

Two short notes on the book 'The Uncommitted'

Ted Kaczynski

1979 & 1988

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... During my last year at the University of Michigan I reached a decision and a psychological turning-point that changed the direction of my life. I had two major psychological needs that were unsatisfied: One of course was sex. The other was what I will call for the sake of simplicity the need for serious, purposeful work...(I won't treat this subject in detail here. For relevant discussion see the psychological study by Kenneth Keniston, *The Uncommitted.*) ...

Ted's 1979 Autobiography

... On p. 364, Keniston warns, "The psychoanalytic conception of the ego should not be confused with the popular notion of the ego as the center of interest, vanity, and pride ...

... In view of this, I want to clarify the term "ego" as I use it in this autobiography and in my other notes. My use of the word is of course drawn from the popular notion. But it does overlap slightly with the usage described by Keniston. As I use it, ego means that part of the mind which is concerned with: Power, dominance, superiority, pride, revenge, autonomy, will, purpose, work, decision, reason*, action, aggression, self-discipline. Here, power is the central concept. Some of the other items (like work, reason, etc.) to start out with are merely tools for attaining power, revenge, etc., but these "tools" become ends in themselves. Thus, power holds a pre-eminent position, but the other items are also important, and some of them rival (maybe even sometimes exceed?) the importance of power. Speaking now from my own point of view, power alone is by no means enough ...

... to be satisfying, the exercise of power has to require an effort. It must require the use of some of the other items in the list, like reason, action, self-discipline, etc. Also necessary in order to avoid boredom is a serious purpose for the exercise of power. What's the good of having power if you have no strong reason to use it?

... I would add that ... the only possible serious purposes are determined by biological instincts — food, shelter, physical rest, love, hate, social status, etc ... I suggest that, for most people, needs for love, satiation of hate, social status, and other instincts not connected with physical needs, are satiated long before the people concerned have expended enough time and effort. Thus a sense of purposelessness occurs. This holds also for more subtle "instincts" like that for artistic expression. Few people seem able to fully satisfy their need for purpose through art ... a chronic sense of purposelessness is inevitable, unless that society can give its people a deeply-ingrained artificial purpose through some form of psychological engineering ...

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Ted related an anecdote about the author of *The Uncommitted* in a letter to his mother in 1991: "One of the psychologists who participated in [the Murray] study, and who interviewed me a few times, was a youngish instructor who lived at Eliot House [Ted's dormitory]. He was a member of the house master's inner clique. Two or three times when I met him at Eliot House I said 'hello.' In each case this psychologist answered my greeting in a low tone, looking off in another direction and hurrying away as if he didn't want to stop and talk to me."

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