

1.3.3 TECHNOLOGICAL SUBVERSION

DAVID STRONG

In this reading taken from the author's book *Crazy Mountains: Learning from Wilderness to Weigh Technology*, philosopher David Strong asks us to consider the basic question, "Why do we value technology?"

In his analysis, we value technological devices because they disburden us of toil-some labor, discomfort, and bother. Technological innovations beckon us with the promise of freedom and happiness. We want things to be easy so that we are freer to pursue our ends without having to worry too much about the means we use to do so, and we believe that being "free" in this sense—that is, disburdened—will make us happy.

Using as his examples the replacement of the hearth by the central heating system and television viewing as a primary form of entertainment, Strong argues that this quest for freedom and happiness through technology provides ease and comfort, often alters the nature of human experience in ways that disconnect us from nature and other people, and ironically produces not happiness but alienation. Although some readers may find this philosophical meditation somewhat demanding, those who study it carefully will find that it rewards their effort.

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