face of public and Republican opinion demanding more effective policing and incitement of drugs at the nation's borders. In his 'Epilogue' to some extent he throws up his hands in despair, asking what is to be done and saying we should expect little of the federal government as we experience continuing family deterioration and the growing disparity of incomes it produces. We can only trust that 'another generation of hard and complex analysis may give us some insights' (229). That is the one hope he holds out in his penultimate sixth chapter, 'The Coming of Age of American Social Policy,' which he claims that economists have given government the tools to manage the economy but sociologists have failed to provide models for understanding and remedying the ills of a post-industrial society.

The great interest in all this is what perhaps only Moynihan can provide—the leading politician's inside view and intimate knowledge of the legislative history of American social programs, combined with sufficient familiarity with the social sciences and writing skill to make expert government studies accessible for the general reader. But the weaknesses of the book also result from these fused roles and abilities. Moynihan is a busy politician. Perhaps that is why Miles to Go is not an integrated, documented and well-structured academic study but the recent gleanings of his files of newspaper clippings, speeches, contributions to senatorial debates, and already published op ed and magazine pieces. Bringing these things together does emphasize his policy preoccupations over the last decades and bring them to bear on explaining recent American politics, especially the 1994 Republican 'revolution' and the reactions of a prominent liberal Democrat to it. That has red value but we miss a thoroughly worked out synthesis, especially when throughout the book he emphasizes his ability to predict problems and find solutions when no one else could. He is constantly saying I told you so to benighted fellow politicians and social commentators. He is somewhat too busy quoting himself, going on recid, taking credit, making the public gesture and planning the hidden strategy to deal with partisan opponents—being the politician—for Miles to Go to realize its potential as the work of a social scientist and historian. One wishes Moynihan could have dallied by the woods in thought longer so as to gain a clearer, more objective perspective on the miles he had already traveled.

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Exeter University Press and editor Mick Gidley auspiciously open their new Representing American Culture series with David E. Nye's *Narratives and Spaces: Technology and the Construction of American Culture*. A specialist in social and cultural readings of technological history, David Nye is a prolific writer on American Studies subjects; his
clear and eminently readable style combines solid scholarship, original Pacts, ideas and theories into an entertaining, informative whole — and Narratives and Spaces does not fail to delight. The ten thematically arranged chapters are divided into three parts: I Spaces, II: Narratives and III Narratives in Space (given the interplay between technology and culture as well as the complex relationship between the facts of and imagination about technology in the United States, however, no chapter is as easily categorized as those overall headings might indicate). All but one have appeared in European and American journals or as prc publications over the last few years before being rewritten and edited for this volume.

Since addressing the interconnection between historical method and postmodern theory in The Invented Self: An Anti-biography from Documents of Thomas Edison (1983), the strength and grace of Nye's arguments and standpoint have developed. Hayden White remains an inspiration for his discussion of the state of criticism and method in current history writing, while Jacques Derrida is applied in a jargon-free way to fictional issues of representation and narrative which intersect with historical instances and facts to construct our social landscapes. Technology, and history writing about it, as Nye makes clear, can never be free of subjective perceptions and alternative narratives. Narratives in Space seeks to challenge realist history writing by adding another textual version, and to 'put theory into dialogue with particular instances' (6).

Part I addresses a number of instances and narrative types. The opening chapter examines the impact of tourism on the visual construction of natural sites/sights and the experience of space. Using Niagara Falls and the Grand Canyon as examples, and covering the changes from an 1830s train culture to a present day car culture, Nye shows how different visual constructions and landscape ideals clash, and how the large vistas and concentrated series of lookouts at both locations have put today's auto-motivated tourist at an (intended) disadvantage. For ecological reasons, the Grand Canyon park services have resisted extending road and hotel facilities (originally geared for inordinate jail tourism) to cater for the modern motorist's flexible 'point of view.' Instead, just outside the park, visitors may take in a hyper real Grand Canyon at the TMAX cinema. Technology allows them many more and different visual experiences than they could have enjoyed themselves, given constraints on time, money and accessibility. Chapter Two charts another instance of the electrification of the American West between 1880 and 1940, from its role in advancing the settlement of four distinct wests (those associated with mining, urbanization, agriculture and, conversely, the wilderness) to the way the spectacle of light became part of the West's self-perception. Challenging Turner's mythic, undifferentiated and vacant West settled by individual farmers, Nye shows how the Far West, for instance, was urbanized and industrialized before agriculture (dependent on electricity and artificial irrigation) was made possible. Electricity is here an example of a real, technological conquest of space where Turner's agricultural conquest was rhetorical. A third chapter deals with Wright Morris's 1948 photo-novel The Home Place, rural landscapes, values and documentaries.

After discussions of space and presentation, the three chapters of Part II turn to narratives and representations of technologies. Nye first parades four different points of view, myths and counter-myths about New Deal electrification, evaluating the rival claims
ol private utilities and government agencies concerning the efficiency and effect on rural society of the strategies adopted Chapter Five then ponders 'Energy' as a recent narrative concept – power with spatial elasticity – and develops a classificatory system to deal with different energy narratives (for example, of abundance, scarcity and ingenuity) present in presidential rhetoric as well as the writings of Scott Fitzgerald. The final chapter (which parallels the discussion of Wright Morris by evaluating Doctorow's World's Fair (1985) on the borderline between definitions of history, autobiography and fiction) continues the central theoretical discussion of narrative strategies and classification.

The four chapters of Part III pursue the themes of Parts I and II at their intersection. One chapter looks at how American corporations catering to the public influenced lighting strategies at world's fairs between 1881 and 1919. Eponymous inventors or famous engines may have been central at first, but a drive towards the inanimate unity via electrical control took over in later stages. Nye then concentrates specifically on the 1919 New York World's Fair, where European governments unsuccessfully tried to court an American public massively opposed to enteining the impending European war through national displays which came across as old-fashioned, unimpressive and static compared with the dynamism and entertainment favoured by American corporate exhibits. The third chapter examines the lack of public support for NASA's space program in the 1960s and the problems of creating and maintaining space-flight as a 'media event.' Nye points out that television was an insufficiently dramatic medium for relaying the spiritual, sublime qualities of a lift-off, but gained narrative quality once cameras secured access to the capsule. The final chapter follows three stages in the computerization of society and discusses the links between postmodernism and today's decentralized, internet-dominated use of personal computers. Drawing on the work of Jean Francois Lyotard, Nye's evaluation of the new role of capitalist production and consumption in a postmodern society, in terms of language, images or landscapes, closes the circle between the 'natural' space of the Grand Canyon and cyberspace.

One belies which Nye seeks to discredit (in favour of social constructionism) is technological determinism. The idea that machines initiate cultural changes. The crux, in Nye's words, is that 'machines do not simply appear and invent and shape them within a larger context, which includes visual practices and narrative strategies' (2). The argument should not be the simple one about whether machines make us or we them, nor is it Nye's chapters juggle narratives which within some six categories of present technologies as deterministic forces' (179), the social effects of which range from automatic progress to apocalyptic Technology has no master narrative, therefore, but many alternative ones, allowing us to deal with it in a variety of ways – including accepting it as a 'natural' part of life. In illustrating man's active role in the man-machine-nature relationship, Nye also addresses ecological and other similar concerns raised by the ways in which man's technological interference with the American landscape has made it more of a 'manscape.'

Narratives and Spaces is a very handy collection of many of Nye's short pieces which will also open up his oeuvre to new readers who can find electrification, early railtourism, the interplay between the natural and technological sublime and other subjects researched in depth in his other recent books, such as Electrifying America (1990) and
American Technological Sublime (1994) The introduction should be of particular interest to readers, including those who think they have no truck with issues related to the writing of technological history More generally, the wealth of material dealt with and the scholarly qualities of the book will make it useful as a teaching tool and to specialists in equal measure

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The American Dream seems to pop up whenever discussions of American culture or literature turn to topics of desire and identity. It is no surprise, then, that this mythic construct also permeates the genre and motivates the characters in texts classified as hard-boiled fiction. Although staged in the rather nightmarish decorations of the underworld of gangs, violence, political corruption, homophobia, and hard-core misogyny and heterosexism, the hard-boiled novels in fact communicate a romantic yearning for the American Dream, Jopi Nyman argues in his recent study of the genre. Men Alone links the American Dream with ideologies of white male liegemony and analyzes the cultural production of masculinity as an expression of and challenge to the American ideals of gendered individualism, power relations, and social order in the 1920s and 1930s. A thorough and very well researched, although rather unnecessarily overdone study, Nyman’s book examines the genre as a historical and cultural phenomenon. It interweaves close readings of primary texts with a plethora of literary critical, historical, sociological, and philosophical approaches. It should be of interest to scholars of American literature, gender and culture, as well as American and Cultural Studies.

The book opens with the description of the history and genesis of hard-boiled fiction in the historical and cultural context that produced both popular and more literary works at the time when America was being transformed from an agricultural into an urban society. Relying on the theories of textuality and narrative put forth by, among others, Michel Foucault, Georg Lukács, and Edward Said, Nyman shows that, like other novels, the hard-boiled one is an ideological document that expresses and mirrors social anxieties, class conflicts, and the modernist alienation of the individual. As a direct descendant of the western and the wilderness stories, it maps a process of a male individual's search for a self, while also portraying the life of the underclass very much in the vein of earlier realist and naturalist fiction. Placing his discussion in the larger context of American literary history, Nyman argues that the hard-boiled fiction's alienated masculine perspective on the world arises from this genre's celebration of the tough guy character, some of whose prototypes can be found in the novels of Cooper, Melville, Twain, and Norris. As he shows, the tough hero's yearning for power and control over hostile and corrupt society