

Shanghai auch in Zukunft in der Kontinuität seiner Geschichte stehen werde, dass es sich in vielerlei Hinsicht nicht von anderen re-globalisierten Städten unterscheide und dennoch eine ganz außergewöhnliche und einmalige Stadt sei. Shanghai sei eine post-sozialistische Metropole, die wiederum auch weit über dieses Charakteristikum hinaus der Ort sei, an dem man die Zukunft erfahren könne. Dass die Stadtregierung von Shanghai mit der Weltausstellung sich selbst dazu verpflichtet hatte, diese Stadt umweltfreundlicher zu gestalten, und diese Verpflichtung auch eingehalten hat, scheint bei Wasserstrom nicht auf. Das aber wäre ein wirklich wichtiger und interessanter Ansatzpunkt gewesen, der Anlass zu einer analytischen Auseinandersetzung mit Shanghai in Gegenwart und Vergangenheit hätte sein können. Ist Shanghai ein Trendsetter, wie es sich selbst gern sieht, oder ein Moloch, in dem das Ideal des maoistischen China endgültig zu Grab getragen wird? Doch ist die Analyse sowieso in diesem schmalen Bändchen nicht zu Hause. Zwar erfahren wir viel aus englischsprachiger und wenig aus chinesisch-sprachiger Presse über Shanghai. Doch ganz offenbar ist die Nähe des Autors zu dieser Stadt so groß, dass ihm ein erhellender Blick aus der Distanz nicht gelungen ist. Wie eine uninspirierte Pflichtübung wirkt das Buch. Schade.

Martin J. Murray: City of Extremes. The Spatial Politics of Johannesburg (= Politics, History, and Culture), Durham: Duke University Press 2011, 470 S.

Reviewed by
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Martin Murray is a former Professor of Sociology at the State University of New York in Binghamton, and most recently Professor of Urban Planning at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. His interest with Johannesburg extends over some ten years during which time he has made several visits to the city and engaged in intensive research. The net result, journal articles aside, has been the publication of two substantial books. In 2008 Murray's first Johannesburg book appeared under the title *Taming the Disorderly City: Envisioning the Spatial Landscape of Johannesburg after Apartheid*. Then, three years later, we have the *City of Extremes: The Spatial Politics of Johannesburg*. It is not just another book about Johannesburg, indeed not. "City of Extremes" conveys some serious messages based upon both informed observation and meticulous library and archival research; as demonstrated by the 130 pages of footnotes. Running through the book as a whole is Murray's lament that, after a fraction short of 20 years since the official demise of apartheid, there is a never widening gulf between the overwhelming majority of Johannesburg's poorly serviced

residents and the elitist minority of middle and upper class residents. The latter group enjoy ready access to world-class malls and shopping services, to educational and health facilities, whereas the bulk of the black working class is still contained in the townships created in the eras of segregation and apartheid. Murray takes little comfort that the ranks of the middle and upper classes continue to grow through an inflow of a small stream of nouveau riche indigenous people known also as 'black diamonds'.

Before unpacking and laying bare the structure of the book and the essence of its Three Parts, and despite some negative issues which I refer to only in passing, it is my opinion that this book makes an excellent addition to the growing list of works that range in focus from specialised aspects of various parts of Johannesburg to the city as a whole. Murray skilfully blends architectural material, drawn from the magisterial work by Chipkin, into the evolving narrative. And readers will find the section of the book where Cosmos City (pp. 197-207) is discussed to be very interesting indeed.

The material encompassed in the book is set out and presented in three parts. Each Part contains two or three Chapters and each Part is prefaced by a discussion over some six to eight pages of text that are intended to set up the essence of the Chapters that follow. The above structure may well have helped the author during the actual writing of the book. In its completed form, however, the structure serves more to create an impression of three books in one set of covers rather than a single wide ranging treatise. The above impression is underscored by the author's irritating

tendency to repeat himself from time to time.

Part I contains matter that is related to the making and meaning of the built environment of Johannesburg during its infancy as a "Europeanized city at the edge of the British Empire" (p. xxi). And the some 30 pages of Chapter 1 contain material that ranges from the 1880s to the end of the 1930s. Whereas the author might well believe that he had established a suitable starting block for the discussion that follows it is achieved without any mention, let alone a discussion, of what others will see as fundamental to the creation of the race-space of the City.

Specifically, there is no mention of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act that was directly inspired by the Johannesburg municipal officials. And the Act is the single instrument that brought about some 90% of the racial separation in Johannesburg before the first apartheid Acts were passed. Indeed the statement, on the first page of the book's Preface, that Johannesburg was "the quintessential apartheid city" (p. xi) is fundamentally incorrect. Johannesburg of the early 1990s was the quintessential segregated city and Cape Town, that had declined the adoption of the enabling Urban Areas Act, was the quintessential apartheid city.

In Chapter 2 Murray switches his sights and takes aim at the "historically specific modes of city building in Johannesburg that sought to reconcile modern planning principles with the exclusionary practice of racial segregation" (p. xxi). Here he draws extensively and appropriately from various sources and in particular from Chipkin and van der Waal.¹ In Chapter 2 the focus is mainly on the changing skyline of

the then Central Business District and also on Hillbrow, the cosmopolitan residential area that is located on both slopes of South Africa's northern watershed and not on "flatland" (p. 66). In closing the Chapter Murray makes reference to the fact that just as the CBD had 'modernised' itself so a combination of factors, and not least the changing nature of retailing, saw businesses leaving the updated CBD and heading north into the low density and sprawling suburbs of what was then still the municipal area of Sandton.

In Part II, entitled "Unravelling Space: Centrifugal Urbanism and the Convulsive City", and in Part III, "Fortifying Space", Murray draws his readers into the meat of the book. Here he examines the patchwork cityscape that is metropolitan Johannesburg after apartheid. It covers an extremely large area with a cityscape that is increasingly being fashioned by the 'alliance' of capital and local government. Both parties are jointly determined to make and promote Johannesburg as a world-class African city but at the same time as it forges new upmarket urban space the city is spawning an ever increasing sprawl of peripheral concentrations of shacks that the poorest live in.

In the three Chapters of Part II the focus is on the "splintering metropolis" (p. 85), the hollowing out of the central area, and its transformation into an "outcast ghetto" (p. 370), and the disturbing but ever widening gap between the minority 'haves' and the vast number of 'have-nots'. Inevitably those readers who believe that the old CBD area of Johannesburg, and the city's periphery, is constantly improving, and those who are more pessimistic will read

the Chapters with different degrees of approval.

In the last of the three Parts, the emphasis is on the nature and the construction of the 'fortified' spaces that increasingly enclose residential areas, cluster complexes, and shopping malls occupied and frequented by the predominantly (but no longer exclusively white) upper classes. Murray deals in some detail with the 'fortified areas' occupied by three large banks and his conclusions about their role in 'breaking up' the old centralized CBD are similar to those made elsewhere.

In conclusion I reiterate my earlier statement that the book is an excellent addition to the literature on Johannesburg, and a must-read book for all serious scholars with an interest in the City of Gold. It is a pity that the name of the city is not part of the title but has been relegated to last place in the subtitle. Thus one is left to ponder why the title of the book was not Johannesburg: The Spatial Politics of the City of Extremes.

Note:

- 1 C. Chipkin, *Johannesburg Style. Architecture and Society, 1880s–1960s*, Cape Town 1993; G. van der Waal, *From Mining Camp to Metropolis. The Building of Johannesburg, 1886–1940*, Pretoria, 1987.