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From the *Grünen Wiesen* to Urban Space: Berlin, Expansion, and the *Longue Durée*

Introduction

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The essays in this special issue all focus on the city of Berlin, in particular, its relationship with its margins and borders over the *longue dureé*. The authors—Kristin Poling, Marion Gray, Barry Jackisch, and Eli Rubin—all consider the history of Berlin over the last two centuries, with special emphasis on how Berlin expanded over this time and how it encountered the open spaces surrounding it and within it—the "green fields" (*grüne Wiesen*) referred to in the theme title.[1] Each of them explores a different period in Berlin's history, and so together, the essays form a long dureé history of Berlin, although each of the essays in its own way explores the roots of Berlin's history in deeper time scales, from the early modern period, to the Middle Ages, and even to the very end of the last ice age, more than 10,000 years ago.

Each of these essays takes a separate part of Berlin's history as its subject. Kristin Poling's essay, "Shantytowns and Pioneers beyond the City Wall: Berlin's Urban Frontier in the Nineteenth Century," examines the period during Berlin's rapid industrialization before and just after the unification of Germany, roughly, from the 1840s to the 1870s. Marion Gray's essay, "Urban Sewage and Green Meadows: Berlin's Expansion to the South, 1870–1920," looks at the expansion of Berlin toward the villages of Steglitz, Dahlem, and Klein Ziethen, and considers in particular the issue of the city's sewage and its use of outlying areas as "sewage farms." Barry Jackisch's essay, "The Nature of Berlin: Green Space and Visions of a New German Capital, 1900–45," focuses on the incorporation of green space within the city as it expanded, especially the Grunewald, during the Weimar and then the Nazi era. And Eli Rubin's essay, "Amnesiopolis: From *Mietskaserne* to *Wohnungsbauserie 70* in East Berlin's Northeast," focuses on the mammoth prefabricated housing settlement of Marzahn-Hellersdorf, built in

[1]The term grüne Wiesen ("green fields") is shorthand often used in German, especially among urban planners, for undeveloped, open areas outside population centers. In this essay, it is used to reflect the multiple themes of marginal spaces, nature, and tabula rasae along the borders of Berlin.

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the 1970s and 1980s on the "green fields" on Berlin's northeast margins as part of the ruling Socialist Unity Party's ambitious "Housing Program."

In addition to providing a chronological continuity, the essays also offer a somewhat comprehensive geographical study of Berlin's margins: Poling focuses partially on the Kottbusser and Halle Gates on the southern and southeastern edge of the city; Gray on the villages of Steglitz, Teltow, and Klein Zeithen on the southwestern edge of Berlin; Jackisch partially on the Grunewald forest on the western edge of Berlin; and Rubin on Marzahn-Hellersdorf, on Berlin's northeastern margin.

Focusing on the margins of the expanding city over a long period accomplishes five goals. First, by focusing on the margins of the city—its edges, open spaces, liminal zones—these essays reveal another side to Berlin and its history, one that has been historically ignored in favor of more visible elements of this city's topography, yet forms a crucial part of the city's history. Doing so also focuses on the marginalized of the city, who often find themselves in marginal spaces. Second, by looking specifically at the interaction of the city with the green fields, this issue grapples with the dialectic formed between nature and urban space, a theme related to the first point, because the relationship between nature and the city is often most visible in the most marginal or empty spaces of the city.

Third, these essays together form a narrative of Berlin as a place defined by colonization, in-migration, and expansion, a city in constant flux and under constant pressure to expand outward to the open, flat lands around it, and yet always deeply ambivalent about the conditions and the nature of its rapid urban growth. By looking at the city over varying long-term durations, these essays seek to provide a coherent framework for the issues of settlement, nature, expansion, and liminality that have defined and continue to define Berlin.

Fourth, these essays all focus on Berlin's dualistic identity as a city unto itself, as well as the capital of Germany, by exploring the links between German history writ large and the history of Berlin as an urban space. Too often, histories of Berlin have focused only on the historical events that unfolded in and around Berlin—political drama, war, well-known cultural institutions, important sites of memory, influential intellectuals, etc.—but treated the city itself as a passive backdrop, or a stage, upon which the chronology of German history plays out. But Berlin, like all cities, is a space, not just a stage set. It is made of streets and buildings, sewers, canals, parks, forests, concrete and sand, and, importantly, the green fields upon which it is built. Each of these spatial dimensions has its own history, one that is intertwined with and co-constitutive of the more well-known chronologies that have played out within Berlin—even if we have to look in the margins and the liminal and hidden spaces to see those histories. Each essay demonstrates, in its own way, the importance that understanding Berlin as a space unto itself has for understanding the link between Berlin and the broader sweep of German, European, and even world history.

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Finally, and connected to the above point, by contemplating Berlin's spatiality as a coeval dimension to its (and Germany's) history, the essays here, individually and as a whole, can be considered part of a new and growing historiography that focuses on the built and the natural environment that some have called the "spatial turn." All the essays here draw inspiration from thinkers and historians such as Fernand Braudel, Henri Lefebvre, Ed Soja, David Harvey, Bill Cronon, David Blackbourne, Dorothee Brantz, Matthew Gandy, Neil Smith, and others who have sought to understand "space" as a fundamental category of historical thought that should be seen as constituting a dialectic with historical subjects—what Soja has called the "socio-spatial dialectic," rather than a passive backdrop upon which history plays out. The "spatial turn" considers all space to be important, from the water table to slums, from gutters to housing developments on the margins of the city, rather than just the most famous architectural landmarks or projects, or the most memorialized squares or monuments. Thus, it is useful, as a school of thought, for understanding the fullness of Berlin as a city, and it underpins the arguments made by each of these works that the unknown, hidden, and marginal spaces (and the people and nature that inhabited them) were just as crucial to Berlin's history as the most well-known and overdetermined spaces in the city, such as the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag, the Wall, Alexanderplatz, the recent Holocaust memorial, and so on.

Thinking more in a spatial dimension alters the way we think about time as well, because spaces and the materials and natures that form them follow different scales of time than subjects alone. A tree, a road, a building, a river all follow different life spans, all of them longer than the subjects that produce the space in and with them, all of them nested inside each other and overlapping. For that reason as well, the structure of this issue as a "longue durée" with shorter histories of specific spaces nested within longer histories of an urban space and a regional space is a choice conditioned as well by the notion of a "spatial turn." In what follows next, this introduction will argue for Berlin as a uniquely important space to study over the long term.

Why Berlin? Expansion and Colonization on Margins of Empire

Berlin presents a particularly compelling case study for a spatially oriented history seen over the longue durée, because of several distinguishing factors. Its geological and geopolitical location in particular—on the open plains, on the fault lines of two cultures—has deeply influenced its history. This history has been one of colonization, understood in two ways. First, Berlin has been defined by its character as a colony at the edge of an empire, one that is as much geopolitical in its raison d'être as it is economic. Second, Berlin has also been defined by its rapid expansion in the industrial era, beginning in the nineteenth century and continuing to the present day.

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As Alexandra Richie and others have noted, Berlin's location makes little intuitive sense and sets it apart from other major European cities. It is not built on a harbor, as Copenhagen was, or on a major river, as Vienna, London, Paris, and Frankfurt were.[2] It is not centrally located within its geopolitical area, as Rome is central to the Italian Peninsula, or Madrid to the Iberian. It is not strategically located to take advantage of patterns of world trade, like Venice and Manchester, and it is not nestled in the foothills of a major mountain range, like Geneva. Nor is it afforded the protection of mountains, like Zurich or Prague, or of a large body of water, as Britain and Scandinavia are, nor does any other natural geological or meteorological feature offer it protection, as the vastness of the Steppes and the brutal winters have protected Moscow.[3]

Instead, Berlin anchors a large, flat plain known as the Grodno-Warsaw-Berlin depression, formed by the Weichsel Glacier. This plain is wide open to the west and the east, and with no natural barriers, it has been the site of a truly phenomenal history of migration, conquest, and settlement, which has affected Berlin and its surrounding landscape as much as it has neighboring Poland. Indeed, in the spirit of Fernand Braudel, we might say instead of "the mountains come first," that "the glacier comes first."

Because of this geological and geographical location, Berlin has been a contested space, lying on a geopolitical fault line, or fault lines. Berlin has, from its beginnings, been a frontier outpost on either the extreme eastern border of the west or the extreme western border of the east, as it was in "Wendish" times and again as East Berlin during the Cold War. After the Germanic Reconquista of the twelfth century, Berlin became one of the most important frontier outposts of the Holy Roman Empire, the anchor of the "North March" or "Nordmark"—the northern borderland—often referred to simply as the "Mark." Berlin and the Mark became the central location for the eastward expansion of German power for nearly the next millennium. It also became Germany's and central and western Europe's bulwark against the threat of invasions from the east—especially Russian.

And so instead of a mountain, or a river, or a lake, Germany and central and western Europe built a city and filled it with people to make a border where there was not, and should not have been, one. It was a city from the beginning that was built and populated for geopolitical reasons, lending a kind of "artificiality" to its growth. This stood in contrast to other European cities, whose history, population, and built environment flowed in an almost organic way from the

[2]It should be noted that in the medieval and early modern eras, the Spree and Havel rivers were large enough to handle a significant amount of trade, and that the Spree and Havel do connect to the Elbe River and thus to Hamburg and the North Sea; Berlin is also relatively close to the Oder River. Still, it bears consideration as to why a city such as Szczecin, or Wrocław, or even Hamburg, did not then become the economic and political megacity that Berlin did.

[3]Norman Davies made this point on behalf of Poland, which shares the same geological features as Berlin, in Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 24.

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surrounding natural features and the population's interaction with them; one example is Venice, which Henri Lefebvre described as being "born of the sea, but gradually, and not, like Aphrodite, in an instant."[4] This is not to say that the flatness of the *märkisch* landscape meant that Berlin's history was not affected by nature—indeed, as all four essays in this issue show, Berlin's history is partially defined by its relationship with nature, a theme that will be discussed below, including, especially, its hydrology and its sandy soil. Berlin's relationship was paradoxical, however; it was the flatness of the landscape and its placement on a frontier that meant that Berlin could continue to expand almost indefinitely, its only boundaries being political, not geographic.

And, like the frontier towns of the Wild West, Berlin was a "city of the plains" in the "Wild East," on the edge of an empire, and as such it was very difficult to defend. Even after the Slavs had been subdued, converted, and assimilated, the city of Berlin was still in danger—marauding bands, bandits, and warring dukes threatened the city constantly. The city lay in the path of the warring armies during the Thirty Years' War, and was almost totally devastated as a result, its population reduced to only 6,000. Its medieval walls were certainly necessary.

But the threat was not just outside in the lawless flatlands of the glacial plain. The city of Berlin—actually, Berlin lay on one side of the River Spree, and its sister city of Cölln lay on the south side—was notoriously difficult to govern, noted for its rowdy, unruly citizens. The population was anything but homogeneous, a mixture of Germans imported from other parts of the Empire and Slavs who had never left, but converted (after a protracted resistance) to Christianity and became assimilated in German culture, as well as refugees, fugitives, drifters, clerics, and fortune seekers of all kinds. This was, it could be said, part of a long tradition of the rebelliousness of Berliners and their refusal to submit to state power, which expressed itself on numerous occasions, from 1848 to 1919 to 1989.

The rapidity of its growth—it grew from a medium-sized city to the second largest in Europe in a half century's time—and the concomitant acuteness of its social inequities represent a kind of parallel history with Chicago and Detroit, cities with which it was explicitly compared, often negatively, by contemporary observers such as Karl Scheffler.[5] Indeed, many of the migrants who flooded into Berlin from the plains of the east (especially Silesia) had in fact Chicago (or New York or Detroit) as their intended final destination—they remained in Berlin for various reasons as a way station became a permanent home.[6] Writing

[4]Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 76.

[5]Here the term "parallel history" is borrowed from Kate Brown's work on Richland, Washington, and Ozersk, U.S.S.R., during the Cold War in *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[6]Alexandra Richie, *Faust's Metropolis: A History of Berlin* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1999), 161.

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in 1910, Scheffler noted that Berlin lacked the old-world charm and elegance of other European capitals because it had not grown up organically over many centuries. Instead, it had grown suddenly and "artificially"; Scheffler described it as "a city that never is, but is always in the process of becoming."[7]

And yet, Berlin is unique in comparison to other industrial boomtowns precisely because, at least since the Hohenzollern family made it the capital of Prussia in 1701, it was as much a political entity as it was an economic one. Neither Chicago nor Detroit was a political outpost in the same way that Berlin was. This meant that there was always interplay between the life of the city itself and the city as the backdrop for the spectacle and drama of German history over the last 150 years, in a way that was not the case in other similar boomtowns.

Spectacle and Reality: The Margins of Berlin

Berlin has long been a city of spectacle because of its ethnic and cultural diversity, its avant-garde culture, and the fact that it is and has been, at least since 1871 (and arguably longer), the center of German national power. The phases of German history in the last 100 years can be measured by the different kinds of spectacle that have played out in exactly the same space—for example, the Brandenburg Gate, which has seen Napoleon, the Kaisers, retreating soldiers in 1918, Spartakus rebels in 1919, Nazi storm troopers in the 1920s and 1930s, Allied troops, the Berlin Wall, Ronald Reagan, the fall of the Wall, the Love Parade, countless tourists and protestors since 1990, and most recently Barack Obama all use its five columns as their national and global stage. Neither the Champs-Élysées nor the Washington Mall, nor Tianenmen Square, nor arguably Red Square can match so much history per square meter, per year.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Berlin was the key arena for the staging of Nazi power, from the megalomania of Albert Speer's (only partially completed) designs for Germania to the 1936 Olympics, from Goebbels's Sportpalast speech to the massive antiaircraft bunkers built throughout the city. During the Cold War, both halves of Berlin became a *Schauplatz* of confrontation and spectacle. In East Berlin, the state undertook numerous prestige projects, from the TV tower to the Palace of the Republic, to make the GDR's capital the defining showpiece of socialist superiority in the world; and similarly, West Berlin became the staging arena for some of the most powerful optics of the Cold War, including the scenes of the *Wirtschaftswunder* captured along the Kurfürstendamm, the images of cheering Berliners watching the planes of the airlift overhead, and even Kennedy and Reagan's famous Berlin speeches.

[7]Karl Scheffler, *Berlin. Eine Schicksalstadt* (Berlin: E. Reiss, 1910), citation here comes from Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, 1. This is a point that has been made in other places as well, including Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 9.

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It has been thoroughly destroyed, conquered, split in half, and developed into two competing cities; transformed again by competing ideologies, both with their own particularly modernist tendencies; and was the epicenter of both the Cold War and the end of the Cold War; and it has been transformed once again into a postmodern mecca of twenty-first-century globalization and neoliberalism, defined by the new Potsdamer Platz. Like Rome or Paris, tourists and visitors can stand in places in Berlin that are connected to iconic events of history; in particular, the Third Reich, World War II, the Cold War, the GDR, and the Wall itself are profoundly inscribed in the space of the city. Monuments and memorials seem to lurk around every corner, from the stunning Holocaust memorial and Jewish Museum to the Topography of Terror and Palace of Tears exhibits. Other physical remnants of the past simply won't pass away, such as the iconic communist-era television tower and the endless debates about whether to rebuild the old royal palace on the site where it was dynamited to make way for the GDR's "Palace of the Republic," now gone entirely to make way for a rebuilt replica of the royal palace. It is a city with a massive surfeit of memory.[8] It is a city that has seen far too much history for its young age, and as a result, the city feels both very young and very old at the same time. As a result, it is possible to see Berlin only through the lens of the many spectacles that it contains—to see it only as the backdrop of now almost mythical events of world historical importance, rather than a real city unto itself, in which millions of people work and live every day in the present. This has led to a preoccupation with the many dramatic events of the city in the historiography on Berlin, for obvious reasons. This preoccupation with the dramatic and the famous, however, has eclipsed a more holistic view of the city as a space unto itself, rather than as simply a backdrop.

General histories of Berlin, including Alexandra Richie's *Faust's Metropolis,* David Clay Large's *Berlin*, Anthony Read and David Fisher's *Berlin: Biography of a City*, and others give mostly straightforward accounts of the political history of the city.[9] Any mention of specific spaces in the city itself mostly revolve around well-known places, themselves part of the spectacle of the city: the Brandenburg Gate, the Imperial Palace, Hitler's bunker, Checkpoint Charlie, etc.

Another category of Berlin history, one that has recently seen a deluge of works published, are histories of the end of World War II, including Joachim Fest's *Der Untergang*, and encompassing work by Ian Kershaw, Richard Evans, Anthony

[8] Andreas Huyssens has made a similar point in his essay "The Voids of Berlin," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 57–81, 59–60.

[9] Wolfgang Ribbe's edited opus, *Geschichte Berlins*, 2 vols. (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1988), is an exception because it goes into a much "deeper" history, devoting great detail to every era of Berlin's history, from its prehistory to the present, and exploring not only political events or popular culture, but also everyday life and economic and social developments as well.

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Beevor, and Roger Moorhouse.[10] Most of these focus on the collapse of the Third Reich by focusing on the day-to-day events of the Nazi leadership; in reality, the events could just as easily have unfolded in any German city.

Influenced by the cultural turn, a number of scholars have focused on Berlin as a visual or phantasmagoric experience, seeing the city as a "text." One good example of this is Peter Fritzsche's *Reading Berlin 1900*, which "reads" the city as a "text," mainly through the eyes of the press and the many famous writers and artists who lived and wrote in the city at the time. Anke Gleber's *The Art of Taking a Walk: Flanerie, Literature, and Film in Weimar Culture* presents the city as a visual experience, a phantasmagoria, and shows us the city as a flaneur would see it.[11] Janet Ward, Andreas Huyssens, Sabine Hake, and Andrew Webber have all contributed as well to the focus on the *appearance* of the cityscape, mainly through the eyes of a small handful of critics and artists—Benjamin, Kracauer, Hessel, Döblin, Ruttmann—who wrote about a very narrow period of time, the 1920s, mainly in Berlin.[12] The view of the city from the point of view of the flaneur, or the "rock-star" architect (for example, Daniel Liebeskind or Bruno Taut), is a highly privileged view of the city; the cultural critics and writers of the 1920s rarely spent time in the *Mietskaserne,* in the shanty-towns outside the customs walls, or among the *Rieselfelder* on the margins of the city, or focused their attention on the sewers, the roads, the flora and fauna of Berlin, or any other "deeper" understanding of that city that went beyond simply its "surfaces," as Hake has described.

Thus, any of the works on Berlin mentioned above are somewhat myopic, presenting the city as free-floating, disconnected from any real geography, detached from water, sand, and the weather, let alone the massive hidden machinery that kept the city running.[13] As a result, they reinforce the tourists'

[10]Joachim Fest, *Der Untergang. Hitler und das Ende des Dritten Reiches* (Berlin: Fest, 2002); Ian Kershaw, *The End: Hitler's Germany, 1944–45* (New York: Allen Lane, 2011); Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: Nemesis 1936–1945* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000); Richard Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (New York: Penguin, 2010); Anthony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin, 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2003); and Roger Moorhouse, *Berlin at War: Life and Death in Hitler's Capital, 1939–1945* (London: Bodley Head, 2010).

[11]Anke Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk: Flanerie, Literature, and Film in Weimar Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[12]Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin*; Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk*; Janet Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); Andreas Huyssens, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Andrew J. Webber, *Berlin in the Twentieth Century: A Cultural Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[13]To be fair, Fritzsche's *Reading Berlin* is intended only to focus on the city as a text and does not purport to be an all-encompassing history or description of the city. Several other works on Berlin also focus on the spectacle of the street life. See Huyssens, "The Voids"; Molly Loberg, "The Streetscape of Economic Crisis: Commerce, Politics, and Urban Space in Interwar Berlin," *Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 2 (June 2013); Ward, *Weimar Surfaces*.

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view of Berlin: limited to the well-known sites and unmoored in both time and space. By focusing instead on the margins and the "green fields" of Berlin, these essays seek to challenge the notion that the city is a "text." It is a city, not just a text, with a social, economic, material, and ecological life that extends far beyond the view of a handful of street-level observers. Once we move away from seeing Berlin (and in particular central Berlin) as just a "text," we start to see glimpses of the history that makes it a truly fascinating place.

The blossoming interest in memory studies has also found special sway, for obvious reasons, in Berlin. In addition to Brian Ladd's very popular *The Ghosts of Berlin*, there have been a number of other works in recent years that have focused on the many battles over memory in the city.[14] These range from the debate over the reconstruction of the old imperial palace to the Topography of Terror exhibit to the many museums of Berlin, including the German History Museum, the GDR Museum, and the Jewish Museum.[15] Again, important as all these have been, they also per force relegate the city itself to a backdrop for debates about memory.[16] Its particular geology, geography, hydrology, meteorology, ecology, etc., is, in these works, mostly ignored. But for some other turn of fate the same debates could have been happening in Frankfurt or Cologne; there is, in other words, nothing particular to Berlin's unique geological and geographical location, and thus no connection to its longue dureé history. The underlying reality, therefore, the one that has shaped Berlin's history (and thus Germany's and Europe's) over centuries, is

[14]Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[15]John V. Maciuika, "Whose Schlossplatz? Architecture and the 'Materialization' of German Identities in Berlin's Historic Center, 1945–2009," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Washington D.C.*, Supplement 7 (2011): 15–28. Karen Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). See also H. Glenn Penny, III, "The Museum für Deutsche Geschichte and German National Identity," *Central European History* 28, no. 3 (1995): 343–372; Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); Karen Till, "Verortung des Museums. Ein geo-ethnographischer Ansatz zum Verständnis der sozialen Erinnerung," in *Geschichtskultur in der Zweiten Moderne*, ed. Rosmarie Breier (Frankfurt: Campus, 2000); Daphne Berdahl, "Re-Presenting the Socialist Modern: Museums and Memory in the Former GDR," in *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics*, ed. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 345–366. More generally, see Martin Sabrow, ed., *Erinnerungsorte der DDR* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009); and Huyssens, *Present Pasts*.

[16]There is a voluminous literature on the politics of memory in Berlin. See Till, *The New Berlin*; Karen Till, *Place and the Politics of Memory: A Geo-Ethnography of Museums and Memorials in Berlin* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1996); and among many others, Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: The Artifacts of German Memory, 1870–1990* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, eds., *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

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covered over for a view of Berlin packaged for the voracious appetite among scholars and the public for sites of memory.[17]

There is a voluminous literature on Berlin's architecture and urban planning, of course, much of which focuses on the highly visible prestige projects in the city, such as Schinkel, Germania, Stalinallee, Alexanderplatz, and Potsdamer Platz.[18] Some architectural and planning histories, such as those by Harald Bodenschatz, Jörn Duwel, and Niels Gutschow, and other publications from the *Institut für Regionalentwicklung und Raumplanung* in Erkner, do in fact pay more attention to the entirety of Berlin's built environment, including housing settlements and industrial projects on the city's margins.[19] Nonetheless, even these works focus heavily on the major, well-known projects, and furthermore, focus only on buildings, not the entirety of the spatial reality of the city, including streets, waterways, utilities, soil, vegetation, etc.

In contrast, the four essays in this issue turn their attention away from the more well-known parts of the city and specifically look at the margins and the marginal spaces of the city—the edges of the city, in particular, as well as the spaces "in between," including the green spaces that Barry Jackisch writes about. In doing so, they are, each in its own way as well as collectively, making a claim that the liminal spaces of the city are as important as, if not more than, the monumental, famous, "produced" or "performed" spaces truly to understand the city. Without understanding the "unseen" parts of the city, including its empty spaces and the subjects and the nature that inhabit them, the argument here is that it is impossible to understand the city qua space.

The Spatial Turn and Histories of Berlin

And it is understanding the city as a space, rather than as a metaphor of space, that situates these essays within what has been referred to as the "spatial turn," a term

[17] Again, to be fair, those who have written on Berlin and its memory culture, including Karen Till and Janet Ward, have explicitly recognized the extent to which focal points of the "new Berlin," for example, the new Potsdamer Platz or the new Reichstag, are very much packaged and performed for consumption, and do not represent anything approaching authenticity.

[18] See Werner Durth, Jörn Düwel, and Niels Gutschow, *Architektur und Städtebau der DDR* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1998); and Jörn Düwel and Niels Gutschow, *Städtebau in Deutschland im 20. Jahrhundert. Ideen, Projekte, Akteure* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 2001); Andreas Butter, *Neues Leben, Neues Bauen. Die Moderne in der Architektur der SBZ/DDR 1945–1951* (Berlin: Schiler, 2006); and Andreas Butter and Ulrich Hartung, *Ostmoderne. Architektur in Berlin, 1945–1965* (Munich: Jovis/Deutsche Werkbund e.V., 2005); and Joachim Palutzki, *Architektur der DDR* (Berlin: Reimer, 2000). Among others, see Claire Colomb, *Staging the New Berlin: Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention Post-1989* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[19] *Berlin und seine Bauten* (Berlin: DOM, 2009); and *Berlin Urban Design: A Brief History*, trans. Sasha Disko (Berlin: DOM, 2010). Christoph Bernhardt and Thomas Wolfes, eds., *Schönheit und Typenprojektierung. Der DDR-Städtebau im internationalen Kontext* (Erkner: Institut für Regionalentwicklung und Strukturplanung, 2005); and Simone Hain, ed., *Warum zum Beispiel die Stalinallee? Beiträge zu einer Transformationsgeschichte des modernen Planens und Bauens* (Erkner: Institut für Regionalentwicklung und Strukturplanung, 1999).

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that was originally associated with critical geographer Ed Soja. Soja, writing in his 2010 *Seeking Spatial Justice*, frames the "spatial turn" as a "rebalancing" of the spatial against the historical as well as the social in a range of fields, from archeology to anthropology, economics, and theology.[20] This spatial turn signals what he suggests is a "profound sea change in all intellectual thought and philosophy" that represents "a growing shift away from an era when spatial thinking was subordinated to historical thinking" over the past 150 years.

Echoing his earlier arguments in his 1989 *Postmodern Geographies*, Soja believes very strongly that the privileging of chronology over geography—essentially, time over space—is a defining facet of modern thinking, among Marxist thinkers as well as Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Husserl, and most other major theorists between 1880 and 1920.[21] For universal laws of history and society to hold true everywhere, he wrote, the contingency and "difference" of various places—Europe, Africa, South America—had to be smoothed out, negated, lest they dissolve the notion of universality and teleology, and even worse, generate a kind of environmental determinism. Even more, he wrote, aside from a few exceptions—notably Henri Lefebvre and a little later, David Harvey—this privileging of time over space is the reason that countless histories of regions, countries, and cities have been written in the last 150 years that focus only or mostly on the subjects of history themselves, ignoring the role of the built or natural environment, treating it "as little more than a receptacle," not important enough to be included in the core narrative. "Thinking historically," Soja wrote, "has been made to feel more intellectually stimulating than thinking spatially or geographically."[22] Here, he echoed Harvey's criticism that the major pillars of twentieth-century thought—Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, in particular—explicitly privileged time over space, and when spatiality is applied to their theories, they splinter "into incoherence."[23]

What Soja has argued for since the late 1980s, and what Harvey and Lefebvre in their own ways have argued for since the 1970s, is not a privileging of space over time, but a sense of what he calls the "socio-spatial dialectic"—the role that spaces and subjects play together in mutually shaping each other, that "spatiality and temporality are ontologically coequal." Of course, Soja also laments the degree to which the terminology of the "spatial turn" has been adapted by scholars in many disciplines only in a superficial way—adding words such as "maps" or

[20]Ed Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 3.

[21]Ed Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Theory*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 2011), 31–45.

[22]Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 3.

[23]David Harvey, "The Geopolitics of Capitalism," in *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, ed. Derek Gregory and John Urry (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1985), 126–63, as well as David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), quoted in Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 65.

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"mapping," "topographies," "landscapes," or just "space" without actually focusing on actual topography or landscapes, instead using such terms just "to appear to be moving with the times."[24]

In cautioning us against working through space only as a metaphor, rather than as real space, Soja echoed Lefebvre's critique of post-structuralist thought. Philosophers such as Foucault, Derrida, Kristeva, and even Noam Chomsky, Lefebvre wrote in *The Production of Space*, subordinate real space to an ill-defined "mental space" from which nearly all meaning derives.[25] Even more than Kant, Hegel, or even Decartes, post-structuralists look ever inward, away from the physical world itself, by looking at semiotics, according to Lefebvre: "The quasi-logical presupposition of an identity between mental space (the space of the philosophers and epistemologists) and real space creates an abyss between the mental sphere on one side and the physical and social spheres on the other."[26] According to Lefebvre, "the philosophers and epistemologists" simultaneously deny this "abyss," covering over even the possibility that physical space could be on the same footing as "epistemological" or "mental" space. And yet real space is fundamental in the creation of oppression and marginalization. To cover it over, to focus only on semiotics, on "reading the city," for Lefebvre, is to ultimately participate in propagating a Gramscian hegemony: "Is it conceivable" he wrote, "that the exercise of hegemony might leave space untouched? Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations? The answer must be no."[27] Soja, echoing Lefebvre as well Harvey, Mike Davis, and other critical geographers such as Doreen Massey, wrote specifically that treating space as a "passive receptacle" "block[s] from view how space is actively involved in generating and sustaining inequality, injustice, economic exploitation, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression and discrimination."[28]

The focus in Berlin for too long has been on the *dramatis personae* and not the stage itself. This myopia has unwittingly reproduced the same marginalization that created the very real marginal spaces to begin with, and so the essays in this issue focus on the margins of Berlin as a way to shift the attention back to the spaces, and the subjects within those spaces, that have been ignored by

[24]This has been the case as well in the field of history, including the history of Germany and Berlin; for example, works such as Hake's *Topologies of Class* and Webber's *Berlin in the Twentieth Century: A Cultural Topography*, for all their other virtues, are not really about topography in a truly spatial, physical sense.

[25]As well taken as Lefebvre's critique was at the time (the early 1970s), certain major figures in the "linguistic" or post-structuralist turn did in fact evolve back toward understanding the importance of real, physical space, including notably Michel Foucault, as both Soja and Tim Cresswell have written on extensively. See Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, 62–63; Tim Cresswell, *Space: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); and Tim Cresswell, *Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

[26]Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 6.

[27]Ibid., 11.

[28]Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 4.

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previous histories. Even more, the margins and marginal or liminal spaces of the city serve in these essays to reveal a much more complete picture of the city as a whole, especially over the course of 150-plus years.

Throughout each of the four essays, five themes about what the edges or the margins of the city can tell us emerge: first, that the liminal zones at the edge of cities (and in some cases within cities) are often where marginalized subjects are found; second, that the city's margins are where it disgorges its "waste" products, human and material, that reveal the ugly truth of the city; third, that the margins of the city are often the place where the city itself projects both its utopian and dystopian visions of itself, revealing inner truths about the city that are not readily visible in the city center and more "produced" public arenas; fourth, that the margins and the marginal spaces of the city are where the "urban" environment encounters the "natural" environment, where the distinction between the two is both highlighted and dissolved, an action that brings with it a different sense of thinking about time (although, as discussed below, the distinction between "nature" and "the urban" is itself problematic and contrived, used here as shorthand); and fifth, that throughout the course of the last 150 years, it has been Berlin's rapid growth and expansion that have repeatedly forced an engagement with and rethinking of the meaning of the city's margins.

Marginalized Subjects in Marginal Spaces

In Berlin, of all places, the great subtext of the last 150 years has been the struggle of subaltern and marginalized groups, whether the Lumpenproletariat in Wedding or Turkish immigrants in Kreuzberg, and this struggle has been fundamental not only to Berlin's history, but to all of German history as well because of Berlin's dual nature as a city and a capital.

Like many cities that passed rapidly through the Industrial Revolution, Berlin developed massive slum districts during the 1800s. These grew up along the margins of the city, to the north and east of Mitte, in places such as Friedrichshain, Prenzlauer Berg, Wedding, and Moabit, on the northern and eastern edges of the city. They were mostly invisible, however, to well-known Berlin. Politicians, middle-class residents, and tourists did not venture to the northern and eastern edges, unless, as one tourist guide suggested, they wanted to go on an "adventure" to see the "other" Berlin, the "dark areas" where the "masses" (*Menschenmassen*) lived.[29] Even in the "misery quarters" the true abject poverty was hidden from the view of the flaneur and the tourist, by design, as Marion Gray and Eli Rubin describe in their essays: the plan of most city blocks, devised in part by James Hobrecht, was for the street-facing apartments to be the largest, with neoclassical or rococo facades, and to be rented to

[29]Richie, *Faust's Metropolis,* 169.

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middle-class families, while the working class lived in the "courtyard" and basement apartments which were dank, cramped, and unsanitary.

The invisibility of the marginalized was not unique to Berlin, of course; cities even before the Industrial Revolution frequently afforded the wealthy and the powerful the opportunity to avoid passing near the areas of cities where the poor lived. And it was even more so the case in the industrial era—this was an observation that Engels made in his study of Manchester. In Berlin, however, the misery of the "misery quarters" was particularly acute, worse than in any other European city that was undergoing the rapid growth of industrialization, as Kristin Poling and Eli Rubin detail in their essays.

Especially beginning in the 1980s, there has been a strong current in German history, and more broadly, to focus on the marginal and marginalized subjects whose voices were frequently left out of traditional histories because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or class. The fields of subaltern studies, postcolonial studies, and *Alltagsgeschichte* among others have sought to rewrite history from the bottom up. German history, of course, has no shortage of oppressed subjects to discuss, from Jews to gays and lesbians during the Third Reich and the GDR to the experience of Turkish immigrants from the 1960s and 1970s on, especially in Berlin.[30] Furthermore, attention to the marginal has come to mean more than oppressed or subaltern groups. The margins of German history have come to include the history of the local, for example, or the history of liminal geographical spaces, such as the borderlands of empires.[31]

Kristin Poling's work follows in the same footsteps, focusing both on a marginal space—the liminal zone just outside Berlin's gates—and marginalized people, namely, the legions of homeless produced by the unprecedented growth and real estate speculation of *Gründerzeit* Berlin. Poling describes the shantytowns that sprang up on the edge of Berlin, especially at the Halle and Kottbuser gates, as being constructed out of the detritus of the city itself, out of "overturned rowboats, abandoned train cars, rafts, and omnibuses." What developed was a new "city" of more than 2,000 people in one case, made from the newly homeless families that were frequently ejected from the so-called "misery quarters" or "rental barracks" that themselves proved to be too

[30]Among the growing literature on the history of Turkish immigrants in Berlin and in other German cities in recent years, see Ruth Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Ayhan Kaya, "German-Turkish Transnational Space: A Space of their Own," *German Studies Review* 30, no. 3 (Oct. 2007): 483–502; Jennifer Petzen, "Home or Homelike? Turkish Queers Manage Space in Berlin," *Space and Culture* 7, no. 1 (2004): 20–32; and Seref Aygün and Abdul F. Baz, eds., *Ganz Oben. Türken in Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: Wirtschaftsverlag, 2002).

[31]Mark Roseman, Neil Gregor, and Nils Roemer, eds., *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006) is a very useful entrée into some of this work, as is, of course, Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

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expensive for the poorest of families. As Poling describes, the housing shortage in Berlin was unprecedented and awful. Fifteen thousand people in the city were homeless, and those proletarians who managed to stay in a home did so at a terrible price. As Marion Gray mentions, the 1867 census found upward of twenty people sharing a single room, alternating sleeping shifts. "The rent eats everything" (*Die Miethe frißt alles*) was a common expression in Berlin, with rents consuming more than half a monthly salary of an average worker in many cases.[32] The reason for this was, again, the combination of Berlin as a rapidly expanding city as well as the newly created capital of the Reich; as Poling notes, enormous luxury apartments stood vacant as the streets and the city's edges teemed with homeless, because real estate speculators were counting on a future influx of wealthy residents who would be drawn to Berlin's newfound power and status.

The shantytowns were an expression of the inherent contradictions embodied in Berlin's growth. They were the mirror that reflected the dark side of the city's breathtaking ascent. The fact that they collected at the margins of the city points to a reason that margins of cities are important; the spaces just beyond the borders of a city are where those who can find no place within the city, and yet still belong to the city, have to settle—far enough away no longer to be caught up in the economic and political "microphysics of power" within the city, but close enough to still participate in the life of the city. Indeed, to the extent that the shantytowns were known in Berlin, they attracted a kind of slum tourism, and one member even made a business selling beer to shantytown tourists from the wealthy parts of the city.

As Poling also notes, however, the shantytowns were not only populated by recently evicted families. Vagrants and wanderers, and seasonal workers from as far away as Russia, also settled there as they settled throughout the city. This highlighted Berlin's position as an anchor in the vast glacial plain stretching from Berlin to Poland and the Baltic coast; a crossroads, or entrepôt, toward which wanderers, desperados, migrants from all over the region, especially the east, would gravitate. The tens of thousands of homeless were invisible to the center, in both a spatial and in a political sense; it was Rosa Luxembourg who bitterly noted that homeless people died every day in Berlin, and "nobody notices them, particularly not the police report."[33] And as a result, in the center, one would not see the underlying reality of Berlin's newfound political power and rapid, speculative growth—nor would one see the reality of Berlin's geopolitical position and significance, itself on a fault line. Only the edges of the city, both of and not of the city, had the power to reveal these underlying

[32]Jutta Wietog, "Wohnungsstandard der Unterschichten in Berlin," in *Arbeiterexistenz im 19. Jahrhundert. Lebensstandard und Lebensgestaltung deutscher Arbeiter und Handwerker*, ed. Werner Conze and Ulrich Engelhardt (Stuttgart: Klett-Cota, 1981), 114–137, 125, and 133.

[33]Richie, *Faust's Metropolis*, 164.

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realities, a power that Poling, drawing from Anthony Vidler's application of Freudian notions to spatiality, describes as "uncanny." She writes about Berlin that "The urban edge furthermore revealed that which should have been hidden. This included both the border itself and that which was relegated to its beyond. . . . the urban border was a site of alienation, where the familiar was made unfamiliar and what was alien revealed itself close to home."

Sadly, of course, it was not only the homeless and the wanderers who found themselves in the margins of the city. As Rubin notes, Marzahn, the village on the northeastern edge of the city that was to one day house the utopian socialist housing settlement, was once used as a "transit camp" for all the Roma in the city during World War II, nearly all of whom were eventually deported toward the east, to their deaths. Nor were they the only ones; the margins of the city were useful for collecting and deporting many of the city's undesirable subjects during the Third Reich, especially during the Holocaust. The infamous Sachsenhausen concentration camp on the northern edge of the Berlin metropolitan area (it is the last stop on the S1 elevated train line today) is another example of how one might discover the "reality" of the Third Reich by leaving Unter den Linden and going to see what lay at the "end of the line." A better example connects to Barry Jackisch's essay, which focuses on the Grunewald. In particular, the Grunewald station—platform 17—became the main collection point for the deportation of Berlin's Jews to the east. The station is deeply isolated, with miles of forests all around—that was, as Jackisch describes, part of the point of having a profoundly natural and wild setting immediately accessible for the city's residents. The enormous forest, with a metropolitan commuter line bisecting it, became the perfect combination of accessibility and isolation for the act of deportation.[34]

German Dreams and Nightmares on the Edge of Berlin

This phenomenon of the city's margins being both close enough to matter and far enough afield to be invisible and unseen operated in another important way, as all four of these essays describe. Namely, they became places where the residents of Berlin projected both their utopian and dystopian ideas about themselves and their nation. This became heightened and accentuated by the fact that Berlin was the national capital; but it also was a function of the flatness and perceived emptiness of the landscape around Berlin, which allowed Germans in Berlin to conceive of the surrounding land as a blank slate—a tabula rasa—onto which they could project their dreams and their nightmares.

[34]See Hans Reichhardt and Wolfgang Schäche, *Von Berlin Nach Germania. Über die Zerstörungen der "Reichshauptstadt" durch Albert Speers Neugestaltungsplanungen* (Berlin: Transit Buchverlag, 1998), which ties the deportations of Jews from the Grunewald station directly to Albert Speer's forced eviction of Jews to make room for bombing victims, 172.

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So, for example, as Poling describes, the "discovery" of the shantytowns in the city's press led to both kinds of projections. Some idealized the shantytown dwellers, seeing in them a typically German frontiersman's mentality, displaying the ability to bring order and civilization to untamed lands, "green fields," mainly through the direct manipulation of space—building homes and streets. One need not take too many leaps to connect this kind of fantasy both to the past history of Berlin itself as a colony on the "green fields" of the Mark and to Germany's tragic pursuit of this fantasy on a genocidal scale in the twentieth century. Such idealizations also revealed the deep ambivalence that many Germans, including Berliners, felt about the very process of urbanization in which they were deeply embedded. Good for the shantytown dwellers, they reasoned, according to Poling, for finally escaping the deleterious influence of the cramped inner-city slums and reestablishing themselves in a kind of natural setting. This same ambivalence about the city itself and its relationship to nature is, as described below, central to Barry Jackisch's contribution.

At the same time, as Poling notes, others saw chaos and the collapse of civilization in the shantytowns, comparing them to a "Negro city in innermost Africa" or "sealskin tents in Lappland." Other, more astute, observers accurately described the city walls, and those who lived just outside them, as revealing as "uncanny" the city's "dual personalities" where the two worlds of the urban and rural, past and present, proletarian and bourgeois could be revealed simultaneously. Marion Gray, similarly, notes the extent to which people in Berlin distrusted and feared the suburbs and surrounding villages, including the village of Steglitz. It was outside the wall, in places such as Steglitz, where the police would make excursions "to apprehend alleged criminals, revolutionaries, and other troublemakers." And yet, as Gray argues, the expansion of Berlin, fueled in part by its new status as the capital, led to a dramatic shift. "The communities beyond the new, open city boundaries," he writes, "began to look less like a threat and more like resources to be exploited."

Green spaces, whether the fields at the edge of the city or the forests within and on the edge of the city, became sites of projection for the fantasies of both the Third Reich and the GDR, as both Barry Jackisch and Eli Rubin describe in their essays. For Nazi urban planners, such as Willi Schelkes, author of Berlin's "green plan" and a close colleague of Albert Speer's, planning green space in Berlin was essential to maintain the health of the "German Volk," as Jackisch writes. As mentioned above, Berlin is unique among world metropolises in the extent of green space it contains, much of which is along its borders, in the Grunewald, Tegel, and around the Müggelsee—21.5 percent of its total surface area. This, as Jackisch explains, is a result of the rapid expansion of Berlin, and in particular the creation of "Greater Berlin" at the beginning of the Weimar Republic.

The conflation of the health of the German "Volk" and exposure to something that lay beyond the pale of the city—green space—was a core *völkisch* belief,

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central to Nazi ideology. Similarly, as Rubin describes, Nazi officials feared the revolutionary and subversive potential of the inner-city slums, bastions of communist resistance, especially in rowdy, unruly Berlin. As mentioned earlier, the juxtapositioning of deeply red bastions of the working class just across the river from the halls of national power presented the potential for major trouble from the point of view of the Nazi leadership. As a result, Rubin writes, there were many officials who wanted to "drain the swamps," meaning the slums, and resettle the working class out on the spacious green fields on the edge of the city—far enough removed from the "degenerate" influences of crime and bolshevism, but close enough to be of use to the city as workers. This resettlement was a key part of Speer's planning for Germania, as Rubin describes in his essay, including a large settlement in Marzahn. Although the Nazis never did "drain the swamps" in this way, the margins gave them the "blank" space—both real *and* mental—to express their fears and hopes through fantasy disguised as urban planning.

And, as Rubin argues in his work, it was ultimately the GDR that made real the fantasy of building a utopia on the margins of Berlin. Utopian notions of new cities had, Rubin writes, been central to East German socialism, expressing a desire to erase all traces—both spatial and psychological—of the dark past. In particular, the inner-city slums were shaped by capitalism and were irrevocably and irretrievably always going to exert a kind of oppressive power, a material memory, even after the overthrow of the capitalist system. The only way to build true socialism, then, was to build it physically as a city, one with nothing but itself as a reference point, with no memory of the past. The edges of the city—Marzahn, Lichtenberg, Hohenschönhausen, and Hellersdorf, in this case—were the perfect place to do this, as they seemed to the planners and politicians in the center of East Berlin to be spaces far enough away to be tabula rasae, but close enough still to be part of the grand new capital of the GDR that they wanted to showcase to the rest of the world.

The Metabolism of the City

It was not just fantasies, whether dark or utopian, that Berliners projected onto the green fields outside their gates. As Marion Gray describes in his essay, one of the ways that Berlin's relationship with the "green fields" on its margin was mediated was through the issue of sewage. In particular, Berlin used the rural lands around it to filter its sewage in sewage farms (Rieselfelder). Berlin was not the only city to use sewage farms—as Gray describes, the practice had been tried in cities such as Paris. But it was especially important in Berlin's case because it stood at the heart of Berlin's expansion beyond its old city walls into towns such as Steglitz, and their eventual annexation.

The inception of the sewage farms—a brainchild particularly of James Hobrecht and Rudolf Virchow—was intended both to drain the city of its filth

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as well as to fertilize the rural areas outside the city. It spoke, therefore, to the desire to colonize the fields outside the city, to reclaim them, similar in many respects to the previous projects of Frederick the Great and others. It also, however, spoke to the desire to use the outskirts of the city as a dumping ground—in this case, for human excrement, something that was both a fundamental "truth" of the city and also one of the most disgusting and dangerous elements of an expanding and booming city. In fact, the collection of "night soil" in the teeming and overcrowded Berlin created such a foul odor, as Gray notes, that people had to lock their windows at night lest it become overpowering. The inability of the city to deal with its sewage, in particular its human and animal excrement, was one of the most obvious and unavoidable contradictions about the growth of the city, and ultimately of the nation. The poor could be hidden in rental barracks in misery quarters across the river; the homeless could be hidden in poor houses and shantytowns at the city gates; nature could be tamed and performed and ordered; but the smell of raw excrement could not be hidden or tamed.

Gray's essay describes what Neil Smith has characterized as the "metabolism" of the city—especially in the sense that Marx intended. Marx, writing in German, Smith noted, used the term *Stoffwechsel*, implying a kind of socio-ecological dialectic or life cycle that was crucial to understanding both how nature is mediated by social labor, and also how the circulation of resources between "nature" and economic activity is crucial to understanding the ways that power is truly structured in society.[35] Thus, the green fields of Klein Ziethen, Waßmannsdorf, and numerous other agrarian communities beyond the political borders of the city of Berlin became a place to hide its metabolism.

The sewage farms were therefore part of the perpetration of an illusion by using the flat, watery, and sandy lands of the glacial plain upon which Berlin sits to resolve a major contradiction in the city's industrialization, one that threatened to make the city unlivable, and certainly unfit to be a capital city. As Eli Rubin notes in his essay, however, a century later the legacy of those fields was very much real, as the expansion of Berlin caught up to the fields, and the overturned soil revealed the contamination that had been hidden from residents, belying the notion of resettling the former inhabitants of East Berlin's slums in the clear, clean air of the "green fields."

Nature, Time, and Marginal Spaces in Berlin

It is not only humans who dwell and occupy the empty, liminal, or marginal spaces of the city, however; it is precisely in such spaces where "nature,"

[35]Neil Smith, "Foreword," in *In the Nature of Cities: Urban Political Ecology and the Politics of Metabolism*, ed. Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw (New York: Routledge, 2006), xiii.

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broadly construed, thrives. On the edges of cities, forests and farmlands meet industrial zones and housing projects. In abandoned lots, in back courtyards, in the medians and islands of thoroughfares, along canals, and in shuttered factories weeds and even new growth forests of young trees grow, often fueled by the carbon dioxide-rich urban air. Urban ecologist Ingo Kowarik calls these spaces "fourth nature," to describe a space in which nature has reestablished itself in the midst of an urban environment—a nature that is at once an example of the original flora and fauna reasserting itself, as well as an entirely new ecology shaped by the built environment.[36] Geographer Gerhard Hard and ecologists Herbert Sukopp and Heinz Ellenberg call such microecological spaces "ruderal," meaning "of rubble."[37]

Marginal spaces reveal the "truth" of a city by showing how fundamentally intertwined nature and the city really are. Despite the fact that cities seek to cover over the nature within them, leading us commonly to think in terms of clear distinctions between "urban" and "natural," the field of urban environmental history has challenged this view, most recently through the work of scholars such as Matthew Gandy and Dorothee Brantz.[38] Taking its cue from Bill Cronon's notion of "Nature's Metropolis" and David Harvey's formulation that "there is nothing unnatural about New York," this field has revealed the extent to which cities are in a process of symbiosis and dialectic with nature.[39] It is especially away from the over-produced or planned areas of the city, along its margins and in its abandoned spaces, that this dialectic reveals itself, where

[36]Ingo Kowarik, "Wild Urban Woodlands: Towards a Conceptual Framework," in *Wild Urban Woodlands*, ed. Ingo Kowarik and Stefan Körner (Berlin: Springer, 2005), 1–32, cited in Matthew Gandy, "Interstitial Landscapes: Reflections on a Berlin Corner," in *Urban Constellations*, ed. Matthew Gandy (Berlin: Jovis, 2011).

[37]See Gerhard Hard, *Ruderalvegetation. Ökologie und Ethnoökologie, Ästhetik und "Schutz"* (Kassel: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Freiraum und Vegetation, Notizbuch der Kasseler Schule, 1998). See also Jens Lachmund, *Greening Berlin: The Co-Production of Science, Politics, and Urban Nature* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 65; Herbert Sukopp, Hans-Peter Blume, and Wolfram Kunick, "The Soil, Flora, and Vegetation of Berlin's Waste Lands," in *Nature in Cities: The Natural Environment in the Design and Development of Urban Green Space*, ed. Ian C. Laurie (Chichester and New York: Wiley, 1979), 115–32; and Heinz Ellenberg, *Vegetation Ecology of Central Europe*, trans. Gordon K. Strutt, 4th ed. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 617 ff.

[38]See especially Matthew Gandy's pathbreaking *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Dorothee Brantz and Sonja Dümpelmann, eds., *Greening the City: Urban Landscapes in the Twentieth Century* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2011); and Dorothee Brantz, with Sasha Disko and Georg Wagner-Kyora, eds., *Thick Space: Approaches to Metropolitanism* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2012). See also her coauthored introductions to each volume.

[39]William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992). David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 186–7. He echoed earlier sentiments by, among others, Jane Jacobs. This point was made by Nik Heynen, Maria Kaika, and Erik Swyngedouw in "Urban Political Ecology: Politicizing the Production of Urban Natures," which is their introductory essay to their edited volume *In the Nature of Cities*, 1–20.

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we can see past the inorganic illusion of the city and uncover its relationship with nature.

Berlin, as Gandy noted, is full of such "ruderal" spaces, due to the vast spaces not only opened up because of the bombing from World War II, but also because of the large gashes in the places where the border used to run.[40] These interstitial spaces, he continued, "reveal a city within a city that is not stage-managed for tourism or consumption."[41] Similar work has been done by Jens Lachmund, who focused on the ecology of bombed-out spaces and abandoned industrial areas in West Berlin, including the Südgelände and Gleisdreieck.[42] There is no shortage of such interstitial, ruderal spaces in Berlin to explore, from the Flak Tower Humboldthain (an artificial mountain with a forest growing on its sides, built over the partially demolished remains of a giant above- and belowground bunker and antiaircraft tower), to the Devil's Mountain in the Grunewald, described by Barry Jackisch in his essay, to the Mauerpark, a strip of grassy empty space left after the Wall was torn down, which has developed into a vibrant countercultural space connecting the districts of Wedding and Prenzlauer Berg. Bettina Stoetzer's recent interesting work has also argued for the importance of ruderal, interstitial, and liminal spaces in Berlin, and pointed to the interaction between the people and vegetation that developed in those spaces.[43]

Indeed, the amount of green space within Berlin, and along its margins, is one of the things that makes Berlin so unique as a major world metropolis; New York, Chicago, Paris, and London all have green spaces, of course, but none quite as extensive as Berlin's. This green space is the subject of Barry Jackisch's work, which emphasizes how important this facet of the city is and has been. In the Grunewald, or the Berliner Stadtforst, one can hike literally all day without having a clue that one is in a major world metropolis. Even the smaller (by comparison) parks, more central to the city, such as the Tiergarten and the various "Volkparks" are larger, lusher, and more thickly wooded than most other major cities offer. There is also a bewildering array of small lakes, ponds, and creeks that wind their way through Berlin's topology, a result of the low-lying water system connected to the Spree and Havel rivers, themselves of course a remnant of the Weichsel glacier. The result is again a kind of liminal space—both a city and watery forest. More than that, as Jackisch's work shows, the debates over and uses of the extensive green space within Berlin reveal a profound

[40]Gandy, "Interstitial Landscapes, 150.

[41]Ibid., 151.

[42]See Lachmund, *Greening Berlin*, and also Jens Lachmund, "Exploring the City of Rubble: Botanical Fieldwork in Bombed Cities in Germany after World War II," *Osiris* 18 (2003): 234–254.

[43]Bettina Stoetzer, "At the Forest Edges of the City: Nature, Race and National Belonging in Berlin" (Ph.D. diss., University of California Santa Cruz, 2011). Stoetzer's dissertation is a forthcoming manuscript entitled *Ruderal City: Ecologies of Migration and Urban Life in Berlin*.

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ambivalence over the nature of Berlin's rapid expansion, the meaning and purpose of urban space in Germany, and the ambivalence that Berliners felt about their own city being the center of national power as opposed to a place grounded in a natural ecosystem.

That Berlin contains so many such liminal spaces within it and along its margins is a result of both its rapid and vast expansion, as well as the consequences of its status as the capital of Germany. That is to say, it is because of its unique political status that it had a Wall and an enormous no-man's-land that stretched through its center; similarly, its political status as the capital of the Reich was part of the reason for the physical destruction it suffered, both at the hands of the Nazi government itself, and especially at the hands of the Allies. It is also because of its rapid expansion—itself a product of its character as a colony as well as a capital—that it contains such large, open, industrial spaces such as Gleisdreieck and Oberschöneweide as well as the incorporation of forests and parks from what were not that long ago small towns outside the city's walls, such as the Grunewald and Steglitz, as both Jackisch and Gray describe in their essays.

It can also be argued that the interaction of nature and marginal or interstitial spaces in cities also reveals the complexity and interwovenness of differing timescales, because cities grow and die in a different scale of time than nature. Nature, both within cities and where the city comes to an end, serves as a reminder that everything was once a "green field" and works against the chronological disjointedness, the illusion of timelessness, the privileging of time over space itself that seems to dominate in cities and within much of the discourse about cities. Through the nature that fills ruderal, liminal, and marginal spaces in cities, we are forced to think in terms of the longue dureé. One might, in fact, read the proliferation of fascination with the theme of nature reclaiming the city present in popular culture—from Alan Weisman's 2007 thought experiment *The World Without Us* to the many recent postapocalyptic visions of the near future, such as the programs "Blackout" and"Falling Skies," and the films *The Road* and *After Earth*—to be indicative of a postindustrial west grappling with the intrusion of nature into urban space, revealing the essential dependency of the city on nature. Indeed, in cities such as Detroit and Flint, Michigan, ruderal spaces practically, sadly, now define the spatial landscape; entire neighborhoods and factories are abandoned, reclaimed by nature, or have already reverted to agriculture, recalling Berlin after 1945. (The current macabre fascination in the United States in the industrial heartland with "ruin porn" echoes the darkly enthralling *Trümmerlandschaften* of immediate postwar German cities).

The experience of rubble—whether caused by bombs or by economic devastation—is marked by vegetation, and it is vegetation that launches it into another timescale, reminding us of the importance of the long durée; the city is just a blip on a larger arc of ecological time. The plants were here first, and they will be here

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once we are gone. This is a lesson that Berliners have learned and that their margins and marginal spaces, ruderal or otherwise, have taught them, and why the longue dureé is to be found in those spaces. For this reason, investigating the margins of the city and the nature of those marginal spaces lends itself to a longue dureé history, especially in the case of Berlin.

So, for example, Eli Rubin discusses the stubborn resistance of the geology of Marzahn to the utopian plans of the East German state as a dialectic between not only soil and concrete but also between memory and forgetting. East German planners, looking at maps in their offices in the center of Berlin, may have thought of the "green fields" on Berlin's northeast margins to be a blank slate. But once the actual construction began and the very real ground was broken, engineers and work brigades discovered that the sandy märkisch soil contained vast secrets: archeological remnants of the first Stone Age wanderers, following the receding glacier, to the pre-great migration Germans, the Slavs, the Cistercians, and literal tons of deadly ordinance from the Battle of Berlin, to the extent that the Marzahn housing settlement became a major archeological event at the same time that it was a vision of the future of socialist Germany. In Marzahn's soil a whole history was written, one of colonization, expansion, migration, conquest, and the negotiation of the glacial plain between Germans and Slavs, which was really the history of Berlin and the surrounding region itself. Instead of erasing the past, moving the working class out onto the city's green margins meant re-remembering them as just the latest iteration of historical patter, stretching as far back as history itself.

Poling notes similar themes about the border and nature in her essay. Reading Berlin's urban border through the nineteenth-century architect Ernst Bruch, Poling also sees the "uneven experience of time, of past and future interfering with the present," another instance of the uncanny character of this liminal space and the way it opened Berliners and Germans up to new kinds of time than they would have sensed in the comfort of the city center.

In fact, all of the subjects who found themselves occupying the liminal spaces at the edge of Berlin found themselves engaging directly with nature, but not as nature lovers, farmers, explorers, or prospectors—they were engaged very much in participating in the life and the project of the city. They were part of the rapidly expanding Berlin, and yet theirs was an experience shaped by the region's geology, hydrology, meteorology, and so on. As Poling notes, for those shantytown dwellers who could not manage to scavenge urban detritus such as a boat or a bus for shelter, there remained the possibility of digging a shelter in the earth, a "dugout," a task rendered much easier because of the flat, sandy terrain of the glacial plain surrounding Berlin. Similarly, Marion Gray's entire essay is in many ways structured around the process of encountering, or reencountering, nature as an experience of urban expansion in Steglitz, Dahlem, Klein-Ziethen, and beyond.

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Conclusion

The importance of pales, borders, frontiers, expansion, and domination of nature are all themes of central concern to German history. Berlin is, of course, not the only city touched by them; however, the city has acted as a mirror, of sorts, of the troubled and dramatic changes that Germany itself has undergone in the last 150 years. Its relationship with its margins brings us, as the essays in this volume show, to a confrontation with the ways in which nature, the economy, political power, oppression, and hegemony all have interacted with one another in Berlin's history. One consequence of Berlin's spectacular past is its over-produced and over-consumed present, in which the city itself as a space has "melted into thin air." Looking to its margins is a way to reconnect it to its broader geographical, geological, and therefore chronological contexts.

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