ForeWord Reviews

TECHNOLOGY

The Intruder Bulletins: The Dark Side of Technology
Mark Anthony Rossi
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Imagine a book of essays that covers, among many other subjects, the ever increasing underground traffic in stolen transplant organs; or "identity cards" ostensibly used for identifying legal residents of the United States, but which could also be used as tracking devices of the movements of legal citizens. Or about the possibility of using virtual reality to train assassins in the future, the connection between video games and the desensitization to war on young people, and the lavish waste of tax dollars on secret government organizations. Imagine that same book being cautiously optimistic and trying for reasonable, rational thought rather than exploitation.

The Intruder Bulletins is such a book. Rossi's views range from well researched and objective, to quite passionate, as when he discusses the abuse of poorly paid migrant farm workers.

Rossi's personal touch endows the essays with a sense of his honest concern for our planet and its inhabitants; a concern rarely shared by the huge, greedy conglomerates, which often come in for a much-deserved drubbing. There are finely turned sentences, laden with meaning as well: "They are steady hands disconnecting conscience from action." In discussing the chilling concept that virtual reality war games make for an antiseptic and detached attitude toward the bombing destruction of vast areas and thousands of lives, he writes: "Devoid of the human context, super machines transform men into killing drones disconnected from the horror of personal confrontation."

Many of these essays contain interesting insights such as Rossi's observation that espionage has shifted its focus from the theft of plans for weapons to the theft of plans for technologies. He treats information as the new goal for which unscrupulous men and corporations and governments will stop at nothing to obtain, wryly stating in passing, "In the beginning the Serpent preyed upon our doubts, now it may find our genius more inviting."

Rossi discusses (quite reasonably and fairly considering the politically sensitive aspects of the issue) the discovery of a "gay gene" as the cause for homosexuality. He also discusses

how such a discovery may not be a good thing at all from the point of view of the gay community, which may have to deal with parents who, having their unborn child identified as possessing the “gay gene,” will wish to seek abortions of such children, thereby all but decimating the future gay and lesbian population of the country within decades.

Pointing out such dilemmas is not the only purpose of the book by any means, because Rossi provides some ideas for solutions to the problems he observes. Some of his opinions may shock readers, but the shocks are much needed, and readers fond of opinions plainly spoken and heartfelt, will welcome them.

Gene-Michael Higney