

Gated communities



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David Guterson's Story; No Place Like Home, is one that provoked thoughts in me about America's "middle class" that so many of us identify with. And let's face it, throwing the word America in front of that description makes all the difference. What we try to spin off as a modest lifestyle, is in reality a very self-indulgent one. While in other parts of the world, middle class means you're not starving; our middle class can be defined by the essential two car house hold, and most likely a gym membership. Saying that we're spoiled would be an understatement, especially considering most of us believe the opposite. Even with our quality of living so much greater than that of most, we are in constant search to better our situation. Many people look for alternatives to living in large cities. They want better schools, larger houses, and safer streets. These things all sound great, Guterson questions whether it is worth the sacrifices one makes when owning a home in a "suburb-city". These well planned cities may offer what we are looking for, but also many things we aren't. Like; uniformity, false sense of security, and the loss of freedoms. Many of these developments have strict regulations, walls, and gates. We are so blinded by the immediate gain, we neglect to see what comes attached. Guterson uses the description, "sanitized wasteland" when referring to this new type of suburbia. It is our status obsessed social class that enables communities like this to thrive. No matter how sheltered, secure, and self-involved our lives become, the troubles of the world subsist. I happen to believe that hiding from these troubles only fuels them, so why lose our individuality while we're at it? Corporate owned developments, like the ones Guterson writes of, leave no room for natural character or growth of a town. Unfortunately, business is just that, business. We are an impatient and spoiled population that fits oh so nicely into the gated communities,

jobs, and shopping malls that big business has chosen for us. I believe communities like these are inevitable, considering the growth of our metropolitan areas. It's important that they are seen for what they are; generic cities, artificial suburbia - just a commute away from reality.