When *Future Shock* came out in 1970, it immediately took America by storm. Written by the futurologists Alvin and Heidi Toffler, it was a popularized sociological mash-up of seemingly everything that concerned US society after the turbulent 1960s: upheaval in the workplace, changing gender roles, crumbling traditional family structures, the rise of computers, and the “death of permanence.” “Future shock” was “a powerful and upsetting psychological disease,” its cause the acceleration of life in every aspect. The world, it seemed, was getting faster and ever more complex. At every corner, society appeared in crisis, spinning out of control. *Future Shock* was talked about in classrooms, homes, and offices, in newspapers and magazines, on television—and even in the White House. What had happened?

In his talk, Dr. Kathke reflects on why *Future Shock* and other popular books diagnosing the state of American society became bestsellers and cultural touchstones during the 1970s and 80s, a time when the Cold War détente opened up a discursive space for national soul searching and the baby boomers sought explanations for their changing environment.

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