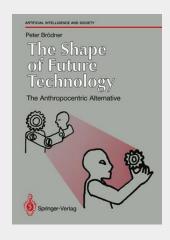
## The Shape of Future Technology

The Anthropocentric Alternative

Mike Cooley One of the most remarkable features of modern industrial society, is the gap between that which technology could provide for society (its potential) and that which it actually does provide for society (its reality). We have for example, complex control systems which can guide a missile to another continent with extraordinary accuracy, yet the blind and the disabled have to stagger around our cities in very much the same way as they did in mediaeval times. There are advanced communication systems enabling messages to be sent around the world in a fraction of a second, but it now takes longer to send an ordinary letter from Washington to New York than it did in the days of the stage coach. Such a growing chasm between potential and reality, is giving rise to a thorough questioning of many of the orthodoxies in these areas and the priorities on which they are based. Similar contradictions, even if at this stage less obvious and dramatic, abound in the field of manufacturing technology. There, we find technologies which have the potential of liberating human beings from soul destroying, routine, backbreaking tasks and leave them free to engage in more creative work, but which in reality, often end up reducing the human being to a mere machine appendage, acted upon by the technology and becoming a passive, pathetic element in the productive system rather than a creative, dynamic human being.

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