The techies’ wet dreams”, note 126, Fitch & Madison, 2016, page 86.

<sup>17</sup> Eileen Crist, *Abundant Earth*, The University of Chicago Press, 2019, page 18.

care. So why does he even mention this assumption and Benton?<sup>18</sup> Kaczynski's motive for doing this, as we will also see in the following example, is not so much meticulousness in providing data that lends solidity and intellectual rigor to his reasoning as the intention to psychologically manipulate the reader into lowering their guard and thus more readily accepting his arguments.

Thus, regarding the variability of extinction and speciation rates, Kaczynski has the gall to add a pointless note<sup>19</sup> in which he doesn't actually prove anything conclusively. He doesn't even truly cite authorities; he only mentions in passing some experts who might offer "some support" for his thesis. And, in the end, he only admits that he can't prove anything, but that he "bets" that most biologists approve of this thesis. What kind of bullshit reasoning is this?

What's the point of including the footnote then? Doesn't he know that true science isn't democratic, since in real science (which isn't necessarily the same as what scientists usually do) majorities, and even consensuses, are worthless, and only empirical evidence matters? Or is he simply using psychological and rhetorical techniques to beguile readers?

In this text (and in *ATR* in general), Kaczynski makes unproven claims to justify his theories and discourse, adding notes in which he acknowledges that what he says has no empirical support and is mere speculation, while still gratuitously asserting its validity. Thus, he gives his discourse an appearance of rigor and rationality that it doesn't actually possess, and on the one hand, he deceives the fools who admire him uncritically, and on the other, he cunningly tries to appease the critical and rational people who might criticize his lack of empirical support, preempting their objections and feigning a degree of self-criticism. Exactly the same thing he criticizes when techies half-heartedly concede to skeptics!

- I also don't think Kaczynski was right to link, for example, the supposed disappearance of the "middle class" (whatever that label actually means), the alleged decline in living standards, the reduction in social security benefits (or private insurance), and the like, in areas like the US or Western Europe in recent times, with his predictions about the increasing obsolescence of human beings as technological development advances.<sup>20</sup> This connection is very far-fetched. First, it's not even at all clear that this decline is so unequivocal and widespread in all cases and aspects (or at least, if it is, it's not as simple and obvious as Kaczynski and those he quotes seem to believe). Furthermore, citing anecdotal cases, such

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<sup>18</sup> Incidentally, it is very difficult to unequivocally prove/disprove Benton's statement based on the fossil record (and that would be the only clear way to prove/disprove it). If only because it is impossible to know exactly how many species have existed throughout the history of life on Earth (in fact, we cannot even know exactly how many species exist today).

<sup>19</sup> See *ATR*, Chapter Two, "The techies' wet dreams", note 127, Fitch & Madison, 2016, page 86.

<sup>20</sup> See *ATR*, Chapter Two, "The techies' wet dreams", Fitch & Madison, 2016, page 71 and notes 120, 121 and 122 in pages 85 and 86.

as that of his friend's parents, doesn't seem to me a rationally acceptable way to demonstrate or reinforce an argument about society in general. Once again, we return to an attempt at psychological and emotional manipulation of the reader (or certain types of readers). And second, even assuming it's true that most people in these societies have seen their standard of living and rights decline, it's not clear that this is actually due to machines becoming increasingly competitive with humans in perpetuating the technoindustrial system, rather than other (perhaps even temporary) social circumstances of an economic or political nature, for example.

In fact, while it's true that the advance of robotization, automation, digitalization, and the emergence of artificial intelligence has led to, and will likely continue to lead to, the disappearance of many jobs in certain sectors (especially in manual labour under easily standardized conditions, as well as in routine "desktop," "intellectual," or "social" jobs), there are many other sectors where they haven't had a significant impact (nor do they seem likely to anytime soon). The "human touch" is not limited to attending to and supporting people and "connecting" with them emotionally, and other similar non-material tasks of a social, "spiritual," or intellectual nature. It often could be related to many other more physical and earthly tasks, such as being able to perform material work that requires solving practical problems under non-standardized, complicated, and unpredictable conditions for which machines cannot be easily programmed and designed in advance, or to which they can hardly adapt. At least not yet. A machine can, for example, tighten screws or perform welding and assemblage on an production line, or it can process enormous amounts of information, perform calculations, write texts, translate, serve the public, etc., at a speed always far superior to that of a human being, and sometimes with at least an "acceptable" quality. But it cannot so easily squeeze behind a sink in an ordinary house with non-standard dimensions to weld a piece of heating pipe at an improbable angle, barely fitting amidst other pipes, cables, appliances, and furniture. However, an experienced person usually finds a way to do it without having to dismantle and renovate the entire kitchen. Of course, those who write about the job destruction caused by technology (or, for that matter, about the supposed disappearance of the middle class and the alleged expansion of poverty) don't usually engage in such mundane, physical tasks in practice (in fact, they usually don't even remember they exist until a plug breaks, their car stalls, a drain gets clogged, or something similar happens, and they have to call someone — a human — to fix it). And although Kaczynski wasn't exactly one of these useless people who can't even tighten a lightbulb, he echoed their arguments because he saw it as convenient to try to convince a certain type of reader who was seething with frustration over their own poor employment or financial situation.

- Last but not least is the bold claim that “the technological world-system is going to collapse in the not-too-distant future, as we’ve argued [elsewhere] it must”. In fact, since Kaczynski makes this argument elsewhere in *ATR*, I won’t delve into it in depth here either. I will merely point out that it is intellectually dishonest to assert such a thing with such certainty. Whether or not the techno-industrial system will collapse in the near future is something nobody knows. If only because, applying one of Kaczynski’s own principles of history, the course of the development of a society is largely unpredictable beyond a fairly limited event horizon. The system may collapse “soon” (that is, within a few years or decades) on its own due to the accumulation and synergy of the effects of its own dynamics (this is a likely scenario, but by no means certain); it may collapse due to some other factors extrinsic to itself, such as one or more natural disasters of some kind (this is an unlikely but possible scenario), it may collapse with the help of a group or organization dedicated precisely to achieving that goal (this is unlikely, though not entirely impossible), it may collapse due to a combination of several of the intrinsic and extrinsic mentioned factors (this is a more likely scenario, but it is still not a certainty), or it may continue on despite everything for many more decades (something at least as likely as the first scenario). And the honest thing to do — no matter how much some of us might like to see the techno-industrial system collapse — is to acknowledge this lack of certainty.

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June 12, 2026

<[www.ultimoreductosalvaje.blogspot.com/2026/06/comentarios-criticos-the-techies-wet.html](http://www.ultimoreductosalvaje.blogspot.com/2026/06/comentarios-criticos-the-techies-wet.html)>

Translation and adaptation of some comments in Spanish sent by UR to V.V.A. on the text "The techies' wet dreams", on March 28, 2026.  
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