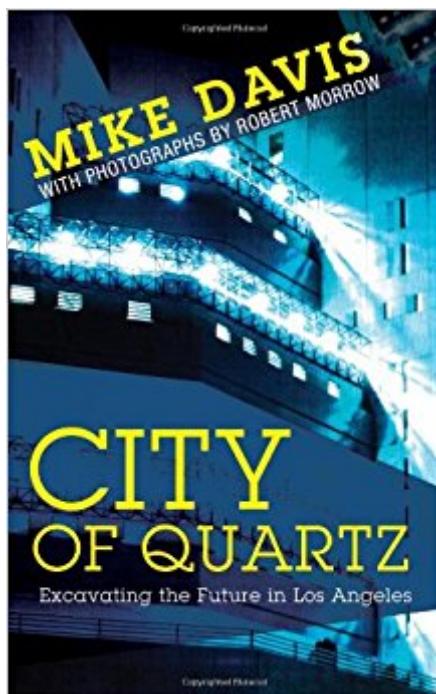


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City Of Quartz: Excavating The Future In Los Angeles



Synopsis

No metropolis has been more loved or more hated. To its official boosters, "Los Angeles brings it all together." To detractors, LA is a sunlit mortuary where "you can rot without feeling it." To Mike Davis, the author of this fiercely elegant and wide-ranging work of social history, Los Angeles is both utopia and dystopia, a place where the last Joshua trees are being plowed under to make room for model communities in the desert, where the rich have hired their own police to fend off street gangs, as well as armed Beirut militias. In City of Quartz, Davis reconstructs LA's shadow history and dissects its ethereal economy. He tells us who has the power and how they hold on to it. He gives us a city of Dickensian extremes, Pynchonesque conspiracies, and a desperation straight out of Nathaniel West's city in which we may glimpse our own future mirrored with terrifying clarity. In this new edition, Davis provides a dazzling update on the city's current status.

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Customer Reviews

Mike Davis peers into a looking glass to divine the future of Los Angeles, and what he sees is not encouraging: a city--or better, a concatenation of competing city states--torn by racial enmity, economic disparity, and social anomie. Looking backward, Davis suggests that Los Angeles has always been contested ground. In the 1840s, he writes, a combination of drought and industrial stock raising led to the destruction of small-scale Spanish farming in the region. In the 1910s, Los Angeles was the scene of a bitter conflict between management and industrial workers, so bitter

that the publisher of the Los Angeles Times retreated to a heavily fortified home he called "The Bivouac." And in 1992, much of the city fell before flames and riot in a scenario Davis describes as thus: "Gangs are multiplying at a terrifying rate, cops are becoming more arrogant and trigger-happy, and a whole generation is being shunted toward some impossible Armageddon." Davis's voice-in-a-whirlwind approach to the past, present, and future of Los Angeles is alarming and arresting, and his book is essential reading for anyone interested in contemporary affairs.

--Gregory MacNamee --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Eschewing the character study that comprises most Los Angeles history, Davis concentrates on the ongoing and ignored ethnic and class struggles, formerly manifested by booster (pro-growth) exploitation, now replaced by exclusionary (no-growth) neighborhood incorporation, and by police control of Afro-American and Latino neighborhoods. His analysis of recent Los Angeles history is often chilling and--sad to say--more true than false. Small inaccuracies sometimes afflict the narrative, and the breathlessness of Davis's writing will probably confuse readers who are unfamiliar with the region. But these criticisms quibble with an otherwise important and necessary work.

Recommended.- Tim Zindel, Hastings Coll . of the Law, San FranciscoCopyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is a classic analysis of urban design. I love it and think it has a lot of original thoughts. But bear in mind that (I) many of the observations are a bit specific to Los Angeles and (ii) the book is getting kind of dated.

I have lived 5 years in Los Angeles and I have to say reading this book has completely changed my perception of the city. Coming from another continent, names like Hollywood and Beverly Hills were familiar to me before arrival, but I knew nothing about Pasadena "Old Money" or South Central struggles. And even after years living here, I had some notions of the city history but I was far away from the rich and complex web of relationships unveiled by this book. Reading this book left me craving for more readings, I think I will go over the book again and read some of the books mentioned in the citations

Essential for anyone living in Los Angeles. This book is your history. You need to read this and you need to realize how far the city has come.

Great read if you are into the counter-culture of southern California. Long read so you must be dedicated to reading it.

One need not go totalistic about this or any other book coming from a True Believer at either end of the political spectrum. Davis may =be= an over-the-top, over-identified-with-the-underdog, welfare-spraying ward healer (it gets worse in the later chapters), but that doesn't mean his observations should be ignored. Having worked for several of the major downtown LA movers and shakers (Bank of America, Atlantic-Richfield, the Chandler-era Los Angeles Times (for Vance Stickle), Federated Department Stores, Carter-Hawley-Hale, the Los Angeles Central City Association (for former deputy mayor Steve Gavin)) as well as several of the major residential and commercial developers of the surrounding communities (American-Pacesetter (for John Klug), Pacific Mutual Life Insurance, Ernest W. Hahn, Cadillac-Fairview Ltd., the Alaska Teamsters Union Pension Fund, MCO Properties (for Charles Hurwitz), Landmark Land Company (for Ernie Vossler), Kohlberg-Kravis-Roberts via KSL Land) as a paid informer -- and dis-informer -- during the Central Business District Redevelopment campaign in 1975 and numerous municipal approval campaigns before and after, I was far enough inside to know that Davis was, as well. Money talks, BS walks. The Big Boys knew this then, and they know it now. No one that I know of, however, has Pieced It All Together as elegantly and definitively, however rambling, tangential and (possibly) difficult to follow Davis's prose becomes at times. I respect the fact that having been there helps, but for the graduate -- or even upper-division undergrad -- student Looking for Clues, this is a gold mine... and not just about Los Angeles or even southern California. In most ways, this =is= the way things work pretty much everywhere.

Item arrived as described. Great book!

A remarkable look at the nefarious City of "Angels," its noirish history and its dirty cast of characters. With an updated preface, this book published in 1990 remains amazingly prescient.

Great read on LA's history, yet at times seemed to target "insiders" with deep knowledge of the local business and political elites and structures.

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