

neighbourhoods were mitigated through price, design and planning. Residential space was unaffordable for most black people. Gates, fences, landscaping and one-way circular streets discouraged access to the compound. Nearby bus stops and stores were kept to a minimum to discourage foot traffic in the surrounding area. The plan worked and served as a model for other developments. Nearly 50 years later Chicago's black and white residents occupy separate worlds.

Joel Rast's well-researched historical study draws on archival collections held at Chicago area university libraries. Some of his most engaging descriptions of the city are ethnographic. The book's biggest contribution to the field of urban history is the importance it places on ideational change. Previous studies have emphasized economic and political or material interests. To understand fully the motivations and behaviours of urban planners, according to Rast, attention must be paid to how their decisions are shaped by conventional wisdom. As a regular visitor to downtown Chicago, I know how easy it is to get wrapped-up in all that is wonderful about the city. Museums and other attractions effectively blind people to deprivation on the periphery. *Origins of the Dual City* is a powerful reminder that Chicago was purposefully designed this way and that nature or individual preference cannot explain the night and day differences between its neighbourhoods. Additionally, it is revealing that key architects of the dual city model lived in the racially segregated suburbs north of Chicago that I study. Most notably, Holman Pettibone and Milton Mumford who laid the groundwork for the model in the 1950s, and Mayor Emmanuel Rahm who later deepened the divide between high income and high poverty areas through his gentrification policies and public school closures. No book can cover every aspect of a topic; still, I would have liked to learn more about how invisible boundaries between neighbourhoods are constructed, maintained and enforced. How is it, for example, that problems, like gun violence, experienced in one area rarely bleed into another?

*Origins of the Dual City* traces how Chicago's economically disadvantaged areas went from 'places to be rehabilitated to places to be managed and policed' (p. 267). Today, city boosters brag about urban renaissance and 'comeback cities' even as poverty and hopelessness become more entrenched (p. 267). Rast warns us that our tacit acceptance of deprivation only serves to perpetuate it. We have learned to live with poverty, we must unlearn to live with it.

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**Richard J. Williams**, *Why Cities Look the Way They Do*. Cambridge: Polity, 2019. xix + 224pp. 58 figures. \$64.95 hbk. \$24.95 pbk.  
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Do we analyse the city as it is, or as it ought to be? From Ebenezer Howard to Le Corbusier, through the remarkable post-1945 generation of architect-planners, urbanists sought not merely to understand the city, but also to perfect it. Their interventions depended upon a conception of the city as discrete, knowable and

amenable to manipulation. The countermovement followed, focusing less on the possible city than the actually existing one. Patrick Geddes, Reyner Banham and the trio behind *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972) – Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour – represent this tradition, which has been chronicled by Daniel Horowitz in his book *Consuming Pleasures* (2012).

Though gesturing towards both camps, Richard J. Williams sides with the latter. ‘Why do cities look the way they do?’, his new book asks. The answer, he argues, is not design but process. No architect or planner would design the route to his favourite Asian market in Leicester, with its ‘bizarre amalgam of things’: a few Victorian fragments, some Swedish-inflected low-rise, a twenty-storey tower and a roaring flyover (p. xii). A scholar of the ultimate planned city of Brasília, Williams recognizes that most cities – and most parts of cities – resemble Leicester more than Letchworth. Each chapter of *Why Cities Look the Way They Do* focuses on a separate process: tourism, money, power, sex, work, war, and culture. Your experience of Venice, he notes, results less from a communion with the early modern world than from the commotion of contemporary tourism; you so long for bohemian Soho that a museum is refurbished – complete with ‘carefully chipped paintwork’ – to look suitably late-industrial (p. 166). Tourism and culture, in these examples, have remade familiar urban spaces, and the book teems with many more examples. ‘[T]he cities that we see are a combination of things’, Williams concludes, ‘most of which are not designed’ (p. 175). He wants readers not to judge cities against idealized aesthetic standards, but rather to see them for what they are – a first step, he suggests, towards making cities better.

Williams is a scholar not of socio-economic forces, but rather of visual culture. Though a study of the processes that shape cities, there is little here on race, ‘work’ but not much labour, ‘money’ but not economies. To bring the book’s insight (about processes) into alignment with its author’s expertise (visual culture), he emphasizes the ways that processes shape the city’s representation. As in Williams’ prior work, such as his revelatory readings of plans and sketches throughout *The Anxious City* (2004), the chapters most succeed when wringing meanings out of popular and visual culture – from *Lost in Translation* to *Sunset Boulevard* to Donald Duck. He is outstanding on *Seinfeld*, for how its version of New York depicted a heteronormative global city – despite conceding, with a wink, that he has only watched the masturbation episode ‘a hundred or so times’ (p. 77). Williams is, in short, a lot of fun: a playful, genial writer, bursting with ideas. And though his touch is light, his subjects often are not. The book discusses a dazzling range of scholars, writers and theorists – from Freud to the Frankfurt School to Foucault, from Banham to Benjamin to Baudrillard.

Persuaded by Williams’ argument, let me add a process of my own, suggested by that opening stroll through Leicester: accretion. Buildings have architects and cities have planners, but time mocks any notion of design. Glancing out my window, my eyes run east up Houston Street – widened under New York’s mid-century planner, Robert Moses. To the south, the spacious lofts of SoHo betray their manufacturing origins, even as their luxurious roof gardens include the odd outdoor boxing studio, while their shops sell lamps approaching four figures – suggesting why their windows remain boarded-up, still sheltering from the recent uprisings. North of Houston grows NYU’s newest building (‘Mordor’, my colleague calls it), and

through its hollow shell I discern a half-dozen water towers. Wooden technologies, post-industrial spaces and mid-century urban renewal thus stand amid the jackfruits of Bloombergian wealth, evidence of urban uprisings, and a high-rise future that, for now, remains on hold. This author-less vista is totally incoherent, yet obviously New York. I have looked out this window every day for years, but I have only come to see it this way – truthfully, to see it all – after reading Williams' book. Rather than a designed cityscape, I see processes all around me – the ultimate tribute to this witty, perceptive and transformative new book.

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**David Morton**, *Age of Concrete: Housing and the Shape of Aspiration in the Capital of Mozambique*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2019. 336pp. 72 illustrations. \$90.00 hbk. \$32.95 pbk.  
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Cities have primarily been sites of struggle in the historiography of Africa. The scholarship of the 1980s and early 1990s, focusing most sharply on the 1930s–1950s, emphasized the struggles between the state and a proletarianizing African urban class, with the bulldozer representing the primary vehicle of state power. David Morton's *Age of Concrete* advances the discussion of African urbanism in innovative directions, presenting a history of Maputo, Mozambique, through the structures, homes and neighbourhoods that Mozambican city-dwellers built and maintained, sometimes in defiance of the state, but in other cases by successfully utilizing the levers of municipal governance.

Although the book follows a chronological order, spanning late Portuguese imperialism through the era of FRELIMO rule in the 1970s and 1980s, each chapter is thematically distinct. The first chapter underscores how colonial Maputo lacked the 'buffer zones' of South Africa, Kenya and Rhodesia that maintained 'great distances between predominantly African neighborhoods and predominantly European neighborhoods' (p. 30). Although Europeans maintained a separate quarter in the cement city, Africans lived in proximity with Europeans, sharing close interactions and spatial intimacies. The following chapters underscore the interplay between residents of the *subúrbios* and municipal authorities, as residents pursued their aspirations for (what they saw as) better housing, with concrete becoming the preferred construction material. Residents who built concrete structures risked eventual eviction, demolition of their homes and devastating fines. They eluded the state through different methods, such as using zinc to mask the concrete construction of their homes. Residents, though, also pushed the state for legitimacy, even if it meant inviting the gaze of state planners into their communities. The final chapters focus on Maputo's transition to post-independence, particularly how the built environment 'mediated the emerging relationship between Mozambican citizens and Mozambican authorities' (p. 153). The efforts