***Walling In and Walling Out: Why are We Building New Barriers to Divide Us?*. Edited by Laura McAtackney and Randall H. McGuire. School for Advanced Research Press. Paperback, 260 pp. ISBN 9780826361233.**

Barriers to free movement are increasingly relevant to our understanding of the world. On the day this book reached me in November 2021, headlines cried out "Lukashenko Threatens to Cut Off Europe Gas Supplies as Border Tensions Escalate" (Channel 4 News); "Far Right Leads Warsaw March of 'Patriots' as Polish Border Crisis Simmers" (Associated Press); and "British Troops helping Poland to Fortify Border with Belarus" (*Daily Telegraph*). While these stories spar about whose border it is – Belarus, Poland or the EU – the action centres on a fence that separates Poland and Belarus where thousands of migrants from Iraq, Syria and elsewhere in Africa have been detained after entering the EU "illegally". So far, seven migrants have died of hypothermia, stuck in front of this flimsy, chain-linked, barbed-wire-topped fence. Does this situation sound familiar?

Why do we keep building walls when we can see the devastation that accompanies these borders? That is the central question of this edited volume on external walls. External walls may seem like a rather niche subject, but this volume covers a wide range of topics by focusing on one specific part of human interaction: separation.

This book was a challenging read – not in its writing style, which is clear and appropriate for researchers of various fields as well as the curious newcomer – but because it forced me to think about walls that I encounter every day but take no notice of. When one thinks of the politics and human impact of walls, the monumental, newsworthy walls come to mind: Israel's West Bank border wall (Chapter 5), the former Berlin Wall (Chapter 6) and the US–Mexico border wall (Chapters 8, 9, 10). Though these walls are frequently discussed and ever-present in the news, these chapters bring to light little-discussed aspects of their

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existence. For example, the Israeli border wall is perhaps most famous for the graffiti that adorns it, which has a booming tourism industry now based around it. Amahl Bishara draws our attention to a critique of this artistic activity , noting that many activists have said that they "preferred to work for the destruction of the wall, rather than to adorn it" (p. 94). Bringing our focus back to some less eye-catching black marks on the wall, Bishara discusses the protests which have seen tyre burning shielding protestors from the watchful eye of guard towers in 2005 (p. 94). Focusing on the material form of these walls, Bishara actually calls attention to the people behind them and the contrasting viewpoints of activists, residents and tourists on one side of the wall, and of the army, government and citizens on the other side. In another look at differing viewpoints, Anna McWilliams explores the "materiality of metaphor" that has haunted the Berlin Wall since the Cold War. Another graffiti-laden tourist attraction, the Berlin Wall now stands (and falls) as a central symbol of freedom, unity and the end of an era. McWilliams questions its symbolic meaning, however, by exploring the viewpoints of East and West Germans, concluding that history is indeed written by the victors.

As yet another powerful, symbolic wall, the US–Mexico border wall is ever present in the media. Particularly if you live in America, it constantly pops up in the news and has become a fundamental part of any political debate. You may feel that you know everything that there is to know about the border wall, but the chapters in this volume will likely prove you wrong. While I disagree with some of the idealised notions of pre-1835 Mexico with which Michael Dear begins his chapter (Chapter 8), he covers the *longue durée* history of the border in a way that is so rarely done and that captures the evolution of the ongoing controversy and conflict. As part of the historical contextualisation of the wall, Dear, along with Margaret Dorsey and Miguel Díaz-Barriga in the following chapter (Chapter 9), make note of the various conflict-saturated materials used to construct it, originating from World

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War II internment camps and the Vietnam War, amongst other violent materials such as barbed wire and mundane fixtures like chain-linked fences. An incomplete and patchwork barrier, the US–Mexico border wall is fortified by various technologies and backed by the border-industrial complex, which Dear explains has a vested interest in it remaining up and active (p. 165). As Reece Jones also points out with the US–Mexico border wall in mind (Chapter 10), the hardening of these borders with surveillance, technology and now whole industries dedicated to the border's enforcement benefits smugglers and cartels by forcing border-crossers to rely on those who know – or simply claim to know – the safest way across.

While these chapters are illuminating, they are not the chapters that changed my perceptions of walls, but rather reinforced my views about these particular walls. Instead, it was the walls which I had never discussed before that forced me to confront my own opinions and preconceptions. Gated communities are their own, perhaps more mundane form of separation. Having never been inside of one, they never crossed my mind as a barrier or a form of discrimination. Zaire Dinzey-Flores changed that with a chapter on the "Race Walls" in Puerto Rico (Chapter 3), making the implicit and codified racism, which she argues is ever-present but largely ignored or denied in Latin America, material and therefore visible. Similarly, Laura McAtackney makes visible not only the continued conflict between Catholic and Protestant, Loyalist and Republican, but also the classist and sexist narratives present in murals and memorials on and around so-called 'peace walls' in Belfast (Chapter 4). In contrast to the distorted memory of the Berlin Wall, McAtackney shows in her chapter that "once walls are erected for long periods of time, they become more difficult to bring down, and the psychic divisions can remain" (p. 84). The same issue is present at the borders of Europe, where, Dimitris Papadopoulous argues (Chapter 7), the invisible walls present on the outskirts of the European Union contrast with its ideal of being "borderless" (p. 131). In spite of its claims of free movement, the European Union has proven that taking borders down is

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much more difficult than reinforcing them, particularly where the borders separate groups along the lines of wealth.

These chapters have challenged me and made visible, through emphasising the material, the human toll of separation. As Randall McGuire puts it so well (Chapter 2), they explore "how modern walls (like past walls) are complex and materialize a host of social relations, how they invite transgression, and how they amplify and polarize social problems and inequalities" (p. 42). Historically well situated (Chapter 2), with a clear focus on archaeology and anthropology, the chapters also touch on memory and heritage studies, politics and international relations, and issues of gender, race and migration.

Just as this book was relevant to the news the day it landed it my hands, I suspect an equally heartbreaking and urgent news story will come to mind when you open this book. Though I long for a day when this book is no longer relevant, I doubt it will ever come, and in the meantime, it's good reading.

Jennifer Putnam

Birkbeck College, University of London, UK

jputna01@mail.bbk.ac.uk

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