AT HOME AND IN THE WORKPLACE:
A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE "SPATIAL TURN"

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ABSTRACT

This introduction places the forum contributions in the wider context of the "spatial turn" within the humanities and social sciences. Following a survey of the historical trajectories of the field, a review of impulses from different disciplines, and a sketch of general developments over the last few decades, the editors exemplify key approaches, methods, and conceptual advances with reference to gender studies. The focus then turns to the structure, main themes, and specific contents of this collection, which features both case studies and theoretical reflections. In conclusion, the essay underlines the significance and further potential of the "spatial turn."

Keywords: space, spatial turn, historiography, gender studies, Germany, England

The "spatial turn" has had a wide-ranging influence on academic history over the last couple of decades. Starting with crude quantitative indicators, the surge of articles, anthologies, and scholarly exchanges shows no sign of abating. Hardly a month passes without a dedicated conference. In the three years since spring 2010 alone, subscribers to H-Net mailing lists have been informed of over thirty dedicated gatherings. The regional, chronological, and thematic spectrums ranged widely, from "Jewish Spaces in Modern Societies and Cultures" (Oxford, May 2010), via "une analyse spatiale des transferts culturels en Méditerranée médiévale" (Paris, 2011) to "Theoretische Konzepte raumzeitlicher Ordnungspraktiken" (Erfurt, July 2012). There are also signs of institutionalization in space-focused research clusters at universities such as the Technical University Darmstadt and University College London, and Erfurt recently established a Heisenberg Chair in the "History and Cultures of Spaces in Modern Times." The number of full-scale monographic treatments, in contrast, appears relatively modest, indicating perhaps that the transfer of conceptual advances into empirical application still poses considerable challenges.[1]

1. For programme details and reports, see, for example, the historical information platform "H-Soz-u-Kult" at http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/; for the thematic cluster "sociology of space" at the Technical University Darmstadt: http://raumsoz.ifs.tu-darmstadt.de/; for the "Space Research Group" at UCL's Bartlett Graduate School: http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/graduate/research/space; for the Erfurt institute: http://www.uni-erfurt.de/geschichte/geschichte-der-raeume/ (all accessed July 29, 2013); one pioneering example is Achim Landwehr, *Die Erschaffung Venedigs: Raum, Bevölkerung, Mythos 1570–1750* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2007), which investigates the continuous reconstitution

The idea for this forum emerged at one of the recent academic gatherings, "From Space to Place: The Spatial Dimension in the History of Western Europe," an international and interdisciplinary conference organized by the Centre for Research in History and Theory, Roehampton University, in cooperation with the German Historical Institute, London, in April 2010.[2] Rather than settling for a publication of proceedings, however, the editors aimed to highlight two prominent strands that emerged at the event: terminological and methodical critiques of the field, on the one hand, and case studies on the closely related themes of home- and workspace, on the other, both mindful of a gender perspective. The articles featured here are thus freshly commissioned research pieces inspired by the discussions held at the conference.

To contextualize the contributions, we propose a brief sketch of the state of the field, which has certainly not remained uncontested. Given the wide range of comparable turns—such as the linguistic, pictorial, material, and sensory—some scholars have legitimate reservations about the promulgation of ever-changing conceptual "fashions" without sustained methodological reflection and rigorous practical application. Others, however, interpret the recurring debates as a sign of the enduring vibrancy and versatility of "cultural history" in its broadest definition. "Space," just like "sound," "language," and "materiality," to name just a few recent research priorities, promises exciting new departures for a discipline that has long sought to broaden its scope beyond the classic preoccupations with historical facts, social elites, and change over time.[3] In this introduction to the forum we wish to reassess the opportunities and limits of the spatial turn in the light of recent developments. This review shall, first, sketch the role of space in "pre-turn" historiography; second, highlight more recent theoretical impulses from other disciplines; third, explore the relationship of space and gender as one of the key issues in studying domestic and working environments; and, finally, make a preliminary assessment of the "spatial turn" from a historical perspective as well as discuss the contributions to "thinking with space" by the various articles in this forum. For the purposes of illustration and exemplification, the regional focus will be on English- and German-speaking Europe. The chronological emphasis will be on the early modern and the modern period, especially the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, the former a period that derives its particular profile from the gradual transformation of localized face-to-face societies into larger communication networks supported by new media such as print and enhanced spatial mobility (both in terms of colonial expansion and the emergence of commercial

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of the state of Venice, for example, through a gradual shift in the perception of boundaries (which were only selectively noted before 1700, but became much more comprehensively defined thereafter).

2. Details can be obtained at http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/termine/id=12397 (accessed July 29, 2013).

3. For a general survey, see Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2008); on opportunities, see, for example, Peter J. Arnade, Martha C. Howell, and Walter Simons, "The Productivity of Urban Space in Northern Europe: An Introduction," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32 (2002), 515-548; a good example of a critical review of a related field, specifically the "new (cultural) political history," is A. Rödder, "Klios Neue Kleider: Theoriedebatten um eine Kulturgeschichte der Politik in der Moderne," *Historische Zeitschrift* 283 (2006), 657-688; on problematic overlaps between the spatial and cultural turns, see Ralph Kingston, "Mind over Matter? History and the Spatial Turn," *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1 (2010), 111-121.

passenger transport),[4] whereas the latter had to grapple with the effects of indus-
trialization, two world wars, and important changes to gender relations through
women's new political, economic, and cultural roles.

For a start, space as an analytical category did not need inventing. Around
1500, for example, some humanists developed an interest in the character of
specific regions, which they tried to capture through a combination of histori-
cal narratives, maps, and landscape descriptions, a genre that became known as
"chorography." Even the essence of the "spatial turn," namely the move from
a "container" image of space toward an acknowledgment of its mutability and
social production—has roots in seventeenth-century natural philosophy: whereas
the English physicist Isaac Newton perceived space as "absolute" (immutable,
metaphysical), the German mathematician and philosopher Gottfried Leibniz
argued for a relational understanding (that is, the constitution of space through
the respective arrangement and kinetic powers of objects and bodies).[5]

Yet it took a long time for such debates to filter into the modern humanities and
mainstream history-writing, which centered on human agency (especially that of
great men) and prioritized the dynamic variable of time (whereas space appeared
to be static or given). Historical interaction certainly took place *in* space, albeit
one conceived as a given framework or stage, a structural context prompting rul-
ers, diplomats, and generals to make decisions with reference only to parameters
such as distance and terrain and in order to carry out certain actions. This sort of
understanding can be called "essentialist" in the sense of endowing the physical
surroundings with peculiar characteristics and effects. The climate and topogra-
phy of the Alps, for example, *is* certainly more conducive to pastoral economies
than to arable husbandry and confronted commanders from Hannibal to Napoleon
with much greater challenges than did campaigns in the lowlands. Yet it would be
wrong to portray past views as entirely immutable, for general attitudes toward
landscapes could change over time. Although mountains appeared to many as
hostile and frightening environments in the Middle Ages, they gradually acquired
a much more favorable image as sanctuaries of natural, "uncivilized" societies
during the Romantic Age.[6]

An explicit engagement with spatial units occurred in those historical branches
that specialized in territorial entities such as towns and regions, in Germany

4. Rudolf Schlögl, "Politik beobachten: Öffentlichkeit und Medien in der Frühen Neuzeit,"
Zeitschrift für historische Forschung 25 (2008), 581-616; Klaus Beyrer, "The Mail-Coach Revolu-
tion," *German History* 24 (2006), 375-386.

5. See also the comment by Gerd Schwerhoff in this issue; Denis Cosgrove, "Landscape and
Landschaft: Lecture Delivered at the 'Spatial Turn in History' Symposium (GHI, 19/2/2004)," *GHI
Washington Bulletin* 35 (Fall 2004), 57-71, esp. 59-60. On changing perceptions of space in the
Renaissance, illustrated with reference to literary reflections of geography, see Bernhard Klein, *Maps
and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2001);
Benno Werlen, *Zur Ontologie von Gesellschaft und Raum*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1999), 173ff.;
for a long-term study of the evolution of spatial thinking, see Gabriele Sturm, *Wege zum Raum: meth-
odologische Annäherungen an ein Basiskonzept raumbezogener Wissenschaften* (Opladen: Leske and
Budrich, 2000).

6. Paul B. Bernard, *Rush to the Alps: The Evolution of Vacationing in Switzerland* (Boulder, CO:
East European Quarterly, 1978).

known as *Städtegeschichte* (institutionalized, for example, at Münster in 1970) and *Landesgeschichte* (prominently established at nearly all major universities from the early twentieth century). Here, too, while perceiving the "peculiar" and distinct characteristics of their objects of investigation as "given," practitioners saw social interactions shaped by them, but also thought humans capable of altering their material surroundings in turn. Hence, urban historians have argued that their central location predestined towns toward market exchange and that their high density of population created particular socioeconomic pressures. Regional scholars similarly noted that inhabitants transformed their living spaces through modifications of boundaries, irrigation projects, or land reclamations. More sinister notions of land shaping inhabitants (and vice-versa), in contrast, emerged in the *Lebensraum* and *Blut und Boden* ideologies of the Nazi period, which may have discredited spatial approaches for many postwar German historians.[7]

Two of the best-known (and methodically reflective) engagements with spatial frameworks evolved within the French Annales school and Italian microhistory. In his seminal book on the Mediterranean, first published in 1949, Fernand Braudel zoomed out from the hectic surface level of events toward medium-term cycles and above all the *longue durée* continuities of geological and climatic structures. He, too, argued for the shaping powers of space and the potential for dynamic adjustments within it, yet—as Eric Piltz has recently observed—not *quite* along the relational lines of current theoretical thinking. Rather, Braudel relied on suggestive, somewhat diffuse metaphors, such as the awe-inspiring vastness of the sea and the natural obstacles to economic exchange, effectively portraying space as something distinct from (and above) human politics. Microhistorians such as Carlo Ginzburg, in contrast, went in the entirely opposite direction. They abandoned the traditional concentration on states and elites to zoom in on localities and individuals. This extreme reduction of scale was meant to yield hidden layers of detail and an illumination of the general through the particular. Both schools raised awareness of the significance of scale as an analytical variable of historical research, evolving distinct approaches and questions for specific places as well as entire hemispheres.[8]

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7. See the website, conference activities, and publication series of the "Institut für vergleichende Städtegeschichte": http://www.uni-muenster.de/Staedtegeschichte/ and the "Institut für bayerische Geschichte": http://www.bayerischegeschichte.uni-muenchen.de/index.html (both accessed July 29, 2013); Eberhard Isenmann, *Die deutsche Stadt im Mittelalter 1150–1500* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2012); Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Fontana, 1987); Enno Bünz und Werner Freitag, "Räume und Grenzen: Traditionen und Konzepte der Landesgeschichte," *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 139 (2003), 145-154; the notion of more living space for German people was first coined in 1901 and became a slogan for the campaign of colonial annexation in Africa by the German Empire before conquest in Eastern Europe during the First World War. It was voiced again in the 1928 bestseller *Volk ohne Raum* (People without Space) by Hans Grimm. The desire for *Lebensraum* fueled Hitler's conquests in the East; *Blut und Boden* was a concept introduced by the Nazi ideologue Walter Darré in his 1930 book *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden* (A New Nobility Based on Blood and Soil), which argued for a re-adoption of rural values, a mythical link of German soil to German race, and, most important, for a systemic eugenic policy to encourage the "fit" to breed and to stop the "unfit" from reproducing; Cosgrove, "Landscape and Landschaft," 63-67.

8. Eric Piltz, "'Trägheit der Räume': Fernand Braudel und die spatial stories der Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, ed. Jörg

So there were certainly traditions of spatial awareness, but when and why did they become more self-consciously reflective? Early signs emerged from the late 1980s, perhaps kicked off by the 1986 German *Historikertag* entitled *Raum und Geschichte* (Space and History). Reasons may have included an enhanced methodological openness in the wake of intensive discussions about the "linguistic turn" and its role in transforming cultural history and above all, the ever more pervasive discourses of globalization in terms of politics, economy, and the new media. The ongoing digital revolution certainly provided highly congenial tools to create, store, and disseminate findings of space-related research. Geographical information systems, allowing sophisticated processing of landscape-related data, and 3-D modeling programmes—which facilitated the visualization of spatial structures—equipped scholars with unprecedented multimedia opportunities.[9]

Apart from these technical innovations, the late twentieth century saw a growing readiness to engage with theoretical models from the natural and social sciences. Much of the pioneering engagement with "space," of course, occurred in fields like astronomy. Some of the interdisciplinary enthusiasm resulted from pressure by funding bodies and university strategies, both of which discourage narrow specialist research, but also the general rise of "cultural history," with its ensuing reorientation away from linear narratives of facts toward more complex panoramas of identities, perceptions, and representations, which require refined methodical instruments. Roll calls of seminal thinkers typically range from Walter Benjamin and Georg Simmel via Michel de Certeau, Henri Lefebvre, and Pierre Bourdieu to Michel Foucault, Edward W. Said, and Edward W. Soja. We cannot trace their respective contributions in detail here, merely point to a few areas of particularly fruitful dialogue, for example, with historical and "radical" geography (given the latter's sensitivity to material conditions and power relations), historical archeology (especially its endeavors to devise a satisfactory combination of physical and documentary evidence), architectural theory (which offers analytical tools such as space syntax), and political science (whence historians adapted James C. Scott's concept of social sites as platforms for the articulation of "hidden transcripts").[10]

Döring and Tristan Thielmann (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008), 75-102, esp. 82-90; Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1991), 93-113; Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

9. S. R. Boettcher, "The Linguistic turn," in *Writing Early Modern History*, ed. Garthine Walker (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), 71-94; see, for example, websites such as "Virtual Heritage": http:// www.virtualheritage.net/home.htm or "The Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture": http:// www.christianityandculture.org.uk/ (both accessed July 30, 2013).

10. *Key Thinkers on Space and Place*, ed. Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles and London: Sage, 2011); *Thinking Space*, ed. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (London: Routledge, 2000); Döring and Thielmann, eds., *Spatial Turn*; for an essay-length survey, see Mike Crang, "Spaces in Theory, Spaces in History and Spatial Historiographies," in *Political Space in Pre-industrial Europe*, ed. Beat Kümin (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 249-266; A. R. H. Baker, *Geography and History: Bridging the Divide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2-3 and passim stresses the contacts, similarities, and overlaps between his discipline and history, despite different perspectives and focal points (periods vs. places). According to Baker, historical geography pursues a geographical analysis of the past, sharing its methods with history and its questions with geography. For a similar attempt to combine historical and geographical perspectives in the German-speaking world,

Early modern German history, however, was particularly influenced by sociologist Martina Löw's conceptualization of the constitution of space as an interrelated process of "spacing" and mental "synthesis." Neither Löw's model nor other similar ones have remained uncontested, of course, yet over the last decade or so, we have seen a stream of historical research—on microsites, wider landscapes, as well as on contemporary perceptions—which interprets space not as given, but as the result of relational processes with the potential to affect subsequent social interaction in turn. To take just one example, public spaces such as alehouses have been portrayed as outcomes of interplays among physical edifices, symbols (such as signs), and human agents (such as publicans and patrons). Once institutionalized in this way, they shaped male and female identities through differentiated accessibility and distinct behavioral expectations. As Soja put it in another key text, scholars need to recognize "spatiality as simultaneously . . . a social product (or outcome) and a shaping force (or medium) in social life."[11]

The rise of feminist theory and, associated with it, the new focus on gender as an analytical tool led to a particularly sustained interrogation of the role of space and place in present and past societies. Feminist anthropologists such as Henrietta Moore and Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo were among the first to discuss the relationship between gender and space and to study how power relations are inscribed in built space. For example, Moore analyzed the ways in which women and men as well as conventional notions of femininity and masculinity are defined across not only time but also space. She understood the role of feminist anthropology to enquire "what it is to be a woman, how cultural understandings of the category 'woman' vary through space and time, and how these understandings relate to the position of women in different societies." Moore claimed that "spatial texts," as she called them, changed over time whenever women and men subverted or openly contested existing gendered divisions between the public and the private or inside and outside. Rosaldo studied the effects of women's exclusion from specific spaces and suggested that women's status is lowest when public and private spheres are highly differentiated. Sociologists such as Daphne Spain analyzed the spatial arrangements in institutions like schools and workplaces and found they sustained gender hierarchies by preventing women's "access to the most socially valued knowledge contained in 'masculine space'."[12]

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see "Raumerfassung und Raumbewusstsein im späteren Mittelalter," ed. Peter Moraw, *Vorträge und Forschungen* 49 (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2002); David Harvey, "Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80, no. 3 (1990), 418-434, discusses time–space compression in the modern world and critiques the evolution of capitalism; see also Matthew Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space*, ed. Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards (London: Routledge, 1994); James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), for example, 20.

11. Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001); for a critique of her theoretical assumptions, see Gerhard Hard, "Der Spatial Turn, von der Geografie her beobachtet," in Döring and Thielmann, eds., *Spatial Turn*, 263-315; Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2007); Beat Kümin, *Drinking Matters: Public Houses and Social Exchange in Early Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2007); Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 7.

12. Henrietta Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1988), 12; Moore, *Space, Text and Gender* (New York/London: Guilford, 1996); Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, "Women,

Feminist geographers, too, such as Doreen Massey, Gillian Rose, and Linda McDowell, addressed the issue of gendered space and took influential male postmodern geographers like David Harvey and Soja to task for ignoring how gender transforms space and society. These feminist geographers have all demonstrated how ideologies of gender (and race) have complicated our understanding of, among others, public and private spheres, the labor process, or citizenship. Massey, for example, has claimed that the construction of gender relations is central for the spatial organization of social relations and has questioned the way conceptualizations of time and space have so often been simply mapped onto the dichotomy of masculinity–femininity. In 1984 she and McDowell examined the way capitalist relations of production had disrupted existing gender relation in four distinct parts of England and compared the situation in the nineteenth century with that at the time of their research: coal mining in the northeast, factory work of the cotton towns, sweated labor of inner London, and the agricultural gang-work of the Fens. They found that these four places had a dramatic impact on patriarchal relationships and that these spatial differences persisted, although in ever evolving forms, up to the 1980s. In an area of almost total separation of men's and women's lives in nineteenth-century Durham, miners who were themselves oppressed at work often oppressed women at home. In contrast, women in the cotton towns of the northwest had a long tradition of being employed outside the home and were also the first labor-force of factory-based industrial capitalism, especially after the introduction of the power loom. Their preponderance in the weaving industry was an enormous challenge "to the traditional sexual division of labour in social production" as the feminist historian Sally Alexander argued as early as 1982. And three years earlier, Jill Liddington, her feminist colleague, had shown how the conjunction of place, economics, and gender relations in Lancashire led to the emergence of local radical women suffragists who "sprang from an industrial culture which enabled them to organize a widespread political campaign for working women like themselves."[13]

Other historians, such as Kathleen Canning, concerned with a critical gender analysis of citizenship and its spatial location in civil societies and the public sphere have rejected the "presumed opposition between private and public sphere" altogether. She concedes that historians of women had at first found useful this distinction between the male-dominated public and the female world

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Culture, and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in *Women, Culture, and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974); Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 137-149.

13. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1994); Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005); Doreen Massey and Linda McDowell, "A Woman's Place?," in *Geography Matters: A Reader*, ed. Doreen Massey and John Allen (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 128-147; Sally Alexander, "Women's Work in Nineteenth-century London: A Study of the Years 1820–50," in *The Changing Experience of Women*, ed. Elizabeth Whitelegg, Madeleine Arnot, Else Bartels, Veronica Beechey, Lynda Birke, Susan Himmelweit, Diana Leonhard, Sonja Ruehl, and Mary Anne Speakman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), 41; cf. Catherine Hall, "The Home Turned Upside Down? The Working-class Family in Cotton Textiles 1780–1850," in Whitelegg *et al*., eds., *The Changing Experience,* 17-29; Jill Liddington, "Women Cotton Workers and the Suffrage Campaign: The radical Suffragists in Lancashire, 1893–1914," in *Fit Work for Women*, ed. Sandra Burman (London: Routledge, 1979), 98; cf. Jill Liddington and Jill Norris, *"One Hand Tied Behind Us": The Rise of the Women's Suffrage Movement* (London: River Oram, 1987).

of the home because it helped establish the importance of women's lives, of family and reproduction as formative of female identities and worthy of historical research; it had also stressed women's influence within the private spheres. But, as Canning and others argued, critical engagement with these terms soon emerged only to intensify after 1989 with the English publication of Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Habermas's bourgeois public sphere, which emerged in eighteenth-century Europe, was conceived as a discursive arena in which "private people come together as a public sphere"; it was characterized by a disregard of status, by a domain of common concern, and by its inclusivity. Feminists from all disciplines argued vigorously against these claims, suggesting that far from being inclusive, the bourgeois public sphere discriminated against women and the lower orders. They also argued against Habermas's definition of "common concern." Nancy Fraser, for example, asserted that the boundaries between what is generally perceived as public, that is, the "common concern," and what is typically called private is not a natural given but is instead inextricably linked. Feminist political theorists sought to establish this divide as an ideological rather than spatial one, and feminist historians showed that the designations of private and public were socially constructed, that is, open to change over time and dependent on locality; for example, issues such as reproduction, formerly thought of as a private matter, became in early twentieth-century Western Europe generally accepted as a common concern and therefore open to state intervention. Historians of gender also offered many examples of the proliferation of the public sphere into which women could and did venture or of the changing role of male actors in the private sphere of marriage, family, household, and related networks.[14]

Another fruitful area in the pursuit of problematizing space and place addressed by feminist scholars is the history of the body. The work of the French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu about the social significance of bodies and their physical placing in space inspired feminists to study the relationship of body

14. Kathleen Canning, *Gender History in Practice* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 19; Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Darmstadt and Neuwied: Luchterhand Verlag, 1962), translated as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1989); Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 36; Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25 (1990), 58-62; cf. Belinda Davis, "Gender, Women, and the 'Public Sphere' in World War I Berlin," in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870–1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); cf. Cornelie Usborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Women's Reproductive Rights and Duties* (London: Macmillan; Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Patricia Hollis, "Women in Council: Separate Spheres, Public Space," in *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800–1914*, ed. Jane Rendall (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Routledge, 1987), esp. 329-335; Angela V. John, *By the Sweat of Their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines* (London: Routledge, 1984); Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History," *Historical Journal* 36 (1993), 383-414; John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Longman, 2005); Cornelie Usborne, *Culture of Abortion in Weimar Germany* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn, 2007), which shows the close involvement of husbands and boyfriends in illegal abortion practices; Kate Fisher, *Birth Control, Sex, and Marriage in Britain, 1918–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) illustrates the power of husbands in making contraceptive choices.

and space, although many argued against Bourdieu's belief in the naturalness of the sexed body, which he thinks of as a "biologically preconstructed" object, and instead subscribed to Foucault's view that the body is socially constructed. McDowell, for example, discussed the body as "the place, the location or site . . . of the individual with more or less impermeable boundaries between one body and another." This mutability, she asserted, is related to place and position. Research on the body, according to her, has changed the meaning of space, "as it has become clear that spatial divisions—whether in the home or in the workplace, at the level of the city or the nation-state—are also affected by and reflected in embodied practices and lived social relations." The sociologist Martina Löw, whom we have already encountered, is also concerned with the "genderization of spaces" and the relation of "mutual interdependence between spaces and bodies." In a recent article on topless sunbathing on the beach, an example of "modern corporality" and "modern spatiality," she argues that spaces become gendered through the "organization of perceptions, and in particular of gazes and the body techniques that go along with them."[15]

In her work on female factory labor and the rise of the welfare state in late nineteenth-century Germany, Kathleen Canning analyzed various bodies, especially the social body that "was evoked and symbolized in the imaginations of social reformers who decried the danger of women's work, and the material bodies of female workers as sites of hygienic, medical and moral intervention." The history of the body in the French Enlightenment and Revolution has gone some way toward shedding new light on the change in public space, the importance of culture, and the exclusion of women from the emergent public sphere; an analysis of the body brought new understanding of imperialism, the First World War, and the rise of fascism. Yet the history of the body has not been without its conceptual difficulty and thus Canning suggests historians work with *embodiment* instead because embodied practices are "always contextual, inflected with class, ethnic, racial, gender, and generational locations with 'place, time physiology and culture'." Or, as Leslie Adelson defines it, embodiment is a process "of making and doing the work of bodies—of becoming a body in social space."[16]

15. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinctions: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge, 1984); Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity and Place* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1999), 34; Martina Löw, "The Social Construction of Space and Gender," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (2006), 121.

16. Canning, *Gender History in Practice*, 139, and Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); for example, Carole Pateman's examination of the different meaning of male and female bodies in the French Enlightenment in *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), which discusses among others the many bodies of Marie Antoinette; Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class, and Political Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Elizabeth Domanski, "Militarization and Reproduction in World War I Germany," in Eley, ed., *Society, Culture, and the State*; *Sexuality and German Fascism*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2005); *Gendered Nations: Nationalism and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford: Berg, 2000); Canning, *Gender History in Practice*, 179, and citing Katherine N. Hayles, "The Materiality of Informatics," unpublished paper, 1992; Leslie Adelson, *Making Bodies: Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), xiii.

Despite acknowledging the important work by anthropologists, geographers, and sociologists on the dialectical relationship between gender and space, the historian, designer, and art critic Jane Rendell in her co-edited book, *Gender Space Architecture* (2000), bemoaned the fact that there is little if any research on the function of representation in negotiating the complex relation between gendered identities and urban space. "Descriptions of gendered space make use of words and images which have cultural associations with particular genders to invoke comparisons to the biological body—for example, soft, curvaceous interiors are connected with women and phallic towers with men." She suggests that the work of the Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre can help with analyzing how representation produces and is produced by social space. Lefebvre studied how space is produced conceptually as well as materially and suggested this occurs through three different yet connected processes: "spatial practice" (material or functional space), "representations of space" (space as codified language), and "representational space" (the lived everyday experience of space).[17]

The following articles situate themselves in this complex matrix of traditions, interconnections, and new departures. In line with the key discussion strands at the "From Space to Place" conference, they are grouped in two parts: (a) case studies in gendered approaches to the home and the workplace; (b) critical reflections on the spatial turn more generally.

Krisztina Robert's essay highlights the importance of combining the theories and methods of gender history and cultural geography when examining gendered employment and war participation, both of which were organized spatially. Robert combines textual and spatial analysis, which creates a useful interpretive framework for exploring both verbal and performative modes of discourse production and their impact on lived experience, including face-to-face exchanges in specific environments. Her discussion of women's entry into military employment in the First World War shows how the female volunteer corps successfully contested conventional barriers limiting women's military war participation. By spatially subverting the discourse of binary gender divisions, members of the volunteer corps managed to extend a "feminine home front" to much of the country. For example, they succeeded in turning places like railway stations and munitions factories that were traditionally associated with masculinity ("heterotopic sites") into more domestic places for uniformed women to perform support jobs for the military. This also meant delineating such places from the real "masculine" space at the front and at the same time associating in the public mind women's military activity with the defense of the fatherland.

Amanda Flather views (work-)space as both reflective and constitutive of social relations. In her article on the sexual and spatial division of labor in the

17. Jane Rendell, Introduction: "Gender, Space," in *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*, ed. Jane Rendell, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); for a more critical view of Lefebvre's classic text *La production de l'Espace* (1974), charging it with a lack of clarity, relative neglect of time, and focus on product rather than process, see T. Unwin, "A Waste of Space? Towards a Critique of the Social Production of Space," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS 25 (2000), 11-29.

seventeenth-century Essex household, she demonstrates the purchase of adopting an analytical focus on specific "spaces" rather than clinging to the conceptual model of "separate spheres" to explore the connection among workplace, gender relations, and power in early modern England. The importance of the "separate sphere" approach for historians lay in the way it helped illuminate the influence of place, especially workplace, on gender relations and vice versa. Feminist historians used it to critique the public/private dichotomy and to explore how different spheres of activities for men and women have been defined, enforced, and challenged in the past. But, as has been argued vigorously since at least the 1980s and as is shown here convincingly by Flather, the notion of "separate spheres" is an overworked trope that is too static and unwieldy for the complex history of gender relations. Employing microhistorical methods to do justice to the regional context of her research, Flather presents a more sophisticated and nuanced analysis of gendered power relations within spaces that were too often called dichotomous or simply classified as "mixed": She finds no clear gender segregation, but rather that spatial patterns of male and female work were enormously varied and depended on a number of factors—such as time, place, occupation, and status. Due considerations of these and cultural influences can reveal how places can be gendered for those who use them, even if both sexes share them.

Willem de Blécourt makes a similar point in his article about twentieth-century Flemish witchcraft discourse. Although the household was popularly considered a woman's domain, Flemish property rights kept it firmly under male control. A sense of genuinely female space seems to have been produced by women's everyday movement through the house or their village and, more important, by bodily contacts and body language. Although protection from witchcraft focused on liminality, that is, securing real, material boundaries, de Blécourt argues that witchcraft (and space) can be understood predominantly in terms of (an immaterial) discourse. This reveals culturally specific and gendered embodied practices in private places and their representations and shows that the meaning of gestures, gaze, and touching as acceptable or inappropriate depended on religion, gender, and, crucially, on location: for men in general and Catholic friars in particular, the dividing line was whether a body practice like the "evil hand" had occurred inside or outside the home, but for women, boundaries between self and others were more subtle and hinged on what they perceived as personal corporal space. But since "unwitchers"—those who helped lift a curse—were generally male they counseled protection of the threshold or other openings to the home lest specific physical behavior could occur, with deadly consequences for the household.

The conceptual critiques center on issues of terminology and the construction of meaning. Matthew Johnson exposes the lack of clarity in current attempts to gauge the "social meaning" of buildings, which fragment into diffuse reconstructions of function, *Zeitgeist*, semiotic sense, and many other branches. As a way forward, he suggests greater attention to the late medieval social structure within which these buildings evolved, and—using the spatial organization of Bodiam Castle in East Sussex as an example—to move away from "meaning" toward "lived

experience." Specifically, Johnson invites readers to follow the approach route to the castle, highlighting perspectives, physical features, and symbolic messages along the way. He acknowledges that such an approach poses fresh methodological difficulties (especially in terms of the social and chronological variability of lived experience), but these may well be smaller than those associated with attempts to recapture evasive notions like a castle-owner's "intent." In a related and forceful challenge, Leif Jerram focuses on the imprecise demarcations between key terms. Rather than having a firm theoretical framework for discussions of "space," many scholars simply perceive it as a vague repository of sociocultural meanings; in other words, they really talk about "place." Jerram thus proposes a new, triple-layered taxonomy in which "space" refers to the "proximate disposition of things in relation to each other," "site" to the "location of things on the earth's surface" and "place" to "values, beliefs, codes, and practices that surround a particular location." Reviewing problematic and promising approaches, he seeks to move from the common preoccupation with perceptions and representations toward a model that integrates matter, materiality, and the physical environment; in other words, he wants to find an analytically satisfactory way of accounting for the role of "space" in the historical process or to stop using the term when we actually mean something else. At this stage, however, both Johnson and Jerram are setting agendas rather than offering solutions. The final contribution takes the form of a "comment" by a leading authority on the spatial turn in the historical sciences, Gerd Schwerhoff, who assesses the articles and their wider scholarly framework from the perspective of a German early modernist. Amid all the flurry of conceptual concerns and methodological difficulties, he reminds us not to lose sight of areas where tangible progress appears possible, for example, in the study of physical movements and topographical markers such as borders.[18]

Reviewing the state of play from the editors' point of view, what is the "value added" of the spatial turn at this point in time? Overall, it appears considerable. Many historical disciplines show tangible signs of "impact." In cartography, to take one example, maps are no longer seen as mere records of physical conditions produced by artists with gradually increasing technical skills, but as claims to power, as tools of representation, and as reflections of changing spatial awareness. There is now as much interest in the symbolic space of the map itself, that is, its marginal annotations and ornamentations, as in the boundaries and features of the geographical space it purports to depict. In communication studies, too, scholars are moving away from the traditional concentration on script and print toward a fuller recognition of face-to-face exchange in specific embeddings. Rudolf Schlögl recently proposed understanding space as a *universal medium*, that is, neither as a container nor as an abstract construct, but as the general framework for human exchange in preindustrial settings, with further analytical differentiation into subcategories such as architectural (or physical) space (for

18. For examples of his own research interests in "public spaces" and related aspects of the field, see, for example, *Zwischen Gotteshaus und Taverne: Öffentliche Räume in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Susanne Rau and Gerd Schwerhoff (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004); *Stadt und Öffentlichkeit in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Gerd Schwerhoff (Cologne: Böhlau, 2011).

example, the built environment), ephemeral (or ritually enriched) space (such as market squares and parish churches), and virtual (that is, a more pervasive and power-saturated) space of lordship and governance.[19]

Overall, there have been advances in both synchronic and diachronic perspective. Synchronically, spatial methods and approaches help us to capture the complexity of historical constellations and the simultaneity of different experiences and horizons. At any one time, members of given societies diverge in their activities, possessions, backgrounds, networks, and imaginations, placing them—even when they meet each other face-to-face—in overlapping yet idiosyncratically constituted worlds of their own. We can thus move toward much finer modes of analysis than the common binary models of elite/popular, sacred/profane, or public/private. As Jerram argues, this requires yet greater efforts to engage with the materiality of social exchange. Points of reference might include optical/archaeological techniques such as view-shed analysis (which investigates lines of vision within, say, churches, providing fresh insights on how contemporaries experienced the liturgy) or architectural tools such as space syntax (which deciphers the structural features of edifices through an analysis of thresholds, boundaries, access permissions, and the hierarchy of interior spaces).[20]

Diachronically, the spatial turn offers fresh opportunities to study the relationship between space and time. Take the ongoing reassessment of the emergence of a political public sphere in the early modern period. Whereas Habermas distinguished a traditional "representational" public sphere associated with the ceremonial of absolutist rulers from the critical reasoning of the emerging bourgeoisie informed by the new periodical press (thus prioritizing *abstract* and discursive developments among social elites), Susanne Rau and Gerd Schwerhoff have recently called for greater attention to political exchange in *concrete* "public spaces" which involved common people and evolved from the Middle Ages.[21] Similar opportunities surely exist for future investigations of classic spatial topics such as the "discovery" of the New World, the dismantling of Purgatory, and the shift to a heliocentric view of the universe.

Our conclusions about the spatial turn, therefore, are relatively upbeat. As with previous turns, critics rightly point to dangers of inflationary use, opportunistic appropriations, semi-digested theory, and imprecise terminology. Regarding the latter, might it be helpful to use "point" for a physical grid-reference, "place" for points where specific constellations of objects and agents constitute socially recognized sites of interaction (such as squares, churches, public houses), and

19. Bernard Klein, *Maps and the Writing of Space in Early Modern England and Ireland* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2000); Andreas Würgler, "Which Switzerland? Contrasting Conceptions of the Early Modern Swiss Confederation in European Minds and Maps," in Kümin, ed., *Political Space,* 197-214; "Der Raum als 'Universalmedium' in der frühneuzeitlichen Stadt" (paper presented at Dresden, November 9, 2004); cf. Piltz, "Braudel," 80.

20. See, for example, the introduction to *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Andrew Spicer and Will Coster (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Simon Roffey, *The Medieval Chantry Chapel: An Archaeology* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2007); Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

21. Susanne Rau and Gerd Schwerhoff, "Öffentliche Räume in der Frühen Neuzeit: Überlegungen zu Leitbegriffen und Themen eines Forschungsfeldes" in Rau and Gerd Schwerhoff, eds., *Öffentliche Räume*, 11-52.

"space" for the fields of perception and maneuver experienced by humans at any point or place? There is clearly much exciting new work out there with genuine potential to advance the field both in terms of synchronic and diachronic analysis. Charges of romanticized notions of space within the humanities seem only partially justified.[22] In early modern and modern history, for example, recent work on the "public sphere" and "public spaces" provides ample evidence of genuine attempts to address political and gender issues and power struggles. Last, the spatial turn reminds us to relativize our "modern" notion of territorial, measurable, secular, and abstract space and understand it rather as the outcome of specific historical processes.

Now, as with every similar research fashion, the main challenge is to avoid a new fixation on a single paradigm and to integrate the methods and tools of spatial research with existing and by no means superseded approaches in the historical sciences.

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22. *Raumproduktionen. Beiträge der Radical Geography: Eine Zwischenbilanz*, ed. Bernd Belina and Boris Michel (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2007), 13. See Hard, "Spatial Turn," for a critique of the admittedly impressionistic-emotive exploration of space in the tradition of a flaneur offered by Karl Schlögel, "Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit," in *Über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag 2003).