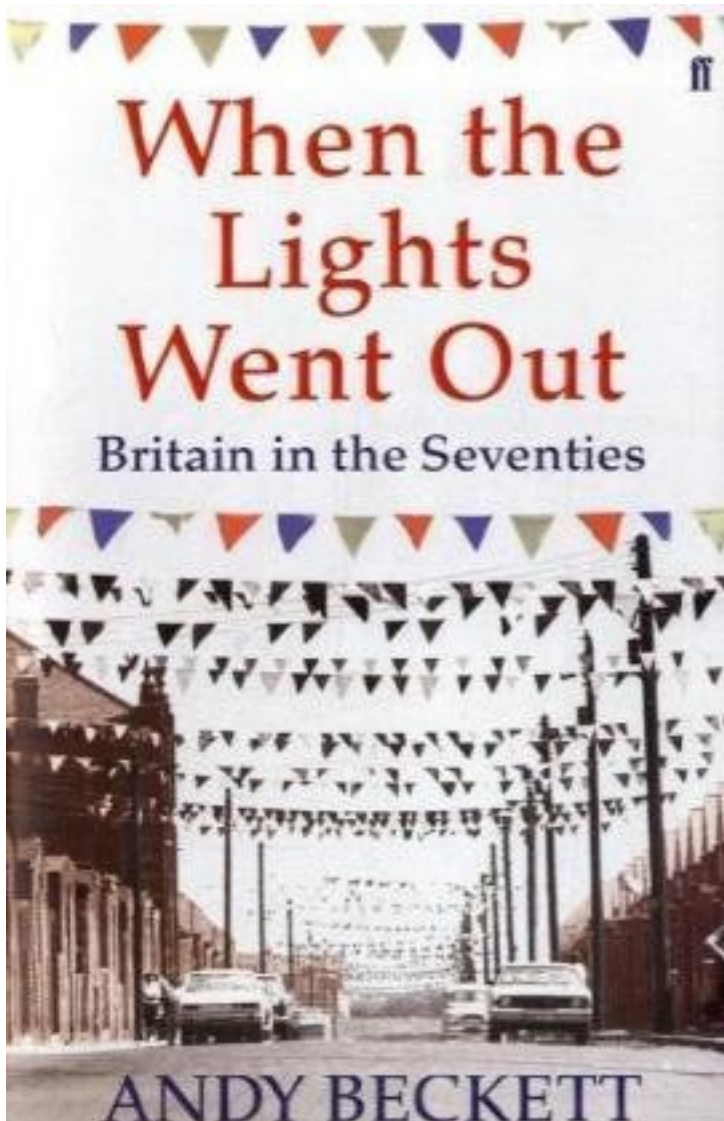# When the Lights Went Out

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Where were you when the lights went out? At home during a thunderstorm? During the Great Northeastern Blackout of 1965? In California when rolling blackouts hit in 2000? In 2003, when a cascading power failure left fifty million people without electricity? We often remember vividly our time in the dark. In When the Lights Went Out, David Nye views power outages in America from 1935 to the present not simply as technical failures but variously as military tactic, social disruption, crisis in the networked city, outcome of political and economic decisions, sudden encounter with sublimity, and memories enshrined in photographs. Our electrically lit-up life is so natural to us that when the lights go off, the darkness seems abnormal. Nye looks at America's development of its electrical grid, which made large-scale power failures possible and a series of blackouts from military blackouts to the "greenout" (exemplified by the new tradition of "Earth Hour"), a voluntary reduction organized by environmental organizations. Blackouts, writes Nye, are breaks in the flow of social time that reveal much about the trajectory of American history. Each time one occurs, Americans confront their essential condition -- not as isolated individuals, but as a community that increasingly binds itself together with electrical wires and signals.

作者介绍:

目录:

When the Lights Went Out_下载链接1_

标签

歷史

美國

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评论

David Nye曾写过electrifying America，现在这本小书像是对应，说完我们如何照明，那就要说说这明亮带来的另一套系统，一套关于故障和黑暗的系统。本书依靠Perrow的Normal Accident思考，结合Victor

Turner的liminality，探讨停电（科技故障-能源不足-经济政治意见不统一-terrorism）的那个时刻人们是如何重新丈量时间与空间，并与他人发生链接的。题目蛮有趣，理论用的也不错，但是感觉写的有点水，各种材料混杂，人们在停电后反应的时代变化也没有很好的理清楚（或者你总要说一句是mixed的吧）。看到最后发现是个号召大家少用电环保的书，感觉和之前好找停电中的improvisation和agency很好对应，也大概了解老爷爷的苦心。

书评