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Inventing Autopia: Dreams and Visions of the Modern Metropolis in Jazz Age Los Angeles

Jeremiah B.C. Axelrod

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In 1920, as its population began to explode, Los Angeles was a largely pastoral city of bungalows and palm trees. Thirty years later, choked with smog and traffic, the city had become synonymous with urban sprawl and unplanned growth. Yet Los Angeles was anything but unplanned, as Jeremiah B.C. Axelrod reveals in this compelling, visually oriented history of the metropolis during its formative years. In a deft mix of cultural and intellectual history that brilliantly illuminates the profound relationship between imagination and place, *Inventing Autopia* shows how the clash of irreconcilable utopian visions and dreams resulted in the invention of an unforeseen new form of urbanism—sprawling, illegible, fractured—that would reshape not only Southern California but much of the nation in the years to come.

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