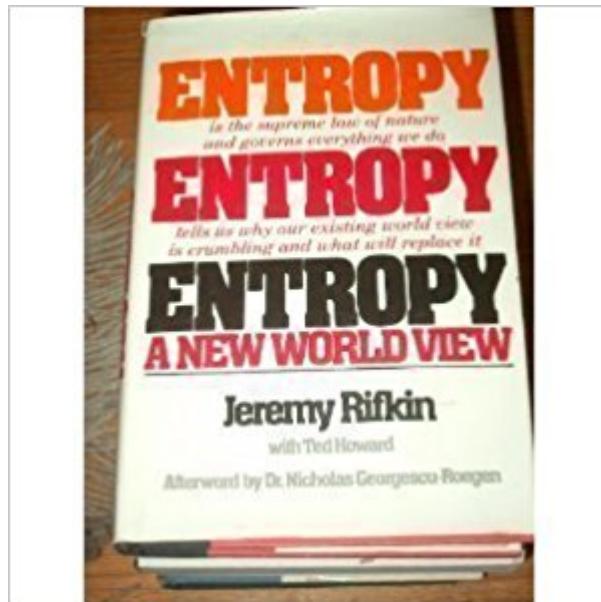


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Entropy: A New World View



Synopsis

When the whole world falls apart, this is a great book to read

Book Information

Hardcover: 305 pages

Publisher: Viking Adult; First Edition, First Printing edition (September 4, 1980)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0670297178

ISBN-13: 978-0670297177

Product Dimensions: 20 x 20 x 20 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 20 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #199,635 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #5 in Books > Science & Math >

Physics > Entropy #15617 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences

Customer Reviews

When the whole world falls apart, this is a great book to read

Recommended by the professor as a must-read if interested in Thermodynamics

For \$.01 plus whatever shipping is, it's either worth the purchase or worth the visit to your library for about the first thirty pages. There's a few things I have to admit, Rifkin's thought process is fascinating; the way he manages to weave thermodynamics into his world view is literally quite entralling. But after those few handful of pages it becomes a treatise on how to take every aspect of the human narrative and exagetically point a person to the authors own end conclusion. I imagine Rifkin extrapolating his conclusion through his observations of what my imagination pictures as manic, feverish writing at the end of gas crisis, the whole nuclear standoff thing and a few other world issues that we were as a nation walking out of or into. At the end I say pick up the book; but I can't give it three stars to admit to liking it, because I don't; but what I can say is I appreciate Rifkin's intriguing train of thought, and this book on Rifkin's "entropy" as an attempt to save us from ourselves.

I've really enjoyed reading this book 30 years after it was written, especially curious to see where the author hit and missed the marks on his projections. I was pleasantly surprised to see a small

warning on global warming, obviously very relevant these days. The historical placement of the writing of the book has interesting parallels, he wrote it during the energy crisis of the seventies, during the cold war, pre-Chernobyl, pre-IBM PC, etc., and here we are with gasoline recently nearing \$5/gallon, fighting two wars not directly related to homeland defense, collapsing corporations being swallowed up by larger ones with government bailouts and talks of further government control, ie, all kinds of cracks in the energy flow line. The real test of the book's projections will be in the next five years, when all of those former third world countries, that have now become highly consumptive of raw materials, have had a chance to consume at a high rate for a length of time. As for those physicists who question Rifkin's application of the second law to the various macromodels, I think even the author himself was not confident in making a serious scientific statement, he was more interested in getting out the overall message that we must preserve our non-renewable resources and allow nature time to catch up to our acquisitions of renewable resources. This is very relevant to today's fisheries for example. All of the mineral resources he cited, particularly copper, are now very expensive, so much so that thieves are now regularly stripping the metals from our highways, cemeteries, and public works. Even though our health care, transportation and education systems are in shambles, not all is bad, many urban areas have revived, people are adjusting and changing lifestyles, conserving and recycling more, consuming less, driving smaller cars, there is greater investment and interest in clean, renewable energy, etc. I do concur with Rifkin's overall goal of sustainable growth.

Rifkin's ideas about physics may or may not be on solid ground, but he's predicted many apocalyptic realities with regard to the environment. And for this we must give him much credit. We have to remember. This book was written going on thirty years ago, before our era of manifest global warming. He predicted a warming of the planet. He doesn't call it "peak oil," as it's called today, but this is what he warns us about way back when. His theory that the so-called Middle Ages ended with the advent of coal as a fuel source is intriguing. It sounds plausible to me. The way we get energy must have a lot to do with the way society is structured. We can certainly say this about agriculture. Once man began cultivating land, the concept of wealth was created, no less... But back to the many predictions Rifkin made in this book: He warned these many years ago about the dangers of synthetic petrochemical nitrogen fertilizers choking our waters. Imagine that! No one was talking about that then and not even now. The Clean Water Act of 1972 does not address toxic runoff from farms and until that legislation is amended, our waters will be polluted. All over the world, runoff is truly one of the greatest environmental threats; we know this now for certain. Rifkin, back

then, long before the rest of us, was writing about the junk thrown in the oceans. Today we have a whirlpool of the size of Greenland over Midway Island densely clogged with plastic refuse, suffocating and starving out wildlife there. Some environmentalists today (too, too few) are lamenting the advent of the flushing toilet. Rifkin does not point this out specifically, but he does note how our coasts were, even back then, poisoned by sewage. The discord among nations today is all about oil, water, land, and natural resources of all sorts. Do we dare admit? This is one of Rifkin's main themes and rightly so. G. W. Bush can say we went into Iraq to bring that country democracy, but we all know, it was about oil. They say today that if everyone on Earth lived as we do in the USA, the world would require the natural resources of five planet Earths. Rifkin alluded to this fact in this book and so long ago. Amazing. It's taken me years of reading the environmental literature to discover the above information. And I could have found it all in this book decades ago. There's lots more; I can't note it all. How 'bout, just read the book.

good

It's a very challenging view of the world and how it works. It is written in a nice language, easy to follow. Unfortunately, the writer does not know his thermodynamics enough and makes quite inaccurate analogies, that could be interesting if they did not have the mark of Scientifism given by the improper use of the idea of Entropy. I have enjoyed other books written by Rifkin and it would be nice if he sticks to what he really knows about politics, without trying to get into fields that he does not know enough.

Complete misunderstanding of entropy concept

This book by J. Rifkin, along with "Algeny", were instrumental in my forming a base and understanding of some of the grander schemes at work on this planet. Must reads for all who seek higher knowledge without the hubris so common in today's intellectuals.

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