

CARL H. NIGHTINGALE, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 2012), 536 pp.

In *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*, Carl H. Nightingale traces the development of urban segregation from ancient cities to the twenty-first century. He argues that from the seventeenth century onward, race became the most important component of urban segregation and that it has become a worldwide phenomenon because cities have been, and still are, interconnected. The main profiteers of racial urban segregation have been the white inhabitants of cities. They intentionally created institutions such as “governments, networks of intellectual exchange, and [...] the modern capitalist real estate industry” (5) to create and uphold racial segregation. This institutional structure rests on “more broadly held beliefs, ideas, and customs” (7) that sustain its power.

The color lines segregation draws are never clear, Nightingale argues, because the segregation of cities—which are by definition places of human interaction—is a paradox. The “ideas, interests, and practices people mobilize for or against segregation are complex” (10), and the powers that keep segregation in place constantly have to negotiate between their interests and movements of resistance. Nightingale points out that the ways segregation affected cities are diverse and messy, yet he argues that there are “long-distance connections” (10) between segregationists around the world. While he writes that a transnational analysis of these connections offers “richer contexts for comparisons between cities” (10), Nightingale does not focus on comparing cities’ histories but rather on the connections between them.

The segregation of cities has always been a means by which elite groups enhance their power and wealth (2); only the definition of who constitutes the dominant group changed. Nightingale argues that institutional racial segregation of cities started in British colonies in India. The attempt to make settlements for only white people had already been practiced in the earliest settler colonies in the Americas. However, only the “demographic, economic, and political circumstances” (55) of the East India Company in Madras at the end of the seventeenth century made city officials build a wall around “Christian Town,” which was designated to Europeans, to separate it from

“Black Town” (61), which was designated to Indians. In the early eighteenth century, they replaced the term ‘Christian’ to define themselves with ‘white,’ following a trend that had started in British colonies in the West Indies and America. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Atlantic slave trade had connected the categories ‘black’ and ‘white’ to the concept of race and made it “one of the most successful concepts in global politics” (84), including urban segregation. The transnational connection between the empire’s largest cities, London and Calcutta, created the institutional forces that helped implement segregation worldwide: “the world’s first modern colonial empire; [...] innovative, ocean-crossing intellectual exchanges among professional scientists and urban reformers; and [...] an early version of a multicontinental market in urban real estate” (75). The transnational connections of the British Empire thus spread the concept of race around the globe, as well as the tools to implement racial segregation in cities worldwide.

From India, the “trajectory” (137) of racial urban segregation politics went eastwards and, in the course of the nineteenth century, affected cities in Southeast Asia, China, Australia, and the West Coast of the United States. The political circumstances in these places differed, yet in “some places it was possible to imagine even stronger tools of urban segregation” (134) than had existed in British colonial India. By 1900, “segregation” had become the dominant term for the practices that had divided cities for centuries. Some urban historians therefore think that segregation “reached a new level of political existence”; Nightingale, in contrast, argues “that the word ‘segregation’ [only] gave racist city splitters a clearer slogan than they had before” (160). The actual reason for the “Segregation Mania” of the outgoing nineteenth century was the “bubonic plague” (159) that broke out in Hong Kong in 1894 and quickly spread to other harbor cities around the world. Claiming to fight the spread of disease, European scientists and public health reformers pressed for further segregation of cities around the world, and urban planners used the “connection between sanitation and segregation” (191) to further argue for the institutionalization of racial segregation.

From the beginning of the century to the 1960s, South Africa and the United States—“two rapidly industrializing white settler soci-

eties” (3)—installed the most radically segregated cities in world history, or, as Nightingale calls it, “archsegregationism” (229). Since both countries were founded as colonies, “interracial coexistence could not be prevented” (238) easily. To prevent “racial intermixing” (238) and uphold their political power, whites implemented segregation. In South Africa, the “Natives (Urban Area) Act” (263) from 1923 was the most extensive segregationist law the world had ever seen. In the United States in 1917, the Supreme Court outlawed ordinances that installed racial segregation as law, but different government institutions “enacted racial segregation policies that were often more radical and thoroughgoing than South Africa’s” (295). By focusing on Chicago during the 1930s and 1940s, Nightingale shows that while northern cities liked to think of themselves as more progressive in racial politics than the South, in actuality “scam-ridden, highly organized, and often ferociously violent grassroots segregation [movements]” (307) created rigid color lines while at the same time successfully camouflaging the racism that was the base of their actions.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Western imperialism worldwide came under pressure from decolonializing forces. In contrast, the United States and South Africa managed to uphold segregation and engaged in the “transoceanic trade in social Darwinist and eugenic ideas” (334), which were most horrifyingly implemented in Nazi Germany. At the same time, antiracist activists shared ideas globally and succeeded in starting “nothing less than

a planetwide revolution against the world of white privilege” (384) between 1945 and 1975. Results of these revolutions were India’s independence, the official end of Apartheid in South Africa, and the civil rights movement in the United States. Yet racial segregation remains prevalent today, even if for the last three decades a New Right movement has used the rhetoric of color-blindness to disguise “white privilege as a defense of rights and liberty” (394). Moreover, racial segregation is often hidden behind the “political language of class, culture, ethnicity, nation, and—most toxically—religion” (385). These new disguises of racial segregation help North America, Europe, and Australia to uphold a new “globe-girdling global color line” (396) that forcefully keeps out immigrants and, ultimately, prevents them from having to share their power.

Nightingale’s *Segregation* is an impressive project and deserves attention because it gives a detailed history of urban racial segregation in British Indian colonies, the United States, and South Africa and, at the same time, brings a transnational view to urban studies. Nightingale traces the interconnectedness of cities and the flows of ideas around the globe, while also naming, whenever possible, the promoters of segregation. The complex net of information he spins shows the “messy” (10) aspect of segregation but also gives enough information to prove that different cities’ implementations of segregation are connected and comparable.

Buffalo

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