

Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis II and Mabel O. Wilson, eds, *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020), 424 pp. incl. 94 b&w ills, ISBN 9780822966593, £26.60  
doi:10.1017/arh.2021.28

*Reviewed by* OLA UDUKU

Every so often a volume appears that is likely to set the bar for writing and research in a discipline. For studies in race and architecture, Mabel O. Wilson, Charles L. Davis and Irene Cheng have achieved this with *Race and Modern Architecture*. This is an extensive compilation of writings on the subject, with a wide cast of themes and authors who have contributed texts that each give a critical reading of an aspect of the influence of race on our understanding of modern architecture.

The editors' introduction to the volume explains its emergence as the culmination of a four-year project that included a symposium inviting papers on the subject of race and architecture at Columbia University. This partly explains the American weighting of the volume's papers. Nevertheless, the contributors introduce readings on different aspects of how racial influences can be read into architecture from a range of situations, perspectives and countries. The editors' justification for the project and the need for the production of this book is well argued and sets the contextual background to the volume.

Following the comprehensive introduction, the book comprises eighteen chapters arranged into sections. The first, 'Race and Enlightenment', has essays that broadly focus on the historical underpinnings of racialised discourses as related to architecture and racial identity. The chapters by Wilson and Peter Minosh leave the reader in no doubt that race cannot be disentangled or airbrushed from the construction of America's Capitol Building, given the way in which the country's founding fathers rationalised their engagement with race and identity in 'free' America. Reinhold Martin's chapter on the 'Color Line' gives a critical review of key debates on architectural history in relation to this major aspect of race theory, the theorisation of systemic discrimination and spatial segregation, as used by the eminent Black philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois and others. Addison Godel's chapter takes us across the world to China and examines how gardens and their planning cultures were viewed in the west as progressive until the opium wars and imperial conquests from the 1830s to the 1860s. He then goes on to discuss how European thinking after this period changed to a view of stasis in keeping with the post-conquest imperial view of Chinese and other Asian cultures as being subordinate to those of the west.

Section two, 'Race and Organicism', presents three essays that all deal with the embeddedness of racial theories in the narratives of land and identity in America. Cheng gives a particularly clear insight into how structural racism and racist narrative are ingrained in principal areas of modern architectural theory through the frequent failure to engage with 'non-white' areas of investigation or research within the constructed canon.

'Race and Nationalism', the title of the third section, is from this perspective the most interesting group of essays, particularly those by Luis E. Carranza and Kenny Cupers,

who detail the ways in which architecture was used as a medium to transmit ideas of hybridity and identity in the case of Mexico, and to impose a nationalist identity in the case of Namibia. This identity-forming process is explored also by Brian L. McLaren's essay on fascist architecture's entanglement with race, anti-Semitism and eugenics in Italy. For students of nationalisms and their connection to built architecture, these are key and clearly written essays which should be on every reading list.

In section four, which is themed as 'Race and Representation', two critical essays reveal how race has been erased from narratives and discourses on architecture, and its involvement in two very American settings: Adrienne Brown on the evolution of the skyscraper and Dianne Harris on the depiction of American suburban life. Both authors in different ways show, through their engagement with narratives, texts and the socio-economic, demographic backgrounds of central New York and suburban Illinois, how the racialised situations of Black bodies as workers, residents and participants in the construction of these spaces has been erased or left as mere footnotes in their official histories.

'Race and Colonialism' is the title of section five, in which case studies from Malaysia, Kenya and Nigeria present different accounts of the ways in which race played out in the creation of design. In the case of Malaysia-Singapore and its indigenous design past, the differences in the view of race and racialisation discourse from the 'South' are well explored by Jiat-Hwee Chang's exploration of design cultures and authenticity before the international design style was promoted by the 'tropical architecture' school's key thinkers to an emerging independent Malaysia. Mark Crinson describes the thesis project of the Architectural Association student Richard Hughes, 'Maragua', which became a real-life but ultimately unrealised plan for an interracial settlement in a post-racialised Kenya. Finally, Adedoyin Teriba's account of the provenance and construction of the multi-authored Shitta Bey mosque in Lagos demonstrates how race, religion and politics are embodied in a landmark mosque in one of sub-Saharan Africa's most culturally diverse cities.

'Race and Urbanism', the final section, while perhaps the theme that might have benefited most from further contributions and exploration, allows the reader to consider different approaches to race within a wider urban context. The first two papers deal with the United States from its unique past of urban segregation. Andrew Herscher reviews how legislation has helped to create the segregated urban landscape of much of the country, and Lisa Uddin examines how the activist Noah Purifoy engages with local communities to provide urban art. The final piece by Esra Akcan discusses future regeneration, using an examination of post-war and reunification Berlin to consider what effects urban planning has now and might have in a changing future.

The essays in *Race and Modern Architecture* give us an encyclopaedic range of texts on race and its intersectional relationship with architecture, its historical context and the lives of its subjects. These essays are wide ranging and go further than explorations of race, space and modernity. Issues of erasure, amnesia or silence are extensively covered, as are more stark points of racism, segregation and nationalism in American and global architectural history. Widening the essay range to issues such as hybridity, locations of indigenous identities and other notions of difference in relation to the canon helps this volume achieve what the authors hoped it would, namely 'an instigation, a beginning [... of] a body of work'.

Extensively referenced and mostly well illustrated, this book deserves to be in every architecture school library and is likely to provide the material for seminars, discussions and debates on race in architecture in the US and internationally. From my viewpoint in advocating for the global south, I hope this book will be made accessible to academics there, too, perhaps as a discounted or open-access digital resource.

Daniel Barber, *Modern Architecture and Climate: Design Before Air Conditioning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 336 pp. incl. 196 b&w and 76 colour ills, ISBN 9780691170039, £50 (paperback)  
doi:10.1017/arh.2021.29

*Reviewed by* FLORIAN URBAN

*Modern Architecture and Climate* is the outcome of Daniel Barber's decade-long investigations of modern architecture, which he started against the background of the climate emergency. Against this background, harnessing historical research for current concerns is perhaps the book's single most important contribution.

Barber, who teaches at the University of Pennsylvania, will be familiar to some readers from his earlier work on the Bauhaus. In his 2019 article 'Heating the Bauhaus', published online at [hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:28553](https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:28553), he unsparingly deconstructed the myths surrounding Walter Gropius's 1926 Bauhaus building in Dessau. While to generations of students it has been praised as a building whose form allegedly accommodates its innovative function, Barber showed that the single-glazed workshop wing from the beginning was impossible to heat appropriately to provide thermal comfort, or even to prevent the pipes from freezing. In 2010, after three unsuccessful attempts to upgrade the heating system, that part of the building was declared unfit for use, and is currently maintained exclusively for conservation reasons.

Now, in *Modern Architecture and Climate*, Barber turns his attention to other canonical architects of the mid-twentieth century, discussing, among others, Le Corbusier, Lúcio Costa, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Skidmore Owings and Merrill and MMM Roberto. He regularly steps back to look at the general picture and integrate his archival findings into a larger historical narrative. This approach convincingly relates to his project of a 'revisionist history of architectural modernism, demonstrating the significance of environmental concerns', as he puts it on his university website.

The book is divided into two parts. 'The Globalization of the International Style' comprises the first three chapters, dealing with climate-concerned modern architecture from the 1920s to the 1940s, and focusing on Le Corbusier, Richard Neutra and the Brazilian modernists. The second part, 'The American Acceleration', comprises chapters four to six and focuses on American-led programmes of the post-war period, including the American Institute of Architects' Climate Control Project, the Princeton Architectural Laboratory and the debates around air conditioning.