

"ENGINES OF CREATION"

by **K. Eric Drexler**

K. Eric Drexler's Engines of Creation is an enormously original book about the consequences of new technologies. It is ambitious and imaginative and, best of all, the thinking is technically sound.

Engines of Creation begins with the insight that what we can do depends on what we can build. This leads to a careful analysis of possible ways to stack atoms. Then Drexler asks, "What could we build with those atom-staking mechanisms?" For one thing, we could manufacture assembly machines much smaller even than living cells, and make materials stronger and lighter than any available today. Hence, better spacecraft. Hence, tiny devices that can travel along capillaries to enter and repair living cells. Hence, the ability to heal disease, reverse the ravages of age, or make our bodies speedier or stronger than before. And we could make machines down to the size of viruses, machines that would work at speeds which none of us can yet appreciate. And then, once we learned how to do it, we would have the option of assembling these myriads of tiny parts into intelligent machines, perhaps based on the use of trillions of nanoscopic parallel-processing devices which make descriptions, compare them to recorded patterns, and then exploit the memories of all their previous experiments. Thus those new technologies could change not merely the materials and means we use to shape our physical environment, but also the activities we would then be able to pursue inside whichever kind of world we make.

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