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The rise of the golden city: Los Angeles in the twentieth century

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THE RISE OF THE GOLDEN CITY Los Angeles in the Twentieth Century

DANA CUFF, *The Provisional City: Los Angeles Stories of Architecture and Urbanism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000, pp. x, 380, notes, maps, photographs, bibliography, index, \$40.00 cloth.

CATHERINE MULHOLLAND, *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. xxi, 411, notes, maps, photographs, bibliography, index, \$35.00 cloth.

RAPHAEL J. SONENSHEIN, *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. xix, 301, maps, tables, photographs, bibliography, index, \$29.95 cloth.

JULES TYGIEL, *The Great Los Angeles Swindle: Oil, Stocks, and Scandal during the Roaring Twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. ix, 398, notes, tables, photographs, bibliography, index, \$25.00 cloth.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Los Angeles was poised to become the premier city on the West Coast. Within thirty years, the boosters, businessmen, and politicians made it a reality. These people believed that the twentieth century belonged to the city of Los Angeles, and they propelled the city into the forefront. They did so by constructing a massive aqueduct system; annexing lands to the east, west, and south of its original borders; developing a harbor; building a massive infrastructure including roads and rail lines; instituting the nation's first zoning laws; and fostering financial investment. By 1930, the city became the largest in the West, boasting a population of 1,238,084.

Despite the astronomical growth, Los Angeles's success did not come without pitfalls. During World War II, the city pushed its limits. Overwhelmed, the city encountered severe housing shortages, urban blight, and limited resources. After the war, additional migrants and increasing racial diversity heightened tensions that exploded in a series of race-related disturbances. Though Los Angeles confronted these challenges, its destiny is forever linked to the pivotal years when it became the largest city in the West.

Together, the writings of Dana Cuff, Catherine Mulholland, Raphael Sonenshein, and Jules Tygiel illuminate the ascent of the City of Angels between 1877 and 1992. These four texts blend architectural history, urban

history, and biography. Each presents different glimpses of the city in a particular phase of its development. Separately, and collectively, they capture a century that witnesses the city's evolution from town to metropolis, telling a tale of intrigue, triumph, and tragedy.

William Mulholland (1855-1935), the chief engineer and architect of the city's water system, and the need to achieve a permanent and limitless water supply have been the subject of numerous authors.¹ *William Mulholland and the Rise of Los Angeles* is the latest work to analyze the controversial man and questionable municipal actions undertaken to find water for Los Angeles. This account affords historian Catherine Mulholland an opportunity to give a greater sense of dignity and humanity to her grandfather. That she succeeds in doing so is just one highlight of an excellent biography.

Mulholland's arrival in Los Angeles in 1877 coincided with the earliest stages of urban development. The depression, drought, and smallpox epidemic that greeted the Irish immigrant were as old as the city itself. For Mulholland, fresh water was the cure. Mulholland began his career in engineering after a stint on artesian wells in Compton. A self-taught man, Mulholland began working for the Los Angeles Water Company in 1878. Shortly afterwards as a deputy "zanjero" or water overseer, he befriended Fred Eaton, the future mayor, and William Perry, president of the water company.

The Los Angeles water system was faulty at best. There was never enough water for constant irrigation of crops, control of the dust, or household use. Competition between private companies created an exploitative environment. As the original system was connected by wells, ditches, and canals, the Los Angeles Water Company engaged in a modernizing project. At the same time, the city needed protection from water damage created by floods and decaying structures. This municipal underdevelopment provided a perfect training ground for the novice engineer. By the time Mulholland became the superintendent of the waterworks in 1886, he was the most qualified man for the position.

Catherine Mulholland presents Mulholland's career in stages, providing a greater understanding of his role in civic affairs. The author argues that the private side of William Mulholland influenced his public actions. Mulholland considered himself a public servant, avoided criticizing others in public, and joined social clubs more to protect his position rather than for true social climbing (pp. 25-60). Catherine Mulholland suggests that William's relationships with the affluent Eaton and Perry were mentorships rather than close friendships, in part because of class distinctions. Mulholland progressed from a laborer to an aspiring member of the upper middle class but had no designs on the privileged class (pp. 46-47). He never abandoned his working-class roots. Mulholland dedicated his life to his family, his position, his workers, and ultimately the people of Los Angeles.

In 1899, Mayor Fred Eaton embarked on several ideas that redefined the growing metropolis and changed Mulholland's life. He began the subdivision

and development of tracts south of the city center; expanded the water system, sewers, and local dams; and supported the construction of an electric rail system (which eventually became Huntington's "Big Red Cars") to replace horse-drawn carriages.

The campaign to acquire a municipal water system marked a turning point in Los Angeles's history. The city's newspapers, which would later play a significant role in civic affairs, entered the debate. Strong local support produced an overwhelming victory at the polls. The city negotiated to purchase the Los Angeles and Crystal Spring Water Companies, and Mulholland, acting as a representative of the Los Angeles Water Company, mediated between his superiors and the city. In 1902, when the transaction was completed, Mulholland became the chief of the city's system.

Mulholland presided over a system that needed to expand and improve services. Mayors, city governments, the water commission, and the public contested his vision and leadership. He overcame scandals concerning water waste, bacteria, hygiene, faulty and new construction, and the lack of rainwater. While Mulholland earned the respect and admiration of the city, his support of Eaton's plan to purchase land and water in Owens Valley was considered suspicious at best and conspiratorial at worst. The *Evening News*, the *Herald*, the *Examiner*, and the *Times* competed in putting additional spin on this proposal that easily increased reader interest and discussion. When put to a vote in 1905, despite apprehensions, Los Angeles residents voted overwhelmingly to support the land purchase.

The vision shared by Eaton and Mulholland was strongly motivated by the construction of the Croton Aqueduct in New York in 1882. However, the construction of the Owens Valley aqueduct system, a 240-mile project, was considered unthinkable. Completed in 1913, it was hailed as a crowning achievement. Mulholland was encouraged to run for mayor and was bestowed with living testimonials.

At that moment, Mulholland was one of the few who recognized that the Owens Valley project was inadequate to fulfill the future needs of Los Angeles. He argued for more dams, aqueducts, and hydroelectric power. He proposed tapping the Colorado River and building a dam at Boulder Canyon. This too became a contested issue in the papers as the *Times* and *Examiner* debated its merits. While Boulder Dam became a reality, the fight continued for more than a decade, increasing tensions over the staggering costs. In the suburbs and hinterlands, there was the continued fear that Los Angeles was stealing land, destroying homes, and dashing the dreams of farming communities. Heated political confrontations, violence, and passionate journalism marked this final phase of Mulholland's tenure.

It literally came to a crashing end in 1928. The St. Francis Dam, built in 1924, was one of the facilities Mulholland constructed to house the waters obtained in the Owens Valley project. Its failure on March 13 represented the end of the nineteenth-century engineering philosophy of which he was a

student. The four hundred deaths and tremendous property loss stood as the city's greatest man-made disaster. The event created panic in communities located below other dams and ultimately led to Mulholland's departure from public life. Though exonerated at the hearings, Mulholland's spirit was crushed.

William Mulholland presided over the water system during the city's greatest expansion. He had the wisdom to create a water supply that serviced a population nearly thirty times larger than originally designed. Mulholland worked with politicians and businessmen who knew little of his work and only demanded an adequate supply of water. And, despite his stoic manner, he was just as visionary as the boosters more commonly recorded in the textbooks. Mulholland was, in many respects, the founder of the modern city.

In contrast to Mulholland, Courtney Chauncey Julian (1885-1934) was a personality many tried to forget. A year before the St. Francis Dam disaster, the Julian Petroleum Company collapsed, leaving thousands with worthless stock. *The Great Los Angeles Swindle* weaves a masterful account of Julian, his companies, and his image of Los Angeles. Jules Tygiel presents a compelling argument by providing a sweeping examination of Los Angeles and its citizens. Divided into three sections, "Oil," "Stocks," and "Scandal," the work starts with the 1930 courthouse murder of Motley Flint, a leading booster, a financier, the vice president of Pacific Southwest Bank, and the brother of former U.S. senator Frank Flint. It concludes with the murder-suicide of Helen and Rosebud Harris in 1931. The volume suggests that the Julian scandal was a crisis that touched every part of the city and had lingering effects. During the 1920s, the self-promoted golden city promised untold fortunes. Los Angeles and its residents believed they were immune from the catastrophes that were occurring in other parts of the nation. More than any other event, the Julian scandal proved them wrong.

The idea of failure in Los Angeles was unthinkable to most, and the accompanying pain was intolerable. "The city and county of Los Angeles," writes Tygiel, "had long featured one of the highest suicide rates in the nation" (p. 310). The murders and suicides associated with the Julian fiasco provided evidence that the city was linked to crimes of greed and hate. However, the greed that overtook small investors was not comparable to that of the elite. Tygiel explains that the real tragedy was that Los Angeles realized that it was no different from the rest of America and, perhaps, that its leaders were worse (p. 310). To emphasize this point, he quotes pioneer Los Angeles historian Carey McWilliams, who wrote, "It would have been possible to have assembled in the prison yard of San Quentin, a group of former civic leaders, empire builders, captains of industry and outstanding public officials from Southern California."²

Tygiel sees C. C. Julian as a mirror of the city's soul. Without question, Julian represents all that is good and bad about the new city. Thriving in a carnival-like environment, Julian sells the city, its wealth, and ultimately himself.

A migrant, drawn from Canada to Los Angeles in search of fame and fortune, Julian embodies the great wealth and vitality of the new city. His initial oil ventures suggested that there were millions of dollars of revenue waiting for the ambitious in the city's backyard. And as a booster, Julian tapped into the gullibility of those who came to Southern California in search of the American dream.

Within weeks of his initial investment in Los Angeles oil fields, the local newspapers made Julian a star. He wrote his own columns that were published as advertisements. His best line was, "Julian refuses to accept your money unless you can afford to lose! Widows and orphans, this is no investment for you!" (p. 40). Such advertisements convinced readers that Julian was trying to earn an honest dollar. Julian equally appeared willing to share the wealth. He appealed to the hearts and minds of the poor by suggesting that these investments would yield long-term prosperity. Armed with the belief that his oils wells, and later mines, could produce great wealth, thousands invested in his schemes.

Julian was also a master showman. He took would-be clients to his wells and mines by car or train, treated the crowds to meals, and often closed the festivities with music and dancing. His advertisements offered warnings that connoted signs of trust; he made promises, and for a brief moment he delivered.

The Julian Petroleum Company's success was hampered by avarice. While the Defiance Gas Stations were profitable, the oil wells generated insufficient returns. Only Julian became rich, and desires to expand his empire raised the suspicions of Edwin Daugherty, the California corporation commissioner, the press, and the investment community. Unfortunately, most attempts to prove that Julian was dishonest did not sever his relationship with the public but rather accentuated it. Julian defeated the Corporation Commission by transforming himself into the people's champion. He outsmarted the *Times* by creating the *Truth*, a paper for the average citizen. Over a decade, Julian used the bond established between him and the man on the street to demonstrate that the wealthy, too, were distrustful and had conspired against the average investor. Until his final demise, Julian retained a core of staunch supporters.

The fraudulent nature of Julian's transactions and the need for cash led him to form a partnership with Oklahoma oilman S. C. Lewis in 1924. By the following year, Lewis forced Julian to surrender ownership of Julian Pete, leaving Julian no choice but to pursue other interests. During the next two years, Lewis figured out how to manipulate his ledgers, favorably adjust stock prices, oversell shares, purchase reputable companies without cash, and make a small fortune. In 1926, Lewis negotiated a merger and managed to remain solvent through the creation of secret pools for wealthy investors. In 1927, with more than a half-million over issued shares and the discovery of the pools, the Julian Petroleum Company's stock collapsed and upset the fiber of the Los Angeles Stock Exchange.

The disasters of the 1920s were a blot on the city's legacy. Tygiel reveals that the scandal involved police officers, FBI agents, and the prosecutor's office. Key members of the stock exchange accepted bribes and gave special treatment to Julian Petroleum. Indeed, the entire fabric of the society was harmed. Yet the *Times* reflected the attitudes of the boosters and economic community, who were more concerned with the need to save the institutions of the city than punish the guilty. Voices outside the mainstream, like the resurrected Julian and the Reverend Bob Schuler, used radio shows and periodicals to level charges against the elite and demand justice for the lower classes.

In the final analysis, few were truly punished. C. C. Julian, who lost everything in Los Angeles, was indicted for mail fraud for an oil scheme in Oklahoma. He skipped bail, fled the country, and died penniless in China. Some bankers, politicians, investors, and businessmen went to jail, but their incarcerations were brief. The Julian Petroleum Company was placed in receivership.

The Julian and, to a lesser extent, the St. Francis incidents revealed that the city often failed to compensate all of the victims. Los Angeles tried to escape the legacy of failure by changing names or merging companies. Yet many of the parties involved in the tragedies and frauds had a hand in the new enterprises. The banks involved in the Julian scandal found safety in consolidation. Fearing collapse, the First National Bank agreed to a merger with the Security Trust and Savings. Similarly, the Bank of Italy absorbed the tainted Merchants National Bank. The receivers of the merged Julian Petroleum and California-Eastern Oil companies reincorporated the company as the Sunset Pacific Oil Company. And on a municipal level, the city's two utilities became the Department of Water and Power in 1929 as an aftermath of the St. Francis Dam incident.

By 1930, Los Angeles counted the largest minority community on the West Coast. Significant numbers of Japanese, Chinese, Mexicans, and African Americans lived in and around downtown Los Angeles. Complementing them was a larger number of poor European immigrants. Dana Cuff's *The Provisional City* considers this social transformation in terms of the use of space and land development in Los Angeles County. She investigates the transformation of five Los Angeles communities starting with the New Deal policies of the 1930s and progressing to the modern city of the 1990s.

Cuff describes the history of the settings and the types of housing built in each location. Although this specialized material has greater appeal to an architect or architectural historian, it is not beyond the grasp of the layman. If William Mulholland was the creator of the modern city, Cuff would claim that he only built its infrastructure. "In order to grasp the form of the contemporary city, and how it is significantly transformed," Cuff believes that one must "scrutinize the great schemes imposed there" (p. 5). By examining large-scale developments during this seventy-year period, she evaluates Los Angeles's great evolution.

The catalyst for change, according to Cuff, is the 1929 stock market crash. Afterwards, federal and state governments restructured the building industry from banking to construction to real estate development, creating a market for a new type of standardized housing unit, which gave way to the tract houses that compose contemporary suburbs. Cuff indicates that the 1930s mark the beginning of the house as a well-built, affordable, and mass-produced box.

By the 1960s, the box was marketed to an increasing and vast middle class. This transformation of the house occurs “at the same time as the population grew strikingly more diverse, through immigration, increasing numbers of women in the workforce, the undermining of racial segregation and domestic migration” (p. 9). And as uniform housing permeated both sides of the urban divide, public housing units, designed by leading architects, emerged in the core to combat against the slum.

Because Los Angeles needed nearly a half-million housing units in the postwar era, space was highly contested. Often, the desired areas initially housed ethnic and racial minorities. The uniform fear of the slum and these groups usually led to the demands for their removal. Cuff demonstrates, from newly found photographs, that not all of the designated slum communities consisted solely of substandard housing. Often, she explains, there was simply a need to reclaim space. Open spaces and residential spaces were redesigned for aesthetic and environmental purposes. Once these areas were targeted, the planners and developers employed new ideas in the construction.

Federal funding made numerous developments possible. Los Angeles recruited well-respected architects to design large-scale developments, and some worked with contractors to design private housing units. Through their efforts, the Los Angeles Housing Authority produced a variety of public housing styles during the 1940s and early 1950s. Richard Neutra and Robert Alexander’s Elysian Park Heights, Lloyd Wright’s Aliso Village, and the Quonset hut Rodger Young Village illustrated new housing schemes in deteriorating or underused areas.

Elysian Park Heights was planned in the underdeveloped Chavez Ravine, a predominately Mexican settlement. It was designed to have 3,300 units in high-rise and low-rise buildings. Aliso was constructed in 1941 and opened the following year. It replaced Boyle Heights Flats, largely a Russian community, regarded as the worst slum in the city. Designed to feature green space and community amenities such as schools and nurseries, Aliso gave preference to war workers. The Russians and Mexicans who had lived in the “flats” were displaced. Rodger Young Village was temporary housing designed for war veterans, many who chose not to go home after returning to the states. Built on a converted airfield in 1946, its Quonset huts were quickly assembled and the village was operational in ninety days. Yet in 1954, despite the wishes of most residents to remain, the village was closed. In its place came parking lots for the Los Angeles Zoo and the Autry Museum.

At the other end of the real estate spectrum were the more valued lands, where no one lost their homes but rather purchased them. Westchester represented the private developers' use of space. It is a planned inner suburb, a short distance from Los Angeles International Airport, whose developers, including Fritz Burns, were opponents of public housing. During the 1940s and early 1950s, Westchester was promoted as a racially exclusive middle-class suburb of single-family homes. Similarly, Playa Vista was a planned public and private enterprise in a coastal enclave owned by Howard Hughes. Following his death, developers proposed a mixed-use project with 1,024 acres of residential and commercial properties.

Quietly, by the early 1950s, developers were able to amass a strong campaign against public housing. Cuff reveals that large-scale public and private housing was constructed at nearly the same costs, and this influenced the developers' positions. One major confrontation pitted Frank Wilkinson, the long-standing liberal employee of the housing authority, against developer Fritz Burns. The authority was weakly supported by Mayor Fletcher Bowron and elements of the Communist Party, but a larger faction including the *Times*, the Kaiser Corporation, the Committee against Socialist Housing, other developers, and the Catholic Church rallied behind Burns.

Local residents organized to save their communities. Integrated groups successfully contested issues in Rodger Young Village, but they could not save their community from destruction. Attempts to halt the demolition of homes in Chavez Ravine were also unsuccessful, and the fight against the construction of public housing was successful in Elysian Park. Burns and his associates stifled Los Angeles's involvement in public housing.

Burns, portrayed as both villain and innovator, emerges as one of the most important figures in Cuff's work. He was also a property owner in Chavez Ravine, and when he joined the Elysian Park protests, they won a major victory. During the court proceedings, Burns questioned Wilkinson's loyalty to the nation in reference to communism. Unwilling to answer, Wilkinson was driven out of office, and the entire housing authority suffered. Supported by the builders, Los Angeles terminated its public housing contract. After a court case, local support in Congress, and additional negotiations, the city settled its contracts with the federal government.

Although public housing was not built at Chavez Ravine, the homes were not saved. The city dedicated the land to park space and in a series of complicated negotiations, with Walter O'Malley, donated the land for the construction of Dodger Stadium. Once again, press opinions were telling. The *Times*, as a booster, supported the arrangement, while the *News-Herald* and the *Journal*, as advocates of the displaced property holders, denounced the decision.

As *The Provisional City* reveals, the life and death of a neighborhood is a complicated process. While the architects created imaginative ideas, from the modernist notions of Richard Neutra to the contemporary ones of the new urbanism, the residents in these communities pay little interest to the designs.

Their fears and aspirations lay not in the efforts of the designers but in the thoughts of public and private figures who are in constant motion questioning the use of space.

The backroom politics of race and class that are essential to Cuff's work make a larger appearance in the writings of political scientist Raphael Sonenshein. *Politics in Black and White* examines the rise of Tom Bradley as mayor of Los Angeles (1973-1993).³ Bradley, a former policeman, becomes the first black elected to the city council and later the first black mayor by serving the city's African American population as well as a multiracial coalition of progressive citizens. The idea of coalition is central to Sonenshein's thesis. Blacks and whites, he argues, unite through a series of common interests, producing not one but numerous coalitions.

Furthermore, Bradley serves as a window to the other Los Angeles with a political career framed by the Watts Riots in 1965 and the Rodney King Riots of 1992. While there was some degree of economic prosperity and significant home ownership, Los Angeles blacks never fared as well as their counterparts in other large cities. Despite the 1948 Supreme Court decision against restrictive covenants, African Americans remained ghettoized within the heart of the city. Amazingly, while most blacks were contained in a handful of election districts, they lacked political power at the beginning of the 1960s. Latinos and Jews, in contrast, had already gained some vestige of political power and had seats on the city council.

Between the late 1940s and the early 1960s, Sonenshein argues that the city, downtown business, and the *Times* engaged in practices to limit black (and other nonwhite) participation in governmental affairs. In most circumstances, the city isolated and divided ethnic minorities. To the benefit of the mayor, his constituents, and those in the city government, Los Angeles consistently reorganized election districts to ensure white majorities. On numerous occasions, this practice prevented a black majority.

Public housing, as Cuff's study of Rodger Young Village indicates, was an exception to the division of the races. Groups within this and other housing complexes formed coalitions challenging the political authority. This might have been the start of the first political coalition between blacks, Latinos, and whites. However, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), one of the most conservative elements in the city, was antiblack and uncomfortable with the biracial alliance. The text alludes that the LAPD tried to deter political organization within public housing complexes as it gave rise to these alliances. It visibly used its weight to back mayoral candidates who supported its issues (p. 32). Led by Chief William Parker, the LAPD closely scrutinized Mayors Bowron, Poulson, and Yorty. Even Parker's successor, Daryl Gates, challenged Bradley when he took office.

The 1960 census disclosure that African Americans increased from 8.7 percent to 13 percent of the city is seen as the true initiation of the political coalition. Democratic Assemblymen Augustus Hawkins, the sole black elected

official in the city, and Jesse Unruh were in charge of the city's reappointment. Hawkins brokered for a deal in the senate and assembly, but within the city there was no concession. Instead, the black neighborhoods were split into five districts, and only one, the eighth, had a black majority.

Upstart Democrat Sam Yorty's campaign for mayor in 1961 produced the first true coalition. His defeat of Norris Poulson represented a victory over the traditional political organizations, the *Times*, and organized business. Yorty received the support of San Fernando Valley home owners and inner-city minorities by promising valley residents to end the trash separation process that led to the use of two garbage cans and by offering to appoint minorities to city commissions and to fight police brutality. However, once in office, he balked at naming an African American to the tenth district's vacant city council seat. Not deterred, the *Eagle* and the *Sentinel*, Los Angeles's two black newspapers, and black coalitions mobilized, promoted a recall movement, and solicited candidates. When the court blocked the recall, they decided to contest the seat in the next election and worked to force the city council to select Gilbert Lindsay to fill the vacant historic Latin seat in the ninth. As a result, in the 1963 council elections, Lindsay ran as an incumbent in the ninth, two black challengers Everette Porter (supported by Yorty) and Billy Mills (supported by the community) opposed each other in the eighth, and Tom Bradley ran as the challenger in the tenth. On March 28, Bradley won outright with a majority of the black vote and even numbers of the white vote. Two months later on May 28, Mills and Lindsay won in runoffs. The foundation of Bradley's coalition was laid.

Sonenshein examines how Bradley's initial election changed the nature of black Los Angeles and offers greater possibilities. Democratic regulars, such as Mervyn Dymally and Jesse Unruh, solicited rank-and-file African American support. Bradley, a reformer, appealed to a more diverse group. His base consisted of less educated and moderate Latinos, progressive Asians, more educated and upwardly mobile blacks, and highly educated and progressive whites. Bradley empowered African Americans and other minorities to vote not solely for race but by issue.

Following Bradley's election as mayor, he developed both white and black allies, and time and time again, Bradley assisted their political aspirations. Sonenshein is equally adept in analyzing the two factions that developed from the black political organizations. He explains how the Bradley-Dymally rivalry produced two machines for breeding future candidates. Major beneficiaries of this movement include Yvonne Brathwaite Burke and Maxine Waters, who later left the Bradley camp to form her own organization.

However, what makes Sonenshein's text so rich is the story of the mayoral election, the expansion of the Bradley coalition, the development of his machine, and the confrontations with the old order. The author covers these issues in great detail and provides significant numerical and statistical data.

His vast collection of interviews and involvement during the Bradley years provides further insight to the complicated issues.

One of the particularly interesting situations is the Rodney King affair, which pushed Bradley to demand Chief Gates's resignation. Contrary to the notion that this event separated the city and severely tested the strength of the Bradley coalition, Sonenshein argues that the coalition held remarkably well and had bounced back from the banking scandal. He reveals that most blacks, Latinos, and liberal whites viewed Bradley favorably after the King beating. In contrast, the city council did not support the mayor's decision to place Chief Gates on leave. Only Michael Woo, the lone Asian councilman, supported Gates's ouster. Where, according to Sonenshein, Bradley fails is in the days following his call for Gates to resign and in the aftermath of the riots. With waning support in the council, Bradley rallied his black voters. While African Americans and Latinos backed him, everyone else did not. The Christopher Commission report briefly aided Bradley, and then the riots occurred. Across the board, even among communities of color, Bradley's stock fell. Polls revealed that his once significant white base slipped well below fifty percent. Sonenshein credits Proposition F, the bill to reform the LAPD, with the restoration of the coalition. In key districts, Latinos and moderate whites favored the measure, while Jews, liberal whites, and blacks gave it overwhelming support. Only among conservative whites did the legislation fail to receive fifty percent of the vote. While blacks, liberals, and Jews had reunited, Bradley recognized his time as the leader of the coalition had past. He did not seek a sixth term.

In the post-Bradley years, the Republicans returned to power. The hope was that Michael Woo would parlay the successful formula to victory. The fact that he lost to conservative Richard Riordan raised new questions about the strength of the coalition. Unfortunately, Sonenshein's study ends with the Riordan-Woo contest and simply does not provide enough information about the Asian relationship to the coalitions to explain why Woo failed. James Hahn's recent victory over Antonio Villaraigosa, which took place after the book's publication, represents another challenge to Sonenshein's thesis and raises additional concerns about the future of the coalitions. However, these failures to produce the city's last two mayors do not suggest that coalitions are no longer possible but rather highlight Sonenshein's secondary point that trust between minority and majority participants is essential for the fulfillment of identifiable goals.

While time will be the final judge of his theory, Sonenshein's assessment of the Bradley years is correct. The mayor made Los Angeles a Pacific Rim city by attracting international business and tourism. He campaigned for investment in South Central, encouraged massive downtown redevelopment, and hosted the first profitable Olympics. During the course of his five terms, Bradley found a way to bring minorities, women, whites, and downtown

business together. His failings were always present, but they were magnified during his failed campaigns for governor and became obvious after his fourth election. Bradley lacked the type of personal style to abate the worries of the skeptic. He equally suffered from an increasing inability to balance the needs of the liberal whites and more militant blacks. Yet none of the key areas of difference between his white and black constituents, such as the lack of affordable housing, Pacific oil drilling, the Farrakhan speech, or King beating, affected his standing at the polls. Instead, it was a financial scandal concerning Bradley's unorthodox ties to local banks that did the most damage to his image as a trustworthy figure.

These four books are substantive additions to the increasing literature on the Los Angeles experience. In many ways, Mulholland, Sonenshein, Tygiel, and Cuff are revisionists, but they also provide new approaches to the material. Los Angeles is the central player in their stories. Cuff's monograph may be the only one that can be associated with the "Los Angeles School," but all clearly highlight the belief that Los Angeles departs from all eastern and midwestern cities.

The authors establish this point in two manners. First, they draw comparisons with East Coast or midwestern cities to reveal distinctions, and second, they place Los Angeles within the growing competition between western cities for supremacy. The following statement by Sonenshein is illustrative:

Los Angeles is the prototypical western metropolis—a city of the twentieth century, built by entrepreneurial visionaries on a path quite different from that of eastern and midwestern cities. The twin concepts of boom and reform that underlie the experience of Sun Belt cities have characterized the spectacular growth of Los Angeles. (P. 13)

As the Croton project is compared to the Owens Valley project, William Mulholland can be compared to New York's famed Robert Moses. Yet in contrast to Robert Caro's and Joel Schwartz's biographies, none of Mulholland's biographies are of an embittered character.⁴

Mulholland is seen as a tough but likeable man of honor. He, like Moses, appears to be a king, in the sense that his career as superintendent spans more than fifty years and covers the terms of nineteen mayors, but his status was favorable before the St. Francis tragedy. Mulholland's story implies that he should be considered one of the nation's best public servants, ranked higher than his New York counterpart.

Jules Tygiel broadens the perspective of the Julian saga by making the cityscape the centerpiece of his story. The underlying emphasis of the text suggests that the speculation and corruption associated with Julian Pete are a product of the uncontrollable urge to make Los Angeles better than San Francisco and more like Chicago and New York.

Raphael Sonenshein makes a similar point. He states his interest in New York City in the preface and in the final chapter speaks strongly to its failures. *Politics in Black and White* is not only an analysis of Los Angeles but a comparison of black mayoral elections. Sonenshein argues that the coalition that produced Bradley's election indicates that Los Angeles strategists achieved victories that had not occurred in other cities. The election of black men in overwhelming black secondary cities such as Cleveland, Gary, and Newark did not assist Bradley. Similarly, Bradley accomplished something not duplicated in Chicago or New York. That these two primary cities, with substantial black populations, could not elect African American candidates without solid black/minority support enhances the idea that Los Angeles is unique. The model, for a city that is less than twenty percent black, used multiracial coalitions that unified liberal whites with some conservative whites. This did not happen in New York and Chicago, as conservatives refused to support the black candidate. However, the Los Angeles model was later duplicated with success in Seattle and San Francisco and on a smaller scale in New Haven, Connecticut.

The idea of difference also flows throughout Dana Cuff's work. She argues that the nation's housing policies were mandated from Washington and New York, which had very different housing concerns. Furthermore, conditions in Los Angeles worsened when suburbanization exploded in Los Angeles in the 1940s and the war created a housing shortage. Her best examples center on Rodger Young Village's use of Quonset huts as homes, its sense of home ownership within the core, and its number of minorities. Similarly, Westchester is a suburban model that precedes Levittown. Throughout the text, Cuff compares events in New York and several other communities, including Houston and Chicago, to those in Los Angeles to establish her points.

Although the City of Los Angeles did not become the nation's first city, many social scientists suggest it is poised to do so during this century.⁵ If concepts of urban development truly pass from the East Coast to the Midwest and then to the West, Los Angeles highlights the growth of the frontier. Then perhaps, more than any other American city, the twentieth century does embody Los Angeles. Brash, innovative, and resilient, Los Angeles did and continues to do things in its own unique style. While maintaining its frontier image, the city has developed a cosmopolitan flair to rival New York and Chicago, complete with skyscrapers and social, cultural, and financial facilities.

—Leslie Wilson
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NOTES

1. See, for example, Remi Nadeau, *The Water Seekers* (Santa Barbara, 1974), and William Kahl, *Water and Power* (Berkeley, 1982); and Margaret Leslie Davis, *Rivers in the Desert* (New York, 1993).
2. Ibid. Quoted from Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (1946; rpt. edn., New York, 1970).
3. Tom Bradley has been the subject of other works, including Gregory J. Payne and Scott C. Ratzan, *Tom Bradley: The Impossible Dream* (Santa Monica, 1986), and Thomas F. Pettigrew and Denise A. Alston, *Tom Bradley's Campaigns for Governor: The Dilemma of Race and Political Strategies* (Washington, D.C., 1988).
4. See Robert Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York, 1974), and Joel Schwartz, *The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals and Redevelopment of the Inner City* (Columbus, 1993).
5. The "Los Angeles School" centers on a group of scholars, including Allen Scott, Michael Dear, and Edward Soja, who study Los Angeles. They believe that Los Angeles will be the model for future urban planning and that the city is the nation's first example of postmodern urbanism. See D. W. Miller, "The New Urban Studies," *Chronicle of Higher Education* August (2000): A15-16.

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