WEEK 2 ASSIGNMENT

Write a 1-2 page response to your readings. You may choose some questions from the list below, but you are encouraged to raise your own questions. Your paper must touch upon all the readings assigned for the upcoming session.

1. Which factors shaped the origins of the first digital computers? Would it be fair to say that computers were superior to the contemporary analog computing devices?
2. Discuss the notion of "closure" as defined by Pinch and Bijker. Has the development of the computer reached "closure"?
3. Discuss the relationship between (de)centralized technological and organizational structures using the SAGE case or your own example. Can the same technological structure be used in different organizational modes? Can the same organization combine different technological structures?
4. Discuss the validity of the "impact" model of the relations between computers and society using the Global Bank Brazil case or your own example.
5. Do you agree with Edwards's argument that computers are not gender-neutral?
6. Which fields of science and technology contributed to the development of the computer? How can we incorporate the individual histories of these fields into the history of computing? Can the computer be seen as the pinnacle of these individual histories?
7. What are the strengths and the weaknesses of the historical analogy between the development of the computer and the automobile? Can you suggest another analogy for the computer?
8. What is your answer to Mahoney's question, "Where is the Middletown of today, … transformed by the presence of the microcomputer?"
9. Do you agree that Vannevar Bush's account of the Memex was utopian?
10. Discuss the difference between "reality transcending" and "situation transcending," and the notion of "web model" according to Kling.
11. Classify the books or articles that you have read about computing according to the five genres of literature discussed by Kling. Which genre appeals to you most? Why?
12. What questions pertinent to the history of computing have not been raised in the readings?