

Amazon Customer Reviews

THE MOST POSITIVE

8 of 10 people found the following review helpful:

★★★★☆ **Not a rosy future**, 16 Mar 2006

By "[dmaisch](#)" - [See all my reviews](#)

In *Tomorrow's People*, Greenfield argues that as a result of the impact of new technology, from biomedical science to information technology (which includes telecommunications) we may be seeing a "makeover" of society "far more cataclysmic than anything that has happened before". This makeover includes "a huge impact on our brains and central nervous system" including the prospect of "directly tampering with the essence of our individuality".

In her book, Greenfield warns of the possibility of a bleak future for the majority of the world's population, somewhat like Fritz Lang's 1927 cinema classic, *Metropolis*, if the technologically advanced world doesn't utilise technology wisely for the benefit of all. Greenfield pictures a future where the march of technology is an unstoppable force with the challenge for humanity how best to adapt to it. She sees the danger of an advanced technological society developing alongside a "vast majority" of the world's population in the underdeveloped world being left out of the advances of technology with the danger of this vast majority being "exploited and abused in ways more sinister, pervasive and cruel than even that witnessed by the worst excesses on the colonialist past." Greenfield sees the solution to this unbalance by the use of high technology. One example given is the development of GM modified trees to use as fuel combined with solar energy systems to allow high tech cottage industries to flourish in rural areas, allowing people to remain living in the countryside. Greenfield enthusiastically predicts a future where "all food, whether home-cooked or takeaway or a mere pill, comes from genetically modified produce." A future where all those concerns over GM foods proved unfounded with GM foods the only way to successfully feed the developing world. A world where GM and nanotechnology altered food was superior than natural foods.

As far as concerns over possible health hazards from all this technology, (be it from GM foods, vaccines, new pharmaceutical drugs, telecommunications, etc, etc.) Greenfield sees it as just symptoms of technophobia which is defined as the fear of or aversion to technology, especially computers and high technology. Those concerns she sees as just sensationalist and scare mongering. As for the growing power and intrusion of corporate industrial involvement in science Greenfield sees this as a positive. This can be seen on page 184 where she states: "First, there is a growing need for innovative science in the private sector as companies in high-tech industries, particularly pharmaceutical companies, depend for survival on having novel products in the pipeline." As for future research it will take place in "Universities as well as behind the walls of leviathan pharmaceutical and other high-tech industries..."

Summing up Greenfield's "Tomorrow's People" it does present in detail the many novel social challenges facing tomorrow's people from high technology but totally avoids any mention of the possibility that there may be unintended biological hazards which she conveniently dismisses as just technophobia. Her glowing portrayal of everything high tech and the corporate world's benevolent role in advancing the coming high-tech world is at odds with ample evidence that the corporate world's actions is anything but benevolent. Recommended reading here would be "The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power" by Joel Bakan and "Toxic Sludge is Good For You! Lies, Damn Lies and the Public Relations Industry" by John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton.

NEGATIVE

22 of 26 people found the following review helpful:

★☆☆☆☆ **Misleading title**, 23 Mar 2004

By [Bobby Elliott](#) (Erskine, UK)

I bought this book because I'm interested in the effect of technology on the individual and society, and the title and summary made it sound interesting. But I was disappointed when I read the book.

The author is a neuroscientist. She's certainly not a political or computer scientist. Her Noddy treatment of politics was surprising even for someone so steeped in their own subject (at one stage she attributes the rise of Fascism in Europe to English gardens - honestly - it's that bad). Her technical knowledge appears to be poor - so several key developments relating to the future of technology are not discussed (for example, she completely omits artificial intelligence).

If you've only got a hammer then everything looks like a nail. So everything in this book is twisted into a discussion on brain-function. Whenever she strays from her domain, the treatment is facile or incoherent.

I struggled to complete this book. Maybe the proof-reader did too since the number of typos increased noticeably in the last few chapters. I like to say something positive about any book I read but I'm struggling to say much good about this one because I got so little out of it. I suppose the fact that I finished it says something. It is readable. Her knowledge of neuroscience is undoubted and the one or two discussions (such as the one on consciousness) were interesting.

But I can't recommend it.