



# Imagined Frontiers: Contemporary America and Beyond

*Carl Abbott*

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We live near the edge—whether in a settlement at the core of the Rockies, a gated community tucked into the wilds of the Santa Monica Mountains, a silicon culture emerging in the suburbs, or, in the future, homesteading on a terraformed Mars. In *Imagined Frontiers*, urban historian and popular culture scholar Carl Abbott looks at the work of American artists who have used novels, film, television, maps, and occasionally even performance art to explore these frontiers—the metropolitan frontier of suburban development, the classic continental frontier of American settlement, and the yet unrealized frontiers beyond Earth.

Focusing on writers and artists working during the past half-century, an era of global economic and social reach, Abbott describes the dialogue between historians and social scientists seeking to understand these frontier places and the artists reimagining them in written and visual fictions. This book offers perspectives on such well-known authors as T. C. Boyle and John Updike and on such familiar movies and television shows as *Falling Down* and *The Sopranos*. By putting *The Rockford Files* and the cult favorite *Firefly* in conversation with popular fiction writers Robert Heinlein and Stephen King and literary novelists Peter Matthiessen and Leslie Marmon Silko, Abbott interweaves the disparate subjects of western history, urban planning, and science fiction in a single volume.

Abbott combines all-new essays with others previously published but substantially revised to integrate western and urban history, literary analysis, and American studies scholarship in a uniquely compelling analysis of the frontier in popular culture.

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