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New edge : technology and spirituality in the San Francisco Bay Area
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Propositions accompanying the thesis

New Edge

Technology and Spirituality in the San Francisco Bay Area

by Dorien Zandbergen

1. New Edgers are attracted to information technology because they believe it to be a tool - akin to psychedelics and meditation techniques - that helps people break through the illusions of conventional reality.
2. Irony is the quintessential language of New Edgers who assert themselves to be secular while also asserting a belief in transcendental ultimate truth.
3. New Edgers turn Victor Turner's understanding of liminality on its head by making it a permanent ideal and seeing it as a state of empowerment.
4. Paradoxically, the New Edge practice of 'Doing It Yourself' enables the formation of intimate social ties.
5. In the Bay Area, a tension exists between a New Age celebration of the superiority of nature over technology and a techno-optimist celebration of the superiority of technology over nature. New Edgers practice a particular style that allows them to endorse both positions simultaneously.
6. 1960s hippies are not the Romantic Luddites scholars generally take them to be: many sought authenticity through high tech.
7. Scholars who attempt to study the relationship between technology and spirituality run the risk of missing the fact that amidst the mess of everyday life, technology and spirituality are not generally experienced as clearly distinct phenomena.
8. Not all computer hackers are political revolutionaries. Since the 1970s this qualification has been projected onto them by those seeking new kinds of political activism fit for a society controlled by technocratic regimes.
9. In a society full of invisible forces like political secrets, radioactive particles, unperceivable technology and incomprehensible stock markets, New Age spiritual practice and IT measurement tools are both information-processing techniques essential for finding agency.
10. A dissertation about people who find ultimate truth in non-discursive experiences is easier to dance than to write.