

Machines / Ravines:
Negotiating the [Technological] Sublime

Dates: September 14–16, 2017
University of Łódź, Dept. of American Literature

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CFP:

In his 1976 novel *Ratner's Star*, Don DeLillo wrote “beauty was mere scenery unless it was severe,” and in conceptions of the sublime from Longinus through Kant, Hegel, and more recently, Mario Costa and others, *severity* — in its myriad meanings — has been a vital aspect of what constitutes the sublime. Whether we are encountering the severe in the drama of nature’s fury or a severing multiplicity while navigating applications and communications in the digital world, we are confronted with the sublime dynamically (à la Kant) and/or disembodied and atomized (à la Costa). Thus, in considering Romantic notions of the sublime with more contemporary digitally-informed aesthetics, the sublime could be thought of as hovering like a proverbial “ghost in the ravine,” a selfie taken in front of Caspar David Friedrich’s *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*.

We invite papers on American and Canadian literature dealing with subjects including, but certainly not limited to, the following themes:

*Technological and/or spiritual negotiations of the sublime in novels, poetry or plays

*Comparative sublimes

*Science fiction, futurity and the sublime

*[En]Gendering the sublime

*[Mis]Uses of technology in literature

*New literary genres

*Death/violence and/of the sublime

*Ecology, pastoral and the sublime

*Performativity/theatricality and/of the sublime

This is an interdisciplinary conference focusing on literature but not limited to it. We welcome theoretical, historical, philosophical, and creative contributions on these and related themes from [art] historians, literary theorists, artists, writers, philosophers, sociologists,

psychoanalysts, and others. Presentations are expected to take 20 minutes. Another 10 minutes is planned for discussion.

The keynote speaker for the conference will be Dr. David E. Nye, Professor of History at the University of Southern Denmark and author of numerous books, including the renowned *American Technological Sublime, Narratives and Spaces: Technology and the Construction of American Culture, Technology Matters: Questions to Live With*.

Please submit abstracts and supporting information to Mark Tardi (turlepin@yahoo.com) and Dr. Krzysztof Majer (krzymajer@gmail.com) no later than **[March 31, 2017]**. A complete proposal should include the following: your complete contact information, the title of your paper, an abstract of no more than 300 words, a brief biographical statement, and a note on any audio/visual requirements.