Das Netz Response Paper

Cybernetics creates an environment in which there are no borders. In the documentary “Das Netz”, and the articles “Cybernetic History in ‘Das Nets’” and “As We May Think” we are able to see the way that cybernetics developed and how influential it became in all aspects of life. Cybernetics created a way of thinking that not only didn’t have any borders, but one that creates a never ending cycle of influence.

Both the film “Das Netz” and the article that corresponds to it illustrate the large impact that cybernetics has on humanity. It not only created a new way of communicating but a whole new way of thinking. This new way of thinking causes there to be incongruences in the way that people choose to adapt to it—both positively and negatively. It also causes splits in the way that people chose to utilize cybernetics. This is interesting because as a result of computer technology, it revolutionized the way in which we view communication as a whole. It also transformed we view processes within our own bodies. It is also interesting to see the way that cybernetics works on an individual level as is the case with Kacsynski. This also becomes important because it influences one as an artist in certain aspects. We live in a society in which the internet and technology are integral and because of this it is impossible for a person’s viewpoint to not be influenced by what surrounds us.
Dammbeck’s film “Das Netz” chooses to focus on the Unabomber to show the specific effects that cybernetics has on an individual. Through focusing on this specific person the filmmaker is able to illustrate the way that cybernetics is a web that is ultimately connected to almost all aspects of history and society. Brian Holmes then takes the film and goes more in depth with ideas that he felt Dammbeck did not expand enough upon. In this way, as consumers of information, we are given a more extensive view on cybernetics. The Unabomber creates a perfect example of the ways that technology affects an individual and is connected to society as a whole. A specific example of the connections between society and the individual (and the article and film) is Henry Murray. We know that cybernetics brings the new viewpoint of the mind as a computer and the psychologist, Murray, uses this concept in order to show that one can put a person into a situation in order to get the outcome one desires in the same way that computer have an output when you input information. By doing this though, Murray caused detrimental damage to Kaczynski. The documentary barely taps into this experiment and Holmes is able to expand more upon the consequences of the experiment on the Unabomber’s psyche. Holmes states that the purpose of the experiment is to “explore the psychodynamics of a social system under conditions of intense aggression, where the very plasticity of being is exposed to violent metamorphosis” (9). This can then be related to the way that Kaczynski then becomes incredibly paranoid of technology and the ability of it to be used for mental manipulation. He then fights to get his agenda heard through violent means. He believes that by getting his ideas heard he can stop society from using cybernetics as a basis as a way of thinking because he thinks it is inherently evil. This shows the ways that utilizing cybernetics as a way of reasoning affects an
individual and the individual can try to change cybernetics. Even though Kaczynski attempts to change and fight against the system, it ultimately only shows that he is influenced by it in some way.

In his article, Vannevar Bush is able to discuss the ways in which cybernetics evolved “As We May Think.” Bush was able to predict the importance of technology that is now visible in the present and the impact that it had on society. Like we are able to see in the documentary and the article pertaining to it, Bush describes the ways that Cybernetics creates a cycle but one in which advances the technology that surrounds us. As we learn more about technology it influences people and people learn more about technology and in this way we create an environment in which it is easier for us to live in. We are constantly creating new ways to make our life easier by creating more complex things. We continue to build on top of already existing ideals and this is never ending- it has no limits. Bush uses Cybernetic theory to think of ideas in which society can move forward and it is surprising how accurate they are. He talks about how they used technology in the past for warfare and how in the future (now present) they instead would use technology as a way to communicate information. In this way he specifically touches on the basis of cybernetics that we see in the film “Das Netz” and the article “Cybernetic History in Das Netz.”

Complete cybernization can have both positive and negative consequences for both creative outlets and society. By having society be completely influenced by cybernization, it leads there to be no real free thinking when it comes to artistic outlets. Because it is so easy to communicate with one another through the internet we can easily be influenced by others when
creating our own works. This can be seen both positively and negatively. By being influenced by others we are not really coming up with ideas that are completely independent of everything that surrounds them. By having everything connected, artworks influence other artists as well. However, you can see this in a positive light as well. Being influenced by others allows you to create new works which then influence other artists who then create new works as well.

Complete cybernization also has effects on society outside of the art community.

Cybernization has both positive and negative effects. In some ways it can be beneficial and in others dangerous. But this all depends on the way the way that society chooses to utilize and adapt to it. It can create a world that does not entirely exist but it also creates ways in which will facilitate our lifestyles. We are able to see this in the present and the past through the documentary and the article pertaining to it, but we are also able to create ideas of what it will be like in the future in a similar way that Bush predicted the future. We can also view how everything is always influencing some other aspect of life. This never ending cycle shows the importance of the individual in the overall context of the world.