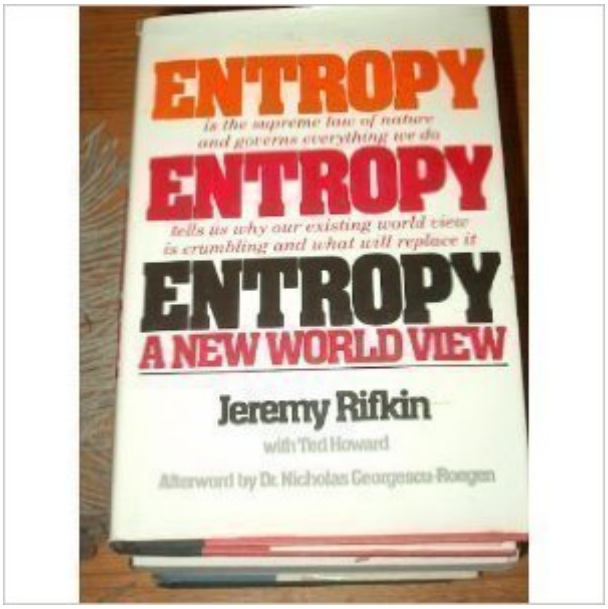
Entropy: A New World View



Synopsis

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

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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 relavent 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, particulary copper, are now very expensive, so much so that thieves are now regularly stripping the metals from our highways, cemeteries, and public works.

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 "peek 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.

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