



Invented Edens: Techno-Cities of the Twentieth Century (Lemelson Center Studies in Invention and Innovation series)

Robert H. Kargon, Arthur P. Molella

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Industrialization created cities of Dickensian squalor that were crowded, smoky, dirty, and disease-ridden. By the beginning of the twentieth century, urban visionaries were looking for ways to improve both living and working conditions in industrial cities. In *Invented Edens*, Robert Kargon and Arthur Molella trace the arc of one form of urban design, which they term the techno-city: a planned city developed in conjunction with large industrial or technological enterprises, blending the technological and the pastoral, the mill town and the garden city. Techno-cities of the twentieth century range from factory towns in Mussolini's Italy to the Disney creation of Celebration, Florida. Kargon and Molella show that the techno-city represents an experiment in integrating modern technology into the world of ideal life. Techno-cities mirror society's understanding of current technologies, and at the same time seek to regain the lost virtues of the edenic pre-industrial village. The idea of the techno-city transcended ideologies, crossed national borders, and spanned the entire twentieth century. Kargon and Molella map the concept through a series of exemplars. These include Norris, Tennessee, home to the Tennessee Valley Authority; Torviscosa, Italy, built by Italy's Fascist government to accommodate synthetic textile manufacturing (and featured in an early short by Michelangelo Antonioni); Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela, planned by a team from MIT and Harvard; and, finally, Disney's Celebration--perhaps the ultimate techno-city, a fantasy city reflecting an era in which virtual experiences are rapidly replacing actual ones.

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