

Race-Track and Labyrinth: The Space of Physical Culture in Berlin

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The human being steps straight ahead, because he has an aim. He knows where to go, he has decided on one direction, and he strides resolutely forward. The right angle is the instrument which is necessary and sufficient for action, because it serves to determine the space in a completely unequivocal fashion.¹

When the gymnastic movement of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn began in 1811, its first strategy was to create a new form of spatial environment for its activities. A picture from about 1817 shows the gymnastics grounds in the Hasenheide area of Berlin.² It includes among other things some running tracks, which is not particularly surprising. What is strange to a twentieth-century observer is that we see not only a straight racing track [*Laufbahn*], but also a “twisting course” [*Schlängellauf*] in the form of three connected circles, and a “miracle course” [*Wunderlauf*] in the form of a labyrinth. These two forms—and the activities associated with them—are unknown in the world of sports and gymnastics today. What did they mean? What is the historical logic which accounts for their appearance in the physical culture of this period, and what is the logic of their disappearance? Or, put another way: what is the historical logic which accounts for the fact that the straight racing-track did not disappear—or, at least, not yet?

Questions such as these lead toward a cultural ecology of sport. Sport has always been an interaction between body and environment. It has always, to some extent, been determined by place and space, and it has itself produced specific forms of place and space. The race-track and labyrinth configurations from about 1817 gymnastics ground, with their inherent contradiction of the straight line and the curved line, was only one aspect of a larger field of contradictions and dimensions such as: indoor versus outdoor movement, the greenery of nature versus artificial construction, isolation versus wholeness, and specialization versus the multiple use of sport space. The recent attention to sport as an ecological problem, recalling the industrial burden on our environment, has demonstrated that these matters may well be of more than academic

1. Le Corbusier, “Leitsätze des Städtebaus,” (1925) in Ulrich Conrads, *Programme und Manifeste zur Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Braunschweig, 1981).

2. Rudolf Gasch, ed., *Handbuch des gesamten Turnwesens und der verwandten Leibesübungen* (Wien/Leipzig, 1928), vol. 1, p. 317.

interest. Perhaps the ecological crisis forms (part of) the real basis for our current interest in the sport-body-space connection.³

From Open-Air Folk Games to the Halls of Noble Exercises

We may approach an understanding of the social-ecological significance of sport through the history of sports facilities. Is it possible, for example, to draw conclusions about the social patterns and dynamics of physical culture from historical changes evident in sports architecture? If so, then Berlin can serve as an example.

The history of separate facilities for physical culture activities in Berlin—to the extent that we can determine this history today—may begin with the transition from folk games among farmers and townspeople to the “noble exercises” or “academic arts.” Until the sixteenth century, the popular feasts, pastimes, games, exercises, contests and amusements which had developed were not characterized by systematic isolation or specialization. Nor were their movement configurations differentiated according to social class distinctions, though common patterns pertaining to specific contests or movements were already evident in socially differentiated spaces, as was the case with the tournaments of the nobility on the one hand and the mock tournaments of the villagers on the other. In general, however, farmers, townspeople, clergy and noblemen mingled together in the village feasts and wakes, and in the fairs and rifleman’s meetings, no doubt showing different forms of engagement and different functions in accordance with the requirements of late feudal society, but still in the context of a common event without spatial barriers. This popular game culture is well documented, especially in the case of the Netherlands by the pictures of Bruegels, as well as in England and in Swiss and Upper German towns in the form of town chronicles and other accounts.

We know little about Berlin in this respect. We have to imagine this popular physical culture as a periodic carnivalistic amusement along town roads and open places, as violent and diverting ballgames between villages or towns, as a combination of contests of strength between the inhabitants, acrobatic displays performed by travelling showmen, running races (including women), and dances. The sound of music and collective laughter dominated the public matches, reflecting both a special form of rhythmic culture and a popular culture of laughter.⁴ Fairs and merrymaking of this kind continued in Berlin until the early nineteenth century in the *Kleiner Tiergarten*, a sort of common and meadow between Alt-Moabit and Neu-Moabit. The sites of games and contests were determined in a traditional or ad hoc manner without taking on a fixed architectural format. Aristocrats as well as patricians and clergymen

3. Henning Eichberg, *Leistungsräume. Sport als Umweltproblem*, (Münster, 1988); John Bale. “Rational Landscapes of Modern Sport.” paper (London 1985). Danish in *Centring* (Gerlev/Denmark) 6 (1985); 100–108; John Bale. “The Place of ‘Place’ in Cultural Studies of Sports,” in *Progress in Human Geography* (forthcoming).

4. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rubelais and his World* (Cambridge/Mass. 1968); Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1978).

participated, although the (alcoholized) crowd represented a social phenomenon which was not without an element of danger for them.

This relative balance shifted during the early modern period. In 1567, for example, this elector of Brandenburg arranged a somewhat warlike contest between the entire populations of Berlin/Cölln and Spandau, comparable in some respects to what we know as patronized sport in England at this time. But while the townspeople were thus distracted, he ordered the church tower of Spandau destroyed by cannon shots, thereby removing both a symbol of the town's autonomy and a potential danger to the citadel of Spandau which was then under construction.⁵ As far as we know, this action did not provoke serious protest, illustrating both the power of popular amusements under noble patronage and a shift toward the prince's new territorial power.

At the same time, the nobility began to withdraw from the popular game culture. This development had already been presaged by tendencies toward social exclusivity in medieval tournaments and chivalrous exercises. But it was not until the 16th century that this developed into an autonomous form of body culture, isolated by virtue of space and bodily configurations, i.e., the noble exercises. And along with them arose the first architecture of specialized halls for movement culture.

An institutionalized venue for these "academic arts" were the *Ritterakademien*, the "academies of chivalry" which served as schools for the young nobility. When the Berlin academy was established in 1705, its founding declaration stated: "In this academy there should be taught, not just the customary exercises of riding, fencing, vaulting and dancing, but His Royal Majesty has also ordered the appointment of the most famous and distinguished professors."⁶ This ordered series shows the priorities of the various bodily exercises which were characteristic of this type of school; in fact, a report from 1724 stated that the *exercitia* were flourishing at the school, but pointed also to a lack of teachers. However, the *manège* (riding hall) was of unsurpassed quality.⁷ Moreover, a stable for 36 horses had been constructed, and its loft was used as a hall for fencing and vaulting. Since 1714 the headmaster of the school had always been an equerry, a master of the horses. In addition, the pupils were trained by a non-commissioned officer of the guard in the exercises of the musket. In 1716 a new *Ritterakademie* was erected in the stable building at the *Breite Strasse*.

The "academies of chivalry," with their riding-halls and ballrooms, fencing-rooms and vaulting-halls, thus created a new spatial environment for corporeal exercises. The *exercitia* thus established themselves as hall exercises.

The same was true of ball games. A special game, called rackets or court

5. Thomas Biller, *Der "Lynarplan" und die Entstehung der Zitadelle Spandau im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1981), p. 67.

6. Bruno Mahler, *Die Leibesübungen in den Ritterakademien*, (Neuruppin, 1921), p. 11.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 24. See also Wolfgang Götz, *Deutsche Marställe des Barock* [Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien, 341 (München, 1964).

tennis, had been developed for the hall configuration. In 1665 the elector of Brandenburg, Friedrich Wilhelm, ordered built a ball court at the Werder, and he personally enjoyed the game very much. But his enthusiasm was not matched by a larger popular response, unlike in other European metropolitan areas. (In Paris in 1600 there were about 250 ball courts.) So the house was relinquished in 1675, although another ball court was constructed in 1680 in the royal *Lustgarten*.⁸

The open-air space, too, was transformed in a new way, serving as a venue for bodily movement in conformity with new patterns of order and taste. The garden, in French style, became a stage for putting on courteous promenades and pastimes; nature was artificially domesticated and transformed into geometrical ornaments. Merian published in 1652 a copperplate of the elector's pleasure garden at the castle of Cölln with hedges of privet and box with flowerbeds in a chessboard pattern and a roundel with stone figures, water basins and arcades.⁹

The new types of military exercises also required new forms of spatial organization. Drill grounds were built, although separated from the life of the townsfolk in order to discourage desertions. Here, too, a new hall architecture was developed, namely the drill-house. The architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel later constructed a "new drill-house" for the regiment of von Winning and Kunheim.¹⁰

When all of these activities are seen in relation to each other, it becomes clear that these different types of halls cannot be explained in a satisfactory manner by their specific purposes or simply as protection against bad weather and, therefore, as "natural" constructions. In fact, the hall culture created a new form of social discipline, of social geometry. Its point of departure was the newly organized state, the prince's court and the military. But the bourgeois townsmen also joined, along with their shooting-houses for the rifle corporations and fencing-rooms for the sword-fencing guilds. The new barriers and stone walls marked the social barriers growing in an aristocratic society of absolutism.

By creating a new external space, this social geometry brought forth a new relationship to the body. New forms of exercises were practiced in these halls: courteous dance instead of popular folk dance, geometrical equestrianism of the "high school" instead of racing contests, elegant fencing with light rapiers instead of the heavy sword and its blows, court tennis and pique drill. A new body appeared: Where the old aristocracy had put force and contest onto the stage, now elegance and theatrical circulation were in style. The violent drama of aristocratic competition was transformed into a representation of bodily positions and courteous civilization. The trained poises and choreographies of the body corresponded to the architectonic frame, the geometry and the straight

8. Wilhelm Streib, "Geschichte des Ballhauses," in *Leibesübungen und körperliche Erziehung* 54 (1935): 373-82, 419-32, 448-64; here: p. 379.

9. Vroni Hampf-Heinrich and Goerd Peschken, ed., *Stadt Grün* [Berliner Topographien, 3] (Berlin 1985), p. 10.

10. Picture 5 in Hermann Teske, *Berlin und seine Soldaten, 200 Jahre Berliner Garnison* (Berlin, 1968).

lines of the halls. The transformation of space thus signaled the rise of a new society and a new configuration of social classes. The old aristocracy of warriors and knights no longer had a place in this new state—though the term *Ritterakademie* obscured this fact—while a new aristocracy became dominant, disciplined within the framework of court, administration, and the military hierarchy.¹¹

The bourgeoisie, too, changed, away from the medieval duel structure involving craftsmen and merchant patricians towards new patterns of behavior and production. Along with the exercise halls other architectural monocultures arose: manufacture as a spatial concentration, isolation and disciplining of the workers. The royal rifle manufactory in Spandau, founded in 1722, was an example of this form of social geometry, paralleling the drillhouse and the ballcourt.¹²

The First Green Wave: Out onto the Heath

The spacial dimension of movement culture thus demonstrated a social structure, a pattern of configuration of social relations. This was also true at the end of the 18th century, when the context of these bodily exercises began to change in a fundamental way. The halls for the noble exercises lost their attraction and were taken down or transformed to serve new functions. In their place, new kinds of exercise grounds had been promoted since the 1770s by the “philanthropic” pedagogues: in the open air and out in nature. In 1790 in Berlin the first gymnastics grounds were opened at a secondary school, the Joachimsthalische Gymnasium. This happened at the same time as the French Revolution in Paris, and one might ask whether this coincidence was merely accidental. The philanthropic authors’ arguments for the new gymnastics grounds can be read as a political program: “nature” and “fresh air and light” as opposed to “walls”; “fresh air” and public space (*Öffentlichkeit*); “back to nature” as a revolutionary “movement” in a literal sense.¹³

It was in the beautiful spring of 1811 that on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons when there was no school, first a few pupils, and then more and more, started coming out with me into the woods and fields. Their numbers grew and we practiced youth games and simple exercises. We continued until the dog days, when a large number of boys met but soon dispersed again. A nucleus, however, remained throughout the winter, and it was these who opened the first gymnastics grounds on the *Hasenheide* in the spring of 1811.¹⁴

This is how Friedrich Ludwig Jahn described in 1816 the beginnings of *Turnen*, the special form of German gymnastics, in Berlin. This description also

11. Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, 3. ed. (Frankfurt/M., 1977). Norbert Elias/Eric Dunning. *Sport im Zivilisationsprozess* (Münster, 1983).

12. Wilhelm Hassenstein, “Zur Geschichte der Königlichen Gewehrfabrik in Spandau unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des 18. Jahrhunderts,” in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Technik und Industrie* 4 (1912): 27-62.

13. Johann Christoph Friedrich GutsMuths, *Gymnastik für die Jugend*, 2. ed. [Schneppenthal 1804], new ed. (Frankfurt/M. 1970), p. 78.

14. Friedrich Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Eiselen, *Die deutsche Turnkunst* [Berlin, 1816], reprint (Fellbach, 1967). p. III.

shows a close connection between the type of physical movement and its environment. "Beneath tall spruce trees" and surrounded by firs and brushwood, the gymnastics grounds on the heath were equipped with a cabin, horizontal bars, parallel bars, vaulting and climbing equipment and with a "rope tied to a tall spruce from whose yard boys were soon attempting the riskiest maneuvers."¹⁵ There was some spatial demarcation, but no strict isolation, because the woods outside the gymnastics grounds were used for wild games of fighting and group competitions. The primary emphasis of early German Turnen was not on formal exercises but rather on games such as "The Black Man," "The Chase" or "Robber and Wanderer." When Jahn started a new and larger gym on the eastern edge of the *Hasenheide* in 1812, formal gymnastics did assume some importance. But the idea of free and undisciplined games in the open air persisted. The open-air gym, in Jahn's view, should always be "on solid ground covered with short grass and planted with trees. . . . If trees are lacking then some must be planted." And "beyond the limits of the gymnastics area itself, each gym school should by rights have another large area where woods alternate with open fields, where groves, bushes, shrubs, thickets and open spaces are to be found along with dedicuous trees and brushwood."¹⁶

The change from hall to open air was not only an innocent pedagogical idea but also mirrored a relationship to society and class. Nor was this relationship unknown to Jahn's contemporaries. The *Turner* gymnasts practised only two traditional forms of exercises indoors: fencing and vaulting, both deriving from the noble exercises. For these activities they rented a hall during the winter. But they also stated that these hall exercises were "more distinguished and not as common" as those which took place in the open air;¹⁷ so it is clear that social criteria were involved.

The opposition between the hail and open air was not the only configurational aspect of the gymnastic ground and its social space. Another was the *Tie*, the meeting place. It consisted of benches around a large tree (the *Dingbaum*) marking the central space for assembling, relaxing and socializing.¹⁸ It was here that Jahn held his famous speeches which were later held up as evidence that he was a political demagogue. It was also a place for singing, since songs of liberation (from French domination) played an important role in forming the democratic and national-revolutionary consciousness of the young gymnasts. There was, then, an overlapping of the space of physical culture and that of political culture. A comparable conflation of the physical and the political was

15. Hans Ferdinand Massmann, "Die Turnplätze in der Hasenheide bei Berlin," in *Deutsche Turnzeitung* 1859, as quoted by Gerd Steins, *Die Berliner Hasenheide. Ihre Turnplätze von 1811 bis 1934* (Berlin, 1978), p. 17. See also Gerd Steins, *Wo das Turnen erfunden wurde . . . Friedrich Ludwig Jahn und die 175 jährige Geschichte der Hasenheide* (Berlin, 1987).

16. Jahn and Eiselen, *Deutsche Turnkunst*, pp. 188, 169.

17. Report of Bernhardt 1818, quoted by Steins, *Berliner*, p. 27. See also Johann Jakob Wilhelm Bornemann, *Lehrbuch der von Friedrich Ludwig Jahn unter dem Namen der Turnkunst wiederweckten Gymnastik* (Berlin, 1814), reprint (Münster, 1981), pp. 48, 64, 83.

18. Jahn and Eiselen, *Deutsche Turnkunst*, pp. 229–30.

achieved by the famous wander tours (*Turnfahrten*), which included physical movements and travel through landscapes and towns as well as marching and singing as a form of political demonstration.¹⁹

A third element characterizing this new type of gymnastics ground was the duality of the *Laufbahn* and the *Schlängellauf* of the racing track and the labyrinth, of the straight line and the curved line. The modern running race, measured in seconds and requiring a straight track or a standardized oval stadium track, had developed from two independent sources: English “pedestrianism” and the French and German “philanthropic” gymnastics.²⁰ The historical success of this kind of racing has seduced historians (myself included) into overlooking the other aspect of gymnastic running culture, namely the *Turner* labyrinth. From the beginning the Berlin gymnasts experimented with what they called the *Schlangenlauf* (snake course), the *Schlängellauf* (twisting course) and the *Schneckenlauf* (snail course), forms of collective running in curved configurations, which also included rhythmic and dancelike steps. Soon they discovered the labyrinth, a prehistorical dancing venue, which fit this movement pattern, and two of Jahn’s closest disciples published books about the *Wunderkreis* (miracle circle).²¹ They now built labyrinths on their gymnastics grounds, as is evident from maps of Berlin (1817) and Breslau (1859).

Once again spatial shape mirrored one aspect of the culture of the body. The curved lines of the *Schlängellauf* and *Wunderlauf* were not suited to races in which time was measured by a stopwatch. They served instead other possibilities associated with running: collective movement, disciplining the body, rhythm, aesthetics, and laughter.²² Running in formation, running backwards, running sideways, running with loads, running in time, etc.—such forms of movement were compatible with the labyrinthine environment. But they were not compatible with the modern culture of racing which requires unilinear movement in a straight-ahead direction, with “progress” or a “career,” with results measured in temporal units. And this is why the labyrinths disappeared from the gymnastics grounds during the second half of the 19th century.

Trees, *Tie* and labyrinth on the *Hasenheide* in Berlin made the gymnastics ground of the early *Turn* movement an extraordinary model of public space intended for physical culture. It was both synchronous and nonsynchronous in its relation to modernity, subversive and oppositional as Ernst Bloch has used these terms.

19. E.T.A. Hoffmann, *Der deutsche Bund gegen Napoleon und die Jahnsche Untersuchung* (1920), quoted by Horst Ueberhorst, *Zurück zu Jahn? Gab es kein besseres Vorwärts?* (Bochum, 1969, p. 88. See also Bornemann, *Lehrbuch*, pp. 100–101.

20. Henning Eichberg, *Leistung, Spannung, Geschwindigkeit. Sport und Tanz im gesellschaftlichen Wandel des 18./19. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 49–60. Hajo Bernett, *Leichtathletik im geschichtlichen Wandel* (Schorndorf, 1987).

21. Ernest Eiselen, *Der Wunderkreis* (Berlin, 1829); Hans Ferdinand Massmann, *Wunderkreis und Irrgarten. Für Turnplätze und Gartenanlagen* (Quedlinburg, 1844). See also Karl Planck, *Fusslümmelei* (Stuttgart, 1898), reprint with commentary (Münster, 1982), pp. 53, 58–61; Steins, *Berliner*, p. 43, 50.

22. Henning Eichberg, “The Labyrinth: The Earliest Nordic ‘Sports Ground’?” in *Scandinavian Journal of Sports Sciences* (forthcoming).

The compatibility of the “back to nature” gymnastics movement with modernity becomes clear as soon as we compare it with other changes in the spatial character of exercises. One example is the relationship between movement and water. At the end of the 18th century, some of the “philanthropic” teachers began to promote swimming. A corporation of professional salt-boilers from Halle, practicing swimming as part of their guild tradition, became active in teaching swimming in Prussia.²³ Among other projects, they founded a swimming school in Berlin which eventually became the first German swimming club called the *Tichysche Frösche*, founded in 1811. The *Turn* gymnasts, too, did their swimming at this site. And in 1817 General Ernst von Pfuel founded a swimming school for the army in Berlin. Some years later, rowing and sailing became sports practiced in and around Berlin. The *Tavener Gesellschaft* on the Spree River, founded in 1835, was one of the first sailing clubs in Germany.

The history of gardens illustrates in its own way the same genesis of “naturalist” modernity. From about 1720 the English garden style, featuring “naturalness,” had created an alternative model in response to the dominant French geometric style. Instead of geometric beds and straight paths, axial lines and symmetry, there developed a garden pattern based on curved lines, a form of “as-if” nature. From the 1770s this style spread in Germany as well, at first within the context of aristocratic culture. In 1787, for example, Friedrich Wilhelm II ordered that his French-style garden at the castle of Charlottenburg be changed to the new English style. Public parks were laid out in Treptow in 1802 and in Friedrichshain in 1840. Peter Joseph Lenné, in particular, developed this model further in the direction of a landscaped people’s garden. In 1822 he founded a “Society for the Advancement of Horticulture in the Royal Prussian States,” to which belonged the Prussian reformers Stein and Hardenberg, Alexander von Humboldt and also the nationalists Jahn and Arndt.²⁴

“Our time seems to be characterized by a great, unprecedented and continuing revolution concerning gardens,” a book on the theory of horticulture stated in 1785.²⁵ When the great political revolution began in Paris four years later, the “revolutionary” sensibility affecting body culture and its spatial environment was already at work.

The Restoration of Hall Exercises

The flight into nature was not, however, pursued by the German gymnastics movement during the 19th century. *Turnen* turned back to hall exercise.²⁶

23. Gustav Putzke, “Von der ‘Schwimmhütte’ zum Millionebad. 125 Jahre deutscher Schwimmsport in Berlin,” *Zeitschrift des Vereins für die Geschichte Berlins* (1936): 99-101; Helmut Hammer, Werner Jähmig, “Die Halloren und ihr Einfluss auf die Ausbreitung des Schwimmsports in Deutschland,” in *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität* (Halle-Wittenberg) [Ges.-wiss. R. 10] (1961), pp. 1253-62.

24. Gerd Dämel, *Über die Landesverschönerung* (Geisenheim, 1961); Alfred Hoffman, *Der Landschaftsgarten* [Geschichte der deutschen Gartenkunst. 3] (Hamburg 1963); Gerhard Hinz, *Peter Joseph Lenné. Landschaftsgestalter und Städteplaner* (Göttingen, 1977); Hampf-Heinrich and Peschken, *Stadt Grün*.

25. C.C.L. Hirschfeldt, *Theorie der Gartenkunst*, vol. 5 (Leipzig, 1795), p. VIII.

26. Henriette Heiny, “Die Turnhalle, eine Sonderform der Architektur des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Kölner Beiträge zur Sportwissenschaften* 3 (1974): 74-94; Franz-Joachim Verspohl, *Stadionbauten von der Antike bis Zur Gegenwart* (Giessen, 1976), pp. 134-39; Gasch, *Handbuch*.

This change is usually explained by referring to the persecution of the gymnastics movement—including accusations that it was democratic, national-revolutionary, and subversive—by the Prussian government and the Metternich system in Germany after 1819. Therefore, it is said, the gymnasts withdrew into the halls in order to survive. But internal dynamics within the *Turner* movement were also working in this direction, Ernst Eiselen, a close collaborator of Jahn, had always thought of gymnastics as a kind of military drill. In 1825 he opened a fencing and vaulting hall in the *Krausenstrasse* and other gymnastics institutes later on. After 1842, when the prohibition on *Turnen* was lifted in Prussia, the reborn gymnastics societies did not move out into the open air again but rather established themselves in halls, sheds and barns. The first hall of a certain gymnastics club in Frankfurt/Main built in 1846 marked the beginning of a new generation of architecture. In 1880, 150 clubs in Germany had their own halls, whereas by 1890 the figure was 262 and in 1913 about 1,000. In Berlin, however, these halls were not as common as elsewhere on account of high real estate prices.

In Berlin, the dominant model was the school gymnastics hall. The first prototype was erected in Darmstadt in 1851-52 after a plan by Adolf Spiess, who later became the leading authority on Prussian drill gymnastics. The school gymnastic halls were often divided into smaller units, so that each school class could perform its exercises separately, undisturbed and under effective control.

A third type of communal gymnastics hall was constructed beginning in the 1860s. Political administrators had discovered physical culture as an important field of social and hygienic “reform” and thus combined it with civic images presented in a historical style along with patriotic embellishments. The gymnastic hall in the *Prinzenstrasse* with its mixture of Romanic, Gothic and Renaissance elements was a monumental example of this style.

The communal gymnastics hall had been the focal point of the so-called “Berlin gymnastics hall dispute” of 1860–62. Liberal *Turner*—represented by Ferdinand Augerstein, the chairman of the Berlin *Turn* Council—demanded a continuation of Jahn’s principles including open air gymnastics, games, hiking trips and public gymnastics demonstrations. The Prussian state, for its part, was interested in the more military gymnastics drill of the Swedish (Ling) type and that of Adolf Spiess, which was to be practiced in the context of the school gymnastics hall. The liberal gymnasts succeeded in erecting the gymnastics hall in the *Prinzenstrasse*, but this was a success within the context of the restorative hall culture. Otherwise, from the 1860s, the school gymnastics hall became the dominant model.

The spatial dimension of physical culture was apparent both on a conscious level, where the dispute occurred, and on that unconscious level where the restoration of the hall configuration was taking place. Once again, transformations of space and transformations of the culture of physical movement were closely interrelated. And, once again, the development of gymnastics facilities in Berlin was accompanied by changes in other fields, especially swimming, commercial sport and parks.

The first swimming hall was built in Berlin in 1855 as part of a wash-house. The model was taken from English social reform, and the motivation was to promote hygiene among the "lower classes." Nevertheless, the new architecture of bath-halls, with their divisions by sex and class, became part of the "restorative configuration."

At the same time, both sport (after the English model) and the culture of the circus produced a new generation of hall constructions. In 1850 the circus at Friedrichstrasse 141 was built, and in 1855 the *Otto'sche Zirkus*. Sports halls, as they were known from Madison Square Garden (1879) in New York, arose in different social contexts. The *Admiralpalast* featured saloons, baths and sport facilities for a more distinguished bourgeois public, while the Sportpalast of 1910 was frequented by a proletarian and petty bourgeois crowd.

Park planning was part of this "restorative" tendency. After 1860 the landscaped park gave way to a more spread-out decorative style with beds and fountains, miniature fences, ornamental hedges and miniature mountains. These axial and geometric layouts had no place for children's playgrounds, or they were pushed aside into gravel basins surrounded by thorny bushes.

The Second Green Wave: "A Revolution of the Body"

How times have changed! Intellectual Berlin, under the sway of "communal liberalism," showed little understanding for the Berlin of the body. It almost seemed as if every Prussian was going to receive a lifetime's quota of physical culture during his two years of military service. This most unnatural restriction of bodily freedom necessarily led to an arousal of the natural forces within the human being, to a revolution of the body against nonsensical and narrowminded town-planning. The storm swept in! Gymnasts, sportsmen, *Wandervögel*, and small gardenholders claimed their own living spaces within the big city.²⁷

The *Wandervögel* were a youth movement which started during the period 1899-1901 at a secondary school in Berlin-Steglitz and soon spread throughout Germany.²⁸ Their preference for being out in the open air, their cultural criticism, and their political and religious sensibilities had much in common with the contemporary neo-romantic Woodcraft movements in the United States and Great Britain.²⁹ They distanced themselves from the spatial environments of their parents, their schools, their city, and the gymnastics halls and practiced, in autonomous groups, an alternative lifestyle out in the woods and the countryside: hiking trips, camping, folk dances and games, swimming and singing.

Although the *Wandervögel* were and remained a small minority, they had an

21. Martin Wagner, "Freiflächenpolitik," *Das neue Berlin* (Berlin, 1929), no. 3, pp. 105-10.

28. Frank Fischer, *Wandern und Schauen* (Hartenstein, 1921); Walter Laqueur, *Die deutsche Jugendbewegung* (Köln, 1962); Hermann Bach, *Struktur und Funktion der Leibesübungen in den Jugendorganisationen vor 1914* (Schorndorf, 1974); Hermann Bach, "Spiel, Wettbewerb und Körperarbeit als Elemente einer Jugendkultur in der bündischen Jugend," *Stadion* 10 (1984): 183-225.

29. Heinz Reichling, *Ernest Thompson Seton und die Woodcraft Bewegung in England* (Bonn, 1937); David Prynne, "The Woodcraft Folk and the Labour Movement 1925-70," *The Journal of Contemporary History* 18 (1983): 79-95; John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society, British Youth Movements, 1883-1940* (London, 1977).

enormous influence on the youth culture of their time, including physical culture, and even on town planning, as Martin Wagner has suggested. Perceptive pedagogues and interested socialists, militarist officers and alarmed clergymen reacted quickly and appropriated the new forms of outdoor life for new organizations such as the boy scouts, religious groups, and socialist youth organizations. For all of these groups outdoor life, hiking, and field games were important activities. This was especially true for the socialist youth movement, organized in 1903-04, since several initiatives on behalf of physical culture and outdoor activities had already appeared in the context of the proletarian cultural organizations. These included the workers' gymnastics movement founded in 1893, the *Naturfreunde* (Friends of Nature), the workers tourists and hikers (1895), and the socialist cyclists' federation (1896).³⁰ The caretakers of the small gardens on the outskirts of Berlin (the *Schrebergärten*) belonged primarily to the proletarian milieu.

Proletarian nudism became the vanguard of this socialist culture and the most radical form of opposition to the culture of "bourgeois" clothing.³¹ Berlin was the center of a socialist nudism movement founded by the teacher Adolf Koch in 1923 as the *Gruppe freier Menschen* [Group of Free Human Beings], later the "Proleterian Life Reform and Free Body Culture Group" within the framework of the Union for the Health of the People [*Verband Volksgesundheit*]. The "Adolf Koch School for Body Culture" had more than 4,000 members in Berlin and was affiliated with such sexual reformers as Magnus Hirschfeld; it also presided over its own nudist grounds [*Gelände Waldsee und Stadtwald Selchow*]. Several other areas set aside for nudism and sports activities in Berlin included a tract east of the military training area at Wünsdorf. Nudism was on the program of the *Naturfreunde* youth group and the (communist-oriented) workers' sports organization *Fichte*. In addition to the proletarian life-reform movement there was a bourgeois wing which had a center in the Eden fruit-culture colony at Oranienburg.³²

Even the proletarian and subproletarian youth gangs of Berlin adopted some elements of the *Wandervögel* youth culture. From about 1916 they appeared as "wild gangs" [*wilde Cliquen*] in autonomous groups, wearing colored clothing and engaged in hiking, camping, singing and strenuous competitions out in the countryside.³³

The youth movement and the life-reform movement had a special impact on the young *Turner* gymnasts,³⁴ who rediscovered the outdoor life of the early period of Jahn's gymnastics movement. They began to criticize the halls as prisons of *Turnen* and preferred games, dancing, hiking tours and competitions

30. Ralf Beduhn, *Die Roten Radler* (Münster, 1982); Jochen Zimmer, ed., *Mits uns zieht die neue Zeit. Die Naturfreunde* (Köln, 1984); Dieter Kramer, *Der sanfte Tourismus* (Wien, 1983).

31. Giselher Spitzer, *Der deutsche Naturismus* (Ahrensburg, 1983); Giselher Spitzer, "Die Adolf-Koch-Bewegung," in *Arbeiterkultur und Arbeitersport* (Clausthal-Zellerfeld, 1985), pp. 77-104.

32. Ulrich Linse, ed., *Zurück o Mensch zur Mutter Erde. Landkommunen in Deutschland 1890-1933* (München, 1983).

33. Helmut Lessing and Manfred Liebel, *Wilde Cliquen* (Bensheim, 1981).

34. Jürgen Dieckert, *Die Turnerjugendbewegung* (Schorndorf, 1968); Henning Eichberg, "Jugendbewegung, Lebensreform und der ATB" (Melsungen, 1983). pp. 53-70.

out in nature. This resulted in certain pedagogical initiatives from “above,” on the part of Prussian *Turn* leaders, physicians, officers, professors and politicians bent on promoting games and establishing playgrounds—the so-called *Spielbewegung* [play movement].³⁵ In 1880 the *Turner* students had established their first field for ball games in the park of the Schönholz castle. In 1911 the gymnasts opened another playground, the *Eichkamp*. From this point on fields for children’s games, sports and gymnastics received high priority from communal authorities. In 1928 there were about thirty of these municipal sites.

The new “green movement” in gymnastics did not mean, however, that the gymnastics hall was relegated to disuse. But the architecture of the gymnastics houses began to experiment with new forms, opening the interior to the open air. This could be achieved by constructing open halls where one or more walls could be opened by means of doors or where there were no walls at all. An open hall of this kind was built in 1911 at the *Landesturnanstalt* in Spandau and in 1917 by the *Turnverein Jahn* in Neukölln. One could also build open-air facilities on the roof of a school or of a gymnastics hall, as at the Fontane School in Schöneberg in 1926.

The gymnastics movement produced these innovations not least as a response to the “menace” represented by the growing sports movement. Since the turn of the century English sport had been experiencing its breakthrough in Germany as a form of popular culture. Its popularity was ascribed at this time to its being an outdoors activity, “sport” being nearly synonymous with field sport or outdoor games.³⁶ Sport innovations of German origin were also related in a specific way to the experience of the landscape and the green “revolution of the body”: the relay race, started in 1896 by gymnasts, and the woods race, started in Berlin in 1900.³⁷ With its new facilities for the more formalized competitions, sport contributed to the new environment of body culture with cinder tracks (Berlin, 1907), sports grounds, and stadium architecture (Grunewald, 1912-13). The *Volkspark* model was developed during the 1920s to integrate sport and leisure activities and included the *Volkspark Jungfernheide* (1920), the *Volkspark Rehberge* (1927) and others.

As municipal surveyor of Berlin, Martin Wagner played an important role in this planning process. The basis for this planning, as he noted in 1928, were social and cultural movements such as the *Wandervögel*, small garden holders, gymnasts, sportsmen, working-class cyclists, *Naturfreunde* and nudists. Between 1921 and 1929 playgrounds and sports grounds expanded sixfold in area. One hundred and four kilometers of paths along lakes and waterways were designated as a protected area as well as large tracts for small gardens, woods, and other municipal free spaces. The *Strandbad Wannsee* was a particular example of this social reform policy. Whereas the construction of bath-halls had

35. Gerd Steins, ed., *Spielbewegung-Bewegungsspiel* (Berlin, 1982).

36. Philipp Heineken, *Die beliebtesten Rasenspiele. Eine Zusammenstellung der hauptsächlichsten englischen Our-Door Games zum Zwecke ihrer Einführung in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1893); Robert Hessen, *Der Sport* (Frankfurt/M., 1908), pp. 5-6, 83; Heinz Risse, *Soziologie des Sports* (Berlin, 1921), reprint (Münster, 1921), pp. 9, 25, 79-80.

37. Bennett, *Leichtathletik*, pp. 219-22, 230-32.

been the priority until 1900, now facilities for swimming and bathing in the open air took precedence.³⁸

Once again we may note a parallel between the cultural ecology of sport and the image of the body; for it was between the turn of the century and the 1920s that “sporty” bronzed skin came to be favored over the more “distinguished” paleness.

A New Colonizing of Space and Body

In 1928 the perceptive Martin Wagner had described the “revolution” of the body as the sensual dimension of politics. But the future did not turn out to be what he and the reform movements had imagined.

The most obvious differences occurred on the political level. In 1933 all of the socialist life-reform movements were prohibited and persecuted by the Nazi state. The bourgeois and right-wing movements were forced to dissolve “voluntarily” and their members were integrated into new state hierarchies. In the process the Nazi state appropriated the heritage of the youth, reform, and body culture movements and transformed them. The now forbidden nudist games of the Körperkulturschule Adolf Koch became the military nudism of the SS, while the hiking tours of the autonomous *Wandervögel* groups became uniformed youth marching in ranks. After 1945 the “green” tendencies of the 1920s did not reappear. A configurational change, comparable to the restoration after the first green wave after 1800, had taken place.

This transformation had an internal dynamic, as well, leading from sport as an outdoor activity to the establishing of sport monocultures. The stadium played an important role in this process. It had expanded as an architectural form during the “revolution of the body.”

In 1912-13 Berlin got its first stadium, built in the race-track area of Grunewald and constructed by the architect Otto March,³⁹ the idea for which had come from the Olympic Stadium in Athens (1896). Later the American model came to dominate. The number of stadiums in German towns increased from 10 in 1920 to more than 125 in 1929. Technical innovations included the use of iron-and-concrete construction in the stadium of the Charlottenburg sports club in 1930. Over time the “liberating” and “natural” character of sports took the form of a new spatial colonization.

The *Reichssportfeld* in Berlin which was built for the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games represented in this sense both a break with the past and continuity. Werner March, the architect (and son of Otto March), had designed the sports facilities of the Deutsche Hochschule für Leibesübungen [German College of Physical Culture] in Berlin in 1921. Now he was ordered to rebuild his father’s stadium, but the megalomania of the Nazi state inflated its dimensions, even though plans for half a million spectators had to be reduced to a more modest

38. Johannes Kusche, *Verfall und Wiederaufbau der deutschen Badewesens* (Berlin, 1929); Ludovica Scarpa, “L’impianto balneare di Wannsee a Berlino,” *Spaziosport* 2:2 (1983): 77–81.

39. Werner March, ed., *Otto March, 1845-1912. Ein schöpferischer Berliner Architekt an der Jahrhundertwende* (Tübingen, 1972).

hundred thousand. The cost of the project ballooned from 2.5 million to 36 million Reichsmarks. The Olympic Stadium became part of a large sports park, including facilities for hockey, tennis, swimming and riding, huge parking lots and space for Nazi-fascist rituals: the *Dietrich-Eckart-Thingstätte* (today the *Waldbühne*), the *Maifeld* and the *Langemarck-Halle*.⁴⁰

The use of sports grounds for paramilitary political displays was not an innovation of the Nazi state. In the 1920s the mass movements of the right as well as of the left had used sports grounds for political theater and parades.⁴¹ The new aspect of Nazi-fascist ritual was in the relationship between the body language of straight lines of uniformed men and the specific form of a non-dialogical public sphere [*Öffentlichkeit*]. The fascist public sphere assumed an historical position between the earlier bourgeois public sphere and the later media-industrial public sphere.⁴² In this sense it is not an accident that the first live transmission of a television picture occurred in the Berlin Olympic Stadium in 1936.⁴³

Analysis of the relationship between body, space, and the public sphere requires that we investigate the importance of the straight line and the right angle for Nazi body culture. The Nazi-fascist body model represented a triumph of the straight line and of right-angular discipline, of movement in *zackig* [jagged] and *straff* [taut, rigid] patterns. It is not possible here to go into the details of this body history⁴⁴ and its connections with the straight lines of modernity, with specific forms of Prussian discipline (noted by Heinrich Heine⁴⁵), with military traditions, etc. Here it will only be suggested that this phenomenon—as in the earlier phases of sport history—was linked to the social ecology of sports. The *zackig* type of body discipline, and its rectangular spatial context, was not an invention of the 1933-45 period, nor did it disappear after 1945.

The sports facilities of the 1920s already demonstrated the dominance of the straight line and the right angle. “The most appropriate shape for a gymnastics field is the rectangle.” “In pools and swim-halls, where space must be saved, the rectangular pool form is most suitable.” “Gym hall: experience has shown that the rectangular form is the most appropriate for practicing bodily exercises.” “Playgrounds should be rectangular because this affords the best utilization of space.”⁴⁶ In the functionalist ideology of Le Corbusier this “pragmatic” pattern

40. Werner March, “Kunst und Technik im Stadionbau,” *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung* 53 (1933): 497–506; Werner March, *Bauwerk Reichssportfeld* (Berlin, 1936).

41. Henning Eichberg, et al., *Massenspiele. NS-Thingspiel, Arbeiterweihespiel und olympisches Zeremonielle* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1977).

42. “Perspectives on the Fascist Public Sphere” in *New German Critique* 4 (1977), no. II; Henning Eichberg, “Lebenswelten und Alltagswissen,” in *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, vol. 5: 1918-1945 (Münster, 1989).

43. Josef Hackforth, *Sport im Fernsehen* (Münster, 1975).

44. Hints are to be found—following Wilhelm Reich: in Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, vol. 1-2, new ed. (Reinbek, 1980); John Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin 1984); with other historical materials: Georges Vigarello, *Le corps redressé*. (Paris 1978).

45. Heinrich Heine, *Deutschland, Ein Wintermärchen* (1844). Caput III.

46. Gasch, *Handbuch*, 2: 395, 236, 409, 288.

acquired a kind of religious superstructure. But its roots are to be found more deeply embedded in the body dynamics of modernity.⁴⁷

In addition to the *Reichssportfeld* two kinds of sports space displayed the new colonization: the sports hall and the motor highway. The latter had its origin in the monofunctionality of motor sports. The original model for the German *Autobahn*, and especially as it developed after 1933, was a racing track in Berlin, the Automobil- und Übungsstrasse AVUS, which had been opened in 1921.⁴⁸ Following the example of motor-sport facilities in England, i.e., the Brooklands course (1907), it combined the features which later became standard for the *Autobahn* system: monofunctionality of motorized traffic, artificial rectification of the landscape, the dominance of speed and forward movement, and the elimination of all slow movement. The promotion of motor sport was one of the first programmatic statements of the Nazi government (in February 1933), and the *Autobahn* soon became a trademark of the regime. Its further development on an ever larger scale culminated after 1945.

From about 1930 the colonization of sports space took the form of the sports hall. This was facilitated by functionalist doctrine, which promoted the “dictatorship” of the straight line and rectangular sport architecture.⁴⁹ After 1933 the Nazi state could fulfill this prescription, although sometimes in styles which differed from what had originally been intended. This, too, continued through the 1950s and 1960s. In 1975 there were about 200 sports grounds, 500 gymnastics and sports halls, 50 swimming halls and bathing venues in West Berlin. But now the spatial discipline associated with sport was no longer accepted without resistance.

A Third Green Wave? The Neue Unübersichtlichkeit

Since the 1970s it seems that the colonization of sports space has entered a period of crisis. Joggers in the streets have made visible a new practical relationship between environment and body, while reflections on this behavioral pattern have appeared much later.⁵⁰ At the same time the *Autobahn* as a manifestation of the sportive race forward was losing its power to fascinate and facing increasing ecological criticism.⁵¹ The other sportive environmental shape, container architecture, was also subjected to criticism and had to offer its own defensive literature to justify its existence.⁵² Opposition to the rectangular

47. Karl Lesemann, *Sanieren und Herrschen* (Giessen, 1982); Hans Bischlager, *Umweltwahrnehmung und Körpererfahrung* (Frankfurt/M., 1984); Hans Bischlager, *Die Auto-Mensch* (Würzburg, 1986).

48. Rainer Stammer, ed., *Reichsautobahn* (Marburg, 1982).

49. Emanuel Josef Mangold, ed., *Bauten der Volkserziehung und Volksgesundheit* (Berlin-Charlottenburg, 1930); Ludwig Hilberseimer, *Hallenbauten. Stadt- und Festhallen, Turn- und Sporthallen Ausstellungshallen, Ausstellungsanlagen* (Leipzig, 1931).

50. Ronald Lutz, *Laufen und Läuferleben* [unpublished doctoral dissertation] (Frankfurt/M., 1988); Hans-Jürgen Schulke, ed., *Alltagslauf als Aufbruch* (Wuppertal, 1988).

51. Bürgerinitiative Westtangente, ed., *Stadtautobahnen-ein Schwarzbuch zur Verkehrsplanung* (Berlin, 1976).

52. Jürgen Dieckert, “Sport und Umwelt-ein Problemaufriss,” *Sport, Lehren und Lernen* (Schorndorf, 1977), pp. 189-93; Jürgen Koch, “Umorientierung im Spiel- und Sportstättenbau,” *Sportpädagogik* no. 6 (1979); 26-32. Elisabeth Metz, *Die Verwendbarkeit der tageslichtlosen Sporthalle im schulischen Bereich* (Löwenich, '975).

disciplining of sports and its parcelling out of space became part of a new ecological criticism of sport which originated, in particular, with young *Turner* and athletes in the early 1970s.⁵³ But this critical opposition seems to have been no more than an intellectual superstructure on top of a development within the culture of the body which itself originated in what is called the “alternative movement culture.”⁵⁴

Today it is difficult to give a detailed analytical account of this most recent historical process as it is occurring in Berlin or elsewhere in Germany. A register describing the new commercial market for body culture in Berlin is being prepared,⁵⁵ but the social ecological analysis has only just begun.

The commercial “body market” and the “alternative movement culture” have also changed the situation for traditional sport. This became evident in Berlin in 1987 when the German Sports Federation held a large conference titled “Human Beings in Sport 2000.” Critical speakers from the Federal Institute for Sports Sciences, the student sports federation, sports youth groups, the gymnastics movement, and architects painted a rather unfavorable picture of what had resulted from several decades of sports facilities expansion: purely quantitative planning criteria, isolated monocultures, functionalist container architecture, and a lack of ecological and aesthetic sensitivity.⁵⁶

The historical process which has produced the sports movement and its facilities has thus resulted in a paradox. What has been planned as the straight line of the race forward—in sport as well as in modern culture in a more general sense—has become a new maze, opening questions about the future of the body and spatiality. The curvilinear labyrinth from the gymnastics grounds of 1820 has disappeared, but the rationality of the right angle has not provided the solution which Le Corbusier imagined. Today the last (?) defenders of “modern rationality” deplore the *Neue Unübersichtlichkeit*, the new resistance of space to being surveyed.⁵⁷ This *Unübersichtlichkeit*, as sport history shows, has its real basis in the cultural ecology of the body. For the sports historian, however, this is a challenge, since the ecology of body culture consists of more than the straight lines of the race forward. These changing patterns within the culture of sport illustrate in a fascinating—and sometimes terrifying—way where our society is “moving.”

53. Dieter Mützelburg, ed., *Sport, Bewegung und Ökologie* (Bremen, 1984); Wolfgang Erz, et al., *Sport und Naturschutz im Konflikt* (Bonn, 1985); Michael Klein, ed., *Sport, Umwelt und sozialer Raum* (Clausthal-Zellerfeld, 1985); Eichberg, *Leistungsräume*.

54. Klaus Moegling, *Alternative Bewegungskultur* (Frankfurt/M., 1988).

55. Gerhard Harder at the Freie Universität Berlin. This register is connected to similar research in Hamburg: see Knut Dietrich, *Ergebnisse der Grundausschätzung zum privatwirtschaftlichen Sportangebot der Stadt* (Hamburg 1985) [manuscript].

56. Karlheinz Gieselher et al., eds., *Menschen im Sport 2000. Dokumentation des Kongresses* (Schorndorf, 1988), pp. 99-123, 197-214; Hartmut Becker, ed., *Menschen im Sport 2000. Statements zum Kongress* (Frankfurt/M., 1988), pp. 64-81

57. Jürgen Habermas, *Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit* (Frankfurt/M., 1985).