

Neo-Luddism as the Paradigm of Misanthropy

The ultimate goal of automation and mechanization is to reach the state where all automatic tasks are performed by automata and all mechanical tasks are performed by mechanisms, which will finally allow humans to focus on specifically human tasks, requiring specifically human skills, talents, and dispositions. Thus, the neo-Luddite claim that bringing those processes to their ultimate conclusion will condemn humankind to permanent idleness is one of the most insultingly misanthropic and demoralizing claims imaginable. After all, it is the claim that a human being can be productive only as an inferior replacement for a machine, but not as a being focused on fulfilling his specifically human potential.

In other words, despite their pretensions about caring for the productive role of humans in the process of economic development, neo-Luddites have no equals in insulting this role and diminishing its significance. For that reason alone automation and mechanization should be eagerly embraced, since the faster they proceed, the sooner nothing human will be alien to us at last.