

Editorial

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In October 1924 German film director Fritz Lang left for the USA to study the methods of film production in America. Later he insisted that his first impression of New York inspired him to make *Metropolis*. This movie—today internationally renowned as a major piece of film culture—combines urban fantasies and visions of the (dismal) future: The gigantic city of Metropolis is socially segregated; while the wealthy upper class lives aboveground and rules from large tower complexes, the working class leads a miserable existence in the depths below. They spend half the day working, dominated by huge machines. Freder, the son of the city's Master, and Maria, a girl that preaches in the catacombs, try to overcome class segregation and exploitation. While contemporary critics attacked the sentimental plot, *Metropolis* was acclaimed for its high level of technical skill. Now, as before, it is considered »a laboratory of modernist cinema and architecture« (Jacobsen and Sudendorf 2000: 9). It thus features different aspects of time and space: the spatial (here: transatlantic) and highly productive transfer of concepts and ideas; the creation of spaces that can be described as arrangements of structures, proportions, and designs; the social stratification of spheres in which people are placed; an imagined future that manifests itself spatially as a city with a distinctive architecture and infrastructure. The cover image of this issue adds further dimensions to this list. It depicts carpentry workers constructing the skyscrapers that are to contribute to the eccentric and unique image of Metropolis. The photo hints at the fact that it takes time to construct spaces; spaces are generated in processes. What is more, the busy carpentry workers—however much they might be posing—remind us that the production of space is mainly carried out by ordinary people, often in minor positions and in everyday routines.

Both history and sociology have engaged in issues like those raised by Metropolis. Time and space are pivotal concepts as well as well-established research topics in both disciplines.¹ And yet there has been a striking shift in recent years. History and sociology traditionally organize their research in terms of time. It is difficult to imagine historical research without temporal selectivity and typological chronologies, while the emergence of sociology is usually linked with ideas of modernity and the forward movement of society along linear trajectories. Central questions have been continually framed in a historical and sociological semantic of »tradition/modernity,« »r/evolution« or »stagnation/progress,« etc. These semantics still play a crucial role, but both disciplines are now also shifting towards research questions that are framed in terms of spatial concepts. As concepts such as »world society,« »entangled histories,« »transnationalism,« »multi-locality« or »histoire croisée« suggest, research is increasingly represented in topological forms and structures. Today it seems that studies on »modernization« will be almost entirely replaced by research on »globalization.« These conceptual shifts challenge central and classical approaches in both disciplines.

In 2011, the *Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology (BGHS)* invited PhD candidates to discuss aspects of the new approaches outlined above in the context of empirical topics or to reflect directly on the history of these shifts. From February 9 to 11, about 25 young historians, sociologists and researchers from neighboring disciplines met at the *BGHS Third Annual Seminar* to present and discuss their findings in a lively atmosphere. This issue of *InterDisciplines* presents six papers that resulted from this conference. The articles are wide-ranging both in terms of time and space: They span from 18th century France to 21st century China. The authors cover a variety of topics, including the construction, usage, and symbolic meaning of spaces; internal and transatlantic migration; entanglements; and »global thinking.« Quite strikingly, all of them focus on spatial aspects and hardly ever reflect on or empirically explore the con-

1 Thanks to Valentin Rauer: He launched the idea for the *Third Annual Seminar* of the *Bielefeld Graduate School in History and Sociology* and wrote the call for papers on which this paragraph is based.

struction, perception, and effects of time. This mirrors the situation at the Annual Seminar. It would be worthwhile investigating why time is a blind spot, while space in its various forms has become a leading category in historical and sociological research: Do we take time for granted? Leaving this question aside, this issue presents original explorations and fruitful findings and thus contributes to a multifaceted and ever-changing research field.

By examining the ways in which cages and corresponding imaginations and practices of caretaking and domestication construed birds as »pets« in eighteenth-century Paris, Julia Breitruck combines spatial history and animal history. She analyzes bird caging as a cultural technique of domestication and cohabitation, the placement and treatment of birds as signs of the owners' social status, and the symbolic function of aviaries as aristocratic heterotopias. Breitruck thus shows that human-bird relationships were defined by both the conceptualization and practice of education as well as by their placement in real and imagined spatial proximities or distances.

Felix Schürmann offers a contribution to the debate on spatial concepts in historiography. By looking at contacts between coastal dwellers in Africa and its offshore islands and sailors from whaling vessels in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he suggests that »beach« and »ship« are spatial images for arenas of historic entanglements. Additionally, Schürmann proposes linking the approach of »entangled histories« to a historical anthropological perspective so that actors can be taken into full view.

David Gutman's article contributes to the well established field of migration history. Gutman examines the emergence of migrant smuggling networks that facilitated migration to North America from communities in eastern Anatolia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He focuses on how the migration industry incorporated pre-existing social relationships and networks while creating many new ones in order to maintain the flow of migrants in the face of state prohibitions. By doing so, he argues for an examination of the roles played by »periph-

eral« social actors and dynamics in shaping the new spatio-temporal regime.

Gleb Albert analyses expectations of an imminent world revolution in early Soviet Russia. He shows that the belief in world revolution was not limited to the intellectual leadership, but that regional party activists placed themselves and their revolutionary activity within a global context. Albert strives to elucidate activists' ideas about the process of world revolution and how they imagined the communist world that would come into existence after the worldwide »proletarian« victory. This »world society« in the making is compared to Niklas Luhmann's concept of world society. Finally, Albert evaluates the role of communist »global thinking« in the context of the ascension of Stalinism in the mid- to late-1920s.

Rumin Luo's focus is on internal migration in China. She analyzes the Hukou system—a system that regulates mobility and distributes social services between rural and urban areas—as an institutional passage that combines the perspectives of time and space: Although migrants experience a shift in identity as they cross this passage, they remain bound to a rural past based on where they were originally registered. Luo thus argues that this system implies an internal passage for the status transition of migrants.

Based in the field of urban sociology, Anna-Lisa Müller explores three essential aspects of cities and urban spaces in an experimental manner: the way people shape urban spaces, the impact of local history on urban design, and graffiti as a means of communication in urban spaces. Müller analytically connects these aspects to Henri Lefèbvre's conception of space as a social product and presents findings of her empirical studies in the European cities of Dublin and Gothenburg in a photo essay.

Jacobsen, Wolfgang and Werner Sudendorf (eds.) 2000: Metropolis. Ein filmisches Laboratorium der modernen Architektur / Metropolis. A Cinematic Laboratory for Modern Architecture. Stuttgart, London