



American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970

By Thomas P. Hughes

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The book that helped earn Thomas P. Hughes his reputation as one of the foremost historians of technology of our age and a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1990, *American Genesis* tells the sweeping story of America's technological revolution. Unlike other histories of technology, which focus on particular inventions like the light bulb or the automobile, *American Genesis* makes these inventions characters in a broad chronicle, both shaped by and shaping a culture. By weaving scientific and technological advancement into other cultural trends, Hughes demonstrates here the myriad ways in which the two are inexorably linked, and in a new preface, he recounts his earlier missteps in predicting the future of technology and follows its move into the information age.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This potentially interesting yet turgidly written sociological study argues that the fertile era of technological innovation in America, which produced the electric light, the telephone, the automobile and the airplane, among other wonders, is better understood as a period of system building than of invention. A professor of the history and sociology of science at the University of Pennsylvania, Hughes begins by analyzing the careers of a dozen independent inventors, including Edison and the Wright Brothers as well as the less famous Lee De Forest and Edwin Armstrong (who vied for patents on the vacuum tube). He goes on to describe the gigantic systems their inventions generated, in the U.S., Europe and even the Soviet Union--the electric utilities, the gasoline-fueled automobile industry, broadcasting, aviation and the rest of the military-industrial complex. Hughes's extensive research has turned up a wealth of detail about the history of engineering and technology, but because he jumps back and forth between innovators and systems builders to work out his sociological theories (rather than choosing a few critical examples and then telling those stories in depth), the book seems destined more for sociologists than a general audience.

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From Library Journal

This history of technology, covering a century of remarkable activity, starts off with the independent inventors--Edison, Bell, Sperry, and the Wrights. The author delves into their motivations and methods and sheds light on how they selected problems to be solved. The history then progresses to the larger, more complex innovations, including electrical power distribution systems and Ford's assembly plants. A fascinating section deals with the Soviet Union's exploitation of America's know-how, especially in scientific management, as developed by Frederick W. Taylor, Frank Gilbreth, and Henry Gantt. More recent and complicated systems approaches, as represented by the TVA program, the Manhattan Project, as well as other military and space programs, are also discussed. A final chapter surveys the disappointments with technology, as articulated by Lewis Mumford, Jacques Ellul, Henry Marcuse, and others. A well-rounded, if a bit plodding, survey of 100 truly monumental years.

- Daniel LaRossa, *Connetquot P.L., Bohemia, N.Y.*

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Review

"Hughes writes with sweep and detail. He links diverse phenomena like the military-industrial complex and modern art and architecture with his overall vision that order and control were the inevitable result of technological progress. His is an epic tale told with a rhythm and cadence that match it."

(Lee Dembart *Los Angeles Times*)

"Immensely valuable."

(Jonathan Yardley *Washington Post*)

"To be sure, readers who don't look for theoretical argument in history books won't regret its absence in *American Genesis*. They will enjoy, as I did, its informative accounts of major inventors and organizers--Henry Ford and Frederick Taylor as well as Edison, but most of all Elmer Sperry, the inventor not only of

the gyroscope but also of many automatic control systems."

(David Joravsky *New York Review of Books*)

"Masterful and stimulating. . . . It is Hughes's mastery of the history of technology that distinguishes this book from previous efforts to depict history as technology . . . Many people have deplored the lack of a single volume giving a coherent, well-written account of what has been learned since 1970 about the role of technology in American history since 1870. Thomas Hughes has done something about it."

(George Wise *Science*)

Nominated for the Pulitzer Prize

(*Pulitzer Prize nomination*)

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This American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970 book is not really ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you obtain by reading this book is information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. This kind of American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970 without we realize teach the one who examining it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't be worry American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970 can bring when you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' become full because you can have it within your lovely laptop even cell phone. This American Genesis: A Century of Invention and Technological Enthusiasm, 1870-1970 having fine arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not really feel uninterested in reading.

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