

# Letters

Various Authors

2020

Send letters to [fe@fifthestate.org](mailto:fe@fifthestate.org) or Fifth Estate, POB 201016, Ferndale MI 48220  
All formats accepted including typescript & handwritten.  
Letters may be edited for length.

## SOME RELIGION?

Your Winter 2019 issue [FE #405] is full of fine writing and provocative thinking, particularly so in the review of *Godless: 150 Years of Disbelief* by Peter Werbe. The final section, beginning with “Let’s devise a spiritual belief system...” is a beautiful manifesto worth sharing. I wish I’d written it!

Thank you for doing what you do. Your readers appreciate you.

MK Punky

Los Angeles

*Peter Werbe replies:* Thank you, MK. However, just so readers don’t think I’ve found religion, what I suggested was as an alternative system to the patriarchal, sky-god, anti-human belief systems now besotting humanity.

It was a fanciful one essentially celebrating ourselves and our connection to everything.

You can see MK’s writing at [michaelkonik.com/books](http://michaelkonik.com/books).

## MORE ON PORN

I read the letter in your Summer 2019 issue [Letters, FE #404] about a guy using pornography. The problem you’re having is using the term pornography instead of sex rated film. Pornography can be defined as womanslaughter, sex acts only filmed and distributed for the purpose of violent sadistic enjoyment.

If your hobby is consensual and non violent I don’t see any crime being committed and I’m an anti pornography identifier. I reject men because they often expect sex and orgasm transactionally, but are lovingly shallow when I need a partner to be an economically stable individual in a marriageable, religious society.

Men could and have often depreciated and defamed my value in relation to their expectation of fame and achievement. I know some women willing to organize militantly about men’s unwillingness to commit to being truthful about what sex anxiety is. Or, refuse to admit the transactional requirement of what’s expected.

As a feminist and a Muslim ethicist, I notice expectations of Man as too impossible as they are for Woman, and so forgive the absurd theatre.

Kathryn via email

## FE ALWAYS TECH

Steve Kirk asserts in “The Logic of the Telescope,” in your Winter 2020 issue [FE #405] that the religious ideas of one group of people trump everything else.

He has no use for technology or idea where it comes from.

The “inevitable march of scientific progress,” he disparages, helped us create vaccines for viruses that previously killed millions.

The *Fifth Estate* has always relied on technology. The first issue was printed on a printing press. When I worked there, we had older machines to set our type, create headlines, burn film for the press, make telephone calls to sources.

Now, the *Fifth Estate* uses a way to reach an audience of every person in the world: the Internet. This is an amazing use of technology—a powerful way to express your ideas, free of any censorship, offering more freedom of speech than the printing press, movable type, or stone tablets.

Steve condemns Intel co-founder Gordon Moore. Is he a telescope funder, hoping to show a profit? My guess is he donates funds to allow science to continue. No government spends enough, or can be trusted to spend on research. Private funding of impartial research seems like a good idea.

There are vital goals that don’t depend on the “basic and cogent understanding of lived reality.” I can’t see a virus. Nor an electron. We need tools to work with these. Tools are neither good nor bad, but benign, and depend on the intent of the user.

He complains that wind turbines mar his view. Really?

Would Steve prefer to heat his home using coal? How about fracked natural gas? Or atomic power?

If he’d rather we heat our homes through burning trees, imagine the damage to the forest and the plants and animals that depend on it for life. Should we instead all migrate to warmer climates and destroy those?

Rick Cricow

Eugene, Ore.

**Steve Kirk replies:** Your argument that technology is benign or neutral, integral to all life, and that its rejection is inherently dumb, is fallacious on its face. The very use of a thing in a society or the necessity of any given thing in daily life does not argue for the value of it, but rather shows that the material conditions of any given culture require or expect its use.

After all, if we were bound to consider all complex societal functions (technologies) as benign then the entire state apparatus is simply nothing but an unsightly growth which in the end is really not much of a problem.

By your logic, anything which facilitates the publication of *Fifth Estate* must persist in perpetuity. This is a rhetorical trap oft used against anarchists of all kinds. If the use of any technology (or anything at all) is a positive argument for its existence, then I guess we anarchists don’t have more work to do.

You are saying that technology is neutral, a common rejoinder to Luddism. Something like: technological systems can be used for any desired value and that their existence contains no internal logic in and of itself.

By this logic, technological progress must exist in some independent realm, manifesting via a culturally unrelated and divorced path of purity. The reality is far different. Cultures and civilizations create technology to serve and reinforce their logic. Technology always has consequences as a result of its very existence, materially, culturally, interpersonally. To say that the only issue is the intent of the user is to separate technology from the world and lived experience.

But, more importantly for an anarchist, it is to divorce technology from the paradigm of domination. It’s my hope that we move beyond such hamstrung analyses of technology and mass society and look our technofied nightmare square in the face.

**Peter Werbe replies:** Sorry to double-team a former *Fifth Estate* staff member from back in the early 1970s, but a quick note.

Humans were not a significant species on the planet until the advent of the first major technological innovation—agriculture. That innovation allowed the emergence of wealth accumulation, cities, mass technics, and the political state with its social pyramid of rulers and ruled to emerge.

From that beginning, humans now dominate the planet with destructive technology and political forms to the point where we may be on the verge of tipping over the edge of sustainability if we haven't already passed it.

We're taking a lot of species with us, all so we can live the modern life we've come to expect, but there's a reckoning ahead.

Consider the passenger pigeon. A billion one day; collapse and extinction the next.

## **MUTUAL AID NEEDED**

The Cooperativa Tipolitografica anarchist offset printing project in Carrara, Italy was born in the 1970s as a place to print, with total autonomy, anarchist propaganda. Since 1974, we have printed the weekly newspaper Umanita Nova.

We also print different materials in Italian and other languages like: *A-Rivista Anarchica*, *II Seme Anarchico*, *Lotta di Classe*, *Anarres*, *Voce Libertaria*, *Liberio Pensiero*, and *Musiche*.

The Cooperativa Tipolitografica is connected to the history of the movement, and is an example of self-management fighting against the logic of the devastating global market.

We need help from comrades to repair our roof for which we need the amount of 10,000 euros.

Information about donations can be made to this email: [\*\*lacooptipo@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:lacooptipo@gmail.com)

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