

A Collaboratively Edited Discussion on Anti-Tech Politics

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Note: This is a collaboratively edited conversation that anyone in the world can join in on, by simply pressing the writers pen symbol at the top of this page.

You simply have to add a name or nickname to the contributors list and put your name in bold at the beginning of any paragraph where you want to enter the conversation.

Try to make your contribution at the end of text dialogues, so as not to break up back and forth responses. But you can obviously suggest edits that break up long text blocks of questions into parts.

1. Contributors

Pro-Tech

- **Theo Slade** — A pragmatic left-anarchist who advocates dual power campaigns and direct action up to the point of property sabotage under representative democracies during non-revolutionary periods.

Anti-Tech

- **Normandie** — An ex-marxist luddite with pre-industrial communist principles when it comes to caring for those in one's own community.
- **John Zerzan** — The most widely known primitivist author of our time. His dialogue is from a longer conversation he had with Theo.
- **John Jacobi** — An anti-industrialist who started a few anti-tech journals.
- **David Skrbina** — The Unabomber's longtime pen pal, who helped publish a book of Ted's writings.
- **Alex Uziel** — President of the publishing company set up to publish Ted's books.

[Insert other label for a more nuanced position here if you so desire]

...

2. Defining our Terms

Theo: I don't think using a few secondary unpopular definitions for words necessarily need be a problem, so long as both parties in the discussion are aware of what definition each person is using. That way when you make a counter-argument against a person's position you can show you've understood it correctly.

I've added some definitions used by an anti-tech advocate John Jacobi which helps show the way many anti-tech people use common terms which come up when discussing anti-tech issues.

Technology

Theo: How I understand technology is well explained by the Corporate Watch book on Tech

Despite a very long history of tool use and 'technological' development, the word technology only became widely used in the 20th century. It is formed from a combination of Greek τέχνη, techne, "art, skill, cunning of hand"; and -λογία, -logia, roughly translating as "science of craft", and originated as a translation of the German word technik.

In discussions around technology, certain ideas are frequently repeated. Most definitions refer to things (tools, machines or techniques) being used to solve problems or satisfy human needs or purposes. It is also generally accepted that the tools and machines need not be physical, that things such as organisational methods or computer software fall under the definition of technology. So does this mean something like language counts as a technology? Maybe, maybe not. Some, such as W. Brian Arthur, use extremely broad definitions, extending the meaning of 'a technology' as far as "a means to fulfil a human purpose".

Science also often comes up in writing about technology and many definitions of technology refer to the the application of scientific knowledge to do something. They are certainly closely related to one another, with scientific discoveries allowing the creation of new technologies, and technological development allowing further observation, measurement and analysis. In fact, science and technology are so intimately connected that it is often difficult to distinguish between them.

Stemming from this, the understanding of nature through observation and measurement, and the ability to influence or even control natural processes and our environment are other common themes in technology.

Technology also concerns the interaction between the technological tools and techniques and the people and systems that create, use or are affected by them. The idea of technology includes a social context and there is a continually evolving relationship with other aspects of society or culture. Technologies are hugely influenced by ideologies and social structures, such as capitalism, and act as real world manifestations of the ideas behind them.

So technology includes tools and machines, needs and desires; it involves science, society and nature, and it is inherently political.

Jacobi: Material means of harnessing energy from nature; can apply to human as well as non-human animals.

Skrbina: I favor a very general definition. A very broad definition. Technology is:

Tools, machines, devices, databases, products, procedures, organizations, institutions, human beings, animals.

I think it's summed up nicely by Jaques Ellul. His definition of technology is:

The total ensemble of means to achieve any end whatsoever.

And here's another one by Kaczynski:

Technology is a global industrial system which functions primarily to degrade and enslave nature and humanity.

Nature/Wilderness

Jacobi: Everything not made or controlled by humans or their technical systems.

Artifice

Jacobi: Everything made and controlled by humans or their technical systems.

Progressivist

Jacobi: People who espouse the idea that civilization has improved, is improving, and will improve the human condition.

Civilization

Jacobi: The way of life based around cities.

Theo: The society, culture, and way of life of a particular area which is technologically advanced.

Ideology

Jacobi: A connected set of ideas, values, and beliefs.

Morality

Jacobi: The rules that govern behavior.

Technique

Jacobi: Methodological means of harnessing energy from nature; can apply to human as well as non-human animals.

Technics

Jacobi: The set of techniques, technologies, and engineering knowledge possessed by a society; alternatively, "both techniques and technologies," i.e., "biotechnics".

3. Kaczynskis' Ideas

Our evolution

Theo: I'm skeptical that just because we did something for a long time in our evolution that it means it would provide us the most meaning in life to keep doing it, it may be less stressful in the same way that challenging yourself to read complicated philosophy might be frustrating at times, but I still view passion for technical fields as producing more important happy flourishing for most people, regardless of suffering.

Evolution is a process of tinkering, finding whatever new mutated DNA will do the job of solving a problem. Our closest relatives chimpanzees and bonobos both have radically different social structures, which can't clearly be explained by a long evolution of settling on a rigid psychology which is the most advantageous for each, but instead by theory of mind and how their brains have developed the capabilities to chose to form different social structures to manage social problems specific to their biological capabilities and their environment.

So the evolution of our biological capabilities created values, the ability for things to matter to us. But, what values we choose is up to us and it's mostly going to be a case of grappling with why our parents and neighbors structured the environment in such a way for our development, whether we learn to agree with that choice or develop on their or someone else's ideas to change things for the next generation.

Normandie: The position regarding the way we evolved to be fulfilled is not an argument that there ought be a rigid psychology or way of doing things. It is that creatures evolve very gradually over a long period of time. Human beings have been essentially thrust into the industrial age, which is so much different in all aspects of life that it does have an impact on people. While everyone certainly has differences in what they seek in life and the archetypes they become, there are general things which are crucial to human well-being. Some of these are basic, such as regular exercise (the importance of which cannot be overstated), healthy sleep, exposure to nature, a healthy diet, etc. Just with the sedentary lifestyle of the modern man, most people are lacking in a major factor for our psychological health. However, one of the most crucial aspects of fulfillment is nearly totally deprived from us industrial civilians, that being the ability to go through what Kaczynski called 'The Power Process'. In short, people need to have goals whose attainment require effort, and they need to have reasonable success in attaining at least some of these goals, and some portion of the population has to have autonomy in the selection and attainment of their goals. Of course most people have goals whose attainment requires effort, but the basic necessities of life are so easily attained by going through the motions to get and work a job, that these serve little to no fulfillment of the power process. The means to secure our physical necessities are so alienated from what we have evolved to do that they leave one empty, even when these are attained, and people have little to no autonomy in these goals. They work the orders of their boss handed down from above. Even freelancers and business owners are beholden to the demands of their economic niche. So, people select surrogate activities to try and emulate the power process, which are 'artificial' goals that one sets for themselves in an attempt to emulate the power process. Surrogate activities are not inherently bad, and they do offer some amount of filling for the hole left by the absence of the power process, but the problem is when surrogate activities alone try to completely replace the power process.

Some have little to no distressing symptoms of modernity, and this is mostly because there is a segment of the population which adapts easier to these industrial conditions. Industrialized nations have an incredibly high rate of suicide, depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, copious mood disorders and ‘personality disorders’, etc. Within those nations, just being in an urban area doubles the rate of schizophrenia. Some people are better at adapting to the industrial world than others, but for those who aren’t and exhibit natural symptoms of incongruity between the way we evolved to live and the way we live today, the diagnosed get separated, labeled, processed, and dealt with by being pharmacologically neutralized with drugs like antidepressants, which are a chemical lobotomy. On top of that, we are provided with a myriad of distractions to placate us, entertainment media, drugs, consumerism, etc, that many are able to pacify their distress their entire lives without being significantly disrupted by psychological distress in their functions in the industrial economy.

I do not claim that technical skills cannot be fun and enjoyable because many of them are. However, given what I just outlined regarding the power process and the fact that technical skills necessitate the techno-industrial system which I believe has inevitable terminal dangers, I don’t think that the fun of some of these technical skills are worth the disastrous fatal effects of industrialism for the ecology of the Earth, human freedom, or human existence, not to mention the overwhelming negative effects of industrialism on people’s mental and physical health.

Jacques Ellul’s influence on Kaczynski

Theo: Except for the not voting, I have no issue with Ellul, he was a Christian left-anarchist who desired to create a:

“...Proudhonian socialism...by transforming the press, the media, and the economic structures...by means of a federative cooperative approach...” an Anarchist society based on federation and the Mutualist economics of Proudhon.

I even agree with his take on technology I think, in that he thinks:

The solution is to simply view technique as objects that can be useful to us and recognize it for what it is, just another thing among many others, instead of believing in technique for its own sake or that of society. If we do this we “...destroy the basis for the power technique has over humanity.”

I would like people to use technology sparingly in their personal life through the concept of minimum viable use and community tool sheds to have a much lower impact on the environment.

I don’t think efficiency should be the goal and I think we should advocate eco-centrist philosophy and policies which starts with the foundation of; in order to even know where it is ethical to draw a line in the sand on where and what amount of territory can be taken up by human development, we need to look to where environmental processes can and cannot support sentient life and to what degree.

Normandie: I think that Ellul’s work, *The Technological Society*, is an incredibly important work for understanding a lot about the techno-industrial system. However, I disagree with his conclusions about what must be done and find his idea that we can take some parts of industrialism and leave the rest to be naive. This is where Kaczynski comes in, who has written about why this is not the case in a robust way in *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How*.

Can people choose how society is run when machines are involved?

Theo: Kaczynski has a view of history where when society changes, and the side-effects are unknown, we rationalize that we desired those side effects in the first place and planned for them through a desire for efficiency or the pursuit of knowledge, but that we begin to reflect systems of machines, rather than them being simple tools of our own desires.

I agree that there can be a kind of manufactured consent situation going on in the way a kid can through social pressure be coerced into buying the latest iphone.

But, I disagree that we need to return to the middle or stone ages levels of technology to solve this problem. I would always want to put time and effort into building assembly lines for life changing items like penicillin and seeing glasses.

We don't need to conceive of society as a network of rational social contracts either for using technology to make sense. From 'The Politics of Postanarchism by Saul Newman':

However, can we assume that the possibilities of human freedom lie rooted in the natural order, as a secret waiting to be discovered, as a flower waiting to blossom, to use Bookchin's metaphor? Can we assume that there is a rational unfolding of possibilities, driven by a certain historical and social logic? This would seem to fall into the trap of essentialism, whereby there is a rational essence or being at the foundation of society whose truth we must perceive. There is an implicit positivism here, in which political and social phenomena are seen as conditioned by natural principles and scientifically observable conditions. Here I think one should reject this view of a social order founded on deep rational principles. In the words of Stirner, 'The essence of the world, so attractive and splendid, is for him who looks to the bottom of it – emptiness.' In other words, rather than there being a rational objectivity at the foundation of society, an immanent wholeness embodying the potential for human freedom, there is a certain void or emptiness, one that produces radical contingency and indeterminacy rather than scientific objectivity. This idea has been elaborated by Laclau and Mouffe, who eschew the idea of society as a rationally intelligible totality, and instead see it as a field of antagonisms which function as its discursive limit. In other words, what gives society its definitional limit at the same time subverts it as a coherent, whole identity. Therefore, they argue, 'Society never manages fully to be society, because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality.' Antagonism should not be thought of here in the sense of the Hobbesian state of nature, as a war of everyman against everyman, but rather as a kind of rupturing or displacement of social identities that prevents the closure of society as a coherent identity.

Normandie: Kaczynski's views on the development of human societies is that they cannot be rationally controlled, that is that people cannot impose a change on society for the long-term unless it is in line with a pre-existing historical trend, such as the gradual 'democratization' of the west. It is not just when machines are involved, but It is my opinion that the primary force driving human society in the modern world is not men or men's profits. What drives humanity is an encompassing motivation, it is something that is a religion in the hearts of most men today. That is the technological system, technical development in all fields, in all facets, in all aspects of living, at all costs, for whatever end, and with whatever means, simply for the sake of doing it; if it can be done it must be done. Most technological developments appear to have more upsides than downsides in the immediate effects, so they will always be pursued whether or not they will be disastrous later on, which is hardly capable of being predicted. Men are not the shepherds of technology in the modern world, but are shepherded by the technological system. All technical developments are advantageous in natural selection, and are

pursued. Industrial economies are a means to pursue, coordinate, plan, and engage in this totality of technical development.

The world is a large supersystem composed of many competing subsystems. In the short term, natural selection favors those that recklessly pursue advantages, even if those advantages are destructive in the long term. Those that are prudent for their long-term future are beat out by those that pursue advantages with little to no regard for long-term consequences. Let's say for example that an anarcho-communist society with an attempt at rational prudence were to form successfully. Movements are always corrupted when they achieve their goals and can offer members of it status or power in some way. The idea that all people can be made to care about this altruistic prudence and not pursue reckless advantages at some point is a fantasy. Some actors at some point will pursue the destructive short term advantages for power, and they will beat out the prudent actors. If a movement is to achieve its goal, it needs to have a clear, concise, and concrete objective that once obtained will be irreversible, and it needs to achieve its goal quickly before corruption sets in. A convoluted vision of society that is easily reversible, such as keeping the 'good parts' of the industrial system and not utilizing the rest, is doomed to fail.

Does modern life erode our freedoms?

Theo: I campaign for people to have the autonomy to choose their own means in life, I want people to have the option of loads more wildlife habitat than currently exists, to live in if they want to. But I also want people to have the freedom to go to a worker owned business to fulfil their intellectual passions.

Normandie: I would absolutely love to spend my life minding my own business on my land with my community and not paying mind to how others live their lives. If I didn't truly believe that industrialism has inexorable, terminal dangers for the future of humanity and the Earth, then I would just live my days on my homestead. I'm not a revolutionary because I don't like cities or factories and want to impose my preferences on others. It is because I genuinely believe that if the industrial system continues to its conclusion, my children won't have a place to live, they will be subjugated and changed beyond the point of any remaining human dignity or they will be extinct, along with the rest of the Earth's ecology.

Is modern life unfulfilling?

Theo: He thinks people are trained to be over-socialized as a form of entertainment in service to technology, so political advocacy is just a surrogate activity, where people are trained to feel guilty for not helping people, to waste their time advocating others become more invested in the collectivist system.

I just disagree that it's an unfulfilling project or we should do it out of guilt. Being able to reach a point in our social evolution where we can care for the basic needs of everyone to a basic extent is a beautiful and satisfying goal to work towards and to sustain through living those communal relationships.

Has technology increased suffering?

Theo: It may have done, but I'm not a utilitarian who only cares about pain vs. pleasure, I think suffering is necessary for self-actualization, so achieving your goals and feeling a deeper happiness, which the stoics called eudaimonia which just means happy flourishing.

The foundations for any pleasure at all for disabled people and other innocent victims of disease and lack of basic security would be denied in any anti-tech revolution which took us backwards.

Ted thinks primitive man can handle these issues stoically, but why then cannot modern man do the same with technology in order to reap the benefits of innocent items like penicillin and seeing glasses?

Would industrial society re-emerge?

Theo: I'm sceptical of Kaczynskis' confidence that a new industrial revolution wouldn't simply re-emerge, especially with people passing down memories and books of all the benefits to modern life.

Firstly, the harm to the environment would be much worse than us simply transitioning to renewable energy and rewilding areas as we depopulate as is the trend in advanced countries. Secondly, I would argue the probability that we will achieve a long-lasting, mostly peaceful, technologically advanced, left-anarchist society is far more valuable to me than returning to an either never ending series of warring feudal societies or feudal societies that repeats the industrial revolution and has another series of world wars for resources.

Primitive life is more appealing to me personally than feudalism in that I could be born into a fairly egalitarian tribe like the Penan or that I wasn't but I wouldn't know any different life or if I had some of the egalitarian ideals I had now, the possibility would be there to strike out on my own and form an egalitarian tribe. But bar convincing everyone to be hunter gatherers, or technological incentives to have fair and democratic communication among societies who trade with each other, you just are going to recreate feudal era societies, where you'd have to be very lucky to escape from conscription and tyrants and the environmental destruction could be far worse.

Normandie: Even if society were to at some point in the future begin the process of industrialization again, it is not sensible for us to worry about that. We must deal with the problems facing our time just as they will have to deal with the problems facing their time. If society were to industrialize again, it would most likely be some 500 or 1,000 years in the future. There are some people who even believe that it would not be possible to industrialize again because the conditions and resources that allowed for industrialization in the first place are no longer there. I'm not one of these people who think it is impossible, but it would certainly take hundreds of years or more to rebuild the system, both because the development of the system is a long and convoluted process and because of the lack of plentiful natural resources that were consumed in our time.

Just because there is a possibility that society industrializes again does not mean we should give up, because the alternative is destruction. The larger the system grows, the more disastrous the effects of its breakdown will be. If we do not bring it to collapse in time, we are facing a technological crisis that entails total ecological destruction. If we carry out a successful revolution in time, then there is at least a chance of humanity, and other complex living organisms, surviving.

What level of violence is justified to achieve this anti-tech revolution...

... & How do you determine what direct action targets are justifiable today?

Zerzan: I'm much more interested in critique than I am in tactics, but to me what's really at the base of it, as it usually is, is the question of violence. What is violence and what is not violence? And I think my position is rather simple, it's not violence if it's not directed at some form of life, in other words you can't violate a building in my view.

I mean friends of mine might disagree, I mean they would say yes it's violence and we don't shrink from violence and that's a position too.

So, I just think that in general there are a lot of targets and you know I don't think you can get too far finding answers to that question in the abstract, but I could be wrong.

Theo: It's a complicated problem, I know some websites try to put together an aims and principles list to explain what actions they'll report on and then I think that can influence what actions people take and what actions people think are justified.

You have people using slogans like 'by any means necessary' going all the way back to Malcolm X & Franz Fanon in the 60s, which I guess is an attempt to say we'll go as far as we're pushed, so be careful what state terror tactics you use on us.

I've experimented with writing up a list of principles for what direct action principles are necessary for different stages in history, in terms of peace time and when social tensions are at their height, of which one principle is; during a non-revolutionary period "never physically hurt people in order to achieve political goals as it runs counter to our philosophy on the left that material conditions create the person and so we should make every peaceful effort to rehabilitate people." So, what do you think about those as an important foundation?

Zerzan: Well I'll just mention that Kaczynski did refine his own view on that, I mean he apologized for that early crude bomb on the jetliner, he renounced that. I think the targets were relatively more appropriate as he went along, as they became more lethal, on that level anyway, I think you could argue that that's the case.

And where is the effectiveness? I mean what success are you having or not having? I mean that can tell you something about what things to do or what things to avoid."

Theo: And what would be the measurements of success for you do you think?

Zerzan: Well, I would say advancing the dialogue. I think that if your thing is mainly critique, it's a question of the conversation in society, is there some resonance? Is there some interest? Is there some development going on there? In other words, I'm not afraid of certain tactics that people commonly shrink from. and they say well, 'you're just turning everybody off', but sometimes I think you have to go through that stage if you will, I mean sometimes that comes with the territory, in other words, people will be defensive and horrified or whatever at first and then they won't be. You know? Then it becomes part of the dialogue, you know then things change, they don't remain the same. In other words, there can be shock at the beginning with some tactics, but that wears off, I think, I would assert that's likely to be the case.

Theo: Right, and you've made the comparison between Kaczynski and John Brown in that way. The difference I would say for me though, in those two situations are that John Brown was six years away from the civil war and they were very much accepted at the time to be one of two sides fighting a guerrilla war, one for revolution and the other for conservatism. Kaczynski's actions were in some ways asymmetrical warfare, but they didn't have any snowballing effect, they weren't strategic targets that scared people off from doing what they were doing.

Secondly, Kaczynski's actions were taken during a non-revolutionary period in which I think physically hurting people to achieve political goals is bad. It's bad precisely because the conditions weren't right for revolutionary war.

For example, even if the revolutionary left got really good at assassinating captains of industry and getting away with it, there would be reasonable fears around the psychology of people who would take such an act against people who they could have grown up and been socially conditioned to be themselves,

which would inexorably lead to a more authoritarian society and worse foundations on which to work towards a better society.

Zerzan: Well I was quite frankly surprised by the levels of sympathy that were spontaneously expressed in the US in the 90s, I was pleasantly surprised by that. Really, there was much much less horror, or there was horror at the bombings and stuff, but there was also a good deal of sympathy.

Like one case, my wife knew this woman at the business school at the university here, and this person commented on the media footage when they were taking him somewhere in Montana before they moved him to California. And he's dressed, it's a well-known deal, he's got a sport coat on and you can tell he's got a vest on underneath and he's kind of looking up at the sky as he's walking along. And her comment was; "why don't they just put a cross on his shoulders?" In other words comparing him to Jesus for Christ's sake, I mean that's a little unexpected, especially from a rather 'straight person', who's not an anarchist or anything of this sort."

Theo: It was definitely a novel case, that's for sure. But I think for the most part, interest in the Unabomber case is comparable to other true crime curiosities.

I'm fascinated by Aileen Wuornos case, who was this hitch-hiking sex worker in the 70s, who ended up killing and robbing some of her clients, and it was this weird juxtaposition for the time because women were getting killed all the time by men and so it flipped the script a little bit that there was actually truck drivers who had assaulted or raped women on the road before, who began to be too afraid to pick up women because they were worried about getting killed.

On hearing news on the radio of a woman sex worker killing men, one woman compared the unbelievable experience to the first time Orson Welles' radio-play 'The War of The Worlds' was received by a bemused audience.

So, I'm fine with people finding a lot of value in his philosophy and he's definitely an intellectual who has found a fairly good critique of modern civilization in 90% of his writings. I just worry that his effect on the world is going to be a stepping stone and to the right for a lot of people, so in terms of discussing his legacy we need to figure out ways to lay down some principles and say that what he did was chaotic and wrong, and we need we need these solid principles for direct action today, to lay the stepping stones for going forward today.

For example, I know you disagree with random bombings of the ITS tendency, but in terms of people agreeing with your philosophy on what kind of technology is likely bad which is very broad, this idea that any tool that requires a hierarchy of coordination and specialization is something to be avoided, are you not concerned that you could be promoting direct action which falls well outside ethical principles like the ones I laid out in my email to you, such that you run the risk of motivating someone to take direct action which makes your rebellion look insane and so lead people to wish to preserve the status quo or facilitate a move to a more authoritarian society?

I observed some important push back like the Anarchist Federations response to an Informal Anarchist Federation cell kneecapping a nuclear physicist, where AFed critiqued the terrorist project of attempting to spread fear rather than building social movements and sometimes sabotaging what stands in our way, but always with the goal of winning strategic victories. Another important critique to add here, is that I don't think we should ever take actions based on the conspiratorial anti-industrial beliefs in the over-exaggerated dangers of industry such as fears of nuclear meltdowns in stable nations.

Zerzan: Well again, I'd say what is happening in terms of social movements now? I mean there's very little right now, I could point to the anti-globalization years so-called, you know around 1999 to 2001 which was a pretty considerable thing, it's kind of forgotten but I mean I don't know, perhaps Kaczynski's forgotten.

Theo: I still don't think a strong argument has been given for justifying direct action which attempts to harm or kill people. And so, unfortunately I think for people who take this stance like yourself and Kaczynski, some important disclaimers need to be made whenever discussing your work if – as members of campaign groups, mutual aid networks and affinity groups – we want to recruit and maintain members or advocate others over to our political philosophy.

4. Related Issues

What disclaimers should we use when talking about Kaczynski?

Theo: When discussing Kaczynski & his ideas, do you think it's important to add disclaimers that some of his ideas and actions were wrong & how critical do you think those disclaimers need to be?

Normandie: Yes, I use them myself all the time when talking about Kaczynski so that people don't get the wrong idea. Disclaimers should certainly be used, except of course in the case of discussions in a group that regularly talks about techno-skeptic philosophy and already knows the disclaimers as a given. Normalization of violence is not healthy or righteous, even for people forced into deadly wars.

Theo: Right, so my position is you just shouldn't platform people who have done evil without disclaimers or unless you are debating them and know you can draw more of their fans over to your side. Yes, critique the ideas as if anyone could have said them, but even if the ideas are perfectly good, make sure there is a critique of the evil actions he's done and evil groups inspired by him, encase people go on from that to learn about him and sympathize with him and his legacy.

Normandie: I fully recognize that there is certainly negative conflation; however, the core of his ideology, which is the inevitable terminal dangers of industrialism, holds up whether or not he murdered people. This is an important distinction, the argumentative robustness of the philosophy regarding the nature of industrialism stays strong regardless of disagreements about what should be done about it, i.e. the nature of a revolution against the industrial system, which is a separate issue to be debated apart from his ideas about industrialism itself.

Theo: I think it's important to acknowledge there can be negative connotations even if he was right, for example someone's motivation for putting the effort into putting out good political theory could be to cover over or make recompense for things they've done in the past. So if I was to not critique their past, someone could have good feelings about their political theory, find out about their past, then come up with justifications for why it wasn't so bad because they like their theory.

But regardless, I do think he in part absolutely developed a tailor-made ideology as a shield for unethical murderous desires. As he himself acknowledged the desire to kill psychologists and anyone else he hated was a major turning point in his life, another big change in his ideology also coincided with personal life changes in that after he was imprisoned, he set out a concrete plan for revolution and hoped he could be used as a symbol for it, which reflects how he could no longer take personal revenge and the most meaning he could conceive for himself was being this theorist for how others could work together to bring about a revolution.

As to the moment his ideology changed towards violence, he started to have sexual fantasies of becoming a woman I think because he didn't know how to have relationships with women, so he wanted to explore desires for women which he hadn't had the space to learn to understand (I don't think it was out of any felt-emergence that he was a woman).

So he made an appointment to go see the university psychologist and at the last minute decided he didn't want to talk about having a sex change.

He writes in his diary that this is when the first desire to kill happened:

“I felt disgusted about what my uncontrolled sexual cravings had almost led me to do. And I felt humiliated, and I violently hated the psychiatrist. Just then there came a major turning point in my life. Like a Phoenix, I burst from the ashes of my despair to a glorious new hope. . . So, I said to myself, why not really kill that psychiatrist and anyone else whom I hate. . . I will kill, but I will make at least some effort to avoid detection, so that I can kill again.”

So the psychology experiments for the CIA and this humiliating experience with the psychologist, turned into hateful resentment for a society that he felt had made him confused and depressed.

Then a desire to carefully plan his murders and pick targets he thought some people would intellectually admire him for picking, as in his eyes the vilest people deserving of fighting a guerrilla war against. Could be seen as a way of getting the validation he didn't get from friends as a child on his own terms, for being special and intelligent enough to have discovered all these connections and go after the worst offenders. Rebelling against social alienation and mediocrity/ fear of the harder task of finding meaning with others, that there's no special meaning given to your life for just being you.

Normandie: Kaczynski likely committed his violent actions under the influence of developmental trauma. Addressing whether or not the ideology is 'tailor made' for murderous desires, I would say that any truly revolutionary ideology is ripe for abuse in its execution, and has been abused by many people, including most political revolutionaries in the past 2 centuries. If the philosophy of anti-industrialism is true, and I believe it is, then there are two options: to attempt revolution against this system, or to do nothing and chug ever on to the terminal end. I know many people who agree with Kaczynski and Ellul's core philosophy, but would rather do nothing, and I used to be in this camp as well. However, if something is to be done about it, and this something is more than likely going to include violence (as all actual revolutions seem to have included), then of course there are going to be people who attempt to abuse the mask of the ideology to accomplish devious personal goals. This does not mean that the answer is to do nothing and lead the ecology of the Earth to not survive.

I don't think you can blame Kaczynski for the 'fascist creep' any more than you can blame Marx for the horrors of Mao. Fascists and authoritarians of that nature would be so with or without the flare of technoskepticism inspired by Kaczynski. There is a resurgence of authoritarianism happening all over the place in many ideologies.

Theo: I do blame Marx in part for the horrors of Mao. Marx knew he was writing a strategy promoting the most opportunistically violent class war revolutions possible. He thought the problem with the French revolution was that they didn't chop off enough heads, so very little sense of needing to inspire people to be invested in the new society, just terrorizing people as being of primary importance.

Kaczynski's actions and theory directly inspired some people to join non-violent green and insurrectionary left-anarchist movement, but also far-right terror groups who wouldn't otherwise have done so. And in the case of ITS turned them from far-left green anarchists property saboteurs to far-right terrorists.

Normandie: There are, in my strong opinion, certain changes in the world that cannot come about by protracted reform. Some things can only be accomplished by revolution. If there is something of this nature that cannot be accomplished by reform, and is dire, then you can't blame the person who pointed it out for the mishandlings of those responding to it. If that were the case, no revolution against any evil or disastrous system could happen because there will be some people who try to accomplish devious things.

Theo: Even if I were to grant that the core philosophy was valid and revolution was justified, there are countless examples I can point to of Kaczynski advocating evil strategy and evil character vices, which we can get into later when we talk about *What level of violence is justified to achieve this anti-tech*

revolution? But two examples that come to mind are still to this day advocating the killing of biotech scientists as symbols to simply send a message and through his actions in the past the justifying of a bombing spree as the natural response to anger he felt, so including bombs in which he tried to take down airplanes where his motivation was the anger he felt at planes flying over his cabin.

But as long as we can acknowledge beyond the core philosophy, his actions and other ideas have been directly responsible for encouraging others to do evil, I'll take that as important common ground. I would still contend the core philosophy is bad too and thus not worth the revolution you desire also, but I'm happy to go over all his ideas in detail one at a time to present my counter-arguments.

Preventing the Fascist Creep

Theo: There are far-left primitivists who think primitive life will be one of peace and few work-hours, then centrist-primitivists who are just anti-social egoists, then I'd say to the degree you understand primitive life is one of indifference for the disabled, etc. And you still desire it, then I'd say you're on the anti-egalitarian right-wing of politics at least in that one aspect.

It is confused by the fact I view anti-industrial society as an irrational political foundation for achieving your desires, but to the extent there are these irrational rabbit holes people can fall down anywhere on the political spectrum, they can act as a worrying kind of wormhole which fast tracks people to diametrically opposite political positions.

So how this can happen on the far-left is if you're struggling with the contradictions of having say a personal trauma which leads you to anti-industrialist politics + far-leftism which isn't inherently against people finding value in highly technical work. So you might be worried that you could be overthrowing the current government, but will still be socially alienated from a demeaning factory work job, that is just slightly more democratic. And then from that point, find more common cause with anarcho-capitalists for just desiring to hoard what they can and kill anyone who comes onto their property, or fascists who want to hoard all the wealth for white people say.

Normandie: Indeed there are many, especially on the 'left', who believe a mythological version of primitive life. However, there are also many who hold an incorrectly savage view of primitive life. There is evidence of tribes who took care of their disabled members for many years after their disability (citation coming). The idea that primitivism means indifference for the disabled is just not the case. There was also much less disability due to gradual natural selective pressures. Many conditions that were incredibly rare before civilization have widely proliferated in the population. I've written more on this in my article, *Civilization is Unhealthy*. These things can be debated, but primitivism isn't a hill I'll die on. I'll defend the things I believe about it and everyone has different views on it given their value systems. As I said, I am anti-industrialist first and foremost.

I don't think it is useful or practical to retroactively cast on to hunter-gatherers the modern political compass, which is largely predicated upon industrial mass-production. We have ideas about 'usual' characteristics of people on the left and the right that many think can be applied to tribes, and this may be intuitive to a degree, but I still don't think it is accurate to describe tribes who were both largely egalitarian and market-based traders. If I believe in egalitarian communalism, but I believe that life on Earth will be destroyed, or humans domesticated and controlled to such a degree as to make them hardly human anymore, if the industrial system remains, it doesn't make me a right winger. The choice in the anti-industrialist philosophy is to save life on Earth from annihilation, or to let life on Earth go extinct because disabled people such as those in an iron lung would be unable to survive without the industrial system. If you believe that all life dying is better than some people dying, I can understand and respect that position. In fact, I used to prefer that all people die when I was a committed misanthrope. Nonetheless, I completely believe in taking care of disabled people. If there is

a disabled person in my commune, we are taking care of them. This position of wanting the survival of life on Earth and having to make hard choices doesn't make me a right winger. You may think it is 'socially conservative' somehow, but I strongly disagree.

As a disclaimer, I'm not a primitivist as a political ideology. I don't call myself a primitivist. While I do think that humans would have a more secure existence psychologically as hunter gatherers, I don't believe you can make all of human society primitive. You just can't rationally control the development of a society like that. No amount of ideology will keep people from growing food if the alternative is to starve. The only way this could happen is if a meteor hit the Earth and all people except the hunter-gatherers in the Amazon and on North Sentinel Island died, which I don't want. Primarily, I am anti-industrialist, I believe that industrialism will inevitably lead to disaster and possibly the destruction of all complex life forms if allowed to continue. People can do whatever they'd like after collapse comes. I'm not a political activist, in fact political philosophy is something that is not much of a priority right now except for how my commune will function. I don't see anarcho-primitivism as a 'rational political foundation' either, because I don't think its meant to be one outside of a small group - a tribe. I also don't think most primitivists are driven to primitivism because of 'trauma' other than the lived experience of industrial distress that most everyone experiences to one degree or another.

Regarding what you just said: 'So you might be worried that you could be overthrowing the current government, but will still be socially alienated from a demeaning factory work job, that is just slightly more democratic. And then from that point, find more common cause with anarcho-capitalists for just desiring to hoard what they can and kill anyone who comes onto their property, or fascists who want to hoard all the wealth for white people say.', I'm not quite sure how you reach that conclusion about primitivists having 'more in common' with this or that right-wing group. Firstly, anarcho-capitalists are delusional if they think their system is anarchism because industrial economy has a tendency toward consolidation and centralization for technical development as an inherent characteristic due to selective pressures for competition, so of course its not anarchism, the state is just replaced by the corporation. How anprims have anything meaningfully in common with fascists, I've no idea how you've reached that conclusion.

Ted is explicitly anti-authoritarian and against using the state as a means to destroy the industrial system. 'This is not to be a political revolution, our goal is overthrow not government but the economic and technological basis of the present society'.

Theo: Responding to your last point and working backwards, I would say regardless of if someone is against using the state to overthrow advanced technology, I don't think that makes it any better, it's still authoritarian to stop people from having the choice of accessing advanced medicine through worker-owned industries.

With regards to people shifting from left to right after becoming anti-industrialists, I don't think I'm projecting political identities onto tribespeople who don't know any other life, I'm specifically talking about people in the here and now changing their political sympathies towards fascism or anarcho-capitalism because they desire to just be hermits in the forest with their white family and exploiting their sons and friends through trade, but just not organizing in any way with factory production lines or punching a clock.

From what you've just said I perceive your political foundation to still be that of the left, with your desire for egalitarian communalism, but I just reiterate that I think this to be an anti-historical and anti-science position whose effect in the real world would more closely align with right wing people in their indifference for segments of the population simply for who they are by nature.

Normandie: Back to what I previously said, I don't want to control how anyone lives their life. I don't even believe in a state in my political philosophy, I'm an anarchist. However, I'm not willing to let that principle cause me to sit back and allow the industrial system to destroy life, or all freedoms of life

that make it worth living, because it would take away some medicine that is treating mostly conditions that are largely caused by industrialism in the first place.

The case study of ITS

Theo: Individualists Tending to the Wild (In Spanish: Individualistas Tendiendo a lo Salvaje, ITS) is a self-defined eco-extremist group that emerged in Mexico in 2011, whose members were originally part of the green & insurrectionary left-anarchist milieus who likely grew up on earth first monkey-wrenching manuals from the 80s. Upon reading the unabomber's manifesto they stopped committing arsons aimed at sabotaging evil companies and instead started to desire to have the wider effect of terrorizing people through fear of injury or death on the simple principle of being against technology and wanting to regress to hunter-gatherer societies:

With anarchism, the relationship at the moment is one of rupture, although there is no dishonor in accepting that many eco-extremists and some members of ITS come from anarchism, mostly from insurrectionist and eco-anarchist tendencies. Although at the time there were some ties, today the vast majority of anarchists hate us.

Most call themselves nihilists in that they don't want to be beholden to pursuing any concrete narratives, like the goal of destroying all advanced technological systems, but instead hope to inspire others to a simple psychology of anger and resentment at the conformity they were forced to grow up with.

Interestingly Ted in prison has argued to the extent they are organising with others they should be working to bring about a primitivist revolution in going after riskier targets like electricity grid stations. But it's almost as if ITS feel being able to do random attacks is what's owed to them by being free and that to listen to Ted now would be helping serve his needs as a theorist from prison, to the detriment of their own desires.

They are also now firmly on the far-right, quoting from the now banned facebook page of the eco-fascist publication Atassa:

All anti-civ thought and fascism have the same founding premise and modus operandi. These are that a large chunk of the human population holds down a selected group that could potentially function successfully if these other groups were not around. The solution is thus to cull the land of those people, either the scapegoat of all societal ills (fascism) or the vast majority of people who could not function without the support of techno-industrial society (anarcho-primitivism / anti-civ green anarchy). Both ideologies can be reluctant or coy about the methodology they use or its results ("an ethno-state does not lead directly to genocide", "the destruction of the power grid is not intended to directly kill billions of people"). However, the ethical decision of both is the same: do what needs to be done to allow those who can be free to be free, and damn the consequences. Eco-extremism does not shy away from this.

For context here is a communique of who Atassa are from ITS themselves:

The northern lands of the American continent are being won over by the tendency that moves away from political humanism and spits mockingly on hyper-moral civilized values.

It was obvious that the rabid followers of humanism would protest against the incorrect words and the "atrocious" acts of ITS in Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. Scared, they would whisper, "I hope ITS doesn't come to the U.S." and that's what happened. ITS hasn't

come to the U.S., but (here is the "but") little by little the most emblematic theorists of eco-extremism were arriving, who created publishing projects and put into circulation websites that reproduced the discourse against human progressivism.

The first sign we have to support this is the publication of *Atassa* magazine, the first issue of which was a tremendous blow for the humanist slanderers, demonstrating the arrival of eco-extremism to the U.S. The second issue will be a true earthquake for those same defamers of the tendency.

Normandie: Let me first clarify that I am not anti-civ, but I recognize that many people who are in the wider diaspora of groups that are anti-civ commonly flirt with or idolize Kaczynski in some way. These people have either not read Kaczynski's *magnum opus* (ATR), or have and disregard the most important parts of it to instead pursue their own delusions about politics.

I had not heard of ITS before this discussion. If we are staying on the topic of Kaczynski's philosophy, he has clearly stated (especially in *Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How*) that anti-tech revolutionaries must avoid working with extreme-environmentalists, such as ITS, and anarcho-primitivists. The only goal for Kaczynski is to destroy the technological system, and anyone who has any other priorities (especially political ambitions like fascism) should not be worked with. I am repulsed by fascist and I, along with anyone who takes anti-tech revolutionary activity seriously and practically, avoid working with these people and actively try to keep them out of our circles. It seems that the initial move away from leftism by ITS was reading *Industrial Society and Its Future*, but that they have moved towards ecofascism in defiance of Kaczynski's philosophy. Like I said earlier, any revolutionary concept is going to have people like this who use the banner for evil ends. Kaczynski is not some religious figure to be followed by those of us who are anti-industrialist, but he has contributed valuable work to anyone hoping to do anything about the terminal dangers of industrialism, and admits that discretion and adaptation is going to be necessary for revolutionaries going forward. Anyone who took hedence to his outlining of what does and doesn't make a revolutionary movement successful would not work with these people, so it is my opinion that the move to fascism is due primarily to their own poor qualities as people.

Addressing this statement, 'All anti-civ thought and fascism have the same founding premise and modus operandi. These are that a large chunk of the human population holds down a selected group that could potentially function successfully if these other groups were not around. The solution is thus to cull the land of those people, either the scapegoat of all societal ills (fascism) or the vast majority of people who could not function without the support of techno-industrial society (anarcho-primitivism / anti-civ green anarchy)',

Anti-industrialism is not an anti-civ ideology. Of course, people who are anti-civ are inherently against industrialism because you can't have industrialism without civilization. However, the only goal of the anti-tech movement (as it concerns Kaczynski's philosophy) is the end of industrialism, and nothing else. Anyone with other goals for the movement is to be absolutely avoided at all costs, as Kaczynski himself has said. Anti-civ is a political philosophy, anti-industrialism is not. Destroying the industrial system is one concrete goal that does not concern how a society is governed. Anti-civ is a delusion that the trajectory of human society can be rationally controlled, which Kaczynski dedicates the first chapter of ATR to show that it cannot be. You cannot force all of humanity to not live sedentary lives. Anti-industrialism does not pin the blame of the current state of the world on any group of people. Jacques Ellul spent his masterpiece detailing how the industrial system is an inorganic and encompassing force with one goal, technical development and infection of all aspects, and that humans are a middle-man between the system and its ends (a middleman that will one day not be as technically efficient as an alternative, thus being replaced). Anti-industrialism has nothing to do with groups of people.

The excerpt may have a point of anti-civ and fascist commonalities, but like I just detailed, this is very much not the case for those who follow Kaczynski's revolutionary philosophy.

Theo: I fully grant that Kaczynski despises ITS now, but I would argue firstly, that Kaczynski's philosophy inspiring people to move away from leftism has terrible real world consequences, and secondly that it's also bad precisely because it moves people closer to the right wing and fascism and so acts as a stepping stone or gateway to it.

The fanaticism some people have for Kaczynski's work can blind them to how the core theory is sometimes directly responsible for evil, it's like a religious person who says you have to have blind faith, live as if you believe for a month or a year, but even then, they will act as if an ex-believer who had been in the religion 50 years never properly understood the holy books.

So what I'm saying is ideologies can always claim they don't have many members yet because of manufactured consent or whatever, and that can be true to a degree, but you have to also take these case studies seriously of groups of people passing through your ideology, being really invested in it for a time and it having a profound impact on them, but that it had a negative effect on the world while they were in it and that the theory wasn't even reasonable or inspiring enough to get them to stay with it long-term.

The early actions the group ITS took and the theory they used to explain their actions were very much aligned with the actions and theory Kaczynski had put out at the time. For example their targeting of bio-scientists as symbols was right out of Kaczynski's essay advising what tactics should be pursued, as well as their theory that technology should be attacked on principle because it's all rotten and no concessions can be made, finally right down to their copying of all his ideological terms like claiming to be acting in defence of 'Wild Nature'.

5. Miscellaneous Questions

Would you still use domesticated animals in a peaceful world?

Theo: There are obviously people who are pro & anti animal domestication on either side of the technology question, so I'm curious to get a range of opinions for how anti-tech philosophy interacts with animal rights issues.

Most vegans are against breeding domesticated animals like cows, pigs, sheep and chickens because we think we should be freeing up space for those wild animals with a close common ancestor such as bison, wild boar, mouflon and jungle fowl, which are better able to express their capabilities in the wild. That way those domesticated animals with numerous health problems like chickens who get egg bound or break their legs easily for carrying so much meat can be allowed to simply not be bred into existence anymore.

Many anti-civ people extend this critique of domestication to the way they say humans have allowed ourselves to become unthinkingly subordinate to the way of life in cities. And some even go as far as to say this process started when we began using fire.

Finally, there are many anti-tech people who see it as necessary to practice animal farming and hunting for surviving the collapse, which I don't see as likely, but I do think that that would be justified if true.

A hypothetical question I'm curious about though, to test people's principles is... if you lived in a world where everyone was vegan and there was no war, where everyone grew food forests, so even if you desired to move, you could always help someone else with their food forest, and you knew you could meet all your nutritional needs living this life, and you knew there wasn't going to be warfare, and you knew you could maintain the skills of hunting if you needed to go back to that, would you hypothetically choose not to hunt animals? Just living a life where you're communicating with them through seeing otters in the wild, but just choosing not to hunt, do you think that would be an ethical responsibility? What do you think if you knew that you could survive perfectly fine with low labor hours?

Zerzan: That sounds rather nice, yeah I wouldn't argue against it, I mean if it's conceivable and I think you know hunter-gatherer life was more gathering than hunting, but still, maybe that would be more ideal. If you're trying to learn anything from the record, it's a bit hard to imagine that in terms of our evolution, but it sounds nice, yeah.

Theo: Yeah it's a nice dream. I just often come up against people who are really invested in like eating meat because it's their culture and eating these horrible factory farmed animals, so I think it's interesting, like I use the argument of we have all these glass greenhouses now, we have thousands of vegetables we can grow all year round to eat a varied diet, but even if we went back to primitivist life and we could still meet all our nutritional needs, I think there would be some ethical responsibility there too, just to embody this more compassionate lifestyle.

Zerzan: Right, I salute your values, I think that's very worthwhile to think about.

Alex: Veganism is unnatural and detrimental to human health. Of course a civilized child may have emotions when simply facing death, but living creatures die, and they must die for others to be fed.

The vegan dogma is one of the worst aspects to develop from of civilized life, and I hope every vegan gets free of it before it does them serious bodily damage.

Our species of human is 200K years old, and you can be sure people were eating anything they could tolerate. Suddenly refusing to process foods which forever enabled human survival is not going to be without negative consequences. Humans are genetically most alike chimps and bonobos, and neither are vegetarian. What do you imagine would be the consequences to the health of these apes if they were to be limited to a vegan diet? (This dietary restriction would have to be imposed on them because they would never fall victim to the ideology that it is wrong to kill/eat grubs, fish, insects, and small mammals.)

Veganism is unnatural and detrimental to human health. Of course a civilized child may have emotions when simply facing death, but living creatures die, and they must die for others to be fed. The vegan dogma is one of the worst aspects to develop from of civilized life, and I hope every vegan gets free of it before it does them serious bodily damage.

Theo:

Veganism is unnatural ... The vegan dogma is one of the worst aspects to develop from of civilized life

Our nature is simply that of being highly intelligent animals who can choose to struggle against our natural drives if we decide intellectually that we desire to. E.g. Biologically really liking sugar because it's not common in the wild, but deciding not to binge on it anyway, even when we have easy access to it in cities.

Humans are genetically most alike chimps and bonobos ... This dietary restriction would have to be imposed on them because they would never fall victim to the ideology that it is wrong to kill/eat grubs, fish, insects, and small mammals.

The reason I think hunting and paying for the killing of animals is a character vice for myself and many others is because I'm intelligent enough to empathize with other animals and know I can be happy and healthy eating a vegan diet. So, I don't hold the position you're tarring all vegans with, but we likely agree my position is not one other animals could ever come to, along with severely mentally disabled people and psychopaths.

detrimental to human health. ... Our species of human is 200K years old, and you can be sure people were eating anything they could tolerate. Suddenly refusing to process foods which forever enabled human survival is not going to be without negative consequences.

If the only way we'd been able to achieve optimal health for 200K years was eating large quantities of soil I would still happily abandon it if I knew the trade-off was just knowing how to grow enough duck-weed year round, or brewing yeast in glass jars, just like we do beer or penicillin.

Of course a civilized child may have emotions when simply facing death,

I agree it's likely a problem for kids to fear seeing death, I'd probably take my kids out on a deer hunt if they were overpopulated and politicians in my area were continuing to drag their feet on re-introducing predators.

but living creatures die, and they must die for others to be fed

I'm with you, along with the Tibetans and Zoroastrians, I would like a sky burial were it legal, as a charitable offering to larger animals that could benefit from the meat most. However, most animals people eat today are bred to live much shorter and more dreadful lives than they would have in the wild, getting to express their wild capabilities. So, I advocate more people go vegan, so they are never bred to live these shitty lives. Also, because it takes more land to grow plants to feed to animals, to eat the animals, than just eating plants, so I'd like to free up more land for wild habitat, to increase the net amount of wild animals on earth getting to express their capabilities. So regardless of whether your ideal is primitive food forests or solar-punk, I think advocating veganism is character virtuous.

Alex: This reformism and vegan advocacy is seriously bogus. Removing violence from our lives is good for stabilizing and perpetuating techno-industrial civilization, but since violence is an innate part of ape life, the lack of any arena for its expression does not foster human psychological health. Instead of killing to eat, we civilized people in technological society are largely repressed from any violent action - how good can this be for us, physically and psychologically? (Again, if chimps were made to be nonviolent, what consequences would result? What would human observers think if some minority of chimps suddenly began persuading others to not eat nothing but plants and fruits, for some reason - and how would that differ from a psychosis in the animal?) Have we civilized a healthy relationship with death? I think not, and the charade of veganism's promise to eliminate any contribution to animal deaths is noy going to foster a good understanding of death & life. But vegan advocates are in luck: the TIS seems ready to impose veganism or other engineered techno-sciencey manufactured diet (perhaps crickets) upon humanity, for as long as humans are allowed and tolerated.

You think and hope you will be healthy eating a vegan diet, but you may simply be beginning a slow-burn disaster which doesn't crescendo for 15 years. On the other hand, we know that people eating animals and their eggs and marrow, and drinking their milk or blood, have been well nurtured and made healthy for eons.

reddit.com/r/exvegans has plenty of testimonials and anecdotes of health problems befalling ardent vegans, driving them to question and leave the ideology; I wish you no harm and hope you will move to a more natural diet before health maladies arrive - and I'm sure they will, eventually. And our nature to desire sugar (or salts) should be exercised and fulfilled, when sugar is rare, regional and seasonal. When we create foods and modify the world to suit ourselves - taking control from the gods, as Daniel Quinn put it - we have to attend to ripple effects we cannot foresee or fully manage (hypertension, diabetes, obesity, population growth come to mind).

Theo: I set up <https://reddit.com/r/AntiVegans> a while ago as I think it'd be funny to gather anecdotes of people who used to be ideologically motivated to warn against veganism for the comedic mirror it would create. Either way, I don't actually see the evidentiary use value in a bunch of anecdotes when we have so many either way, and so much better evidence in research papers, but if you're curious about my personal cultural experience with vegans and the arguments, I was brought up vegetarian, went vegan at 15, and enjoy a fit life at 31 in a tiny village.

I don't think we're lacking for opportunities to habituate people to violence and conflict in TIS, we have much more meaningful opportunities in fact in the painful realizations about friends, frenemies and enemies we are in intellectual and physical competition with.

You keep asserting veganism is x, like veganism wants apes to be non-violent, veganism wants people to eat crickets, which just sounds like conspiracy thinking, linking news stories that aren't connected. The way I've seen the crickets thing pop up is just liberal journalists covering the rise of veganism and offering an unsatisfactory middle ground as part of what they think their job is to do in covering both sides impartially and suggesting middle ground steps. But obviously vegans are against farming and killing insects, as they're sentient animals who can have a subjective experience of capabilities they're enjoying expressing. So to vegans it's a character vice to breed them into the world knowing you plan to go against their interests by killing them.

Alex: You misunderstand my remarks. The technological system pursues its needs, which may be a lower human toll upon Nature, possibly accomplished by a cricket-heavy sustenance, or petri dish lab meats, or a vegan nutritional syrup - or the eradication of (most of) humanity. Even if unintentional and unwitting, the vegan movement (along with the animal rights folks pushing cellular 'meat' and such) aids the technological system's management of humanity, separated from Nature and dependent upon the social managers of the system. Crickets are championed by the non-vegan advocates of "sustainability" who want feed everyone everywhere and 'lessen our impact'. If humans are apes, and vegans want animals not to be killed by humans, then at least some elimination of apes' violence is being sought by vegans, right? I don't follow your remarks about friends and enemies, but I doubt that that violence compares to raids or hunts by uncivilized tribal groups or survival by killing as required in Nature. Why do you think it is that people who do live in Nature have not adopted a vegan diet?

Theo:

vegans want animals not to be killed by humans

No, vegans simply want to do an animal products boycott, they can still be in favor of killing animals for a multitude of reasons, e.g. for pest control within settlements and farms, reducing overpopulation, eliminating invasive species, mercy killing injured animals, etc. There's many legal animal rights advocates who for example are against hunting on principle, but that was never the original goal people had in mind who came up with the term vegan and so even that is not a required principle to hold in order to adopt veganism. Here's 5 example ethical reasons someone might be vegan (and what branch of philosophy it may be related to):

Hedonistic Utilitarianism: The commitment to not use sentient life where you know you will cause more suffering on a global calculus than happiness. Examples: human caused climate change, stress and pain in a slaughterhouse than a longer happy life in the wild with low rates of predation, stress to slaughterhouse workers who are more likely to abuse their family, etc.

Preference Consequentialism: The commitment to not use sentient life in various ways because you know they will have interests to go on living longer than would be profitable. Examples: They have habits for activities they'd like to do each day and they show you by their desire not to be loaded onto scary trucks and to a slaughterhouse where they hear the screams of other animals and the smell of death.

Virtue Ethics: The pursuit of positive character virtues through not breeding a sentient life into captivity when you know you could leave room for other animals to enjoy happy flourishing by being able to express all their capabilities in wild habitat. So not wanting to parasitically take away life with meaning for low-order pleasure in our hierarchy of needs which we can find elsewhere.

Deontology: The principle of everyone should only act in such a way that it would still be acceptable to them if it were to become universal law. So not breeding sentient life into existence, only to keep them confined, tear families apart and kill them later, as you wouldn't want it to happen to you.

Existentialist Ethics: The desire to be wary of acting in-authentically, so in a way you don't believe due to outside social pressures, like that acting un-caringly is necessary to what it means to be a man. So testing out values you were brought up with against new ones as you go and coming to the conclusion that you'd prefer to live in a society where most people have the value of seeing animals flourishing in nature and not in captivity/pain.

I doubt that that violence compares to raids or hunts by uncivilized tribal groups or survival by killing as required in Nature.

It doesn't compare in terms of the quantity of opportunities to chaotically follow ones baser instincts on a whim, but it is far and away superior on the calculus of more meaningful and emotionally draining conflict that people have access to in TIS. E.g. millions of people have the ability to go volunteer to fight

against Russia's attack on the Ukrainian people now, and for 5 years millions had the opportunity to fight ISIS's attack on the Yazidi people. Going to fight ISIS may have involved tying oneself emotionally to forever wanting to know on a deeply personal level that the sex slaves you freed are still doing well and potentially carrying the burden of a mistake that could have been avoided costing a friend's life, you get to experience the attempts at saving and recapturing a complex culture and people tied to a land that can trace their philosophical development back to being primitive tribes.

Why do you think it is that people who do live in Nature have not adopted a vegan diet?

Again, because like I said at the beginning, "the reason I think hunting and paying for the killing of animals is a character vice for myself and many others is because I'm intelligent enough to empathize with other animals and know I can be happy and healthy eating a vegan diet. So, I don't hold the position you're tarring all vegans with, but we likely agree my position is not one other animals could ever come to, along with severely mentally disabled people and psychopaths." There's no injustice happening to the animals that get hunted by for example uncontacted tribes people who use blow darts to pick off the slowest squirrels or whatever, helping their evolution. And there's no bad intent or character vice on the part of the tribes person who hasn't ever contemplated leaving the forest to eat farmed foods and allow the forest to go in a different evolutionary direction such that they could be living a more meaningful life, and the forest would be able to contain a higher quantity of animals.



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