contained unit, a private wonderland walled off from the rest of the world. Although visually open to the street, the lawn was a barrier—a kind of verdant moat separating the household from the threats and temptations of the city. It served as a means of transition from the public street to the very private house, as a kind of space that, by the very fact of its having no clearly defined function, mediated between the activities of the outside and the activities of the inside. The sweeping lawn helped civilize the wild vista beyond and provided a carpet for new outdoor activities such as croquet (a lawn game imported from England in the 1860s), tennis, and social gatherings. More importantly, lawns provided a presumably ideal place to nurture children....

The Anti-Urban Tradition in American Thought...

Even before the Industrial Revolution transformed many English cities into gloomy slums, London inspired oppressive horror among such major authors as Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Alexander Pope, and William Wordsworth. The very thought of re-creating Old World conditions filled Thomas Jefferson with dread. During an eighteenth-century epidemic of yellow fever, he derived consolation from the thought that it might discourage the growth of future urban centers. "I view large cities," Jefferson wrote in a famous passage, "as pestilential to the morals, the health, and the liberties of man. True, they nourish some of the elegant arts, but the useful ones can thrive elsewhere, and less perfection in the others, with more health, virtue, and freedom, would be my choice."...

In the United States many talented writers testified to the magnetic quality of the American metropolis, and they celebrated the economic growth and material progress that urbanization helped make possible. Pulp fiction, such as Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick* (1868), depicted the city as the locus of nearly unlimited opportunity, while more talented writers, such as Walt Whitman, valued New York for the stimulation that could be derived from it....

On balance, however, the American metropolis was more a symbol of problems and of evil than of hope, love, or generosity. William Dean Howells, Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and Jacob Riis shocked their nineteenth-century readers with city tales of "hopeless-faced women deformed by hardship" and of "the festering mass of human wretchedness," while American politicians gloried in the frontier tradition and told their audiences that tillers of the soil represented the nation's best hope for the future....

The traditional American distrust of population concentrations was heightened in the nineteenth century, when every decennial census revealed that a larger proportion of the citizenry was rejecting agrarian life for the better opportunities of crowded settlements. Especially troublesome was the notion that size itself seemed to confound every temporary solution to periodic crises. As gains were made in public health, fire prevention, water supply, and sanitation, more severe emergencies rose to take their place....

Almost worse than pestilence was immoral behavior, which shifted from an earlier association with the frontier and the wild West to a clear urban emphasis. Irresolute, unsupervised, and alcoholic men and women too often gave in to wicked temptations....

The changing ethnic composition of the urban population also increased middle-class antipathy to the older neighborhoods, as Poles, Italians, Russians, and assorted eastern and southern Europeans, most of them Jews or Catholics, poured into the industrialized areas after 1880.... To this fear were added specific programs to tax property so as to create public improvements and jobs to benefit working-class voters. The observation of Lord Bryce that municipal government was "the one conspicuous failure of the United States" was often quoted. The import of such projections was not lost on middle-class families, who often took the opportunity that low price and good transportation afforded to move beyond city jurisdictions....

Although there were many critics of the isolated household, after the Civil War the detached house and the sizeable yard became the symbols of a very distinct type of community—the embodiment of the suburban

ideal. The solid and spac   ...ses that lined the tree-arched avenu   inted the winding lanes of dozens o   ; exuded success and security. They s   imune to the dislocations of an indu   g society and cut off from the toil   ulence of emerging immigrant ghett   ied roofs, tended lawns, shuttered windows, and separate rooms all spoke of communities that valued the tradition of the family, to the pride of ownership, and the fondness for the rural life....

Such residences were attainable only by the middle and upper classes. For most Americans life consisted of unrelenting labor either on farms or in factories, and slight relaxation in decrepit lodgings. But the image had a growing attraction in a society in which urbanization's underside—the slums, the epidemics, the crime, the anomie—was so obvious and persistent a problem. The suburban ideal offered the promise of an environment visibly responsive to personal effort, an environment that would combine the best of both city and rural life and that would provide a permanent home for a restless people.

ESSAY 1-2. ROBERT FISHMAN, *BOURGEOIS UTOPIAS: THE RISE AND FALL OF SUBURBIA* (1987)

London: Birthplace of Suburbia

Like written constitutions, the novel, steam engines, and so many other innovations that have reshaped our lives, the middle-class residential suburb was a product of the eighteenth century. Its form and function reflect many of the most pervasive cultural elements in eighteenth century civilization, but the suburb also reflects the specific conditions of the city in which it was born. Perhaps inevitably, London was the site of this innovation in urban form: for London was the first of H. G. Wells's "whirlpool cities."

London had become the largest city in Europe by the end of the seventeenth century, and its predominance over its great continental rivals—Paris, Naples, and Amsterdam—increased markedly during the eighteenth century. While, for example, Paris reached 500,000 people by 1700 but hardly grew in the next hundred years, London went from 575,000 in 1700 to 675,000 in 1750 and reached 960,000 by 1800. Indeed, London's population exceeded 1.1 million in 1800, if one counts the whole metropolitan area now known to demographers as "greater London."

Perhaps even more impressive than these figures were the economic and political supremacies that made them possible. For London was the focus of a worldwide network of oceangoing trade routes, which made the city the international center of long-distance trade and banking. It was also the political capital of the British Empire and its center for the production and consumption of luxury goods. With this combination of functions (along with a prosperous hinterland that kept the city well supplied with food and fuel), London became the first modern city to overcome the barriers to growth that had kept the medieval and early modern cities in check.

The modern suburb was a direct result of this unprecedented urban growth. It grew out of a crisis in urban form that stemmed from the inability of the premodern city to cope with explosive modern urban expansion. It also reflected the unprecedented growth in the wealth and size of an upper-middle-class merchant elite. This London bourgeoisie had attained the critical mass in numbers, resources, and confidence to transform the cities of their time to suit their values....

The central principle of [London's] premodern ecology was that the wealthiest members of the community lived and worked closest to the historic core, while the poorest people were pushed to the periphery. Indeed, the word "suburb"...referred exclusively to these peripheral slums, which surrounded all large towns. These suburban poor lacked the means to expand their shantylike "suburbs" into the surrounding countryside. So London was like an increasingly overpacked

container, continually bulging but never able to expand efficiently....

London thrived as a center of trade: in other words, as a center of information. Its leading merchants depended on rapid knowledge of markets throughout the world, a knowledge that was available to them only through a multitude of face-to-face contacts. The concentration of England's leading merchants in the few intensely crowded acres at the heart of the City (and just blocks from the port) was a highly efficient mechanism for promoting this exchange of information.

Thus, for the elite, crowding was productive. But it meant that not only their working lives but also their family lives were spent in the most congested part of the kingdom. As late as the middle of the eighteenth century, it was taken for granted that "home" and "work" were virtually inseparable. Even the wealthiest bankers conducted their business from their homes; great merchants lived, in effect, above the shop, with goods stored in their cellars and apprentices living in the attics. This identity of home and work was the basic building block of eighteenth century urban ecology....

I should emphasize here that even the relatively wealthy core areas were never upper-class neighborhoods in the modern sense. Just as the idea of a residential district or a single function—a residential district or a single function—was foreign to the premodern city, so too was a single-class district....By the mid eighteenth century the city was clearly approaching an ecological crisis. The few examples of improvements—such as the filling in of the Fleet Ditch, a stream that had become a noisome sewer—could hardly keep pace with the difficulties. The streets, for example, were drained only by a "kennel" or ditch running down the middle, which was usually filled with rubbish and worse....

Thus the economics of the great city were attracting an increasingly wealthy elite to an urban core that was, at best, crowded, dirty, noisy, and unhealthy. In other centuries these conditions might have been tolerated even by the elite. The eighteenth century, however, was an "age of improvement" in which leaders were constantly seeking a better order for life, whether in government, manufactur-

ing, or cities. In retrospect we can see that there were two alternative models for this improvement. The first was for the elite to take possession of an area at or close to the most elegant eighteenth century models. The second was the far more radical decentralization of bourgeois residence that we have come to call suburbanization.

So deeply held were the traditional ideas of urban form—most notably, the identification of the elite with the urban core—that for most of the eighteenth century only the reconstruction of the core seemed possible and likely....

It is in this context that we can understand the true originality of the suburban idea: for the modern suburb involved discarding the old preference for center over periphery; radically disassociating home and work environments; creating neighborhoods based both on the idea of a single class and on that of a single (domestic) function; and, finally, creating a new kind of landscape in which the clear line...between city and country becomes thoroughly blurred in an environment that combines the two.

All these transformations were involved when, in the mid eighteenth century, the London merchant elite began to convert their combined homes and offices at the core into offices only; and then to move with their families not to adjacent urban squares but as much as five miles outside the city to spacious villas in the quiet agricultural settlements that ringed London. As we can now appreciate, this flight from the city was in fact a new and highly potent form of urban expansion.

The merchant elite leaped over the belt of poverty that had constrained the metropolis and used their wealth to establish a new kind of rapidly expanding urban periphery, which we now call suburbia. They realized that, with their private carriages and ample funds, they were no longer limited to the area traditionally considered the city. On the area traditionally considered land still a surprisingly relatively inexpensive land still a surprisingly short commute to the core, they could build a world of privilege, leisure, and family life that reflected their values....

[T]his radical rethinking of the meaning of

the city and of domesticity was not the work of a single architect of genius, who proposed a new model and then convinced his clients of its worth. Rather, suburbia was a collective creation of the city's bourgeois elite, a gradual adoption of a new way of living by a class that had the wealth and confidence to remake the world to suit its values.

It was, indeed, this class that was transforming society in so many other ways as it reshaped the world to fulfill its needs. Suburbia was only one characteristic bourgeois invention, but one that has had a remarkable influence on the modern world. To understand suburbia—both in its earliest eighteenth century form and in its twentieth century incarnations—we must now look closely at the class that created it.

The London Bourgeoisie and Their City

Every true suburb is the outcome of two opposing forces, an attraction toward the opportunities of the great city and a simultaneous repulsion against urban life. This conflict, now deeply embedded in suburban design, first arose out of the tensions in the eighteenth century London bourgeoisie's feelings toward their metropolis. Every year made the city more important economically, yet, in the course of the eighteenth century, the very bourgeoisie who profited most from London's centralization came to hate and fear the social consequences of city life.

Suburbia can never be understood solely in its own terms. It must always be defined in relation to its rejected opposite: the metropolis. If the eighteenth century creators of suburbia bequeathed to their successors their positive ideal of a family life in union with nature, they also passed on their deepest fears of living in an inhumane and immoral metropolis. Buried deep within every subsequent suburban dream is a nightmare image of eighteenth century London.

But before elaborating this bourgeois critique of the city, we must first define the London "bourgeoisie" itself. I use the term to designate those most prosperous members of the middle class whose businesses and capital accumulation—at least £25,000 to more than £100,000—gave them an income com-

parable to the rural squirearchy and even to some of the aristocracy, yet who maintained the living and working habits of the urban middle class....

[A] member of the London bourgeoisie was characteristically a merchant engaged in overseas trade and the financial operations that accompanied it. Sugar from the West Indies, tea from China, spices from India, furs from North America, naval stores from Russia and the Baltic—these were among the immensely profitable items that filled bourgeois storehouses. A relatively small circle of entrepreneurs controlled the vast revenues that derived ultimately from Britain's naval and colonial supremacies....

If a seemingly inevitable logic drew merchants' premises as close as possible to the center, an equally compelling logic associated the family with the workplace. Even for the wealthy elite of merchants and bankers, the family was not simply (or perhaps even primarily) an emotional unit. It was at least equally an economic unit. The merchant's capital was essentially a family resource; his work force was his family—including his wife and older children—as well as apprentices who lived in the house and were treated like children. Virtually every aspect of family life was permeated by the requirements of the business.

This interpenetration is most clearly visible in the active role played by women in London commercial life. A wife's daily assistance in the shop was vital for smaller businesses, and even the most opulent merchants were careful to give their wives a role sufficiently prominent that they could participate in and understand the source of their income....

The typical merchant's townhouse, therefore, was surprisingly open to the city. Commercial life flowed in freely, so that virtually every room had some business as well as familial function. From the front parlor where customers were entertained and deals transacted, to the upper stories where the apprentices slept and the basement where goods were stored, there was little purely domestic space. As apprentices, teenage boys were inevitably drawn into this system, either within their own homes or as part of another family; at the same time, teenage girls were taught

the necessary skills for playing their part in their future husband's business....

Nevertheless, the mid eighteenth century saw a crucial change in bourgeois attitudes toward the city that led directly to suburbanization. This growing repulsion was not, I think, the inexorable result of any drastic social change in the city itself. Despite the population growth and resulting overcrowding, London remained a city of commerce and small workshops. The Industrial Revolution, just beginning in the north of England, essentially bypassed London until the middle of the nineteenth century. Crime was serious, but there is no evidence that it was increasing dramatically; the lighting of streets at night had somewhat increased safety. Transportation within and outside the city remained restricted to stage coaches and private carriages traveling on still primitive roads....

The crucial changes occurred instead within bourgeois culture, within that complex of attitudes which defined the meaning of the city. The most important of them concerned the family; but I would also point to a subtle yet pervasive shift in the relation of the middle class to the rest of the city population. Anyone looking at eighteenth century life must be struck by what Ian Watt has called "the combination of physical proximity and vast social distance." English society was still something of a caste society in the sense that social distance was so marked that the privileged felt no need to protect themselves further from the poor by physical distance. That the richest bankers in London lived literally surrounded by poor families did not in the least diminish the bankers' status. One might even say that in a caste society the rich need the constant and close presence of the poor to remind them of their privileges.

In the course of the eighteenth century, this attitude slowly began to move closer to the nineteenth century idea that social distinctions require physical segregation. Part of the change was no doubt due to differing personal habits of the rich and poor, especially over personal cleanliness, that great divide of disgust which would culminate in the Victorian adage George Orwell reports hearing when he was young: "The lower classes smell."...

In any case, it is one of the paradoxes of urban history that the extremely unequal cities of the eighteenth century tolerated a great measure of close physical contact between rich and poor; whereas the more "equal" cities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were increasingly zoned to eliminate such contacts. For our purposes, the newly felt need for social segregation made the crowded, intensely mixed neighborhoods of the urban core appear all the more unpleasant and threatening to the bourgeoisie. Social segregation destroyed many of the most prized sites of eighteenth century urban social life: the pleasure gardens lost patronage largely because the respectable no longer wished to mix with "low" company. And the desire for segregation fueled that search for single-class neighborhoods securely protected from the poor which was to become a powerful motive in the spread of suburbia.

Even more fundamental was the profound change in the bourgeois family, which began as early as the last quarter of the seventeenth century and fully emerged in the mid eighteenth century. Lawrence Stone, in his important book *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800,* has called this new bourgeois form "the closed domesticated nuclear family." He refers essentially to the emergence of the family as the primary and overwhelming emotional focus of its members' lives. For Stone, this "modern" family is not a natural biological unit that has remained constant through history but the product of a long historical evolution....

The importance of this new kind of family for this book is that the essential principles of the closed family contradicted the basic principles of the eighteenth century city. Just as the traditional urban ecology was unable to cope with the demands of modern growth, so the traditional urban form and domestic architecture were contrary to the needs of the new family. As we have seen, even the most opulent merchant's house was essentially open to the city; it provided little or no privacy for the emergence of a closed sphere of emotional intimacy. Further, the constant presence of urban amusements drew the family away from its domesticated attachments and into the older, wider networks of urban amusements.

This contradiction between the city and the new family was further sharpened by a religious movement that took hold with special strength among the upper middle class of London: the Evangelical movement. It first arose in the early eighteenth century as a response within the Anglican church to John Wesley's renewed emphasis on personal salvation. By the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the emphasis of its leaders had shifted to promoting a new ideal of conduct that emphasized the role of the family. One might call the Evangelicals the ideologists of the closed, domesticated nuclear family....

The Evangelicals were the most influential group in creating that complex of attitudes which we now call Victorianism, but which in fact originated in the late eighteenth century. Members of the Established church but uncertain of its efficacy, the Evangelicals taught that the most secure path to salvation was the beneficent influence of a truly Christian family. Anything that strengthened the emotional ties within the family was therefore holy; anything that weakened the family and its ability to foster true morality was anathema.

Chief among the enemies of the family was the city, with its social opportunities. Wilberforce's "reformation of manners" was essentially a broad attack on all forms of urban pleasures....The Evangelical movement went on to attack street fairs, taverns, ballrooms, pleasure gardens—the whole range of urban amusements, even the lottery. Whatever they could not close down entirely they attempted to prohibit on Sunday.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Evangelical ideology was the attitude toward women. On the one hand, they gave to women the highest possible role in their system of values: the principal guardian of the Christian home. On the other, they fanatically opposed any role for women outside that sphere....

This contradiction between the city and the Evangelical ideal of the family provided the final impetus for the unprecedented separation of the citizen's home from the city that is the essence of the suburban idea. The city was not just crowded, dirty, and unhealthy; it was immoral. Salvation itself depended on

separating the woman's sacred world of family and children from the profane metropolis. Yet this separation could not jeopardize a man's constant attendance at his business—for hard work and success were also Evangelical virtues—and business life required rapid personal access to that great beehive of information which was London. This was the problem, and suburbia was to be the ultimate solution.

Clapham, a Proper Paradise

In order to show more clearly the emergence of a true suburbia from the weekend houses of the London bourgeoisie, I will concentrate now on a single locale, the village of Clapham in Surrey, south of the Thames. Only five miles by a relatively good road to London Bridge and the City, it was nevertheless still open country in the mid eighteenth century, with one of the few commons left in the countryside near London and fine prospects of the Thames and the metropolis from nearby hills. It was near Clapham that Daniel Defoe stood in 1724 to get his sight of the metropolis, and even then he noted the presence of numerous opulent merchants' villas all around him.

If Clapham was typical of the former agricultural villages that became the favored sites of middle class estates in the eighteenth century, it also had one notable feature that recommends it to our attention. It became the favored home of the most prosperous and most prominent leaders of the Evangelical movement; not only William Wilberforce but so many of his closest colleagues made their home here that the movement was often known as the "Clapham Sect." In Clapham we can follow the influence of Evangelical domestic ideology on the new domestic suburban architecture as it was actually built and lived in by these bourgeois "saints" of the movement. Both in its design and in its ideology, this modest village was to have a profound influence on the Anglo-American middle class.

The connection between Clapham and the Evangelicals arose from a large estate that the Thornton family purchased overlooking Clapham Common in 1735. The Thorntons

exemplified that "big bourgeoisie" which would champion both the Evangelical movement and suburbia. Bankers and merchants in the trade with Russia, with close family connections to the textile merchants of Yorkshire, they were also known for their philanthropy. John Thornton (1720–90) was not only a director of the Bank of England but the patron of the favorite Evangelical poet, William Cowper. John's son Henry Thornton (1760–1815), one of the wealthiest bankers in London, was also one of the most religious. When in the 1790s he settled into his own mansion, Battersea Rise, at Clapham, he built next door a substantial house for his close friend, colleague in Parliament, and fellow Evangelical, William Wilberforce....

The presence of these prominent leaders attracted lesser known but equally pious and prosperous London merchants to Clapham. A map of 1800 depicts seventy-two "gentlemen's seats" around the common, all with substantial houses on grounds of at least ten acres....

Because these merchants clearly retained their City townhouses (or similar premises) for business purposes after they had settled in Clapham, it is difficult to establish the exact moment they made their country residence their true abode on weekdays and weekends, and used the City establishment only as an office. Nevertheless, the evidence from letters, diaries, and other sources clearly indicates that as early as the 1790s Clapham had become a true suburb in my sense. Families settled there throughout the week, the men maintaining that all-important direct tie to London by commuting each working day by private carriage. A new style of life had been established.

As the Clapham Evangelicals such as Wilberforce, [Hannah] More, and their colleagues were the very moralists who were loudest in their condemnation of the city and its vices, there can be little doubt that this final break with the merchant's traditional residence in the urban core was motivated by their rejection of the urban social mores, especially as they applied to women. A location like Clapham gave them the ability to take the family out of London without taking leave of the family business. Equally importantly, it provided a whole community of people who shared their values. Unlike the City of London, this community did not have to be shared with the urban poor; neither was its design restricted by urban crowding or by the high price of urban land. Around
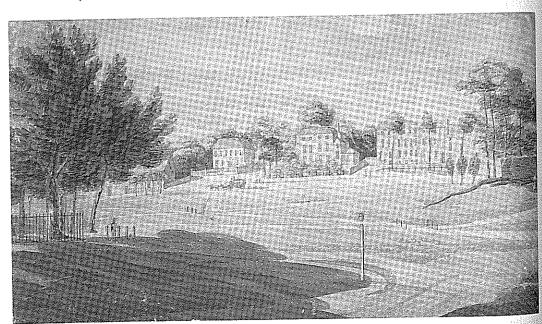

Figure 1-8 This anonymous watercolor in the Guildhall Library depicts Clapham Common circa 1800 with its suburban landscape of large detached villas on lawns sloping down to the Common. Courtesy of Guildhall Library, Corporation of London. Illustration in original.

Clapham Common the Evangelicals could create their serious-minded paradise.

The design of this prototypical suburban community might be described as the union of the country house, the villa, and the picturesque traditions, reinforced by the particular concerns of the Evangelical movement. The Evangelicals never tired of repeating that, if all urban social life must be rejected, the truly godly recreations were family life and direct contact with nature....

Contemporary drawings show wide tree shaded lawns sweeping up from the common to Palladian houses behind which large gardens and orchards were planted. Each house added its own well maintained greenery to the whole. What emerged was a collective environment extending not only to the common but to the villa grounds as well. The Evangelical village became an all encompassing park, an Edenic garden that surrounded the houses and made sweet the life of the families within them.

In the traditional country house or villa, the grounds related only to the centrally located house of the owner, who gazed out at his personal prospect. The true suburban landscape, as seen at Clapham, is a balance of the public and the private. Each property is private, but each contributes to the total landscape of *houses in a park*.

ESSAY 1-3. JOHN ARCHER, "COLONIAL SUBURBS IN SOUTH ASIA, 1700–1850, AND THE SPACES OF MODERNITY" (1997)

Source: *Visions of Suburbia*, ed. Roger Silverstone (London: Routledge, 1997).

Spaces and Practices

Suburbs and colonies, like other forms of human production, are instruments conceived to advance certain interests. Ordinarily the beneficiaries are the builders and people who may live or work there, though in many cases spaces are articulated just as intentionally to limit the interests of others. In any event, spaces of any sort that people occupy are more than mere containers or settings for human activity. The specific configuration of any space actually plays a crucial role in the formation and sustenance of the consciousness of all those who exist there. Likewise space is integral to the delineation and facilitation of the whole spectrum of relations among individuals, institutions, and social fractions (classes, castes, genders, races, etc.). Indeed the very terms and dimensions of human praxis—economic, political, moral, religious, artistic, etc.—are embedded in, and sustained by, the configuration of surrounding spaces.

In light of such considerations, the study of colonial spaces is particularly complex—and particularly rewarding—since colonial space simultaneously sustains not only two or more distinct cultures, but also the complex array of boundaries, relations, and negotiations among them. Embedded in this array are such processes as differentiation, amalgamation, segregation, domination, exploitation, and resistance. And of particular interest in the case of colonial suburbs, of new positionalities outside the canons of either culture—for example, the legitimation of practices outside the limits ordinarily imposed by caste or by class. The particular ways in which spaces are configured, then, are instrumental not only in the constitution, but also in the ongoing transformation of social structures and human practices.

Colonies and Suburbs

Colonies and suburbs (in the sense of a locale outside the settlement proper) have existed almost since the beginning of organized settlement. For much of this time colonies and suburbs were sites of exile and alienation. Both were politically and economically dependent on the metropole. And both served the same dual functions: they were places from which to import goods that could not be produced or finished within the settlement proper, and they were places to which the unwanted could be exported (criminals, heathens, pollution). Toward the end of the seventeenth century, however, the expansion of European mercantile economies and the corresponding expansion of European bourgeoisies occasioned the refinement both

housing, particularly for young families, that an estimated 90,000 illegal apartments were carved out of single-family homes through the conversion of basements, attics, and the like into rentable space. The illegal market represents one-third of the entire rental market, according to conservative estimates, and urban planners forecast that the island will need to build some 100,000 units of affordable housing by the end of the decade to meet demand....

These aggregate figures do not adequately express the rental market faced by blacks and Latinos on Long Island who for decades have been subject to systematic segregation. A 1991 *Miami Herald* investigation ranked Long Island as the fifteenth most segregated metropolitan area in the United States out of 318 studied. Segregation is most extreme for African-American Long Islanders: two-thirds of Long Island neighborhoods are less than 1 percent black, and one-half have no blacks at all. The average white resident of Nassau County lives in a census tract where only 8 percent of the neighbors are black or Latino. Towns experiencing white flight, such as Freeport and Uniondale in Nassau County, found their populations replaced by blacks and Latinos. Indeed,...Latino immigrants tend to find their housing options restricted largely to communities with significant minority populations.

The living situation my informants found themselves in shocked them for two principal reasons: (1) either the practice of paying rent was new to them or the amount they needed to pay on Long Island far surpassed what they had paid at home; and (2) they found themselves severely isolated from mainstream America, the "real America," in their words, that they only glimpsed at work or from the confines of public transportation....

[T]he latter complaint is most common among middle-class and urban immigrants. The former, however, is ubiquitous....

The miscalculation immigrants make about their projected earnings versus expenses is quickly recognized and corrected once they arrive. But the pressure of housing costs, in particular, weighs heavily on everyone. They realize immediately that they can afford neither their own apartment nor even

their own room. Don Jose explained it to me, saying, "What you think is that life here is different, that you are going to live well here, in peace....Here rents are expensive, everything is expensive. Of course, if you earn in dollars you spend dollars too. So you don't save what you thought you would. I had made a plan like this: If I earn three hundred dollars then I will spend so much and save so much. So after so much time I will have saved so much money. You think that you can save. But it's not so. Here you come to find out that your expenses are two or three times what you thought they'd be. This is the great disillusionment that you carry with you. You think that if you earn a good salary you will be happy but it's not true. You can earn what they told you that you would earn, but they never tell you how much your expenses will be, especially rent. No one tells you about this. They only tell you what they earn, not what they spend. That's the problem. So when you start to see how much you spend, you begin to feel deceived."

If immigrants merely conformed to neoclassical economic rules, they would flow out of areas that they could not afford to live in. But immigrants, particularly the undocumented, are very dependent upon finding jobs, and the labor market they face, as discussed previously, is so constricted that they do not enjoy the same flexibility as natives enjoy. As a result, they leave areas such as Houston, Texas, where housing is cheap and abundant but jobs are scarce, and head for areas offering employment, despite the costs. They resort to the only other technique available to them: finding ways to minimize their housing expenditures by living in overcrowded, substandard housing in the least expensive neighborhoods....

NOTES

1. William Frey, *Melting Pot Suburbs: A 2000 Census Study of Suburban Diversity,*(Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2001).
2. William Frey, "The New Urban Demographics: Race, Space, and Boomer Aging," *Brookings Review* 18 (Summer 2000), 20–24, 20.
3. "Greenfield," see Dolores Hayden with aerial photographs by Jim Wark, *A Fieldguide to Sprawl* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2004), 42.

CHAPTER 15

Our Town

Inclusion and Exclusion in Recent Suburbia

INTRODUCTION

As the suburbs diversified economically and socially after 1970, concerns about local control and regulation remained ever present. Even as the courts and legislatures struck down explicit racial barriers in the housing market, opening the way for growing numbers of African-American, Latino, and Asian-American families to move to the suburbs, many suburban communities sought new ways to control residential space—particularly in terms of population composition, land use, and local fiscal resources. In the face of growing diversity in the public realm, many Americans called into question the assumption of shared values and shared responsibility to the commonweal. In response, some suburbanites withdrew into privately owned and governed residential enclaves. At the end of the twentieth century, suburbanites still searched for secure, comforting definitions of "our town," but distinctions between who belonged and who did not remained matters of intense concern. An exclusionary sensibility continued to shape the suburban landscape.

Suburbanites deployed a range of legal, administrative, and eventually physical mechanisms to maintain this sense of control. Local zoning and building regulations were among the most common tactics. Even as the civil rights movement peaked, developers and suburbanites were already refining new ways to protect suburban exclusivity. Already, in the early 1960s, housing and civil rights activists recognized a trend toward what they called "exclusionary"—or "snob"—zoning. Such ordinances mandated large lots and floor areas, and limited construction to free-standing single-family homes, while disallowing apartments, attached housing, and manufactured homes. By the mid-1960s, lots of one-half acre or more were required to build a home in huge portions of American suburbia, and the trend was toward even larger minimums. By contrast, during the suburban boom of the 1920s, lot sizes of one eighth of an acre were commonplace, and Levittown properties of the late 1940s measured just slightly larger. By the 1960s, the development of such modest properties was prohibited by law across a growing swathe of suburbia. One result was a crisis in affordable housing, with special ramifications for African Americans and other minorities who on average earned less money than whites. In those higher-end suburbs where economic resources and potential for growth were greatest, land use policies precluded settlement by all but the most affluent segments of the metropolitan population. Thus, even as racial bias came under increasing legal assault, class bias in suburbia gained strength.

During the 1970s, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld these broad municipal powers, defining "general welfare"—the basis for government power to restrict property rights—in terms of the existing residents of a given suburb (*Village of Belle Terre v. Boraas*, 1974). In addition, the Court held that only zoning ordinances designed with the explicit intent (not just the effect) to discriminate on the basis of race were invalid (*Arlington Heights v. Metropolitan Housing Development Corp.*, 1977). Not surprisingly, race evaporated from the rhetoric of suburban exclusion, to be replaced by a class-oriented lexicon of property values, landscape

aesthetics, tax rates, congestion, and even traffic safety. Suburban residential segregation thus endured under a new apparatus.

A related development during these decades was the rise of large-scale Common Interest Developments, or CIDs. Blending a number of long-standing trends in real estate development, these communities were characterized by master planning, the provision of shared facilities, extensive contractual restrictions governing the use of property, and "government" by a private association. CIDs were novel in the 1960s—in 1970, approximately 2 million Americans lived in such places. But they soon became the dominant form of suburban real estate development in the United States. By 2005, according to an estimate by the Community Associations Institute, more than 54 million Americans lived in CIDs—most of them in the suburbs.

CIDs met several challenges of the post-1970 real estate market. As suburbs intensified their zoning requirements, many large developers had difficulty finding profitable places to build. With CIDs, municipalities permitted development of higher housing densities, sometimes including attached homes and apartments (though not necessarily affordable ones), while in exchange, developers and residents paid for services and amenities that the municipality would otherwise have provided. For home seekers, CIDs offered facilities, such as pools and recreational areas, that few could afford otherwise, and a level of services that a growing number of suburbs found it hard to provide. CIDs marked the triumph of private "community building," increasing residential densities and the communal ownership of facilities at the same time that they intensified trends toward suburban privatism, a separate way of life restricted to select groups defined by ownership as opposed to citizenship.

Among the most controversial aspects of CIDs was the role of homeowner associations and condominium boards as a form of private government. As specified in the covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs), to which residents agreed as a condition of purchase, these associations exercised wide latitude to enforce their own rules, employ private security and maintenance workers, and control the flow of association fees—a kind of private tax devoted to the benefit of the development. Ironically, as national political rhetoric assailed intrusive government, residents of CIDs submitted to private restrictions that were more intrusive than any real government could constitutionally impose. The popularity of CIDs, however, suggests an impulse among suburbanites to withdraw into privately owned, governed, and maintained residential enclaves, reinforcing wider trends in U.S. political culture toward privatism, localism, and resistance to taxation for public services that benefited anyone outside the local community.

Finally, as urban crime rates peaked in the early 1990s and media coverage of crime reached new heights, real estate developers began marketing enhanced safety and security through the construction of private gated communities. Sustained by continuing economic and social uncertainties, the trend accelerated even as actual crime rates fell after the mid-1990s. Gating became the latest tool in a long tradition of marketing suburbia as a private refuge from a hostile world, and in that same tradition, it contributed to continuing suburban exclusivity at the end of the twentieth century. By 2001, an estimated 16 million Americans (6% of the population) lived in private gated communities, a trend particularly strong in Sunbelt states like Florida, Texas, Arizona, and California.

As the twentieth century came to an end, more and more suburbanites sought the security of predictable and well-maintained physical environments, reliable social behavior, and the hope of stable or appreciating property values. They were willing to sacrifice a range of personal freedoms in order to secure these promises. Read another way, it also appeared that among the freedoms suburbanites cherished most was the freedom from free neighbors.

DOCUMENTS

Despite federal fair housing legislation and court rulings in the late 1960s, minority families continued to face stringent barriers to suburban living, and especially to those suburbs with the greatest fiscal attributes. **Document 15-1**, an influential essay by suburban legal activists Paul Davidoff and Neil Gold, pinpoints exclusionary zoning as the cause of continuing racial segregation in housing, schools, and employment. In the early 1970s, Davidoff and Gold's Suburban Action Institute brought suit against numerous suburbs with restrictive zoning ordinances, hoping to use the courts to "open up the suburbs" to minority residents. Though their efforts achieved limited success, one place the argument did carry was New Jersey, the nation's most suburban state. **Document 15-2** shares the opinion of the Supreme Court of New Jersey in the landmark Mount Laurel case. The suit stemmed from the refusal of a suburbanizing township near Philadelphia to permit a local group to build thirty-six apartments for working-class black residents of the community. Although local African Americans could trace their roots in the area to the colonial era, a town committeeman explained the new reality: "If you people can't afford to live in our town, then you'll just have to leave."[1] Writing for a unanimous court, Justice Frederick Hall argues that Mount Laurel's zoning ordinance represented a form of economic discrimination and "affirmative action" for middle- and upper-income people. Exclusionary, fiscal zoning, which paid no heed to its human consequences, the court concluded, was invalid. The case established the responsibility of New Jersey's growing suburbs to redraw their zoning maps to permit construction of a "fair share" of affordable housing. A companion decision (known as Mount Laurel II) in 1983 established a formula to accomplish this. In the next twenty years, builders constructed some 40,000 units of "fair share" housing across the state, although the distribution of that housing was a mixed bag. The court allowed municipalities to trade or sell fair share allotments to other communities. As a result, many of these new homes were built in the state's ailing central cities, improving residential opportunities there, but doing little to open growing suburbs to the working poor. **Document 15-3** and **Document 15-4** reveal the outcome of the struggle in Mount Laurel itself. After more than thirty years of resistance and millions of local tax dollars spent on legal fees, Mount Laurel allowed construction to proceed on 140 apartments for low- to moderate-income families. The Ethel R. Lawrence homes, named in memory of the woman who spearheaded the Mount Laurel struggle, opened in November 2000. Journalist Michelle Molz reports in **Document 15-3** that when the final forty units became available, hundreds of people, many of them African Americans and Puerto Ricans from the nearby city of Camden, waited in line over night for the chance to apply. **Document 15-4** gives a human face to the families that Mount Laurel and other suburbs fought decades to exclude: residents at leisure in front of their tastefully designed new homes.

The increasing trend toward privatism and regulation in the suburbs was reflected in the proliferation of community interest developments covered by covenants, conditions, and restrictions. **Document 15-5** assesses the reach (and occasional overreach) of these agreements, revealing varying opinions on the trend in suburban Philadelphia.

As suburbs diversified after 1970, African-American, Latino, and Asian-American families, too, confronted the appeal and dilemmas of private homeowner governments. In **Document 15-6**, Susan Saulny, a reporter for the *Washington Post*, examines the controversy over use of private basketball courts by nonresidents in one Prince George's County, Maryland subdivision. Complicating the issue, both the ball players and home owners in this majority black suburban county were African American.

As private, gated communities became increasingly popular in the late 1990s, they provoked heated public debate. Not surprisingly, this latest suburban trend became fodder for larger social and political critiques. In **Document 15-7**, David Boaz of the libertarian Cato Institute, explains the trend toward gated communities as a logical response to urban crime and the failures of municipal government. Gated communities, he writes, represent an example of people drawing a new social contract. Ironically, Boaz sees these communities as an outgrowth of "the failures of big government," despite suburbs' long-standing emphasis on small-scale home rule. In contrast, urban planner Edward Blakely attacks the trend toward gated living in **Document 15-8**, blaming it for contributing to segregation, the decline of community, and drains on public life. **Document 15-9** offers

states....But...to[...]ve covenants are an approved [...]

Today's real [...]opers do not merely insert into the deed a covenant or two, as sellers did in earlier times, such as a promise not to build a slaughterhouse or a soap factory....Instead, they have lawyers draft a fat package many pages long and full of elaborate restrictions that, taken as a whole, dictate to a large extent the lifestyle of everybody in the project.

The rigidity that seems to characterize CID rule enforcement was deliberately institutionalized by developers. It is maintained through the rules and laws under which CID boards operate. Even if individual board members wish to use prudent discretion in the enforcement of restrictions, and make exceptions, it is often difficult for them to do so. Individual association members can sue the board for failing to enforce the rules. Moreover, attorneys and property managers who specialize in servicing CIDs advocate strict rule enforcement in order to avoid setting precedents that could be used to justify further exceptions, and, ultimately, undermine the entire regime. Even if many residents and board members wish to change a rule, the task is made especially difficult by developers' "super-majority" requirements, which mandate approval from 75 percent of *all* owners, not just those voting.

This form of private government is strikingly different from that of cities. In a variety of ways, these private governments are illiberal and undemocratic. Most significantly boards of directors operate outside constitutional restrictions because the law views them as business entities rather than governments. Moreover, courts accept the legal fiction that all the residents have voluntarily agreed to be bound by the covenants by virtue of having bought a unit in the development.

Macropolitics: Secession of the Successful?

Rather than offering a solution to the problems of big cities, as Howard intended, CIDs exacerbate them. The developments take over many municipal functions for those who can pay the price, offering a compet-

ing sector of pay-as-you-go utilities....This privatization was undertaken without consideration of its implications and consequences, however....Most important, it carries with it the possibility that those affluent enough to live in CIDs will become increasingly segregated from the rest of society....

Instead of housing people from all walks of life, as Ebenezer Howard envisioned, CIDs compete with cities for the affluent, siphoning off their tax dollars, their expertise and participation, and their sense of identification with a community. Such developments have come to be invoked as part of a disturbing trend called the "secession of the successful" by liberal economist Robert Reich, who...[was] Secretary of Labor under President Clinton. "In many cities and towns, the wealthy have in effect withdrawn their dollars from the support of public spaces and institutions shared by all and dedicated the savings to their own private services," Reich writes....

Similar observations have been made by conservative social scientist Charles Murray, who views the growth of CIDs as a symbol of America becoming "a caste society" with "utter social separation" of the rich from the rest of society. Murray envisions a day when this growing sector of rich Americans will come to view cities as the internal equivalent of Indian reservations—places of deprivation and dysfunction for which they have no responsibility.

ESSAY 15-2. SETHA LOW, *BEHIND THE GATES: LIFE, SECURITY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS IN FORTRESS AMERICA* (2003)

Felicia—"Fear Flight": Safety, Community, and Fear of Others

I climb into Felicia's Volvo station wagon, carefully setting my tape recorder on the dashboard. Outside, the twisted junipers and gray-green cottonwoods of San Antonio flash by.... New gated developments with partially constructed houses and bulldozers leveling wild grass fields...suddenly disappear, leaving countryside that looks like it's been untouched for the past hundred years.

The contrast between the small-town past and suburban present is demarcated as we speed north.

Felicia is a tall, thin woman in her mid-forties who sits straight upright in the driver's seat. Her long fingers clutch the steering wheel as she drives; she is telling me about her college and graduate degrees. Even with the amount of education she has accumulated, she decided to stay home to take care of her seven-year-old daughter. They moved from California because of her husband's job and the opportunity to have a more comfortable life with a bigger house. They now live on an attractive cul-de-sac in a two-story, four-thousand-square-foot Scottsdale model located within a gated subdivision on the northern edge of the city.

She is articulate and gets right to the point. When they were shopping for a house, school district and aesthetics were important considerations. In fact, she had some reservations about living in a gated community, including the fact that it only has one exit if there is a fire. But they were concerned for their child's safety, and now feel that it was a good choice because it allows her to go outside and play. As Felicia puts it, "We're in San Antonio, and I believe the whole country knows how many child-kidnappings we've had....My husband would not ever allow her outside to play without direct adult supervision unless we were gated." It allows them the freedom to walk around the neighborhood at night, and their daughter and her friends from nongated neighborhoods are able to ride their bicycles safely.

Felicia, however, thinks it has a flip side in that it produces a false sense of safety. The guards aren't "Johnny-on-the-spot," and anybody who wants to could jump the gate. There's a perception of safety among residents that may not be real and could potentially leave one more vulnerable "if there was ever an attack."...

Their development is made up of people who are retired and don't want to maintain large yards, or people who want to raise families in a more protected environment. There is a lot [of] "fear flight," people who have moved in the last couple of years as the crime rate, or the reporting of the crime rate, has

become such a prominent part of the news. She knows people who are building because they want to get out of their exclusive subdivisions that don't have gates; she mentions one family that was shopping for a house in the gated community because they had been robbed many times.

Their neighbors are upper middle and middle class, white, Christian, and, apart from one Jewish family, quite homogeneous—businessmen and doctors, with stay-at-home wives, many without college educations. On their street, they know everyone by sight and visit with neighbors who have children; but they no longer have a party when new people move in. The houses are "very nice," architecturally designed and custom built, and she worries that the new ones will not be as tasteful or beautiful.

Felicia feels safe inside the community, but expresses considerable anxiety about living in San Antonio:

"When I leave the area entirely and go downtown [little laugh], I feel quite threatened just being out in normal urban areas, unrestricted urban areas....Please let me explain. The north central part of this city [San Antonio], by and large, is middle class to upper-middle class. Period. There are very few pockets of poverty. Very few. And therefore if you go to any store, you will look around and most of the clientele will be middle class as you are yourself. So you're somewhat insulated. But if you go downtown, which is much more mixed, where everybody goes, I feel much more threatened."

Her daughter was four years old when they first moved, and I wonder about the psychological impact of moving from a rambling, unfenced Californian suburb to a gated community. Felicia says her daughter feels threatened when she sees poor people, because she hasn't had enough exposure:

"We were driving next to a truck with some day laborers and equipment in the back, and we were stopped beside them at the light. She wanted to move because she was afraid those people were going to come and get her. They looked scary to her. I explained that they were workmen, they're the 'backbone of our country,' they're coming from work, you know, but..."

So living in a secured enclave may heighten a child's fear of others. It's unclear, though, whether Felicia's observation reflects many children's experience of growing up in a gated community, or simply her daughter's idiosyncracy and modeling of her mother's anxiety.

Felicia and her husband wanted to buy the nicest house in the best school district, while providing a safe environment for their daughter, one where they can be cloistered from any class differences. They consider the neighborhood "a real community" where you know your neighbors, although it is not as friendly as where they used to live. For them, the gated community provides a haven in a socially and culturally diverse world, offering a protected setting for their upper-middle-class lifestyle.

Desire for safety, security, community, and "niceness," as well as wanting to live near people like themselves because of a fear of "others" and of crime, is not unique to this family, but expressed by most residents living in gated communities. How they make sense of their new lives behind gates and walls, as well as the social consequences of their residential choices, are the subjects of this book. The emergence of a fortress mentality and its phenomenal success is surprising in the United States, where the majority of people live in open and unguarded neighborhoods. Thus, the rapid increase in the numbers of Americans moving to secured residential enclaves invites a more complex account of their motives and values. Like other middle-class Americans, residents of gated communities are looking for a place where they feel comfortable and secure, but this seemingly self-evident explanation reflects different underlying meanings and intentions. And collectively, their individual decisions are transforming the American dream of owning a suburban home in a close-knit community with easy access to nature into a vision that includes gates, walls, and guards....

One explanation for the gated community's popularity is that it materially and metaphorically incorporates otherwise conflicting, and in some cases polarized, social values that make up the moral terrain of middle-class life. For example, it reflects urban and suburban tensions in the United States regarding social class, race, and ethnicity and at the same time represents the perennial concern with creating community. The gated community's symbolic power rests on its ability to order personal and social experience.

Architectural symbols such as gates and walls also provide a rationale for the moral inconsistencies of everyday life. For instance, many residents want to feel safe in their homes and argue that walls and gates will keep out criminals; but gated communities are not safer than nongated suburban neighborhoods, where crime rates are already low. Instead, the logic of the symbolism satisfies conventional middle-class understandings of the nature of criminal activity—"it makes it harder for them to get in"—and justifies the choice to live in a gated community in terms of its moral and physical consequences—"look at my friends who were randomly robbed living in a nongated development."

Living in a gated community represents a new version of the middle-class American dream precisely because it temporarily suppresses and masks...the inherent anxieties and conflicting social values of modern urban and suburban life. It transforms Americans' dilemma of how to protect themselves and their children from danger, crime, and unknown others while still perpetuating open, friendly neighborhoods and comfortable, safe homes. It reinforces the norms of a middle-class lifestyle in a historical period in which everyday events and news media exacerbate fears of violence and terrorism. Thus, residents cite their "need" for gated communities to provide a safe and secure home in the face of a lack of other societal alternatives.

Gated residential communities, however, intensify social segregation, racism, and exclusionary land use practices already in place in most of the United States, and raise a number of values conflicts for residents. For instance, residents acknowledge their misgivings about the possible false security provided by the gates and guards, but at the same time, even that false security satisfies their desire for emotional security associated with childhood and the neighborhoods where they grew up. Living in a gated development contributes to residents' sense of well-being, but comes at the price of maintaining private guards and gates as well as conforming to extensive homeowners association rules and regulations. Individual freedom and ease of access for residents must be limited in order to achieve greater privacy and social control for the community as a whole. These contradictions—which residents are aware of and talk about—provide an opportunity to understand the psychological and social meaning-making processes Americans use to order their lives.

Defining the Gated Community

A gated community is a residential development surrounded by walls, fences, or earth banks covered with bushes and shrubs, with a secured entrance. In some cases, protection is provided by inaccessible land such as a nature reserve and, in a few cases, by a guarded bridge. The houses, streets, sidewalks, and other amenities are physically enclosed by these barriers, and entrance gates are operated by a guard or opened with a key or electronic identity card. Inside the development there is often a neighborhood watch organization or professional security personnel who patrol on foot or by automobile.

Gated communities restrict access not just to residents' homes, but also to the use of public spaces and services—roads, parks, facilities, and open space—contained within the enclosure. Communities vary in size from a few homes in very wealthy areas to as many as 21,000 homes in Leisure World in Orange County, California.... Many include golf courses, tennis courts, fitness centers, swimming pools, lakes, or unspoiled landscape as part of their appeal; commercial and public facilities are rare....

In many ways, buying a home in a gated residential community is a microcosm of the contemporary American dream. It reflects the social concerns and conflicts as well as the pleasures and desires of modern middle-class life. But it is the American dream with a twist, one that intentionally restricts access and emphasizes social control and security over other community values. Thus, by exploring the lives of gated community residents, we learn about ourselves, and at the same time we glimpse an increasingly secured and segregated world—a fortress America.

Kerry—Remembering a Childhood Home...

Kerry is an attractive woman, in her mid-thirties, wearing navy slacks and a starched white blouse.... George, her husband, works at a well-known financial center in Manhattan and just left for the day. She offers me ginger muffins and tea from a silver teapot, while describing their decision to move to Manor House [a gated community of 4,000 to 6,000 square foot homes on Long Island, New York] from their first home.

"We lived in Sunnyside Gardens, Queens, which was a planned community built in 1928. It was designed to imitate English garden communities with two- and three-family attached and semiattached brick houses. Everyone has a private front and back yard with a communal garden behind. We paid a yearly maintenance fee and sometimes volunteered to help with the garden.

The garden and volunteers made it a community. There's a street fair once or twice a year, and there's a local [neighborhood] organization. We were involved and had a great sense of a community.

So why did we leave? First of all, it's like what's happening to New York City. Things change, neighborhoods change, the makeup of the population changes. I was raised on Long Island, and missed the security of living there. And my husband was born in Portugal and was used to the openness of the land outside of Lisbon where he used to go climbing with his friends....

She knew that she would never find another community where she could walk down the block and say hi to most of the people she passed."...

"But here," she says, "I'm free and clear." She doesn't have to worry about raking leaves, watering the garden, or plowing the driveway. But she does miss walking into the shops and seeing her friends.

The most important thing, though, is that it is a gated community, "and there is a guard. I can't believe I'm leaving this till the

end, that I feel safe and secure. I mean, I walk around the house sometimes and the door is open. It feels like when I was growing up on the south shore [of Long Island]....[And] it fulfills my husband's desire to have open space like when he was a child." The fact that Manor House is gated, has open space, and does the outside maintenance seems to make all the difference.

Florence Ladd, an environmental psychologist, says we re-create aspects of our childhood in distant communities wherever we resettle. We unconsciously remember places from our early childhood...and these place memories reappear in our homes and landscapes. We turn to this window on the past to perpetuate settings where we were happy as children, and by discovering characteristics of remembered places we replicate them for ourselves and our children....

How could it be otherwise? Our earliest spatial and environmental relationships are to our homes and local communities. These places are imprinted in our imaginations as given, even natural, and taken for granted until we grow up and begin to question them. Is it so surprising, then, that when we search for a home, community, or design concept we return time and again to this resource?

But why are these residents moving to a type of community that did not exist when they were young? The answer lies in how gated community residents infuse their desire to re-create a childhood place with the feelings of emotional security and protection of childhood. Gated community residents want to recapture physical elements of their childhood landscapes, just like other people, but this desire is entangled with an unconscious longing for security they identify with living behind gates and walls....

So what exactly do residents mean when they say "I feel secure in my community"? At an emotional level, it means feeling protected and that everything is right with the world; unconsciously it is associated with a sense of childhood trust and protection by parents.

Socially it means "I feel comfortable with my friends and neighbors." "I feel secure in my community" also means feeling physically safe, not just psychologically or socially comfortable. These meanings—and many others—are evoked whenever they talk about security. This simultaneity and ambiguity of meaning gives the concept the power to evoke a complex and ever-shifting set of feelings, feelings that become encoded in a variety of symbolic forms, including the built environment....

Protecting the Children and Safety for All

"Interview me, interview me," clamors Alexandra as we walk toward her friend's house, "I want to be in the book."

"The book will be about you," I try to console her, "but I'm only interviewing parents, not children."

"Why aren't you asking me?" she counters. "I live in a gated community too."...

[T]his is my nine-year-old niece; surely I can have a casual conversation with her.

"Tell you what....I'll ask you one question, okay?"...

"If you could live anywhere, in any house, where would you live?" I ask.

"Do you mean here in San Antonio?" Alexandra looks at the curb.

"Yes, but in any neighborhood or kind of house you can think of."

"Okay...," she pauses....

"Take your time," I reassure her, "this is not a test."

Her face relaxes. "Well..." she drawls. "I want a two-story house on a hill with a stable nearby where I can keep my horse. It must be a safe neighborhood, new, with green all around and lots of flowers. The backyard has a swing set and a pool. Behind the house is water and a boat." She is combining the fantasies of her father, mother, and even her aunt.

"Would it be gated?"

She hesitates. "Only if needed."

"How would you know?"

"If there were robbers."...

Walking slowly, Alex tagging behind, I think about what I have just learned. The children say they want more protection—higher walls and patrol cars. What are they afraid of? Robbers, Alex said. Why should she be so afraid of "robbers?" As far as I know her family has never been burglarized. Her friend's older brother is afraid that peo-

ple can get into his house, while the younger one imagines someone climbing over the wall. Yet they live so far from other people, out on the suburban fringe. Are they repeating what they hear their parents say or is this some childhood fascination with guns and robbers?

Fear is a part of every child's life and varies over the course of a child's normal development and as a consequence of emotional vulnerability to perceived dangers. The content changes: a four-year-old may fear the dark, large animals, and imaginary creatures, while an eight-year-old's fears are a mix of ghosts and tigers and more realistic fears about bodily harm. Until recently it was thought that it was not until the teenage years that children begin to focus on societal violence and failure at school.

A study of San Antonio, Texas, schoolchildren between the ages of seven and nine, however, found that most of their fears were related to personal threats and injury, including societal danger such as street drugs, drive-by shootings, guns, gangs, and nuclear weapons. Girls reported more fears than boys did, and poorer children expressed more fears than middle-income children did. Clearly, the fears of children under ten in San Antonio resemble those of older children documented in earlier eras. In our increasingly violent society, young children may be prematurely encountering "an array of fears for which they may be neither cognitively nor emotionally prepared."...

Karen—Worrying About Surveillance and Safety...

Karen, a young-looking woman in her mid-thirties, greets me at the door [of her two story house in a gated community north of San Antonio] dressed in pink Bermuda shorts and matching silk golf shirt....She starts by talking about problems with their security company, complaining that they do not do a very good job. I ask if there is a block watch or other surveillance organization. "Just the security that patrols the golf course. They're supposed to come down here once an hour. [They] drive through, and monitor the gates with security cameras. I mean, it's limited, but

that's unfair to say: [at least] it's controlled-access entry." I ask her to be more specific about the kinds of dangers she imagines.

"[The kids] getting hit by a car [while] playing in the road. That's one of my biggest fears, because they're not into watching and being cautious. Since we live on a cul-de-sac and in a gated community, you falsely have the security that no one is going to hit you. Probably my biggest fear is that there is all this construction going on because the construction workers draw a lot of illegal aliens working out here. I guess, not to stereotype it, but it's like that's the way typically you see lots of burglaries going on. The house next to you is being built, and then you have a burglary at your house. And they can take something and watch when you come and go. During construction I would be very, very cautious."

She emphasizes how the gates restrict traffic and make it possible for children to ride their bicycles around the neighborhood at an early age. She lets her older child ride anywhere inside the community:

"But he always tells me, 'I'm going to ride my bike.' So that I know he's out there, and I can look for him. He really rarely goes off, and he won't go too far. Or he'll come and tell me, or he'll be with a group of kids doing it. I assume that my kid must have a real fear of a lot of things. One day, he says, 'You know, Mom, I wish our school made us go through one of those things like they have...'

'What are you talking about?' I ask him.

And he says, 'You know, he has to walk through and if he had a gun, then....'

I just says, 'Metal detector?' He says, 'Yeah.'...

Where is that [fear] coming from?

The thing that I see about the gates [is that] you're going to see very different kinds of gated communities. You're going to see this kind of gate, where it's controlled but it's very limited. If you want to come in here, you just sit there, and you wait, and when the gate opens you tailgate somebody. You know, we're told if somebody does that, get on the phone and call security, say somebody followed me in. But, you know, I don't think everybody does, all the time. I know it's happened to me, and I have not done it, even

when I didn't know the person. Because there are so many workers, you've got people coming and going. And I guess the way I look at the security issue out here is those gates are not going to stop a burglar if he really wants to come in here. They're going to deter him, though. He's going to drive up and he's going to say, 'You know, I'm going to go across the street here because the houses are just as nice, you know, they all look just as nice. But it's not gated, and there are other ways to get out.'

Statistics show a burglar does not come down a dead-end road. They want two exits. Now, we've had a handful of burglaries out here...in two of the houses, but they were probably inside jobs. The kid had a party, the parents were gone, the party got totally out of control, [and] it turns out there was $2,000 in cash missing. Another house, the same sort of situation, where she's got teenage girls and a teenage son. They've got all kinds of people coming and going from their house with those kids....[They] had some jewelry stolen. Not that you shouldn't take it seriously, but those kinds of things don't matter to me...."

I find it interesting that Karen draws a distinction between burglaries within the community and her general concern about protecting her family from crime. It's as if a burglary by someone from within the neighborhood is not as dangerous or threatening as crime committed by outsiders. Sally Merry, an anthropologist who studies perceptions of danger, found that familiarity—familiarity with other residents and with the locations where crime usually occurred—reduced residents' sense of fear. In Karen's case, familiarity seems a reasonable explanation.

I ask her how she would characterize this community in comparison with other neighborhoods in San Antonio.

"It's not the real world out here, although that may not be true, because if you look around in all the new developments, 90 percent of them have gates....More and more, all the new communities that are built are all pretty much gated. And it's almost as a form of competition.

I think it's [gating] one of those nice things.

I don't think people are so afraid. I think they have that same attitude that I originally had that crime doesn't really affect me. I think people have that sense of security, although it's probably false if you look at personal property crimes like we have here...[but] if you asked me tomorrow if I was going to move, it would be only to a gated community. I think that the safety is most important; I really like knowing who's coming and going...I love knowing my kids can get on their bicycles and ride around the block, and I don't have to wonder are they gonna come back home."...

Whether it is Mexicans, black salesmen, workers, or "ethnic changes," the message is the same: residents are using the walls, entry gates, and guards in an effort to keep perceived dangers outside of their homes, neighborhoods, and social world. Contact incites fear and concern, and in response they are moving to exclusive, private, residential developments where they can keep other people out with guards and gates. The walls are making visible the systems of exclusion that are already there; now the walls are constructed in concrete....

Residents talk about their fear of the poor, the workers, the "Mexicans," and the "newcomers," as well as their retreat behind walls, where they think they will be safe. But there is fear even behind the walls. There are workers who enter the community every day, and residents must go out in order to buy groceries, shop, or see a movie. The gates provide some protection, but residents would like more. Even though the gates and guards exclude the feared "others" from living with them, "they" can slip by the gate, follow your car in, crawl over the wall, or, worse, the guard can fall asleep. Informal conversations about the screening of guards and how they are hired, as well as discussions about increasing the height and length of the protective walls as new threats appear, are frequent in the locker room of the health club, on the tennis court, and during strolls in the community in the evening.

The discourse of fear encompasses many social concerns, about class, race, and ethnic exclusivity and gender. It provides a verbal component that complements—and even reinforces—the visual landscape of fear created by the walls, gates, and guards....

Civic engagement and social connectedness...[have] declined over the last thirty years; Americans are now less trustful and more isolated. Gated communities are not the cause or even indirectly the result of these societal changes, but they amplify these tendencies, further reducing the possibilities of social interaction between people, and the symbiosis between city and suburb.

Gated communities—in California, as well as in San Antonio, and Long Island—participate in this transformation by redefining the meaning of "community" to include protective physical boundaries that determine who is inside and who is outside....

Gated community residents are interested in "community," but a specific kind of community that includes protecting children and keeping out crime and others while at the same time controlling the environment and the quality of services. The "community" they are searching for is one imagined from childhood or some idealized past. In a variety of ways, these residents are all searching for their version of the perfect community, one where there is no fear, no crime, no kidnapping, no "other" people, where there is a reassuringly consistent architectural and physical landscape, amenities and services that work, and great neighbors who want exactly the same things....

Architecture and the layout of towns and suburbs provide concrete, anchoring points of people's everyday life. These anchoring points reinforce our ideas about society at large. Gated communities and the social segregation and exclusion they materially represent make sense of and even rationalize problems Americans have with race, class,

and gender inequality and social discrimination. The gated community contributes to a geography of social relations that produces fear and anxiety simply by locating a person's home and place identity in a secured enclave, gated, guarded, and locked....

The reasons people give for their decision to move to a gated community vary widely, and the closer you get to the person and his or her individual psychology, the more complex the answer. At a societal level, people say they move because of their fear of crime and others. They move to secure a neighborhood that is stable and a home that will retain its resale value. They move in order to have control of their environment and of the environment of those who live nearby. Residents in rapidly growing areas want to live in a private community for the services. And retirees particularly want the low maintenance and lack of responsibility that come with living in a private condominium development.

At a personal level, though, residents are searching for the sense of security and safety that they associate with their childhood. When they talk about their concern with "others," they are splitting—socially and psychologically—the good and bad aspects of (and good and bad people in) American society. The gates are used symbolically to ward off many of life's unknowns, including unemployment, loss of loved ones, and downward mobility. Of course, gates cannot deliver all that is promised, but they are one attempt to resurrect aspects of the American dream that many people feel they have lost.

NOTES

1. David L. Kirp, John P. Dwyer, and Larry A. Rosenthal, *Our Town: Race, Housing, and the Soul of Suburbia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 2.