**Mumford, Lewis (1895-1990)**

Lewis Mumford was a prolific author, social philosopher and prominent American critic of architecture and urbanism. A native of New York City, he penned a column on architecture that was published in *The New Yorker* from 1931 to 1975, extending his work to a broad audience. He evaluated the built world based on its relationship to its inhabitants and the natural environment, disregarding physical design and the development of a ‘modern’ style in favor of social functionality. Primarily concerned with the role of technology within civilization, he criticized the dehumanizing effects of mechanization. In books such as *Technics and Civilization* (1934) and his later two volume work *The Myth of the Machine* (1967-1970), he traced the evolution of the machine and differentiated between a technology befitting human needs and one for only innovation’s sake. He expressed hope for the potential to make use of technology’s positive, innate aspects and overcome the influence of the machine in order to more organically fulfill human purpose. As he sums it up in *Technics and Civilization*, ‘While many of the boasted achievements of industrialism are merely rubbish, and while many of the goods produced by the machine are fraudulent and evanescent, its esthetic, its logic, and its factual technique remain a durable contribution: they are among man’s supreme conquests’ (324-325).

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**List of works**

(For a comprehensive bibliography of Mumford’s work, see **Wojtowicz [2000] below.)**

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**References and further reading**

Goldberger, P. (1990) ‘Lewis Mumford: Preacher, Prophet, Romantic’, *The New York Times* 4 Feb.

Wojtowicz, R. (1998) *Lewis Mumford and American Modernism: Eutopian Theories for Architecture and Urban Planning* [sic], New York: Cambridge University Press.

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