neighborhoods, gated communities, and contemporary urban development bear the signature of security's aesthetic touch. The ethnographic work we carried out in that book helps us pinpoint who was protecting and securing, for what, and for whom.

When reading Castronovo's book, it becomes clear that Americans have long been subject to surveillance, which is sometimes resisted but often embraced. Chapter 4 discusses communication, information, and analysis via the writing of Charles Brockden Brown. Castronovo is interested in the avalanche of information produced by surveillance and the survivability of storytelling in the face of the "informational sublime" (p. 115). He gives us a fascinating reading of the gothic history of contemporary debates about information security and uncertainty. Castronovo describes the staggering amount of data collected by U.S. security agencies and the impossibility of knowing what it all means or can uncover (p. 125). He argues that excess creates apprehension and fear, requiring interventions that produce yet more uncertainty. However, there is a loss of precision at this point in the book. Fear, uncertainty, anxiety, and risk are written about as if they are the same thing—terms become unmoored from their contexts. Moreover, while the scale of data accumulation by surveillance systems may seem overwhelming and the patterns therein are hard to explain, the people who manage security agencies and critical infrastructure are perfectly capable of either ignoring internal problems or converting them into assets. After all, according to security experts, big data has "emergent" qualities available for pattern analysis, which is the basis of high-tech predictive policing systems. Defense and intelligence agencies have long understood "the problem of opacity" and "explainability" as technical challenges.

American Insecurity concludes with two chapters on race, security, and fear, a masterful exposition of his thirteen axioms, especially "12. Security Safeguards Whiteness." Settler colonists, he tells us, were obsessed with data analysis (p. 154), and Thomas Jefferson was an early enthusiast. He "trembled" (p. 155) when he realized U.S. population data showed an increasing Black population, a looming threat to white hegemony—*homo secures* is surely a white man. Just at the point when the reader's mind wanders back to today's demographic anxieties and "great replacement" theories, Castronovo introduces a vital discussion of Black intellectual life as expressed in *Freedom's Journal.* Many of the most striking themes in the book are here: the twinning of security and freedom, the population as a (racialized) target of security, and "the people" who accommodate security, resist it, or confound it. The closer *American Insecurity* draws to life, with all its contradictions, the better we see what insecurity means.

However, there is a further loss of precision in the Epilogue. Although it offers yet more masterful cultural history, the Epilogue to *American Insecurity* opens questions and invites challenges rather than offering conclusions. Castronovo leaves readers with the impression that contemporary security is a giant apparatus with "surveillance programs with unparalleled reach and incredible technological sophistication" (pp. 230-231). Our work with powerful security providers has left us less than impressed. In *Trapped*, we notice internal contradictions, deeply flawed technological outputs, and the machinery's reliance on public institutions and support. Later in the Epilogue, drawing on Herman Melville's story, "The Lightning Rod Man," Castronovo includes a brief entry on how security enters ordinary life as technology ("solutions") sold by people who are "part huckster and part evangelist" (p. 233), which becomes not a source of confidence but a risk to be managed, a felt vulnerability. This vital discussion, however, occurs in the last pages of Castronovo's book, making it a partial cultural history of American insecurity.

In *Trapped*, our focus is on security capitalism, on how the supply of and demand for security shapes life in gated communities, elite enclaves, airports, and other contemporary institutions. By foregrounding security capitalism and those who consent to control, who enjoy feeling "safe and secure," or who struggle to think and act differently, we notice how language and affects differ depending on context. Risk and the precautionary principle are technical devices in the realm of security experts, but chaos is the enemy beyond the gates. In gated communities, residents express their fears and anxieties, but they frame the life they have built on ground prepared by racial security capitalism using terms like "niceness." When representatives of the security-industrial complex speak of chaos, and when the residents of exclusive communities demand more yet more security to protect the niceness of their neighbourhood, they are code-switching, signalling support for the system as it is, but also opening a conversation that carries within it the possibility of change.

Response to Mark Maguire and Setha Low's Review of *American Insecurity and the Origins of Vulnerability*

doi:10.1017/S1537592724001853

— Russ Castronovo

Equipped with sophisticated technologies, backed by endless data, and seemingly justified by theories of the state, security presents a formidable edifice. Any critical assault on the conceptual architecture of securitization—to say nothing of its actual mechanisms—needs to be

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waged across several disciplinary fronts. This contention is fundamental to *American Insecurity and the Origins of Vulnerability*, which argues for the centrality of humanities fields, especially literary criticism, cultural history, and political theory, for understanding the affective force of anxiety and fear in diminishing democratic life. As part of this interdisciplinary effort, I am pleased to have as interlocutors Setha Low and Mark Maguire, whose work in anthropology provides an ethnographic dimension to this endeavor. I am equally pleased that their assessment of *American Insecurity* highlights the distinctiveness of its contributions to the critique of security. (Confidentially, if crossing disciplinary borders can occasion a bit of trepidation, I am relieved to find out that my book passes muster with practitioners of the social sciences.)

Given the differences in terms of evidence and approach, it is not surprising that the emphases of a literary scholar and two anthropologists might not always align. A subtle instance of this variance might be witnessed in Low and Macguire's observation that *American Insecurity* "brings" its insights and "perspective to American history and literature." There is, of course, nothing wrong with this statement, but I might have inverted it. That is, I would describe the aim of the book as employing American literature, especially the archives of print culture, as a critical tool for interrogating both the everyday practices and the philosophical givens of security discourse. What seems a quibble is really about methodology. Literature is not simply a body of texts that needs to be explained; instead, literature, broadly construed to include everything from novels to Jefferson's notes to his plantation overseer to articles in the first Black newspaper in the United States, is also that which explains and denaturalizes otherwise ossified formations of state and culture.

This difference in emphasis, I think, accounts for Low and Maguire's dissatisfaction with the way that the book concludes. While citing the "masterful cultural history" in the book's final section, they also see a "loss of precision" in the "Epilogue to *American Insecurity* [which] opens questions and challenges rather than offering conclusions." Exactly so! Instead of consolidating action items, one goal of humanities critique is to extend interrogation and, above all, to remain skeptical of its own conclusions. The Epilogue to *American Insecurity* exists as a provocation to continue the work of critique, which the structures of security sorely need. It may be hardly curious, then, that their review here of *American Insecurity* concludes by circling back to the topics discussed in their book, *Trapped*, just as earlier they state that researchers and scholars often find it "easy to overlook research that illustrates your argument," especially when that research is "from another discipline such as anthropology." This disciplinary signpost, like the varying stress on openness versus conclusions, reminds us that academic discipline is not wholly unrelated to the policing of borders.

Trapped: Life under Security Capitalism and How to Escape It. By Mark Maguire and Setha Low. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2024. 182 pages. $14.00 paper.
doi:10.1017/S153759272400183X

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In the state of "Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man," as Thomas Hobbes warned in his 1651 text, *Leviathan*, society lacks the security necessary for business and commerce. "There is no place for Industry … nor use of the commodities that may be imported," he continued. But it is not simply that business interests require security; it is also that now, four centuries later, security has become big business. In *Trapped*, anthropologists Mark Maguire and Setha Low (also a professor of environmental psychology) describe this conjunction as "security capitalism," a seemingly inescapable assemblage that both privatizes and militarizes public space. In the process, it increases the profits of real estate developers and security contractors, even as it ultimately impoverishes democracy around the globe.

Part of the Stanford University Press Briefs series, *Trapped* is a trim and accessible volume that pairs ethnographic storytelling with trenchant critique while still leaving space in the book's conclusion to outline steps for defunding security. Its style is essential to the political work that the authors see this book doing in tearing down the walls, both literal and conceptual, that have created a gated worldview built on fear, distrust, and segregation. Their description of security technology as "the latest snake-oil-based solution" (p. 98), their warning that the security-industrial complex creates profiles of presumed threats and that "tomorrow, it could be you!" (p. 111), and their goal to "free people from security" (p. 41) all characterize the direct and often punchy statements that drive their argument and add to its urgency. In opposition to the convoluted coordination of private, neoliberal, and state interests that enable security capitalism to thrive, *Trapped* offers a crisp breakdown of the hypervigilance, constant policing, and other ailments that beset everyday life within the contemporary conjuncture. (Given this streamlined approach, this book does not feature sustained engagements with theorists who discuss the biopolitical or algorithmic aspects of security, but that is no cause for disappointment. Indeed, *Trapped* is a book that would pair well on a syllabus with Hobbes's *Leviathan* or Michel Foucault's *Security, Territory, Population.*)

Two stories set Maguire and Low's intervention in motion. The prologue opens on an affluent couple in Nairobi, Kenya, on their way to do some shopping for a

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