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Reviews of books

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Martin J. Murray, *Taming the Disorderly City: The Spatial Landscape of Johannesburg after Apartheid*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008. 260pp. £19.50 pbk.

James Brennan, **Andrew Burton and Yusuf Lawi (eds.)**, *Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging Metropolis*. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2007. 288pp. £24.95 pbk.

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In his lucidly written and insightful *The African City*, Bill Freund suggested that two trends have characterized work on the post-colonial African metropolis. The first has focused on the 'dysfunctional and dangerous' even 'nightmarish' aspects of contemporary African urbanity. The second has highlighted the 'cultural creativity' and 'economic rationality' of much African urban activity.[1] The two books under review fall roughly into these different camps.

Taming the Disorderly City is more contemporary urban study than urban history. It describes and does much to explain the spatial social geography of contemporary Johannesburg, drawing on rich existing literature by the historical geographers and sociologists.[2] Murray's depiction is largely dystopian. His vision of this South African metropolis is even more disturbing than Fritz Lang's imagined cinematic city of the 1920s. Rescue and redemption for Johannesburg seem less likely. The divisions of the apartheid city endure, while the evil robot of market capitalism has brought about even greater inequality. Johannesburg is seemingly irredeemably divided between a city of 'spectacle', the 'luxurious playgrounds for the rich' that keep 'alive the enduring myth of progress' on the one hand, and the 'other' city of 'abysmal slums' in which the disorderly residuum lacking sufficient wealth, education or 'talent' must reside.

[1] B. Freund, *The African City* (Cambridge, 2007).

[2] Notably: A. Morris, *Bleakness and Light: Inner City Transition in Hillbrow, Johannesburg* (Johannesburg, 1999); J. Beall, O. Crankshaw and S. Parnell, *Uniting a Divided City: Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg* (London, 2002); R. Tomlinson, R. A.Beauregard, L. Bremner and X. Mangcu (eds.), *Emerging Johannesburg: Perspectives on the Postapartheid City* (London and New York, 2003); K. Beavon, *Johannesburg: The Making and Shaping of a City* (Pretoria and Leiden, 2004); L. Bremner, *Johannesburg: One City, Colliding Worlds* (Pretoria, 2004).

Murray argues that the task of remedying the apartheid legacy of social and built environment divides, while meeting the challenge of new 'perverse' urbanization (urbanization that has seen no responding expansion of wage employment) has been irresponsibly left by those in authority to market capitalism. Consequently urban regeneration in some parts of the city has been accompanied by urban ruin in others. Slums are the result of 'real estate competition', with informal settlements in particular being 'dumping places' for the poor, while the rich are 'safely cocooned behind walls' or (two pages later) 'safely cocooned behind barricades'.

Murray's arguments are often persuasive, even if barricades and walls have not always guaranteed the safety of the rich in Johannesburg, and he presents the social structure of the city in rather too simplified binary terms. Many of his observations about the nature of Johannesburg's urbanity that disturb him, not least that there are few physical areas of 'democratic experience' in the city compared to many another metropolis, are convincing. There are few physical spaces that facilitate contact, however fleeting, across the city's social spectrum compared to many other cities across the globe. And the social geography and built environment of the city so dramatically and readily reveal its disparities in wealth to the outsider. Hence Johannesburg's urbanity, for much of its history, has more often than not disturbed visitors, perhaps especially those from cities of 'the north'. Yet particularly in the first few chapters, Murray continually repeats these points. This is an author treading water. There is repetition of both argument and terminology, especially of the irrefutable point that Johannesburg is a city of spectacular inequality and enormous poverty. Johannesburg does indeed have a much higher *gini* coefficient than, for instance, Dar es Salaam. But one grows impatient to learn how the author thinks such poverty and inequity affects the lives of Johannesburg's inhabitants.

Murray does eventually offer considerable and often adroitly chosen thick description of built environments, and this includes some effective details of individual life histories. Yet here there would appear to be some contradiction in his argument. Murray criticizes those, like place-marketers and planners, who want to regenerate Johannesburg and turn it into a 'radiant city' for characterizing the Central Business District and inner-city areas in dystopian fashion. In Murray's opinion, they describe places of lawlessness and grime so as to pave the way for private investment-driven regeneration. Yet he provides a similarly dystopian vision of his own: in intriguing but disturbing accounts of how entire buildings have been hijacked by criminal syndicates, or in moving but even more disturbing descriptions of extensive urban misery and 'ongoing social catastrophe'. The Central Business District has held out against what Murray terms 'the forces of total annihilation and ruin', but only just, and in his view despite the worst efforts of the market and a local state that has largely failed the poor. But Murray, other than implicitly suggesting that greater state intervention is required, provides little in the way of detailed solutions of his own, presumably because he does not subscribe to what he dubs the 'myth of progress'.

Taming the Disorderly City overall is somewhat reminiscent of Andrew Mearns' despairing vision of the East End in *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, without Mearns' certainty, or much certainty or hope of any kind, as to where help might come from. There is also more than a touch of Engels on Manchester. But Engels obviously had his own certainty about what needed to be done. He also allowed for 'infinite gradations' in the Mancunian social structure. Murray's Johannesburg, a little like the Johannesburg portrayed in films of the 1980s such as in *Dry White*

Season or *Mapantsula*, contains only a Manichean divide of very rich and very poor: no middling sorts or middling areas are described at all, let alone cultural creolization. Neither is much allowance made for the possibility that urbanization for some, perhaps even for many, in the shanties or inner-city areas might be seen from their perspective as providing positive opportunities. Murray says that for most it did not provide a 'better life', but his contention is unproven. Proving it depends in part, of course, on the nature of the life left behind; not just in the South African countryside but in, for instance and for many, Mugabe's Zimbabwe or other conflict-ridden parts of sub-Saharan Africa. One is also reminded of Alan Mayne's criticism of earlier stereotypes of slums that could 'obscure the lives of the inner-city working-classes' and 'reduce them to puppets who gesture at the tug of impersonal market-place structures'.[3] The variety and extent of new forms of urban protest since 1994 predictably confirm the continued social agency of the South African poor.[4] In the process of drawing on Maria Huchzemeyer's work to describe Johannesburg's informal settlements, Murray in fact himself suggests that they may be a little more than mere 'dumping places' for the poor.[5] The presence of spaza shops, flower gardens, washing lines or sometimes even solar panels for electricity are not obviously responses of the hopeless to urbanization. As Robert Neuwirth demonstrated in *Shadow Cities*, informal settlements might contain creative and determined responses to disadvantage.[6]

The contributors to *Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging Metropolis* provide far more examples of social and cultural creativity by the poor than appear in *Taming the Disorderly City*. And in their two introductory chapters, Brennan and Burton write of Dar es Salaam's current cultural and socio-economic 'vibrancy', and of its decade-long 'creative renaissance'. This edited collection includes three chapters (by Graebner, Hill and Perullo) on the fascinating history to the near present of various hybrid musical forms and performances in Dar es Salaam that offer most obvious support to these contentions. These chapters are important additions to the already impressive body of scholarship on urban music in southern Africa that has demonstrated one way in which even racially segregated cities can and have been places of cultural creolization.[7] Yet they do not suggest that urban life involved anything other than creative responses to commonly very difficult and dangerous circumstances. Werner Graebner, in his chapter on 'The Ngoma impulse: from club to nightclub in Dar es Salaam', provides the lyrics from a couple of cautionary songs about the city. One by the Rhythm Makers, recorded in 1950, went in part: 'There are many joys and threats to be encountered side by side . . . If you want to enjoy yourself, When you go out to a dance, a football match,

[3] A. Mayne, *The Imagined Slum: Newspaper Representation in Three Cities 1870–1914* (Leicester, 1993), p. 3.

[4] R. Ballard, A. Habib and I. Valodia (eds.), *Voices of Protest: Social Movements in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg, 2006); N.C. Gibson (ed.), *Challenging Hegemony: Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Trenton, NJ, and Asmara, Eritrea, 2006).

[5] M. Huchzermeyer, *Unlawful Occupation: Informal Settlements and Urban Policy in South Africa and Brazil*, (Trenton, 2004).

[6] D. Neuwirth, Shadow Cities: A Billion Squatters, A New Urban World (London, 2004).

[7] D. Coplan, *In Township Tonight* (Johannesburg, 1985); V. Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in South African Performance* (Chicago, 1991); C. Ballantine, *Marabi Nights: Early South African Jazz and Vaudeville* (Johannesburg, 1993); V. Erlmann, *Music, Modernity, and the Global Imagination: South Africa and the West* (New York, 1999); G. Ansell, *Soweto Blues: Jazz, Popular Music and Politics in South Africa* (New York and London, 2004).

or to the market: the women are really hot, and the bandits are really hot! All they want is one thing, that is your money!'

Two innovative chapters by Tadasu Tsurata and Andrew Ivaska explore elements of the history of football and the experiences of 'modern women' or 'city girls' respectively. Both these chapters reveal a city divided along numerous fault lines including but beyond those of relative wealth. Tsurata explains how support for Dar es Salaam's two main clubs, Yanga and Sunderland (later renamed Simba) reflected a number of ethnic, occupational and spatial cleavages, as well as familial loyalties, in the town. Sunderland fans dubbed Yanga supporters 'fishmongers' or 'coconut tree climbers', while the latter retorted by calling Sunderland supporters 'slaves of Arabs' or 'Europeans'. Ivaska draws on a court case surrounding Pauline Joseph, arrested for wearing a mini-skirt, to analyse struggles over women's dress, work and movement in Dar in the 1960s and 1970s. Disputes about what constituted respectability reveal a great deal about both the emergence of new female occupations and identities in the city as well as about urban male jealousies and insecurities. In addition to these five chapters on the post-colonial city, there are a further five contributions on colonial Dar es Salaam. Both Kironde and Brennan provide insights into the emergence of racial defined, and defining, spatial ordering in the city into European, Indian and African zones. Dar, in Kironde's words, became 'a town made up of social and geographical entities encased in a kind of parochialism, couched in terms of different needs for different races'. For Brennan, there was a tension between this desire of colonial authorities for segregation and what they saw as possibilities of urban improvement through capital investment. This led to the partial breakdown of segregation in favour of allowing Indian investment in African areas, which in turn led to African invective and 'racial populism'.

Justin Willis, in a chapter on municipal policy towards the drinking of alcohol in Dar, cautions against any simple control-resistance explanation of municipal vacillations. He shows that Dar es Salaam authorities attempted to establish a beer hall monopoly (along the lines of the 'Durban system' in South Africa explored by Paul La Hausse), because of the possibility of making profits, controlling consumption and selling a less adulterated brew.[8] But the reasons why their attempt failed were complex. Willis argues that there was no clear-cut colonial agenda or evidence of a politically inspired boycott. The increasingly limited power of the colonial state is also revealed by Andrew Burton's excellent chapter on policing. Even with increased resources after World War II, the British authorities and the police were unable to assert much control over African areas of Dar, partly because policemen lived outside these areas and were viewed as strangers, and partly because of the rising tide of African nationalism. And another innovative chapter, by Thaddeus Sunseri, on 'fuelling the city' might point the way forward to further work on provisioning (or attempts at provisioning: those analysed here were not very successful) the African city.

Contributors to *Dar es Salaam* do not neglect to describe and explain poverty and inequity resulting from historical processes such as colonialism and segregation, and this is predictably given considerable attention in the colonial section. There is rather less on poverty in the post-colonial city. But the collection as a whole pays far greater attention to the creative human agency of ordinary urbanites than

[8] P.la Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts.A History of Liquor in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1988).

Disorderly City which, like many accounts of contemporary African cities, presents the African metropolis pre-eminently as a slum. Urban poverty has obviously been real, extensive and responsible for immense suffering in Africa, as elsewhere, and has grown exponentially in recent years. Yet a more complete picture of its experience is supplied only when due weight is given to ways in which African urbanites have not only been resilient but creative.[9] This requires understanding the politics not only of suffering but also of smiling, as Patrick Chabal has recently put it.[10]

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David G. Barrie, *Police in the Age of Improvement: Police Development and the Civic Tradition in Scotland, 1775–1865*. Cullompton: Willan, 2008. xiiii + 307pp. 7 figures, 7 tables. Bibliography. £45.00.
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Despite the substantial historiography of policing in the British Isles, little scholarly attention has been directed at Scotland's experience. Whilst there have been good local studies, stressing the individual nature of the development of each burgh's force, there is a want of a broader framework showing national trends within which these local variations may be understood. The main problem, perhaps, in explaining this neglect is that the first parliamentary inquiry relating to Scottish policing was not held until 1852–3; before this date, one must turn to fragmented local source material. Dr Barrie's impressive bibliography reflects the scale of the task which this has necessitated. Barrie has supplemented his doctoral work on Glasgow, which provides his strongest case study, with additional research into several other burghs including Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dundee and a number of small burghs of barony and regality, producing a broad study of the developments in Scotland's policing, in the contexts of civic tradition and urban governance.

Scotland's Enlightenment thinkers, Barrie argues, influenced a distinct culture of urban governance and responsibility, and broad conceptions of police including civil administration, such as lighting and sweeping, which, after 1835, reformed English municipal corporations would have administered. This fostered a civic culture which called for participation, self-direction and local accountability. Accordingly, representative bodies held favour late into the nineteenth century. The new civil society was the space in which thinking about the creation and reform of policing took place. Philosophers such as Hume, Smith and Ferguson continued to influence propertied men and lawyers, and therefore public men. This was especially the case in Edinburgh, owing to the prevalence of lawyers. The Enlightenment raised expectations of governance, particularly in refined, commercial centres, and instilled the notion that police commissions ought to be democratic and representative.

Barrie is aware of the difficulties in providing conclusive proof, but the strongest link between Enlightenment and policing is found in his Glasgow

[9] J. Iliffe, *The African Poor* (Cambridge, 1987); J. Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge, 2005).
[10] P. Chabal, *Africa: The Politics of Suffering and Smiling* (London and New York, 2009).