

## *American Technological Sublime*

The essays in this volume examine how the tensions between culture and nature is more apparent than real. Even in preindustrial societies, where the dominant technologies are agricultural, it would be impossible to envision a landscape unshaped by human contact. A major theme in American history has been the desire to achieve a genuinely republican way of life that values liberty, order, and virtue. This work shows us how new technologies affected this drive for a republican civilization - a question as vital now as ever.

The sublime evokes our awe, our terror, and our wonder. Applied first in ancient Greece to the heights of literary expression, in the 18th-century the sublime was extended to nature and to the sciences, enterprises that viewed the natural world as a manifestation of God's goodness, power, and wisdom. In *The Scientific Sublime*, Alan Gross reveals the modern-day sublime in popular science. He shows how the great popular scientists of our time--Richard Feynman, Stephen Hawking, Steven Weinberg, Brian Greene, Lisa Randall, Rachel Carson, Stephen Jay Gould, Steven Pinker, Richard Dawkins, and

E. O. Wilson--evoke the sublime in response to fundamental questions: How did the universe begin? How did life? How did language? These authors maintain a tradition initiated by Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, and Adam Smith, towering 18th-century figures who adapted the literary sublime first to nature, then to science--though with one crucial difference: religion has been replaced wholly by science. In a final chapter, Gross explores science's attack on religion, an assault that attempts to sweep permanently under the rug two questions science cannot answer: What is the meaning of life? What is the meaning of the good life?

In the early 1960s, computers haunted the American popular imagination. Bleak tools of the cold war, they embodied the rigid organization and mechanical conformity that made the military-industrial complex possible. But by the 1990s—and the dawn of the Internet—computers started to represent a very different kind of world: a collaborative and digital utopia modeled on the communal ideals of the hippies who so vehemently rebelled against the cold war establishment in the first place. From *Counterculture to Cyberculture* is the first book to explore this extraordinary

and ironic transformation. Fred Turner here traces the previously untold story of a highly influential group of San Francisco Bay-area entrepreneurs: Stewart Brand and the Whole Earth network. Between 1968 and 1998, via such familiar venues as the National Book Award-winning Whole Earth Catalog, the computer conferencing system known as WELL, and, ultimately, the launch of the wildly successful Wired magazine, Brand and his colleagues brokered a long-running collaboration between San Francisco flower power and the emerging technological hub of Silicon Valley. Thanks to their vision, counterculturalists and technologists alike joined together to reimagine computers as tools for personal liberation, the building of virtual and decidedly alternative communities, and the exploration of bold new social frontiers. Shedding new light on how our networked culture came to be, this fascinating book reminds us that the distance between the Grateful Dead and Google, between Ken Kesey and the computer itself, is not as great as we might think.

Corporate Identities at General Electric,  
1890-1930

Social Meanings of a New Technology,  
1880-1940

Boys and Their Toys

The Illuminated Building

Civilizing the Machine

Technology and Narratives of New

Beginnings

When the Lights Went Out

American Technological Sublime continues the exploration of the social construction of technology that David Nye began in his award-winning book *Electrifying America*. Here Nye examines the continuing appeal of the "technological sublime" (a term coined by Perry Miller) as a key to the nation's history, using as examples the natural sites, architectural forms, and technological achievements that ordinary people have valued intensely. Technology has long played a central role in the formation of Americans' sense of selfhood. From the first canal systems through the moon landing, Americans have, for better or worse, derived unity from the common feeling of awe inspired by large-scale applications of technological prowess. American Technological Sublime continues the exploration of the social construction of technology that David Nye began in his award-winning book *Electrifying America*. Here Nye examines the continuing appeal of the "technological sublime" (a term coined by Perry Miller) as a key to the nation's history, using as examples the natural sites, architectural forms,

and technological achievements that ordinary people have valued intensely. American Technological Sublime is a study of the politics of perception in industrial society. Arranged chronologically, it suggests that the sublime itself has a history - that sublime experiences are emotional configurations that emerge from new social and technological conditions, and that each new configuration to some extent undermines and displaces the older versions. After giving a short history of the sublime as an aesthetic category, Nye describes the reemergence and democratization of the concept in the early nineteenth century as an expression of the American sense of specialness. What has filled the American public with wonder, awe, even terror? David Nye selects the Grand Canyon, Niagara Falls, the eruption of Mt. St. Helens, the Erie Canal, the first transcontinental railroad, Eads Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge, the major international expositions, the Hudson-Fulton Celebration of 1909, the Empire State Building, and Boulder Dam. He then looks at the atom bomb tests and the Apollo mission as examples of the increasing ambivalence of the technological sublime in the postwar world. The festivities surrounding the rededication of the Statue of Liberty in 1986 become a touchstone reflecting the transformation of the American experience of the sublime over

two centuries. Nye concludes with a vision of the modern-day "consumer sublime" as manifested in the fantasy world of Las Vegas.

Blackouts—whether they result from military planning, network failure, human error, or terrorism—offer snapshots of electricity's increasingly central role in American society. Where were you when the lights went out? At home during a thunderstorm? During the Great Northeastern Blackout of 1965? In California when rolling blackouts hit in 2000? In 2003, when a cascading power failure left fifty million people without electricity? We often remember vividly our time in the dark. In *When the Lights Went Out*, David Nye views power outages in America from 1935 to the present not simply as technical failures but variously as military tactic, social disruption, crisis in the networked city, outcome of political and economic decisions, sudden encounter with sublimity, and memories enshrined in photographs. Our electrically lit-up life is so natural to us that when the lights go off, the darkness seems abnormal. Nye looks at America's development of its electrical grid, which made large-scale power failures possible and a series of blackouts from military blackouts to the "greenout" (exemplified by the new tradition of "Earth Hour"), a voluntary reduction organized by environmental organizations. Blackouts, writes

Nye, are breaks in the flow of social time that reveal much about the trajectory of American history. Each time one occurs, Americans confront their essential condition—not as isolated individuals, but as a community that increasingly binds itself together with electrical wires and signals.

Musical Sincerity and Transcendence in Film focuses on the ways filmmakers treat music reflexively—that is, draw attention to what it is and what it can do. Examining a wide range of movies from recent decades including examples from Indiewood, teen film, and blockbuster cinema, the book explores two recurring ideas about music implied by foregrounded musical activity on screen: that music can be a potent means of sincere expression and genuine human connection and that music can enable transcendence of disenchantment and the mundane. As an historical musicologist, Timothy Cochran explores these assumptions through analysis of musical style, aesthetic implications, and narrative strategy while treating the ideas as historically-grounded and culturally-situated with conceptual origins often lying outside of film. The book covers eclectic critical terrain to highlight various layers of musical sincerity and transcendence in film, including the nineteenth-century aesthetics of E.T.A. Hoffmann, David

Foster Wallace's literary resistance to irony (sometimes called the New Sincerity), strategies of self-revelation in singer-songwriter repertoires, Lionel Trilling's distinction between sincerity and authenticity, theories of play, David Nye's notion of the American technological sublime, and Svetlana Boym's writings on nostalgia. These lenses reveal that film is a way of perpetuating, revising, and critiquing ideas about music and that music in film is a potent means of exploring broader social, emotional, and spiritual desires. How conflicting ideas of nature threaten to fracture America's identity. Amber waves of grain, purple mountain majesties: American invest much of their national identity in sites of natural beauty. And yet American lands today are torn by conflicts over science, religion, identity, and politics. Creationists believe that the Biblical flood carved landscapes less than 10,000 years ago; environmentalists protest pipelines; Western states argue that the federal government's land policies throttle free enterprise; Native Americans demand protection for sacred sites. In this book, David Nye looks at Americans' irreconcilably conflicting ideas about nature. A landscape is conflicted when different groups have different uses for the same location—for example, when some want to open mining sites that others want to preserve or when suburban development



impinges on agriculture. Some landscapes are so degraded from careless use that they become toxic “anti-landscapes.” Nye traces these conflicts to clashing conceptions of nature—ranging from pastoral to Native American to military-industrial—that cannot be averaged into a compromise. Nye argues that today’s environmental crisis is rooted in these conflicting ideas about land. Depending on your politics, global warming is either an inconvenient truth or fake news. America’s contradictory conceptions of nature are at the heart of a broken national consensus.

Niagara Falls

Electricity, Landscape, and the American Mind

Popular Science Unravels the Mysteries of the Universe

The Green Depression

Women's Liberation and the Sublime

Image Worlds

From Counterculture to Cyberculture

***Nye uses energy as a touchstone to examine the lives of ordinary people engaged in normal activities. How did the United States become the world's largest consumer of energy? David Nye shows that this is less a question about the development of technology than it is a question about the development of culture. In Consuming Power, Nye uses energy as a touchstone to***

*examine the lives of ordinary people engaged in normal activities. He looks at how these activities changed as new energy systems were constructed, from colonial times to recent years. He also shows how, as Americans incorporated new machines and processes into their lives, they became ensnared in power systems that were not easily changed: they made choices about the conduct of their lives, and those choices accumulated to produce a consuming culture. Nye examines a sequence of large systems that acquired and then lost technological momentum over the course of American history, including water power, steam power, electricity, the internal-combustion engine, atomic power, and computerization. He shows how each system became part of a larger set of social constructions through its links to the home, the factory, and the city. The result is a social history of America as seen through the lens of energy consumption.*

*Contemporary culture is haunted by its media. Yet in their ubiquity, digital media have become increasingly banal, making it harder for us to register their novelty or the scope of the social changes they have wrought. What do we learn about our media environment when we look closely at the ways novelists and filmmakers narrate and depict banal use of everyday technologies? How do we encounter our own media use in scenes of waiting for e-mail,*

*watching eBay bids, programming as work, and worrying about numbers of social media likes, friends, and followers? Zara Dinnen analyzes a range of prominent contemporary novels, films, and artworks to contend that we live in the condition of the “digital banal,” not noticing the affective and political novelty of our relationship to digital media. Authors like Jennifer Egan, Dave Eggers, Sheila Heti, Jonathan Lethem, Gary Shteyngart, Colson Whitehead, Mark Amerika, Ellen Ullman, and Danica Novgorodoff and films such as The Social Network and Catfish critique and reveal the ways in which digital labor isolates the individual; how the work of programming has become an operation of power; and the continuation of the “Californian ideology,” which has folded the radical into the rote and the imaginary into the mundane. The works of these writers and artists, Dinnen argues, also offer ways of resisting the more troubling aspects of the effects of new technologies, as well as timely methods for seeing the digital banal as a politics of suppression. Bridging the gap between literary studies and media studies, The Digital Banal recovers the shrouded disturbances that can help us recognize and antagonize our media environment.*

*Looks at how General Electric has used photography in advertising and company publications, explains how these photos convey a corporate image, and identifies five target*

***audiences***

***This fascinating and richly illustrated book traces the history of architectural illumination. 200 photos, 100 in color.***

***Movies, Technology, and Wonder***

***Big Data in a Turbulent World***

***The Religion of Technology***

***Urban Lighting, 1800-1920***

***American Illuminations***

***Myth, Power, and Cyberspace***

***Questions to Live With***

Nye analyzes the transformation of the Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls into tourist sites, the history of light shows at world's fairs, the New Deal programs designed to provide electricity to rural areas, and the Apollo 11 moon to reveal how the spaces we live in and the technology we use are integral to American identity, and a key part of American self-representation. Nye also turns his attention to the Internet, where technology has not simply transformed space, but created a whole new kind of space, and with it, new stories. Nye analyzes the transformation of the Grand Canyon and Niagara Falls into tourist sites, the history of light shows at world's fairs, the New Deal programs designed to provide electricity to rural areas, the Apollo 11 moon landing, and the new narratives of the Internet to reveal how the spaces we live in and the technology we use are integral to American identity, and a key part of American self-representation. In examining the interaction of technology, space, and American narrative, Nye argues against the idea that technology is an inevitable and insidious controller of our lives.

America's sense of space has always been tied to what Hayden White called the narrativization of real events. If the awe-inspiring manifestations of nature in America (Niagara Falls, Virginia's Natural Bridge, the Grand Canyon, etc.) were often used as a foil for projecting utopian visions and idealizations of the nation's

exceptional place among the nations of the world, the rapid technological progress and its concomitant appropriation of natural spaces served equally well, as David Nye argues, to promote the dominant cultural idiom of exploration and conquest. From the beginning, American attitudes towards space were thus utterly contradictory if not paradoxical; a paradox that scholars tried to capture in such hybrid concepts as the middle landscape (Leo Marx), an engineered New Earth (Cecelia Tichi), or the technological sublime (David Nye). Not only was America's concept of space paradoxical, it has always also been a contested terrain, a site of continuous social and cultural conflict. Many foundational issues in American history (the dislocation of Native and African Americans, the geo-political implications of nation-building, immigration and transmigration, the increasing division and clustering of contemporary American society, etc.) involve differing ideals and notions of space. Quite literally, space and its various ideological appropriations formed the arena where America's search for identity (national, political, cultural) has been staged. If American democracy, as Frederick Jackson Turner claimed, is born of free land, then its history may well be defined as the history of the fierce struggles to gain and maintain power over both the geographical, social and political spaces of America and its concomitant narratives. The number and range of topics, interests, and critical approaches of the essays gathered here open up exciting new avenues of inquiry into the tangled, contentious relations of space in America. Topics include: Theories of Space - Landscape / Nature - Technoscape / Architecture / Urban Utopia - Literature - Performance / Film / Visual Arts.

How did electricity enter everyday life in America? Using Muncie, Indiana—the Lynds' now iconic Middletown—as a touchstone, David Nye explores how electricity seeped into and redefined American culture. With an eye for telling details from archival sources and a broad understanding of cultural and social history, he creates a thought-provoking panorama of a technology fundamental to

modern life. Emphasizing the experiences of ordinary men and women rather than the lives of inventors and entrepreneurs, Nye treats electrification as a set of technical possibilities that were selectively adopted to create the streetcar suburb, the amusement park, the "Great White Way," the assembly line, the electrified home, and the industrialized farm. He shows how electricity touched every part of American life, how it became an extension of political ideologies, how it virtually created the image of the modern city, and how it even pervaded colloquial speech, confirming the values of high energy and speed that have become hallmarks of the twentieth century. He also pursues the social meaning of electrification as expressed in utopian ideas and exhibits at world's fairs, and explores the evocation of electrical landscapes in painting, literature, and photography. Electrifying America combines chronology and topicality to examine the major forms of light and power as they came into general use. It shows that in the city electrification promoted a more varied landscape and made possible new art forms and new consumption environments. In the factory, electricity permitted a complete redesign of the size and scale of operations, shifting power away from the shop floor to managers. Electrical appliances redefined domestic work and transformed the landscape of the home, while on the farm electricity laid the foundation for today's agribusiness.

Negotiating the divide between "respectable manhood" and "rough manhood" this book explores masculinity at work and at play through provocative essays on labor unions, railroads, vocational training programs, and NASCAR racing.

Technology and the Construction of American Culture

Gramophone, Film, Typewriter

The Scientific Sublime

The Technological Sublime in American Novels Between 1900 and 1940

Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture

Electronic Presence from Telegraphy to Television

Reviews the rise of the Japanese economy

Focusing on works by Norman Mailer, Thomas Pynchon, Joseph McElroy, and Don DeLillo, Joseph Tabbi finds that a simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from technology has produced a powerful new mode of modern writing—the technological sublime.

Beth McKinsey has chronicled and examined the changing image of Niagara Falls between the seventeenth and twentieth century.

Womens Liberation and the Sublime is a passionate report on the state of feminist thinking and practice after the linguistic turn. A critical assessment of masculinist notions of the sublime in modern and postmodern accounts grounds the author's positive and constructive recuperation of sublime experience in a feminist voice.

Theory, History, Culture

The Digital Sublime

The Origins of Japanese Industrial Power

Reflexive Fictions

Technologies of Landscape

America's Assembly Line

Technology Matters

**"This is a follow-up to Nye's 1994 MITP book American Technological Sublime. (American Technological Sublime continues the exploration of the social construction of technology that David Nye began in his award-winning book Electrifying America. Here Nye examines the continuing appeal of the**

**"technological sublime"--a term coined by Perry Miller--as a key to the nation's history, using as examples the natural sites, architectural forms, and technological achievements that ordinary people have valued intensely.) This new project extends the sublime into new areas that reflect especially the last fifty years. Thus, in *Seven Sublimes*, Nye explores the natural, technological, disastrous, martial, intangible, digital, and environmental sublimes--areas of sublime experience that were insufficiently recognized or theorized when Nye's earlier book came out nearly twenty-five years ago. Each suggests a different human relation to space and time. Most of these seven sublimes can be experienced at historic sites, ruins, large cities, national parks, or on websites"--**

**An exploration of the dialogue that emerged after 1776 between different visions of what it meant to use new technologies to transform the land. After 1776, the former American colonies began to reimagine themselves as a unified, self-created community. Technologies had an important role in**



**the resulting national narratives, and a few technologies assumed particular prominence. Among these were the axe, the mill, the canal, the railroad, and the irrigation dam. In this book David Nye explores the stories that clustered around these technologies. In doing so, he rediscovers an American story of origins, with America conceived as a second creation built in harmony with God's first creation. While mainstream Americans constructed technological foundation stories to explain their place in the New World, however, marginalized groups told other stories of destruction and loss. Native Americans protested the loss of their forests, fishermen resisted the construction of dams, and early environmentalists feared the exhaustion of resources. A water mill could be viewed as the kernel of a new community or as a new way to exploit labor. If passengers comprehended railways as part of a larger narrative about American expansion and progress, many farmers attacked railroad land grants. To explore these contradictions, Nye devotes alternating chapters to narratives of second creation and to**

**narratives of those who rejected it. Nye draws on popular literature, speeches, advertisements, paintings, and many other media to create a history of American foundation stories. He shows how these stories were revised periodically, as social and economic conditions changed, without ever erasing the earlier stories entirely. The image of the isolated frontier family carving a homestead out of the wilderness with an axe persists to this day, alongside later images and narratives. In the book's conclusion, Nye considers the relation between these earlier stories and such later American developments as the conservation movement, narratives of environmental recovery, and the idealization of wilderness.**

**Dust storms. Flooding. The fear of nuclear fallout. While literary critics associate authors of the 1930s and '40s with leftist political and economic thought, they often ignore concern in the period's literary and cultural works with major environmental crises. To fill this gap in scholarship, author Matthew M. Lambert argues that depression-era authors contributed to the development**

**of modern environmentalist thought in a variety of ways. Writers of the time provided a better understanding of the devastating effects that humans can have on the environment. They also depicted the ecological and cultural value of nonhuman nature, including animal “predators” and “pests.” Finally, they laid the groundwork for “environmental justice” by focusing on the social effects of environmental exploitation. To show the reach of environmentalist thought during the period, the first three chapters of *The Green Depression: American Ecoliterature in the 1930s and 1940s* focus on different geographical landscapes, including the wild, rural, and urban. The fourth and final chapter shifts to debates over the social and environmental effects of technology during the period. In identifying modern environmental ideas and concerns in American literary and cultural works of the 1930s and '40s, *The Green Depression* highlights the importance of depression-era literature in understanding the development of environmentalist thought over the twentieth century. This book also builds**

**upon a growing body of scholarship in ecocriticism that describes the unique contributions African American and other nonwhite authors have made to the environmental justice movement and to our understanding of the natural world.**

**American Technological Sublime**  
**MIT Press**

**American Technological Sublime**

**Icon of the American Sublime**

**Feminism, Postmodernism, Environment**

**Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism**

**New Media and American Literature and Culture**

**Electrifying America**

**The Digital Banal**

*An historical study of the social construction of American technology from 1820 to the present.*

*How Americans adapted European royal illuminations for patriotic celebrations, spectacular expositions, and intensely bright commercial lighting to create the world's most dazzling and glamorous cities. Illuminated fêtes and civic celebrations began in Renaissance Italy and spread through the courts of Europe. Their fireworks, torches, lamps, and special effects glorified the monarch, marked the birth of a prince, or celebrated military victory. Nineteenth-century Americans rejected such monarchial pomp and adapted spectacular lighting to their democratic, commercial culture. In *American Illuminations*, David Nye explains how they experimented with*

*gas and electric light to create illuminated cityscapes far brighter and more dynamic than those of Europe, and how these illuminations became symbols of modernity and the conquest of nature. Americans used gaslight and electricity in parades, expositions, advertising, elections, and political spectacles. In the 1880s, cities erected powerful arc lights on towers to create artificial moonlight. By the 1890s they adopted more intensive, commercial lighting that defined distinct zones of light and glamorized the city's White Ways, skyscrapers, bridges, department stores, theaters, and dance halls. Poor and blighted areas disappeared into the shadows. American illuminations also became integral parts of national political campaigns, presidential inaugurations, and victory celebrations after the Spanish-American War and World War I.*

*"As Dustin Abnet shows, the robot-whether automaton, Mechanical Turk, cyborg, or iPhone, whether humanized machine or mechanized human being-has long been a fraught embodiment of human fears. Abnet investigates, moreover, how the discourse of the robot has reinforced social and economic inequalities as well as fantasies of social control. "Robots" as a trope are not necessarily mechanical but are rather embodiments of quasi humanity, exhibiting a mix of human and nonhuman characteristics. Such figures are troubling to dominant discourses, which cannot easily assimilate them or identify salient boundaries. The robot lurks beneath the fears that fracture society"--*

*The proliferation of electric communication and power networks have drawn wires through American landscapes like vines through untended gardens since 1844. But these wire networks are more than merely the tools and infrastructure*

*required to send electric messages and power between distinct places; the iconic lines themselves send powerful messages. The wiry webs above our heads and the towers rhythmically striding along the horizon symbolize the ambiguous effects of widespread industrialization and the shifting values of electricity and landscape in the American mind. In Power-Lined Daniel L. Wuebben weaves together personal narrative, historical research, cultural analysis, and social science to provide a sweeping investigation of the varied influence of overhead wires on the American landscape and the American mind. Wuebben shows that overhead wires--from Morse's telegraph to our high-voltage grid--not only carry electricity between American places but also create electrified spaces that signify and complicate notions of technology, nature, progress, and, most recently, renewable energy infrastructure. Power-Lined exposes the subtle influences wrought by the wiring of the nation and shows that, even in this age of wireless devices, perceptions of overhead lines may be key in progressing toward a more sustainable energy future.*

*The American Robot*

*To the Cloud*

*American Ecoliterature in the 1930s and 1940s*

*American Blockbuster*

*Consuming Power*

*Space in America*

*From Reaping to Recycling*

Arguing against the widely held belief that technology and religion are at war with each other, David F. Noble's groundbreaking book reveals the religious roots and spirit of Western technology. It links the technological

enthusiasms of the present day with the ancient and enduring Christian expectation of recovering humankind's lost divinity.

Covering a period of a thousand years, Noble traces the evolution of the Western idea of technological development from the ninth century, when the useful arts became connected to the concept of redemption, up to the twentieth, when humans began to exercise God-like knowledge and powers. Noble describes how technological advance accelerated at the very point when it was invested with spiritual significance. By examining the imaginings of monks, explorers, magi, scientists, Freemasons, and engineers, this historical account brings to light an other-worldly inspiration behind the apparently worldly endeavors by which we habitually define Western civilization. Thus we see that Isaac Newton devoted his lifetime to the interpretation of prophecy. Joseph Priestley was the discoverer of oxygen and a founder of Unitarianism. Freemasons were early advocates of industrialization and the fathers of the engineering profession. Wernher von Braun saw spaceflight as a millenarian new beginning for humankind. The narrative moves into our own time through the technological enterprises of the

last half of the twentieth century: nuclear weapons, manned space exploration, Artificial Intelligence, and genetic engineering. Here the book suggests that the convergence of technology and religion has outlived its usefulness, that though it once contributed to human well-being, it has now become a threat to our survival. Viewed at the dawn of the new millennium, the technological means upon which we have come to rely for the preservation and enlargement of our lives betray an increasing impatience with life and a disdainful disregard for mortal needs. David F. Noble thus contends that we must collectively strive to disabuse ourselves of the inherited religion of technology and begin rigorously to re-examine our enchantment with unregulated technological advance. In a book that fundamentally challenges our understanding of race in the United States, Neil Foley unravels the complex history of ethnicity in the cotton culture of central Texas. This engrossing narrative, spanning the period from the Civil War through the collapse of tenant farming in the early 1940s, bridges the intellectual chasm between African American and Southern history on one hand and Chicano and Southwestern history on the other. *The White Scourge*



describes a unique borderlands region, where the cultures of the South, West, and Mexico overlap, to provide a deeper understanding of the process of identity formation and to challenge the binary opposition between "black" and "white" that often dominates discussions of American race relations. In Texas, which by 1890 had become the nation's leading cotton-producing state, the presence of Mexican sharecroppers and farm workers complicated the black-white dyad that shaped rural labor relations in the South. With the transformation of agrarian society into corporate agribusiness, white racial identity began to fracture along class lines, further complicating categories of identity. Foley explores the "fringe of whiteness," an ethno-racial borderlands comprising Mexicans, African Americans, and poor whites, to trace shifting ideologies and power relations. By showing how many different ethnic groups are defined in relation to "whiteness," Foley redefines white racial identity as not simply a pinnacle of status but the complex racial, social, and economic matrix in which power and privilege are shared. Foley skillfully weaves archival material with oral history interviews, providing a richly detailed view of everyday

life in the Texas cotton culture. Addressing the ways in which historical categories affect the lives of ordinary people, *The White Scourge* tells the broader story of racial identity in America; at the same time it paints an evocative picture of a unique American region. This truly multiracial narrative touches on many issues central to our understanding of American history: labor and the role of unions, gender roles and their relation to ethnicity, the demise of agrarian whiteness, and the Mexican-American experience.

Examines the repeated association of new electronic media with spiritual phenomena from the telegraph in the late 19th century to television.

Interpreting the myths of the digital age: why we believed in the power of cyberspace to open up a new world. The digital era promises, as did many other technological developments before it, the transformation of society: with the computer, we can transcend time, space, and politics-as-usual. In *The Digital Sublime*, Vincent Mosco goes beyond the usual stories of technological breakthrough and economic meltdown to explore the myths constructed around the new digital technology and why we feel

compelled to believe in them. He tells us that what kept enthusiastic investors in the dotcom era bidding up stocks even after the crash had begun was not willful ignorance of the laws of economics but belief in the myth that cyberspace was opening up a new world. Myths are not just falsehoods that can be disproved, Mosco points out, but stories that lift us out of the banality of everyday life into the possibility of the sublime. He argues that if we take what we know about cyberspace and situate it within what we know about culture—specifically the central post-Cold War myths of the end of history, geography, and politics—we will add to our knowledge about the digital world; we need to see it "with both eyes"—that is, to understand it both culturally and materially. After examining the myths of cyberspace and going back in history to look at the similar mythic pronouncements prompted by past technological advances—the telephone, the radio, and television, among others—Mosco takes us to Ground Zero. In the final chapter he considers the twin towers of the World Trade Center—our icons of communication, information, and trade—and their part in the politics, economics, and myths of cyberspace. Technology and American Writing from

## Mailer to Cyberpunk

### Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900

#### Power-Lined

#### A Cultural History

#### A History of Blackouts in America

#### Masculinity, Class and Technology in America

#### The Double-edged Sword

*Discusses in nontechnical language ten central questions about technology that illuminate what technology is and why it matters. Technology matters, writes David Nye, because it is inseparable from being human. We have used tools for more than 100,000 years, and their central purpose has not always been to provide necessities. People excel at using old tools to solve new problems and at inventing new tools for more elegant solutions to old tasks. Perhaps this is because we are intimate with devices and machines from an early age—as children, we play with technological toys: trucks, cars, stoves, telephones, model railroads, Playstations. Through these machines we imagine ourselves into a creative relationship with the world. As adults, we retain this technological playfulness with gadgets and appliances—Blackberries, cell phones, GPS navigation systems in our cars. We use technology to shape our world, yet we think little about the choices we are making. In Technology Matters, Nye tackles ten central questions about our relationship to technology, integrating a half-century of ideas about technology into ten cogent and concise chapters, with wide-ranging historical examples from many societies. He asks: Can we define technology? Does technology shape us, or do we shape it? Is technology inevitable or unpredictable? (Why do experts often*

*fail to get it right?))? How do historians understand it? Are we using modern technology to create cultural uniformity, or diversity? To create abundance, or an ecological crisis? To destroy jobs or create new opportunities? Should "the market" choose our technologies? Do advanced technologies make us more secure, or escalate dangers? Does ubiquitous technology expand our mental horizons, or encapsulate us in artifice? These large questions may have no final answers yet, but we need to wrestle with them—to live them, so that we may, as Rilke puts it, "live along some distant day into the answers."*

*From the Model T to today's "lean manufacturing": the assembly line as crucial, yet controversial, agent of social and economic transformation. The mechanized assembly line was invented in 1913 and has been in continuous operation ever since. It is the most familiar form of mass production. Both praised as a boon to workers and condemned for exploiting them, it has been celebrated and satirized. (We can still picture Chaplin's little tramp trying to keep up with a factory conveyor belt.) In *America's Assembly Line*, David Nye examines the industrial innovation that made the United States productive and wealthy in the twentieth century. The assembly line—developed at the Ford Motor Company in 1913 for the mass production of Model Ts—first created and then served an expanding mass market. It also transformed industrial labor. By 1980, Japan had reinvented the assembly line as a system of "lean manufacturing"; American industry reluctantly adopted the new approach. Nye describes this evolution and the new global landscape of increasingly automated factories, with fewer industrial jobs in America and questionable working conditions in developing countries. A century after Ford's pioneering innovation, the assembly line continues to evolve toward more*

*sustainable manufacturing.*

*On history of communication*

*Cloud computing and big data are arguably the most significant forces in information technology today. In the wake of revelations about National Security Agency (NSA) activities, many of which occur "in the cloud", this book offers both enlightenment and a critical view. Vincent Mosco explores where the cloud originated, what it means, and how important it is for business, government and citizens. He describes the intense competition among cloud companies like Amazon and Google, the spread of the cloud to government agencies like the controversial NSA, and the astounding growth of entire cloud cities in China. Is the cloud the long-promised information utility that will solve many of the world's economic and social problems? Or is it just marketing hype? To the Cloud provides the first thorough analysis of the potential and the problems of a technology that may very well disrupt the world.*

*America as Second Creation*

*Postmodern Sublime*

*Conflicted American Landscapes*

*Seven Sublimes*

*Henry Ford, Ignorant Idealist*

*The White Scourge*

*Musical Sincerity and Transcendence in Film*

This examination of American novels from 1900 to 1940 traces the literary treatment of the technological sublime, a simultaneous awe and fear of technology. The American technological sublime is a construct that can be useful in understanding the often conflicted and ambivalent reactions of enthusiasm and anxiety, exaltation and depression, associated with the patterns of development experienced in the US in this

transitory period. The first four decades of the 20th century saw the culmination of the technological sublime in America: the loss of the innocently one-sided enthusiasm and technological republicanism of the 19th century to a fragmented, often paranoiac, and largely pessimistic vision of technology that became dominant of the literature after World War II. After an evaluation of earlier scholarship on the American technological sublime, the study examines four important decades in the development of the American technological sublime and some of the literary responses to it. Charles R. Acland charts the origins, impact, and dynamics of the blockbuster, showing how it became a complex economic and cultural machine designed to advance popular support for technological advances.

A reconception of the sublime to include experiences of disaster, war, outer space, virtual reality, and the Anthropocene. We experience the sublime—overwhelming amazement and exhilaration—in at least seven different forms. Gazing from the top of a mountain at a majestic vista is not the same thing as looking at a city from the observation deck of a skyscraper; looking at images constructed from Hubble Space Telescope data is not the same as living through a powerful earthquake. The varieties of sublime experience have increased during the last two centuries, and we need an expanded terminology to distinguish between them. In this book, David Nye delineates seven forms of the sublime: natural, technological, disastrous, martial, intangible, digital, and environmental, which express seven different relationships to space, time, and identity. These forms of the sublime can be experienced at historic sites, ruins, cities, national parks, or on the computer screen. We find them in beautiful landscapes and

gigantic dams, in battle and on battlefields, in images of black holes and microscopic particles. The older forms are tangible, when we are physically present and our senses are fully engaged; increasingly, others are intangible, mediated through technology. Nye examines each of the seven sublimes, framed by philosophy but focused on historical examples.

Strategy, Institutions and the Development of Organisational Capability

Narratives and Spaces

Architecture of the Night

The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention

Haunted Media

A Social History of American Energies