

strengthened his book. He accurately argues that positing Christianity and Native Spiritual beliefs as opposites is erroneous and acknowledges the interconnectedness of the two belief systems; however, he does little to explore the hybrid places that evolved through, for example, the influence of Catholicism on native places. Indeed, there was little discussion of native conversion to Christianity, or the evolution of their spiritual landscapes and places.

Ultimately, I found myself taunted and tantalized by Francaviglia's intertwining of personal vignettes with academic materials. While I would have preferred a more nuanced analysis of some of the places he discusses, his book did prompt me to consider the relationship between place, religion, and identity and for that reason alone, it deserves a serious read by geographers, historians, and others interested in these issues.

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Setha Low, *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America*, Routledge, New York, 2003, xi + 275 pages, \$26.00 hardback.

There are many conceivable ways to engage the phenomenon of gated communities. Seen in the context of globalization, they can be analyzed as manifestations of increased social and economic segregation concomitant to the privatization of democratic institutions. From an individual's frame of reference, they might be perceived as architectural responses to fear of crime or to nostalgic longing for traditional ways of life. This book touches upon these elements, and more, but with a specific focus on the cultures of (and within) gated communities.

Setha Low enters into the homes of people living in gated communities—in the US Northeast and Southwest, and in Mexico City—and asks them why they moved there. She attends deftly to what people say, what topics they avoid, and how they act within their spaces, so the book is filled with detailed informant articulations and rich ethnographic descriptions. In fact, Low provides an admirable ethnographic overflow of information, chasing down some narrative meanings but leaving many others open to interpretation. Importantly, this book is not a condemnation of the people who live in gated communities; instead, it is an attempt to understand their lives and the oftentimes conflicting rationales people have for living where and how they do.

While, as might be expected, interviewees do express concerns over security and fears about people from other classes or ethnic backgrounds, Low discovers a range of more nuanced explanations for the decisions people make about where to live. For instance, people move because of their concerns about property values, or for the convenience of having others take care of their yards, or because they desire ready-made social networks for themselves and their children. Perhaps most interestingly, in cities like Phoenix, where one-third of all new residential construction is gated, people do not have as many opportunities to live in non-gated areas as they might otherwise want. Low writes, 'The supply side of

private governance (and gating) is driving the expansion of private communities, even though it is not necessarily the best (or most efficient) solution for residents or, much less, for society at large' (p. 197). Meanwhile, cities have strong incentives to privatize public spaces, because developers then take over responsibility for building and maintaining infrastructures such as roads or providing services such as trash removal or security patrols.

In the chapter 'Re-creating the Past,' Low delves into the ways that individual recollections of the past exert a powerful force upon present behaviors and desires. Many residents of gated communities claim to be seeking a return to the comforts and security of their childhood homes, or a return to untroubled and uncomplicated ways of life, which can often imply ethnic and economic homogeneity. Low writes: 'It is through the symbolism of gates and walls that the desire of gated community residents to re-create their childhood environments becomes intertwined with security. The gates and walls represent parents, protecting the individual from physical harm as well as providing the sense of psychological well-being originally experienced at home as a young child' (p. 90). Gated communities, then, become symbols of childhood security that afford 'place attachment' and the easy formation of 'place identities' through their familiarity.

Another strength of this book is its occasional juxtaposition of informant data with statistical findings. For instance, when compared to other middle-class suburbs, there is no evidence that gated communities actually increase the safety of residents or protect property values (p. 24). What they do tend to produce, however, is a heightened sense of fear and insecurity (pp. 123, 131). And, in spite of residents' rationales for traditional community life, there tends to be much less community involvement and collective responsibility in gated communities than in non-gated ones (p. 57). Residents say that they are trading-off freedom for security, and that this is why they submit to the intense policing of social life within gated communities, but apparently this trade-off is a false one, leaving residents with diminished freedom but without enhanced security.

There are few limitations to speak of in this book. First, while Low expertly weaves throughout the book an implicit critique of gendered relations within gated communities, the data on gender is not analyzed as fully as it could be. Why is it that most of Low's interviewees are women, many of whom speak about their husbands' beliefs when asked about their own? What does it mean that these women stay home, watch the children, and prepare meals and yet see themselves as modern? It could be that the 'traditional' values of these housing developments have less to do with community and more to do with reinforcing restrictive gender roles and power relations. Other limitations most likely stem from the book's orientation toward general audiences rather than toward exclusively academic ones. Thus, Low communicates to the reader that she likes or dislikes interviewees, and she uses herself as a reference point for evaluating informants' concerns about security. However, these articulations do not seem to provide a deeper understanding of the people living in gated communities. All said, this is a timely and valuable book that shows the complexity of people's decisions about where and how to live in an uncertain global world.

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