



Flight Technology and Metaphysics: The Impact of Abstract Ideas on the Development of Aeronautics and Astronautics

Gideon Tolkowsky

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This book is about the ways in which the development of technology impacts and is impacted by metaphysics - by abstract ideological currents and undercurrents that populate the environment in which the technology develops. The emphasis here is on the history of flight, both atmospheric flight and space flight. Much has been written and said about the interaction between the development of science (rather than technology) and ideology, or "metaphysics." Examples include the development of astronomy and geography, in terms of how these have been impacted by prevailing theories about the structure of the Solar System and Earth's status in it. Another example is represented by the diverging theories of evolution, which have deeply impacted biology, environmental sciences, and more. Both of the above ideological/scientific divergences were of course deeply anchored in religious beliefs and impacted them. In order to expand the same argument regarding the interface between science and metaphysics, and also apply it to the technology/metaphysics domain, we delve into the differences between science and technology. The bulk of this book centers on aviation and space-flight technologies, and attempts to place those in the context of abstract ideologies and ideas that surrounded their development at the time. Why the choice of those particular technological domains of all the huge variety of technologies that have developed in the last two centuries since the Industrial Revolution? The latter, in a way, served as a starting line for an unfathomable wave of technological innovation and merging of technology with society in its broadest sense.

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