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Lewis Mumford (1895-1990) was an American historian of technology and science. Particularly noted for his study of cities and urban architecture, he had a tremendously broad career as a writer that also included a period as an influential literary critic. Mumford's earliest books in the field of literary criticism have had a lasting impact on contemporary American literary criticism. The Golden Day contributed to a resurgence in scholarly research on the work of 1850's American transcendentalist authors and Herman Melville: A Study of His Life and Vision effectively launched a revival in the study of the work of Herman Melville. In his early writings on urban life, Mumford was optimistic about human abilities and wrote that the human race would use electricity and mass communication to build a better world for all humankind. He would later take a more pessimistic stance. His early architectural criticism also helped to bring wider public recognition to the work of Henry Hobson Richardson, Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. He served as the architectural critic for The New Yorker magazine for over 30 years, and his 1961 book, The City in History, received the National Book Award.