



Rhetoric of Machine Aesthetics

Barry Brummett

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Brummett addresses the question of how the aesthetic experience of machines can have rhetorical influence. He develops a theory of machine aesthetics, showing nine dimensions of the aesthetic experience of machines and machine-like objects or activities. He identifies three general types of machine aesthetics: Mechtech, classical machine aesthetics based on hardware, gears, pistons, and so forth; Electrotech, high technology machine aesthetics based on the ability of electricity to put machinery on the human scale; and Chaotech, the aesthetic appeal of the decayed machine. In each case, rhetorical applications of the aesthetic are explored. A final critical application shows how the film *Brazil* warns its audience that fascism can be supported by simulations based on machine aesthetics.

Brummett's book develops and articulates ideas in the fields of rhetoric and literature that have not been brought together before. In a radical departure, Brummett sees machines not as passive backdrops to human intercourse, but rather as possessing a powerful rhetoric of their own. The book will be of great interest to scholars and students of communications, art, and aesthetics.

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