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AHR Conversation
Walls, Borders, and Boundaries in World History

PARTICIPANTS:

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Since 2006, the *AHR* has published nine "Conversations," each on a subject of interest to a wide range of historians.[1] For each the process has been the same: the Editor convenes a group of scholars with an interest in the topic, who, via e-mail over the course of several months, conduct a conversation, which is then lightly edited and footnoted, finally appearing (with one exception) in the December issue. The goal has been to provide readers with a wide-ranging consideration of a topic at a high level of expertise, in which the participants are recruited across several fields and periods. It is the sort of publishing project that this journal is uniquely positioned to undertake.

This year's topic, "Walls, Borders, and Boundaries in World History," has an obvious contemporary relevance, most dramatically in the calls to "Build That Wall" that were a shrill trope in the recent U.S. presidential campaign. Beyond this, the specter of building walls, defending borders, and reasserting boundaries haunts political life in many parts of the world, from the wall separating Israel and the Palestinian territories; to the potential redrawing of the boundaries of several nation-states, as regions—Kurdistan in Afghanistan, Catalonia in Spain—attempt to assert their independence; to the oft-heard pleas for borders to be policed or even closed in the face of what seems to be a worldwide refugee crisis. Contemporary public discourse on this subject is usually cast in moral terms: walls are seen as either good or bad; boundaries and borders are viewed either as regrettable obstacles to the virtues of openness and cosmopolitanism

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[1] "On Transnational History" (December 2006); "Religious Identities and Violence" (December 2007); "Environmental Historians and Environmental Crisis" (December 2008); "Historians and the Study of Material Culture" (December 2009); "Historical Perspectives on the Circulation of Information" (December 2011); "The Historical Study of Emotions" (December 2012); "How Size Matters: The Question of Scale in History" (December 2013); "Explaining Historical Change; or, The Lost History of Causes" (October 2015); "History after the End of History: Reconceptualizing the Twentieth Century" (December 2016).

or as necessary to keep out things and people deemed undesirable. Our conversation will certainly attend to the contemporary aspects of our topic, but we want to add a historical perspective to thinking about "walls, borders, and boundaries," while also remaining alert to the methodological and theoretical problems encountered in attempting to make sense of the many different phenomena and experiences evoked by our topic.

The participants in this conversation are certainly up to the task, bringing a wide range of scholarly expertise to our discussion. Suzanne Conklin Akbari is Professor of English and Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto; among other subjects, she has written on European representations of Islam and the Orient. Tamar Herzog, the Monroe Gutman Professor of Latin American Affairs at Harvard University, works on Iberian societies, and most recently on the topic of frontiers in Portuguese and Spanish America. Daniel Jütte is Associate Professor of History at New York History; his interests lie in cultural history, urban history, material culture, the history of knowledge and science, and Jewish history. Carl Nightingale, Professor of Urban History and Global History at the University at Buffalo, State University of New York, has written on segregation as a global phenomenon. The research of Bill Rankin, Assistant Professor of History at Yale University, focuses on the relationship between science and space, with a special interest in mapping. Keren Weitzberg is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies and the Department of History at University College London; she is a specialist in East African history, and especially Kenya and the Kenyan/Somali borderlands. This year's *AHR* Conversation was moderated by Rob Schneider, *AHR* Editor from 2005 to 2015 and Interim Editor in 2016–2017.

AHR **Editor:** Our topic, to risk making something of a pun, could very well invite a boundless discussion, for what historical experience or topic has nothing to do with "walls, borders, and boundaries"? Indeed, in our pre-Conversation conversation, we acknowledged the potentially limitless dimensions of this subject: it ranges from a consideration of imperial and national borders to the close-quarter thresholds, walls, and separations that have configured family life, relations between men and women, and intimate spaces in different cultures. And it takes us into virtually every imaginable historical epoch, from wall-building as a feature of the earliest human settlements to the current wall-building—or the threat of it—as a feature of political life around the world. The present-day topicality of our subject is obvious, perhaps painfully so; and it would be disingenuous—and pointless—not to acknowledge its contemporary relevance. But while we will surely find ourselves drawn to thinking about the concerns and realities of our own time, we must be mindful of the historical dimensions of our subject and make sure to attend to wall-building, border-policing, and boundary-making in other times and places. It is something of a cliché, but one, alas, that historians cannot fail to embrace: if we want to hope to contribute something to public awareness, it will be in providing a historical context for the concerns and realities of the present.

So in order to begin our conversation, I would like to ask you, first, what brings you to an interest in "walls, borders, and boundaries," and second—to evoke what

I've just said—in what ways do you think that this topic is of importance at this moment?

Carl: Cities are my point of departure in the world history of walls, borders, and boundaries. In my 2012 book *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities*, I argued that Western expansion, like earlier forms of large-scale imperialism, depended on the near-global production of divided urban spaces, and, as part of that, the multiplication and diversification of boundaries between urban zones, most notably defined in terms of color and race.[2] These boundaries were designed to stop movement of various kinds, but were more typically focused on boundaries of settlement, that is, residence. Even more consistently, they were devices that could regulate colonizers' and colonized peoples' access to the opportunities for power, wealth, safety, and relatively satisfying livelihoods that cities otherwise have enormous potential to offer their residents. As such, they were critical tools for the global extension of imperial power.

Yet urban boundary-setting also required enormous investments of power. And for all the potential they offered to imperial officials eager to normalize the extent of that power—or at the very least to win the argument that such boundaries were fundamentally necessary to urban life—their position in space was always contested, permeable, and in near-constant motion. Urban boundaries were mobile in other ways, too. The practices involved in boundary-setting were multifarious, as were combinations of practices. These practices traveled the world with officials, urban reformers, and real estate professionals of many types, as well as with other corporate actors and settlers. Wherever they went, they faced very diverse forces of resistance as well as a variety of natural landscapes that forced adaptations and wholesale reinventions of practices. In this way, urban segregation spread and diversified at the same time. The geographical scope of urban boundaries and zones also varied. Smaller-scale efforts were connected to larger ones: divisions of households could influence divisions of public spaces and neighborhoods and boundaries between cities and the countryside. Equally, urban segregation could serve as a model for efforts to slow movement across national boundaries and between continents. Practices primarily articulated in terms of class and gender segregation, such as those developed in London or Paris, were particularly important for the spread of race segregation, and in turn, race segregation in the colonies helped cement class divisions in the postcolonial world.[3] The culmination of the story involves a comparative and connected history of what I call "archsegregationism" in the U.S. and South Africa. The twisted genius of American segregationism was to leverage the racialized economic logic of a settler-colonial land market to create cities riven by racial boundaries and borders well-known by all city-dwellers, but without the use of explicitly racial segregation laws, as in South Africa (the U.S. Supreme Court did away with these in 1917), and (largely) without walls, as in the more recent forms of segregation in Israel-Palestine.[4]

A byproduct of my research on segregation was another, bigger, question: What do urban boundaries and borders, and the walls that often define them, mean for urban history more generally, for global history, and for global theory, so heavily inter-

[2] Carl H. Nightingale, *Segregation: A Global History of Divided Cities* (Chicago, 2012).
[3] Ibid., Introduction.
[4] Ibid., chaps. 9–11, 387–402, 411–420.

laced as it is with urban theory? In some sense this question isn't new, for walls, borders, and boundaries figure prominently in the historiography of cities, even to the point of playing an ontological role. When scholars of the Urban History Group met (perhaps fittingly) in the *outskirts* of London in April 2017 to contemplate the conference theme "Boundaries and Jurisdictions: Defining the Urban," they were alluding to an assumption that goes back millennia, exemplified most famously by ancient Chinese writers' use of a character for "city" that is identical to that for "wall." Medieval Europeans did a similar thing with the Germanic "borc/burg," fortified place, which, as *bourg* or borough, became the equivalent of a town or a city. From there they stretched it into *phalburg*, *forsborc*, and *faubourg* for "false cities" just outside the city walls; and then abstracted it into concepts like burgher, bourgeoisie, and *Bürgertum*, all of which linked city walls to city dwellers and citizenship itself.

Against the backdrop of a moment when urban theorists have reopened the question of "cityness," the equation of walls and cities deserves a fresh look. The traditional equation of walls and cities is only a metonym—the equation of a part, the walls that surround a city, with the whole, the city itself. But in fact, cities are nothing if they are not nearly completely *made up* of walls—and other hard and semi-hard surfaces that do at least some of the same work, like floors, roofs, pavements, fences, culverts, doors, windows, and the like. Such hard surfaces *are* the urban built environment, or at least the various outer and inner boundaries and borders of the urban spaces in which people and other urban things exist and act. "Producing urban space" means, to a great extent, building walls and other hard surfaces. That begs a big question for urban historians, especially those writing urban history on a large scale: Do people who build walls always mean them solely as boundaries or borders? Or more appositely: Why is it that people have built such a gigantic multitude of walls?

Tamar: My experience researching the emergence and consolidation of borders between Spain and Portugal in both Europe and the Americas from the Middle Ages to (almost) the present has taught me that walls, borders, and boundaries can be viewed as attempts to stop movement, conversion, and change.[5] Like Robert Frost in his "Mending Wall," I have come to think that while some individuals and groups may believe that good fences make good neighbors, many others view things differently and judge indeterminacy and constant evolution as a good thing. As a historian and a jurist I ask, who are the individuals and groups that promote each vision, and what means do they use to advance their goals? I also seek to understand what taking one position or the other tells us about our communities and our expectation of what order and disorder are, and who should be charged with overseeing them.

My interest in the topic thus has very little to do with maps or the various scales in which divisions operate. Like Carl, I also believe that divisions can be meaningful in some situations but not others, and that they can involve material structures (such as walls) or be to some degree invisible. Drawn on a map, legally imagined, personally experienced, or the object of conversations and information-gathering, invisible boundaries can nevertheless be just as real. Because divisions can be abided by or contested, recognized or ignored, become relevant or lose their relevance depending on time, per-

[5] Tamar Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Cambridge Mass., 2015).

son, and place, the question we must ask ourselves is not whether they are present, but how people relate to them. It may be the jurist in me, but I wonder when divisions become normative. It is easy to argue that outside powers are responsible for them—much of the literature indeed identifies the makers of borders as outsiders and their construction as an imposition—but my own archival work has convinced me that this is not necessarily—or at least not always—the case. While walls, borders, and boundaries can be physical barriers, they are above all a tool. They require constant justification as well as guardianship, and their existence involves negotiations that are never bilateral but instead admit the presence of multiple voices that sometimes dialogue with one another but usually result in a cacophony. Despite allegations of fixture, these are highly mobile processes. The nature and importance of divisions change overtime, as some boundaries disappear while others are built, are displaced, or change their character. The question, always, is which divisions are relevant, to whom, in what way, when, and why. Because most societies never advocate a complete enclosure, it is also clear that some movement across divisions is considered "good." The question here is why this is the case. My hope is that historical research about walls, borders, and boundaries (and other types of divisions) might aid in their denaturalization. While there is nothing natural or artificial in making distinctions and in instituting separations, the fascinating question is how this is done, by whom, in what ways, and for which purpose.

Daniel: My interest in boundaries and borders emerged from my general interest in the dialectic of openness and closure. When I first I began to explore this subject, I was particularly interested in the material and social realities that underpinned the mechanics of inclusion and exclusion in premodern Christian-Jewish relations. I was surprised to observe how frequently liminal spaces (of Jewish houses, neighborhoods, etc.) were discussed in the sources: for instance, Christian authorities, secular and religious, were eager to regulate in great detail whether and when Jews would be allowed to look out their windows, appear at their doors, leave the ghetto gates or enter them. These issues were particularly delicate during Christian holidays or processions. At the same time, there is plenty of evidence that in more quotidian situations, domestic boundary spaces such as windows and doors facilitated or even enabled contact between Christians and Jews.

I think the case of Jewish-Christian relations leads into some more general questions about the social function of liminal spaces, and I am wondering whether in this context it would be possible to undertake transhistorical comparisons. (For instance, the social function of the porch in the American South comes to mind.)[6] Do liminal spaces share certain features and potentialities, across periods and societies? I am also interested in exploring how we as historians can connect with the work of neighboring disciplines, especially with anthropologists, who have devoted a great deal of attention to "the betwixt-and-between state of liminality" (the phrase is from Turner, but obviously I am thinking of van Gennep here as well).[7]

[6] Sue Bridwell Beckham, "The American Front Porch: Women's Liminal Space," in Marilyn Ferris Motz and Pat Browne, eds., *Making the American Home: Middle-Class Women and Domestic Material Culture, 1840–1940* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1988), 69–89.
[7] Victor Turner, "Passages, Margins, and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas," in Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1974), 231–271, here

To return briefly to my own trajectory, the observations that sparked my interest eventually turned into an article.[8] In the meantime, I published a more general study of liminality and thresholds in premodern Europe.[9] In this book, I explored how doors, gates, and related technologies of enclosure such as the key and the lock have historically shaped the way we perceive, navigate, and secure the domestic and urban spaces that surround us in our everyday lives. More broadly speaking, I probe how doors and gateways have functioned as sites and symbols of power, exclusion, and inclusion. One liminal space that has particularly intrigued me is city walls and gates, but perhaps I can say more about this later on.

Of course, there are not only spatial but also temporal boundaries. And I think it's particularly important to explore how we can transcend that one (academic) boundary that I think we all experience in our everyday academic life: the boundary between premodern and modern. In other words, it's not enough to look for parallels and analogies, drawn from the respective histories we study, but in fact we might want to think about long-term genealogies and the role of overarching historiographical master narratives. As Carl points out, walls have long been invoked to define the nature of urban communities—to the extent that, say, the medieval city is often imagined as a quintessentially walled community (ignoring the fact that some of the most flourishing premodern cities thrived not because of the protection afforded by their walls, but rather thanks to an institutionalized flexibility, a flexibility that accommodated one of the primary sources of urban growth in an age of high mortality: immigration).

I also concur with Tamar that the materiality of borders is only one aspect of their power (or supposed power) to separate, and that these physical properties are not necessarily a condition for the existence of a division. Indeed, leaving city walls aside, premodern urban space was an elaborate system of internal boundaries, many of which were invisible (I am thinking, for instance, of religious boundaries, such as the *eruv* of Jewish communities). Like Tamar, I find myself quite interested in the discourses—including the collective hopes and anxieties—that are projected onto boundaries, whether material or not. My own work on premodern urban space has shown me that boundaries were often bound up with utopian or religious notions, to the extent that, say, the design of city walls was sometimes guided by political or theological discourses rather than by mere practical considerations. I fully agree with Tamar that in addition to studying the actual construction and materiality of walls, it is often particularly instructive to explore the question of "how this is done, by whom, in what ways, and for which purpose."

Suzanne: My own position in this conversation on the topic of "Walls, Borders, and Boundaries in World History" harmonizes with several of the comments made so far, especially with regard to an engagement with cartography and the ways in which spatial logic translates into other forms of identity production—including but not limited

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232; Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (Chicago, 1960).

    [8] Daniel Jütte, "'They Shall Not Keep Their Doors or Windows Open': Urban Space and the Dynamics of Conflict and Contact in Premodern Jewish-Christian Relations," *European History Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2016): 209–237.

    [9] Daniel Jütte, *The Strait Gate: Thresholds and Power in Western History* (New Haven, Conn., 2015).

to premodern conceptions of race and ethnicity, understood as manifestations of a broader spectrum of bodily diversity. My position differs, however, in being situated specifically in the Middle Ages, including both Latin Christian Europe and the Mediterranean region, with particular attention to regions of cross-cultural contact such as the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. My second book, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450*, focuses particularly on the spatial logic that underlies both Western Christian views of Islam (as a religion devoted to the flesh rather than the soul, to the letter rather than the referent, to the alluring surface) and European conceptions of the Orient (as a geographical region dominated by the influence of the sun, with implications for bodily form as well as behavioral qualities in both man and animal).[10] In this work, borders and boundaries are essential features in defining the alterity of "Saracens," both in terms of religious identity and in terms of bodily diversity.

More recently, I've continued to focus on the role of space and place in the construction of identities, but with reference to medieval universal histories written between the fifth century and the fifteenth. To put it another way, the imaginative cartography that was fundamental to *Idols in the East* also underlies my current book project ("The Shape of Time"), but with an additional focus on the imaginative historiography that led medieval writers to define their place in time in highly formal ways. A forthcoming essay, for example, explores the ways that a late-twelfth-century map of Jerusalem both reflects the shape and symbolic logic of the medieval world map, or mappamundi, and also establishes a series of internal points of reference that gesture back toward the distant past of Incarnation and the immanent future of Apocalypse.[11] Another article in progress explores medieval conceptions of the future as seen in universal histories, showing how typological relations—often highly iterative, extending over multiple eras—served to knit together a series of moments in a single transhistorical point of repetition. The symbolic logic that underlies medieval concepts of periodization sheds a bright light on the shape of time as manifested at other historical moments, especially as viewed through the comparative lens of memorialization and monument-building.

My path into the specific topic of walls, borders, and boundaries comes by way of an interest in how medieval world maps and related diagrammatic forms (wind diagrams, charts of the elements, etc.) participate in the construction of a series of oppositions and symmetries that provide order to the world. Premodern conceptions of the Orient, I've argued, are only intelligible within such systems of thought, and I've extended that work to focus particularly on how medieval city maps of Jerusalem participate in that symbolic discourse, while also providing a sometimes quite detailed account of the lived environment of the cityscape. Medieval texts, both literary and historical, represent the city as at once a boundary marker and a living organism, with constant circulation of goods, currency, and people within its walls and through its carefully policed gates.

This medieval notion of the city and its place in the conceptual landscape has, I

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[10] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2009).

[11] Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Asa Simon Mittman, "Seeing Jerusalem: Schematic Views of the Holy City, 1100–1300," in Marilina Cesario and Hugh Magennis, eds., *Aspects of Knowledge: Preserving and Reinventing Traditions of Learning in the Middle Ages* (Manchester, forthcoming 2018).

think, a long afterlife. In this, I second Daniel's remark that "we might want to think about long-term genealogies and the role of overarching historiographical master narratives." A useful context for this might lie within the field of cultural geography, especially with reference to how the work of Foucault has informed the conception of territory. With regard to the question of "what brings you to an interest in 'walls, borders, and boundaries?,'" I would respond in two ways: the desire to participate in the construction of a more complete genealogy of how premodern cultures understood the border of the city wall, especially in contradistinction to the border of the frontier or property line, and attention to the interplay of the local and the global, the lived environment of the streetscape or neighborhood and the imagined scope of the abstract concept of the city, understood as a singular entity. Both of these concerns remain of vital interest today, in a range of contexts.

Keren: I came to this topic in an effort to understand the histories of a people who have both crossed and been crossed by borders. My first book, *We Do Not Have Borders: Greater Somalia and the Predicaments of Belonging in Kenya*, explores the reasons why Somalis, who have lived in Kenya for generations, are widely perceived to be not fully "native" to the country.[12] Somali history has often been explained through reference to the idea of the "arbitrary border."[13] That African borders are uniquely flawed and arbitrary constructs rests partially on an idealized view of the Western nation-state. (Is the frontier between Kenya and Somalia really any less "artificial" than that dividing the U.S. from Mexico?) The notion of the "arbitrary" border also assumes as its corollary the concept of the natural border, which risks naturalizing the idea that people are meant to live on fixed, ethnically homogeneous territorial homelands.[14] In contrast, I argue that long-prevailing practices in Northeast Africa enabled Somalis to challenge dominant definitions of indigenousness, envision supraterritorial alternatives to the Kenyan state, and, more recently, fit into a world characterized by the relatively easy movement of capital and goods across borders. Their histories reveal the importance of older forms of Islamic cosmopolitanism, kinship, and nomadic life, which came to coexist and compete with the modern territorial state.[15] My next project, tentatively entitled *Identity Crisis: A History of ID Cards, Passports, and Biometrics in Kenya*, will expand upon many of the central questions of my first book by exploring the technologies that both enable and block bodies from crossing borders. This study

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[12] Keren Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders: Greater Somalia and the Predicaments of Belonging in Kenya* (Athens, Ohio, 2017).

[13] For example, see H. A. Ibrahim, "Politics and Nationalism in North-East Africa, 1919–35," in A. Adu Boahen, ed., *General History of Africa*, vol. 7: *Africa under Colonial Domination*, *1880–1935*, Abridged Edition (Paris, 1985), 249–259; and David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder, Colo., 1987).

[14] For critiques of the concept of the "arbitrary" or "artificial" border, see Anatole Ayissi, "The Politics of Frozen State Borders in Postcolonial Africa," in Michel Ben Arrous and Lazare Ki-Zerbo, eds., *African Studies in Geography from Below* (Dakar, 2009), 132–159; Achille Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa," trans. Steven Rendall, *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 259–284; Mahmood Mamdani, "Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4 (2001): 651–664, here 653; and Keren Weitzberg, "Instead of Building a Big, Beautiful Wall, We Should Rethink Our Idea of Borders," *Washington Post*, August 11, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/08/11/instead-of-building-a-big-beautiful-wall-we-should-rethink-our-idea-of-borders/.

[15] Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, 3.

will examine the afterlives of colonial identification regimes, revealing how technologies crucial to the making of the modern citizen and consumer were built upon histories of exclusion and segregation.

Carl mentioned that walls and borders figure prominently in the historiography of the city and may even be intrinsic to the very idea of urban citizenship. Similarly, one could argue that territory is fundamental to the idea of the nation-state and to notions of national sovereignty and political membership.[16] My own work focuses on the nation-state (and the colonial state before it), which played a powerful role in determining who could enjoy freedom of movement and who did or did not "belong" to particular territories. Nevertheless, I very much concur with Tamar and others on this thread: boundary-making required constant negotiation and was rarely a *fait accompli*. Both state officials and subjects were complicit in the enforcement/transgression of borders, whose power did not derive solely from their materiality. From the international frontiers along the Kenya/Somalia/Ethiopia borderlands, to the systems of urban racial segregation in Nairobi, to the borders used to demarcate different clans and ethnic groups in Kenya, boundaries were never fixed or uncontested. They were constantly being amended, rethought, and transgressed.[17] Moreover, as recent literature on borderlands (as spaces of exchange, hybridity, and multiple sovereignties) suggests, political boundaries were often sites of interaction and means for state officials to channel as well as block mobility.[18]

I am personally interested not only in the construction of political and jurisdictional boundaries (and the discourses surrounding them), but also in the conceptualization of borderlessness (and the practices such ways of imagining engender). While I agree with Daniel's point about the need to examine the long-term genealogies of borders (especially as a means of breaking down the premodern/modern divide), one must also consider areas of the world where territorial and juridico-political boundaries have much shorter histories. This is something I am mindful of as an Africanist. To be clear, while mobility and circulation were key features of the precolonial past, Africa was not borderless prior to European rule. There were, for example, pre-

[16] For more on the genealogy of territory, see Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke, 2007); and Stuart Elden, *The Birth of Territory* (Chicago, 2013).

[17] I expand upon these ideas in *We Do Not Have Borders* and Keren Weitzberg, "The Unaccountable Census: Colonial Enumeration and Its Implications for the Somali People of Kenya," *Journal of African History* 56, no. 3 (2015): 409–428.

[18] Gloria E. Anzaldúa is widely credited with popularizing the term "borderlands," which she describes as a site of hybridity in her groundbreaking book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco, 1987). For examples of work that address hybridity at the borderlands of nation-states, see Patrick Gun Cuninghame, "Hybridity, Transnationalism, and Identity in the US-Mexican Borderlands," in Keri E. Iyall Smith and Patricia Leavy, eds., *Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical Examinations* (Leiden, 2008), 13–40; and Alina Sajed, "Postcolonial Strangers in a Cosmopolitan World: Hybridity and Citizenship in the Franco-Maghrebian Borderland," *Citizenship Studies* 14, no. 4 (2010): 363–380. For recent work on Africa that challenges the conception of the border as simply a barrier, see Dereje Feyissa and Markus Virgil Hoehne, eds., *Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa* (Woodbridge, UK, 2010); and Darshan Vigneswaran and Joel Quirk, eds., *Mobility Makes States: Migration and Power in Africa* (Philadelphia, 2015). A number of historians have also explored the tensions within colonial migrant labor systems and the conflicting desire of state officials to both enable African labor mobility and reinforce racial segregation. See, for example, Frederick Cooper, ed., *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital and the State in Urban Africa* (London, 1983); Carina E. Ray, "'The White Wife Problem': Sex, Race and the Contested Politics of Repatriation to Interwar British West Africa," *Gender and History* 21, no. 3 (2009): 628–646.

colonial walled cities on the continent. The practice of building fences around villages and compounds, as we see with the South African *kraal*, was widespread. Moreover, one could argue that Africans had various other means of "boundary"-making.[19] Nevertheless, modern territorial and political borders were largely imposed through formal imperialism in the mid- to late nineteenth century. Thus, I would encourage us to consider how modern systems of spatial segregation have coexisted with non-territorial modes of belonging, different traditions of boundary-making, as well as other kinds of spatial logic.

Why is this topic of importance/of the moment now? Recent global trends toward closure (which I think have put to rest any lingering notions that we are moving closer to a "borderless" world) make this subject especially germane.[20] To echo Suzanne and the Editor's points, I think that we as historians are in a unique position to challenge the teleological bent of so many metanarratives (which posit borders as either disappearing or, alternatively, solidifying/ramifying). As Adam McKeown argues, the drive toward increased border control and identity documentation has always been part and parcel of the history of globalization.[21] I have more to say on this matter, but I'll stop here for the moment.

Bill: My own entry into borders and boundaries is through mapping, understood somewhat expansively. Some of my guiding questions emerge directly from the map as an artifact: I'm interested in the (two-way) relationship between lines drawn on paper and practices on the ground, and I see maps not just as depictions of the world but as tools for centralizing knowledge, managing faraway places, and creating new cultural imaginaries. But many of my commitments also take me beyond maps to larger questions of geographic knowledge and subjectivity. For example, how do different forms of spatial knowledge—maps, GPS, even just latitude and longitude—direct our attention, constrain our movement, and transform the politics of space?

My first book addressed these questions through the history of the mapping sciences in the twentieth century, tracing the transition from the god's-eye view of the paper map to the embedded experience of GPS.[22] In the book I'm especially interested in how the last fifty years have seen both the solidification of the nation-state ideal (decolonization, the breakup of the USSR, etc.) and the increasing permeability of national territories (both directly, through new forms of military and humanitarian

[19] For more on borders in precolonial Africa, see Igor Kopytoff, "The Internal African Frontier: The Making of Political Culture," in Kopytoff, ed., *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington, 1987), 3–84; Allen M. Howard and Richard M. Shain, eds., *The Spatial Factor in African History: The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptual* (Leiden, 2005); Achille Mbembe, "Scrap the Borders That Divide Africans," *Mail & Guardian*, March 17, 2017, https://mg.co.za/article/2017–03–17–00-scrap-the-borders-that-divide-africans.

[20] In a recent piece in *Aeon*, Jeremy Adelman argues that efforts to move beyond a nationalist framework (and examine instead regional and global interconnection) have caused scholars to overlook the importance of disconnection and exclusion. The resurgence of nativism in many parts of the world may force a reconsideration of some of the central assumptions of transnational and global history. Adelman, "What Is Global History Now," *Aeon*, March 2, 2017, https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment.

[21] Adam M. McKeown, *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders* (New York, 2008). See also Stuart Elden, "Territory without Borders," *Harvard International Review*, August 21, 2011, http://hir.harvard.edu/article/?a=2843.

[22] William Rankin, *After the Map: Cartography, Navigation, and the Transformation of Territory in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 2016).

intervention, and indirectly, through the decentralization of geographic knowledge). The core of my argument is that the historical ideal of territory as a well-bounded block of space is just that—an ideal—and by the end of the twentieth century, I see the territoriality of U.S. global power operating much more through constellations of points, not coherent areas.

More broadly, there are two ongoing debates that bring me to our conversation. One is historical; one is theoretical. First the historical. As others have already noted, the specter of the global still haunts us—whether as an active process ("globalization"), as a mindset or imaginary ("globalism" of various kinds), or simply as a catch-all slogan for our times (the "global" as the latest version of what previously might have been "world" or "international"). It's been clear for a while that the metanarratives of the global have been oversold and that the history of the last few decades—since the end of the USSR? since 1973? since World War II?—is not a simple story of increasing borderlessness, the erosion of national states by the forces of global capital, or the alleged placelessness of, say, the Internet. But at the same time, simply affirming that sovereignty still matters, or that nation-state politics are still alive and well, has always seemed to me like a halfhearted response, especially since it fails to account for the various ways that boundaries have indeed become more fluid and permeable, even as they have simultaneously become more stubborn and naturalized.[23]

In other words, how can we tell histories of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that don't fall back on a simple dichotomy between the global (as borderless, fluid, etc.) and the allegedly anti-global forces of nation-states (as bordering, protectionist, or "local")? My own approach has been to study the politics of everyday geographic technologies—maps, coordinates, targeting, navigation, and satellite systems—but there are certainly other ways into the broader question.

The second, more theoretical, debate is one that we haven't touched on so far. When I think about the widespread interest in spatial history, the spatial humanities, and the "spatial turn," I notice that these are usually treated as rather new, untested ideas. And to some extent this makes sense, especially since they're partly linked to new digital methods. But the phrase "spatial turn" was first used—as far as I can tell—in the late 1980s, nearly thirty years ago. And the mutual engagement between historians and geographers dates back many decades more, with the Annales School, early-twentieth-century environmental determinism, and so on. Is this a case of widespread disciplinary amnesia, a recency illusion driven by digital enthusiasm?

More specifically, I find it notable that the main theorists of the spatial turn were all neo-Marxists of various stripes, especially Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Edward Soja (who used the phrase in his 1989 *Postmodern Geographies*), and Doreen Mas-

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[23] I find it helpful to compare historical accounts with the work of geographers; the former make it clear that there is a history here that predates the 1970s, but the latter offer, for me, a more sophisticated account of the recent past. For example, compare Charles S. Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (June 2000): 807–831; Maier, *Once within Borders: Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016); Neil Smith, *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization* (Berkeley, Calif., 2003); Smith, *The Endgame of Globalization* (New York, 2005); John Agnew, *Globalization and Sovereignty* (Lanham, Md., 2009); Saskia Sassen, "When Territory Deborders Territoriality," *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1, no. 1 (2013): 21–45; Neil Brenner, "Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies," *Theory and Society* 28, no. 1 (1999): 39–78; Joe Painter, "Rethinking Territory," *Antipode* 42, no. 5 (2010): 1090–1118.

sey.[24] And these are the theorists—except for Massey, I'm afraid to say—who keep being invoked today. Why has the neo-Marxist project kept its traction here when it has lost its purchase elsewhere? Or, more broadly, why do we still consistently look to these theorists when there are so many important issues that they overlooked? They have precious little to say about the environment, natural resources, or even the kind of topographic materialism that animated, say, Braudel. And they give little room for non-Marxist understandings of power, identity, or historical change. Foucault is sometimes mentioned as well, since he had a few tantalizing ideas about space and territory, but his work shares many of the same blind spots.[25]

So this is the other debate: How do we actually *do* spatial history? Both of the easy answers—digital methods and neo-Marxist constructivism—seem insufficient. Again, my own approach, which comes from the history of science and technology and focuses as much on the history of space as it does on spatial history, is only one possibility. I'm especially intrigued by the potential for seeing spatial questions as part of an intersectional analysis (where space has usually been ignored) and for pursuing a more humanistic engagement with techniques like GIS.[26]

AHR **Editor:** In reflecting on your initial remarks, I find myself thinking about two things in particular. First, the materiality of "walls, borders, and boundaries," and how this aspect distinguishes them from other ways in which people are separated, channeled, restricted, or otherwise represented as different from one another. Take "class" or similar indexes of social hierarchy: With this we might say that history shows us a movement from explicit, even legally prescribed signs—dress, the right to carry weapons, sumptuary codes, legal privileges, conspicuous consumption—to less apparent, more subtle markers—speech, fashion, taste, and the like—some of which, of course, put the premium on the *je ne sais quoi* that aspires to no sign at all. Or consider the marker of "race," where the designation itself was hardly fixed in earlier times, only to become legally and pseudo-scientifically defined in the modern era. The second thing is agency, where again, while there are similarities with how class and race are reified or defined, the role of identifiable agents seems more apparent with regard to the subject of this conversation. And this immediately suggests, of course, not only agency but the power, both symbolic and real, of particular agents and the enormous consequences of building walls, drawing borders, and enforcing/policing boundaries—think the much-threatened Mexican wall or the Sykes-Picot Agreement (among many other examples).

So for this next round I would like you to reflect on these two features of our subject. Do you think it's helpful to think about the material aspect of walls, borders, and boundaries—without, of course, neglecting the representational and symbolic? Or is this to reify a set of phenomena that we should instead see as more transactional, ne-

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[24] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1974; repr., Oxford, 1991); David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore, 1973); Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London, 1989); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis, 1994).

[25] Michel Foucault, "Des espaces autres," *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, no. 5 (October 1984): 46–49. This text was first written in 1967, but Foucault withheld it from publication for over fifteen years.

[26] My own mapping work is available on my website, http://www.radicalcartography.net, maintained since 2003.

gotiated, or sometimes even (largely) invisible, yet terribly effective and consequential nevertheless? And the same thing with agency—is this to invest too much in the actions and power of authorities, or even authoritative maps themselves? (I once asked an ancient history colleague how you knew that you were leaving the Roman Empire. I don't remember the answer, but I thought the question was a good one—naïve but still good—because it made me think about the difference between all the maps we stared at on our classroom walls and the historical reality on the ground.)

Keren: I think there is much utility to thinking of "walls, borders, and boundaries" as having a kind of materiality that is distinct from other forms of separation, restriction, difference-making, etc. With that being said, I would caution against treating extreme examples (like the Mexican/American wall and the Israeli West Bank barrier) as quintessential. The tendency to gravitate toward particularly imposing and restrictive cases of walls and borders is reflective, in my mind, of the presentist concerns of many on the left. It may also reflect a tendency to overlook areas of the world where boundaries are indeterminate or materialize/dematerialize over time (see, for example, Madeleine Reeves's work on Central Asia).[27] Another way to avoid reifying walls/borders or granting too much authority to the agents who enforce them is (as we've discussed) to not conflate the materiality of borders with impermeability. For instance, I am thinking of the work of Wendy Brown, who argues that the frenzy toward wall-building in the post–Cold War era is a sign of the waning (rather than the strengthening) of state sovereignty in the face of globalized flows of people, goods, and ideas.[28] But as we consider various kinds of "border work," I think addressing materiality is one key way for us to engage in dialogue across our different fields.[29]

I would also encourage us to consider spatialization (and the development of a spatial imaginary) as another related thematic commonality that cuts across our diverse interests—for instance, the ability of walls, borders, and boundaries to spatialize (in some cases, territorialize) difference. Carl has referenced the longstanding connections between urban walls and the development of citizenship as well as more modern, globalized forms of racial and spatial segregation. Daniel spoke of connections between Christian hegemony in early modern Europe and regulations surrounding the use of doors, windows, and gates in Jewish neighborhoods. And we can also reference numerous other scholars outside of this immediate conversation. (Teresa Caldeira's work on gated communities and urban segregation in São Paulo and Jan Bender Shetler's work on the bounding and creation of "natural" spaces in the making of national parks in Tanzania, to name only two.[30] Thus far, we've made very little reference to gender, but there is quite a bit of work on boundaries, space, and gendered forms of

[27] Madeleine Reeves, *Border Work: Spatial Lives of the State in Rural Central Asia* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2014).

[28] Wendy Brown, *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* (New York, 2010).

[29] For scholarship on "border work" as critical ethnographic practice, see Celia Haig-Brown and Jo-Ann Archibald, "Transforming First Nations Research with Respect and Power," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 9, no. 3 (1996): 245–267; Margaret Somerville and Tony Perkins, "Border Work in the Contact Zone: Thinking Indigenous/Non-Indigenous Collaboration Spatially," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 24, no. 3 (2003): 253–266.

[30] Teresa P. R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley, Calif., 2000); Jan Bender Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: A History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from Earliest Times to the Present* (Athens, Ohio, 2007).

difference.[31]) It would be worthwhile to address Bill's methodological/theoretical question about how one "does" spatial history (which he framed in terms of moving beyond digital methods and neo-Marxist constructivism). In general, I find this topic particularly fruitful because it allows one to talk about a whole range of forms of difference-making, and also about different and changing kinds of spatial logic.

I like the idea of drawing out thematic parallels between our diverse subfields and interests due in part to concerns (perhaps unwarranted or preemptive) about developing a narrative history/genealogy of this subject. While this is an important and necessary task, as I alluded to earlier, I think it's important that we avoid certain teleologies as much as possible. In other words, we should be wary of naturalizing or treating as inevitable the development of the spatial hallmarks of "modernity" (such as modern cartographic representations of space, nation-state boundaries, etc.). But this is a discussion for later on in the conversation.

Tamar: I tend to agree with the Editor and Keren that the materiality of walls, borders, and boundaries is only one aspect that needs to be taken into account. Material separations are meaningful because they demarcate distinctions in clear and unequivocal ways, but they do not necessarily establish the distinctions; nor are they able to halt their questioning and (often) their violation. As a result, walls, borders, and boundaries are signifiers, but their meaning frequently remains elusive. From my own research, I know that individuals and communities can be aware of the existence (and importance) of separation without needing physical demarcation, or they can contest material separation when it exists. In the early modern period along the Spanish and Portuguese border in both Europe and the Americas, it was often assumed that visible separations were required and meaningful only for outsiders, who did not know the territory and its people sufficiently well. Locals did not need them; nor did they consider them relevant. The documents I studied also suggested that on most occasions building walls (as well as elaborating maps) was an act of claim-making. Walls would be built, border stones would be placed, or maps would be drawn where divisions were unclear and contested, not where they were known and consensual. In these cases, demarcation expressed the desire (and hope) of those engaged in its making that now that walls or border stones were in place, they would be performative and support the makers' claims that a division existed and that it should be presumed to exist where they located it. That said, walls, borders, and boundaries are distinct from other categories of difference-making (such as class or race, as mentioned by the Editor) because they are spatial. As Keren already mentioned, they demarcate how individuals and communities relate to where they and others should be. Being in a place carries enormous implications because space is a highly regulated phenomenon. We can perhaps discuss later why this is the case.

As for agency, I have no doubt that it is essential to both making divisions and de-

[31] Mona Domosh and Joni Seager, eds., *Putting Women in Place: Feminist Geographers Make Sense of the World* (New York, 2001); Elizabeth Munson, "Walking on the Periphery: Gender and the Discourse of Modernization," *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 1 (2002): 63–75; Rachel Silvey, "Geographies of Gender and Migration: Spatializing Social Difference," *International Migration Review* 40, no. 1 (2006): 64–81; Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity, and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (Minneapolis, 2007); Kathryne Beebe, Angela Davis, and Kathryn Gleadle, "Introduction: Space, Place and Gendered Identities: Feminist History and the Spatial Turn," *Women's History Review* 21, no. 4 (2012): 523–532.

marcating them on the ground, yet I would argue that these processes are more cacophonous than meets the ear. Communal organs and the state may be involved in the making of walls, borders, and boundaries, but so are many other individuals and groups: farmers who want to delimit their fields, priests who care about the extension of their dioceses, or collectors of wood who want to maintain a monopoly over a particular area and its resources. On some occasions, these individuals and communities establish a dialogue with neighbors regarding separations. On others they impose their views on their neighbors, or accept their visions. But, regardless of which is the case, all these processes tend to be chaotic rather than orderly. They involve a plethora of agents speaking from many places, and for a variety of distinct reasons with a differentiated degree of success. Looking at one result of such processes—the building of a structure that demarcates the territory or the drawing of maps—is thus extremely reductive.

Back to the Editor's question regarding how one knew one was leaving the Roman Empire, it is a valid question also in today's Europe, where many enclaves belong to more than one country, but where border posts, walls, or even signs welcoming you to a new polity no longer exist. How did I know I had left Spanish Irun and ended up in the surrounding neighborhoods located in France? Well, it took me some time, but I eventually noticed the use of French rather than Spanish (or Basque), a different selection of chain stores (though these differences are also disappearing), and a greater frequency of bakeries and cafés. Of course, had I committed a traffic offense, I would have immediately noticed the difference between one state and the other, because the policeman who stopped me would have been dressed differently and spoken a different language and, as it stands, would have given me a different fine with different conditions. I would suspect that this was also the experience during Roman times (with the necessary differences, of course). From this perspective, the border appears as a continuum or a horizon that gradually is revealed while it also loses shape, rather than as a sharp divider.

Carl: My current project, which involves a historian's intervention into the "what is a city" debate, has pulled me into a rereading of some of the foundational texts in urban studies, including the contentious and highly speculative debate on urban origins. Walls and other built hard surfaces make frequent appearances. Their raw physical presence is, after all, the single largest and most abundant evidence we have upon which to build the foundations of our theories.

Take, as an example, discussions of Jericho, where the fabled archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon unearthed some of the very first houses constructed entirely of stone and brick, as well as the oldest surrounding city walls (they date to about 8300 B.C.E.) and a very early stone tower. Kenyon wrote extensively on the physicality of walls. Their components: stone, dressed and undressed, and brick, hand-molded from mud reinforced with straw, then baked in the sun (fired bricks were far in the future), at first "hogbacked" in form, later scratched with grooves on top to hold mortar better, a feature of bricks to this day. Building a wall was clearly difficult work, especially the Jericho town wall, which was almost six feet wide and twelve feet tall, and the even taller tower, which Kenyon estimated took a hundred men 104 days to complete. Urban theorists like Louis Wirth insist on "permanence" as a precondition of city-

ness, but the wall builders would have scoffed. Rains or rising waters could soften both brick and mortar, earthquakes could topple harder stone walls, and humans could always destroy what humans created, as at Jericho, to the sound of legendary trumpets, many millennia and many city walls later.

Kenyon, very correctly, does not stop with the physical mass of walls, and nor should we. Walls' physicality, while clearly important, came into being because people had a purpose for it, acted rather strenuously on that purpose, and actually had the latitude—power—to act upon a purpose that involved never-ending practice to achieve.[32] I've come to think of the interconnection between people, purpose, practice, power, and the physical places people build as a kind of cautionary tale, one that clarifies both the importance and the limitations of the "spatial turn" so widely trumpeted by urban theorists. Jumping off (rather distantly) from the Editor's question about race and class, think of those connections as a kind of "intersectionality," a chain of necessary but individually insufficient vectors of mutual causation. Human-built spaces are made *because of* and *by means of* economic, cultural, and political needs, practices, and power, but only because humans trust that they will actually *create* new economic, cultural, and political possibilities. Each step in this palindromic causal dynamic depends utterly on the others, and thus none alone explains the whole. By all means: take the spatial turn, especially if it adds physicality into the mix of the mutually constitutive origins of human settlements. Just don't turn too hard, though, down the lifeless dead-end street of spatial (or physical) determinism.

So why did people expend power in building walls, and what power did they gain from doing so? In the 1950s and 1960s, as people like Kenyon unearthed ever-older walls, urban theorists like Lewis Mumford launched into dazzling speculations about what these discoveries meant. One line of explanation he offered involves the foundational analytic polarity of "movement and settlement," further connected in his mind to "aggression" and "nurture."[33]

There is plenty of evidence to connect walls with settlement. Walls, and other heavy human-built hard surfaces (such as floors and, later, roofs and various forms of culverts, canals, and weirs), may have been prefigured by naturally formed caves and gorges as well as human-built fire circles, mounds, tombs, and shrines, but what they shared was relative immovability, unlike structures built of branches, grasses, or animal skins. Thus they fundamentally signaled some form of long-term investment in practices that required people to remain for longer periods of time at a single location. Excavations of Mesolithic Natufian villages in the region of Jericho suggest that heavier, harder materials were introduced to domestic architecture in stages that connect to increasing sedentarism. No one disagrees with Mumford that walls also served for the protection and nurturing of human activity. Long before Jericho, they served above all for protection against the vagaries of the non-human forces of the non-built environment. Other built boundaries included bins, for crop storage, and hearths, the descendants of fire circles, which contained fire so that it was more useful than dangerous. Holding back high water was perhaps the earliest purpose of the biggest walls. Sedimentary patterns around Jericho's town wall suggest that its main purpose was to stop inundations and mud

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[32] Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land* (New York, 1960), chap. 2.
[33] Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, Its Prospects* (New York, 1961), chap. 1.

buildup.[34] This protection from "nature" coincided with another, more ambiguous and only partially seeable effect of walls and closely packed sedentary dwellings (especially ones with grain bins): they also served as gathering places for vermin and pathogens, causing larger disease events and also, over the longer haul, wider immunity.

Walls' protection against natural forces may be related to their role in human worship of divine forces. Walled, enclosed, amphitheater-like spaces, such as the shrine at Göbekli Tepe, seem to have allowed their users to derive spiritual exaltation from the safety of protected gatherings. Alternatively, the top of the tower at Jericho, reachable by twenty-seven steps, may have done the same, in this case through a commanding view of both the bounty and the terror offered by the surrounding natural world.

Once large-scale pastoral societies grew large enough to attack settlements, walls to defend settlements from other people became essential. Here another duality also came into play, this one more rooted in the physical: the combination of horizontality and verticality. Walls tall enough to be un-jumpable prevent or at least discourage human movement across the horizontal surface of the earth, but they also elevate those who have access to their highest points, allowing for closer connection to the gods, a bigger audience for activities conducted up top, better surveillance of what happens below, and the advantage that gravity gives to people stationed with weapons high above adversaries. Much subsequent siegecraft, by extension, consisted of similar exercises in verticality: sapping under walls or surmounting them by means of variations on ladders or by deploying launchers of heavy or burning objects.

No matter how heavily conceived for settlement and protection, walls must also allow movement. A house is a tomb without windows, doors, and a hole in the roof that allows smoke to escape. Similarly, defensive city walls and moats cannot do without gates or the streets they allow to puncture the walls. Thus it is especially revealing to rediscover Geoffrey Evans's 1962 article "'Gates' and 'Streets': Urban Institutions in Old Testament Times," in which he uses biblical evidence to sketch out a long list of uses of gates and the streets that penetrate through walls not only as top-down controlled sluices of human movement, points of banishment, and perfect locations for tax collection, but also as less-controlled gathering places, markets, real estate exchanges, courts of law, and other institutional harbingers of the classical agora, as well as prime vectors of the extramural expansion of residential and industrial districts. Gates, at once the product of and the precondition for the power of walls, become promoters of activities of extramural urban growth, extension, and ever larger thrusts of movement toward the outer world.[35]

Historians clearly need to play freely with the dichotomies Mumford suggests. Various potential intellectual constructions of self-defense and conquest, generosity and hoarding, openness and closedness, segregation and integration, qualified welcome and rejection are more important and historically persistent than the capacity to shower besiegers with boulders, arrows, or molten lead. It is in these distinctions that hard surfaces are deeply connected to the far more ambiguous realms of human motivation, ethics, and ideology.

[34] O. Bar-Josef, "The Walls of Jericho: An Alternative Interpretation," *Current Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (1986): 157–162.

[35] Geoffrey Evans, "'Gates' and 'Streets': Urban Institutions in Old Testament Times," *Journal of Religious History* 2, no. 1 (1962): 1–12.

In that murky realm, the most nefarious motivations for practices of wall-building can be disguised or reconstructed, using bricks and stone, to be sure, but also tools of rhetoric, epistemology, and demagoguery, as beneficent and even heroic. When was it that the destructive intent of a wall was first "walled" out of sight by someone reconstructing that wall as protective and creative? Is it really so presentist to argue that wall-related doublespeak equating aggression with protection has been present long enough that we can no longer eradicate it from any act of wall-building?

Daniel: I agree with Keren that the public—and perhaps also the historical—discourse about walls and borders often tends to gravitate (too easily) toward "extreme examples." Keren has a point in linking this to "the presentist concerns of many on the left." Conversely, many on the political right seem to invest walls and borders with quasi-magical qualities that are at best naïve—and almost always fantastically ahistorical. At least in my area of history—premodern Europe—I find it hard to think about walls and borders that proved, over long periods of time, to be as effective as their builders had hoped.

Of course, this trope of protection has a history in its own right, and that's where I see potential for the study of the long-term "genealogies" that I mentioned in my earlier intervention. In his *Archaeology of Capitalism*, Matthew Johnson points out that in the Western tradition, boundaries and fences have been "symbols of property, and thus of political order," since biblical times.[36] Johnson traces this trope primarily to Puritan thought and theology, where he finds rather telling passages such as "A hedge in the field is as necessary in its kind as government in the church or commonwealth" (quoting the Reverend Joseph Lee in 1656).[37] But of course there is an irreconcilable tension between the invocation of this trope and practices of transgression that are as old as the walls and boundaries themselves.

In this vein, I enjoyed reading Carl's elaboration of this aspect from his perspective of ancient urban history. Carl speaks about ways in which "walls must also allow movement." This entailed "legitimate" openings (such as gates), but also more subversive ways of entry. In my own work on European city walls, I have observed time and again that contemporaries—whether urbanites or "outsiders"—found alternative ways in and out of the city. In fact, some cities (such as early modern Bordeaux) afforded imposing city walls, but at the same time the urban authorities were aware of illegal holes in the walls, and sometimes they chose to put up with them.[38]

How does this link up with the Editor's question? I think every thorough historical discussion of walls and borders must take into account—and perhaps even begin with—the question of "materiality." And this point of departure often leads quite naturally to the issue of what the Editor calls "the representational and symbolic." Some of the previous contributions to this conversation have already provided fascinating examples, drawn from different historical periods and geographical areas, of how walls and walls were, and are, endowed with a wide array of different and sometimes conflicting symbolic meanings. To adapt a felicitous phrase by Jacques Le Goff, we might think of walls as a prime example of "the 'spatialization' of thought."[39]

[36] Matthew Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (Oxford, 1996), 85–86.
[37] Ibid., 85.
[38] Martin Dinges, *Stadtarmut in Bordeaux, 1525–1675: Alltag, Politik, Mentalitäten* (Bonn, 1988), 271.
[39] Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London, 1984), 4.

All that said, I think there is a third strand, somewhere between the material and the symbolic—and that's what I would call the "praxeology" of walls, borders, boundaries, etc. I am thinking of an approach that focuses on the wide range of cultural and social practices that people associate with, or develop in response to, sites of physical demarcation and enclosure. As I've hinted, this can entail different forms of disregard or even active manipulation (e.g., sabotage). At the same time, a praxeology of this kind should, in my opinion, also take into account the numerous more positive practices associated with liminality. This brings me back to the dangers of the presentist perspective that Keren mentioned: it would be reductionist to depict walls as sites/ symbols that solely enact hegemony and social exclusion. In my experience, one is much likelier to discover a more complex, even "messier" historical reality, shaped by the entanglement of everyday practices, conventions, and rituals. Of course, historians are not alone in this observation. Starting with Arnold van Gennep, anthropologists have pointed out that "rites of passage," which play such an important role in the constitution of our social life, are often genetically linked to "sites of passages" such as thresholds and borders. On a more abstract level, one might find similar observations in philosophy. Heidegger, for instance, writes in "Building, Dwelling, Thinking": "A boundary is not that at which something stops, . . . the boundary is that from which something begins its [existence]."[40] I wouldn't call myself an aficionado of existentialist philosophy, but I find this idea very useful—the idea that boundaries are not simply sites of disruption, but also sites of creation and production. Of course, one must tread carefully when choosing such an approach. Its purpose is not to produce a rosy picture of a past characterized by clearly defined demarcations. Nor should this be about provocation for the sake of provocation (as some critics have argued is the case in Ronald Rael's recent *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary*).[41]

To return to my larger point: in my opinion, a historically thorough approach to liminality requires attention to the material and the symbolic, but it cannot end there. I remember quite vividly that this was the trickiest conceptual issue for me when I wrote my book about "thresholds in Western history": at first I was playing with the idea of zooming in on concrete sites; then I contemplated an approach more focused on representations (including the cartographic representations that the Editor mentioned).[42] In the end, it became clear to me that the most fruitful way might be to organize the book around practices and rituals bound up with liminal spaces, even if that meant forgoing, to some extent, a chronological narrative. To give an example: instead of writing a chronologically structured chapter on the history of city walls, I found it more productive to focus on the question of what it actually meant to enter a city.[43] Which procedures, practices, and experiences did this process entail, in different places and at different times? I am only mentioning this here to illustrate how these questions have come up in my research and how I've tried to tackle them. From

[40] Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," trans. Albert Hofstadter, in Neil Leach, ed., *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London, 1997), 95–104, here 100.

[41] Ronald Rael, *Borderwall as Architecture: A Manifesto for the U.S.-Mexico Boundary* (Oakland, Calif., 2017).

[42] Jütte, *The Strait Gate*.

[43] See also Daniel Jütte, "Entering a City: On a Lost Early Modern Practice," *Urban History* 41, no. 2 (2014): 204–227.

a higher vantage point, this links up with the Editor's question about agency—a question that I would answer, very emphatically, in the affirmative: spatial history must leave space for agency, and this means more than just the agency of authorities.

Bill: I certainly agree with Keren, Tamar, and Carl about the importance of resisting any rush to the hyper-materialism of limit cases like physical walls or "dead-end" physical determinism. But I'm not sure that we—the six of us in particular, or the field more broadly—are actually in any danger of succumbing to these temptations. If anything, I see the hard-won turn toward meaning-laden, interactionist, and bottom-up spatial history as potentially keeping us from certain kinds of material history, including even a potentially productive kind of (soft) determinism—if by determinism we simply mean non-human agency.

So I appreciate Daniel's invocation of "praxeology" as a way of addressing both the material and the symbolic at the same time—or perhaps even as a way of denying the dichotomy itself. It reminds me of the now-well-established trend in the history of science toward a focus on scientific practice, especially as a way of avoiding the tired dichotomy between "internal" intellectual history and "external" institutional history. This is the tradition from which my own work has emerged, but I've also followed similar work in geography focusing on the seemingly mundane practices of passport controls, airport space planning, refugee processing, and so on. To understand how science works, look at what scientists *do*—or rather, look at how knowledge is produced, how it travels, and how it fades away. To understand how spatial divisions work, look at the everyday practices that keep the system humming along.

And here I think the Editor's comparison to race or class is helpful, since a focus on practice would find plenty of materiality in these kinds of "social" divisions—everything from "top-down" censuses, identification cards, and anthropometry to "bottom-up" clothing, haircuts, and skin-tanning. (And I would say that speech, fashion, and taste are neither terribly subtle nor immaterial. Likewise, scientific racism only became "pseudo-scientific" after much material work.) Just as we can see race and class as the *results* of these practices rather than as the *cause*, we might also see walls, borders, and boundaries as *results*—or even, more provocatively, as symptoms. It's also worth noting that the materiality of social hierarchy is often immediately spatial, or can be quickly put to spatial ends. In other words, the materiality that I think deserves our attention is the day-to-day practical work of classifying, delimiting, filtering, and so on. And I certainly wouldn't put maps only on the side of the symbolic and imaginary. Mapping is absolutely a ground-level practice, whether literally, with border-surveying, or in more wide-ranging cases like the use of ethnographic maps in primary school classrooms, the Paris Peace Conference, or the partition of Punjab.

With this in mind, I always see agency as distributed (or, in Tamar's terms, "chaotic") rather than concentrated. I'm reminded of Peter Sahlins's classic work on the French-Spanish boundary in the Pyrenees. His main argument was that the boundary—both the physical border itself and the social division into French and Spanish identities—was driven by the local people themselves, opportunistically enrolling the French or Spanish state for their own ends.[44] Similarly, I've been interested in the re-

[44] Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley, Calif., 1989).

cent news reports that show how the U.S.-Mexico border will inevitably be an interaction between local residents (whether ranchers, farmers, or American Indians) and several different levels of government. I don't see boundary-making as an exceptional kind of agency; as with everything else, I see constant interaction between top-down, bottom-up, and middle-out.

But as I hinted above, I do want to leave room for non-human agency. This can include any number of things—from human-built artifacts like signs, fences, and walls (which often continue to act well after their original purpose has faded), to hybrid artifacts like river channels, to fully Braudelian features like mountain ranges and oceans. And I invoke Braudel quite intentionally, though perhaps only in combination with, say, Bruno Latour. I think in particular of a line from *The Mediterranean*, from a section that, oddly enough, was omitted from the English translation: "We should neither exaggerate nor diminish the role of determinism."[45] There's no question that cut-and-paste determinism is a dead end, both methodologically and empirically. But we do ourselves a disservice if we ignore the ways that the physical world (including the human-built world) constrains and directs human activity. And again, the materiality need not be poured-in-place concrete; it can be a border marker, a hedgerow, an always shifting riverway, or a glass partition in an airport. The agency of materiality—the determinism that we should neither swell nor shrink—is itself an empirical question.[46]

Also, I think Tamar is right that what distinguishes the difference-making of walls, borders, and boundaries is that they are spatial. This seems crucial; perhaps it's something we can reflect on further.

Tamar: I certainly agree with Daniel that practices are central to our understanding of walls, borders, and boundaries: if their physicality is a signifier, their meaning is determined by the actions taken by multiple individuals and groups on several levels. This explains the elusive and constantly changing meaning we attribute to these signifiers, depending on who is asking, what for, and when. Because a wall can have a plethora of meanings for different people in different situations, walls are material things with symbolic meaning as much as they are sites of negotiation and practice-making or -following.

As a jurist, what I find most fascinating about walls is that they are also a means of claim-making. When you fence your field, you not only attempt to protect your property, you also make a claim that this is your property and that you have a right to fence it. Maps can function in the same way, imagining a space often before it is known, controlled, understood, or annexed. This in part explains Daniel's observation that historically walls and borders proved less effective than their builders had hoped. Their materiality may have been insufficient to stop an invading army, or the sheep of

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[45] "Ne grossissons pas, mais ne diminuons pas la part du déterminisme." Fernand Braudel, *La méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949), 302. Latour's classic treatise on agency is the second part of *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge, Mass., 1988; original French ed. 1984).

[46] I recently came across a photo series of international borders that I think does a nice job of highlighting some of our thoughts about materiality and permeability. See "23 Stunning Photos of International Borders around the World," https://www.wimp.com/23-stunning-photos-of-international-borders-around-the-world.

a neighbor, but their lack of efficiency usually also was tied to the inability to sustain the claims that were implied in their making, whether they were contested by neighbors or because what was yours changed over time. Claim-making also explains Carl's remarks about aggression and protection being linked. In law, at least, they are two facets of the same phenomenon. You protect by protesting against activities you do not agree with (which you believe threaten your rights or entitlements), and the best protest (because clearest) is violence (silence being read as consent).

Back to the biblical allusions mentioned by Daniel that were extremely popular in early modern Europe to explain both property and jurisdiction, one fascinating aspect is that they tied private property to jurisdiction. They argued that communities (and thus states) had a right to first own and then demarcate a territory because individuals did, and because the same logic functioned in both cases (the logic already mentioned according to which good fences make good neighbors). Oddly, however, despite invoking the Bible, these conclusions were based on discussions among ius commune (medieval Roman law) jurists. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, these jurists sought to justify the extension of private law to the realm of the state, arguing that the way private property came into being and could be protected should also apply to the territories of the emerging late medieval polities.

I also agree with Bill that non-human agency matters, but I think that our experience of it is always mediated by human understanding: rivers and mountains are obviously natural facts, but the way we regard them, the hopes we lay on them, the layers of meanings we attribute to them, are all our doing. Mountains, for example, were clear separators until herding became common and communities began using the upper mountain for pasture.[47] Thereafter, the certainty that mountains separated communities quickly dissolved. If anything, the mountains now united. This does not mean that natural elements do not direct, restrict, or fashion human activity, but that how they do so depends always, at least to some degree, on us.[48]

In the end, what I miss most in our conversation is the spatial element. In what way are walls, borders, and boundaries different from other distinctions that involve no spatial elements? Why is the question of where we are (and where others are) laden with so many meanings and projected onto so many things? It may well be the case that this was an ancient way of ordering things, but that it persisted for so long is intriguing.

Keren: Much of what we've been discussing intersects with longstanding debates within the history of science and the discipline of anthropology that are not necessarily specific to our topic (see, for example, Sherry Ortner's classic essay about the rise of practice within anthropology or Daniel Miller's more recent edited volume on materiality).[49] To simply echo what others have already said, there are many facets to "border work": the materiality of walls and borders, the symbolic and conceptual "architecture," the practices surrounding border-making (including material and textual

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[47] Fernando Chavarría Múgica, "Monarquía fronteriza: Guerra, linaje y comunidad en la España moderna (Navarra, siglo XVI)" (Ph.D. thesis, European University Institute, 2006).

[48] G. Zeller, "Histoire d'une idée fausse," *Revue de synthèse* 11–12 (1936): 115–131; Daniel Nordman, *Frontières de France: De l'espace au territoire, XVIe–XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1998), 10–11.

[49] Sherry B. Ortner, "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, no. 1 (1984): 126–166; and Daniel Miller, ed., *Materiality* (Durham, N.C., 2005).

practices like map-making), and the varied agents (and forms of agency) involved. In considering these factors together, one can challenge well-entrenched binaries between human and non-human agency, subject and object, and the symbolic and the material.

However, I think the Editor's question is still hanging: Is there something about the scale, temporality, and even monumentality of walls, borders, and boundaries (or at least the idealized image they evoke) that lends itself to an approach that would privilege materiality over other factors? And the sense I'm getting is that we're a bit divided on this issue (partly because we are drawn to different case studies and partly due to differing ways of interpreting trends within our fields). I think a similar question surrounds the question of spatiality. While certainly most (all?) complex social, economic, and political phenomena have a spatial component (much as they have a material component), is there a need to foreground the issue of space in addressing this topic? (I think so.)

I suppose what I'm suggesting is that we consider the specificity of our topic. Is it important to leave room for non-human agency as a matter of course? Has the "spatial turn" trained our attention on space in general? Or, at the risk of essentializing, are these issues (materiality and/or spatiality) crucial to understanding the topic at hand? In posing such questions, I may be establishing a false dichotomy. The way that we approach any given topic is always shaped by broader historiographic and theoretical concerns. But I do think it's important that we consider how the topic itself—i.e., walls, borders, and boundaries—may lend itself to certain kinds of methodological and theoretical approaches or open up certain kinds of historiographical debates.

I also think there's reason not to treat walls, borders, and boundaries as analogous to race or class (although we could certainly have a similar discussion about practice, agency, and materiality if we were discussing either topic).

Carl: Keren rightly asks us to be more precise: Should we privilege or foreground the materiality (scale, etc.) of walls/spaces for any reason? For me the answer depends on how we state the question of the wall. The questions I want to answer are causal ones: How do we explain the wall? And what does the wall explain? Both of these questions ask us to think about materiality in ways that we might feel we wouldn't need to think about if we were asking a historical question like "How do we explain reason?" or "What does reason explain?," for example. So yes, we cannot avoid materiality or spatiality when we want to discuss the causes and consequences of walls.

That said, I don't think we can *privilege* materiality when answering either of these questions, in the sense of saying something like "physicality is the most important reason" for a wall or "the scale of a wall is the most important factor" in its consequences for subsequent history. Both questions demand multicausal answers, and to repeat, the multiple causes are all necessary, but none is sufficient.

I hope that clarifies my perhaps gimmicky way of chaining together what I deem the necessary elements of any answer to these two questions in terms of *people* (who are the wall builders?), *purpose* (why did they build it?), *practice* (how did they build it, and what other practices did they want to systematize or make more possible?), *power* (what gave them the latitude to build it?), and *place* (what did the physical and spatial wall—its component materials, its dimensions, its design—actually allow the wall builders to do that they could not do before?).

This last question pivots from question one, "Why the wall?," to question two, "What does the wall explain?," but there again the answer must include the other elements: people (who did the wall affect?), purpose (did they agree with the wall's purpose, or did it inhibit their purposes?), practice (did they act the way the wall builders wanted them to, or did they find ways of acting that subverted the wall, or repurposed it, or brought it tumbling down?), and power once again (what gave them the latitude to do whatever they did?).

I suppose you might say that the physicality of the wall is the pivot point between my two guiding questions, or that the "politics of the wall," that is, the contestation that is probably inherent to just about any wall that some people build in order to make other people behave in a different way, ultimately turns on the fact of its physicality. But I'd prefer to stick by the "necessary but not sufficient" standard. I don't think there is a way of saying any cause is more important than others if all are required for an explanation.

A final note, aimed again only to highlight a previous point: this concatenation of causes does not include the wall's relationship to non-human forces, even though I am pretty convinced that that relationship was the original and possibly the most important reason for the very earliest walls, and maybe most other walls built since.

Bill: Perhaps my way of understanding the Editor's question (and Keren's, too) is this: Is there any fundamental difference between boundary-making and other types of human separation? And to me the answer is already given in the question: If we see walls and borders as technologies of social differentiation—as I think we should—then we should approach them with similar attitudes about materiality and agency as we do other forms of differentiation (race, class, gender). And this indeed taps into broader methodological currents: from one side, a push to understand the materiality of ideas or identity; from the other, a push to understand borders as practices and processes ("border" as a verb, not just a noun).

This doesn't mean that the study of boundaries doesn't call for particular methodological tools or approaches. As suggested in my last response, I think there's something important about material *persistence* that isn't always present when studying other types of differentiation. (Though I certainly agree with Tamar that the meaning and effects of the non-human are never fixed; I am not endorsing Braudel's topographic essentialism.) This is especially important for the second of Carl's questions: What does the wall *do*?

Without wanting to preempt the Editor's next question, we do seem keen to understand how boundaries, as spatial phenomena, might require specifically spatial categories of analysis. Scale is certainly on the list, though it already seems that we may mean different things by this word. More broadly, I wonder whether by "spatial" we're trying to distinguish forms of power that are inscribed on the body (race, gender, and disability, but also class, habitus, etc.) from those that control the location and movement of bodies (walls, borders, urban planning, architecture). But I think the non-human is important here, too. Spatial power is not just about bodies, but also about resources.

Suzanne: Let me begin by responding briefly to the initial question, especially in the context of my own perspective and methodologies, before turning to issues around

space and spatialization that arise from the last few comments circulated within the group. The Editor asked whether it is "helpful to think about the material aspect of walls, borders, or boundaries," and what the role of agency might be within this dynamic. My perspective on this question is inflected by my position as a medievalist who focuses primarily on intellectual history and manuscript culture: in other words, I am much less mindful of the social history and material culture that fleshes out our understandings of the premodern past, and much more attuned to the symbolic systems within which ethnic, racial, and cultural differences were constructed. In my own work, walls, borders, and boundaries are absolutely central, but as immaterial constructs reflected on medieval urban maps and mappaemundi, or described in historical chronicles and literary texts, and only rarely anchored in an actual cityscape or frontier territory. Medieval accounts of the city of Jerusalem under the rule of the Latin Kingdom, for example, both cartographic and textual, posit a fantasy of an urban landscape whose material reality is subordinated to the symbolic and even eschatological import of the Heavenly City. Here, the place of the material city in linear time is a pale reflection of the spiritual city and its place within eternity. While I certainly agree with Daniel and others (especially Bill) that it is necessary to give careful attention to the practices that underpin the management and construction of borders and boundaries, and while I'm particularly conscious of and interested in the ways that this approach has played out within the field of the history of science, this has not been an area of focus within my own research.

What has been central to my work, and what informs my perspective within this conversation, is the integration of time and space in the articulation of territory, and the role of walls, borders, and boundaries in marking temporal shifts. In this light, I'm particularly struck by Keren's comments on the crucial function of spatialization, and am particularly eager to explore together the ways that territory is staked out and conceptually managed. Some of the most interesting contributions in this area have emerged from the field of cultural geography, where the work of David Harvey and Stuart Elden has done much to excavate the deep categories that underlie territory and inform the invigilating function of walls, borders, and boundaries.[50] Both on medieval maps and in textual sources, the temporal and spatial are aligned in ways that produced both premodern systems of knowledge and powerful discursive structures that had real-world implications. In book 2 of Virgil's *Aeneid*, for example, the onward force of *translatio imperii* is made manifest in the multiple thresholds of the palace of Priam and citadel of Troy; this alignment of space and time is echoed in numerous medieval chronicles, from the fifth-century history of Orosius to Higden's fourteenth-century *Polychronicon*, where physical boundary markers are emphasized at historical turning points, designating the movement from one age to another.[51] Similarly, the depiction of walls and boundary markers on mappaemundi, such as the great gates enclosing the unclean tribes of Gog and Magog and the monumental pillars of Hercules at the extremities of the known world, served to enforce a territorial conception of

[50] David Harvey, "Space as a Keyword," in Noel Castree and Derek Gregory, eds., *David Harvey: A Critical Reader* (Oxford, 2006), 270–293; Elden, *The Birth of Territory*; Stuart Elden, *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (Minneapolis, 2009).

[51] Suzanne Conklin Akbari, "Erasing the Body: History and Memory in Medieval Siege Poetry," in Nicholas Paul and Suzanne Yeager, eds., *Remembering the Crusades: Myth, Image, and Identity* (Baltimore, 2012), 146–173.

history that both gave an account of past time and laid out a template for rule in the medieval present. I think that our ongoing conversation, as it moves into a fuller consideration of spatialization, might profit from some discussion of how maps and mapping practices have developed over the past thousand years or so. I don't think that there is any risk of this devolving into a teleological account of emergent modernity, especially with such a thoughtful and sensitive set of interlocutors; instead, it might provide a useful point of reference, with many local data points, for the broad spectrum of ways in which boundaries and borders were imagined during the last millennium.

An additional theme that seems to be emerging is bodies and/or embodiment: that is, the ways that organic metaphors of the body inform conceptions of territory and, more generally, space, and also the ways that bodies are actually processed and managed as they pass through or are barred from borders and boundaries. Here, materiality marks the point of resistance at the border, which proves to be porous or impervious depending upon the body that intersects with it.

AHR **Editor:** Among the many comments in the last round, the theme of space and spatialization seemed to resonate with several of you. I'm not sure we want to enter into a full-scale discussion of the "spatial turn," but it does seem appropriate to consider whether and, if so, in what ways space is a distinct element of our topic. Clearly, on a very basic level, its centrality is self-evident when we consider that "walls, borders, and boundaries" serve, among their other functions, to demark space—to divide, define, create, clarify, or otherwise manipulate spatial contours, extension, and the like. But what to make of it? I assume that we would hardly want to settle for thinking of space as merely "context"—that is, the container, background, geography, landscape, or stage for various human activities or the place where we project various imaginaries (e.g., the "South"). Demarked, divided, or defined in myriad ways, space itself has been a productive, generative element in human history. We just have to think of well-known spatial designations, some fundamentally restricting—a ghetto, the Pale, redlined neighborhoods, the barrier separating men and women at the Western Wall in Jerusalem—others generative or evocative of other meanings and identities—sacred and profane spaces, country versus city, etc. How, then, in your experience, have "walls, borders, and boundaries" participated in configuring and defining space in this sense?

Daniel: History, as a discipline, has seen many "turns," but I think the "spatial turn" has had one of the most sustained effects. It is now entirely common to think of space as a fundamental analytical category for the historian and to acknowledge that space is not an elusive, amorphous mass, but rather subject to historical change and shaped by specific social forces. At the same time, I must admit that in my own research, there was no particular moment when I decided to go "spatial." It was a much more accidental than deliberate process, and perhaps I'm not alone in this regard. In fact, I read some of the "canonical" theoretical texts only after I had become interested in spatial history. I found (and still find) that some of these theoretical texts have a tendency for abstraction and generalization that is not always easy to reconcile with empirical historical research.[52]

[52] A good example is Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

Picking up a thread from an earlier intervention, here is how I got interested in boundaries and how this grew into a more general interest in spatial history: as I mentioned, one of my research areas has been the history of interfaith relations in the premodern period, especially between Christians and Jews. I remember that the more sources I read about Christian-Jewish interaction, the more I noticed how prominently liminal spaces—and their transgression—figured in these texts. In his question, the Editor mentioned "a ghetto." I am not sure whether he is referring specifically to the walled Jewish neighborhoods of the early modern period or whether he is employing the term in the more general sense in which we commonly use it today. But it is certainly interesting to note that this term "ghetto"—now a synonym for segregated neighborhoods of any kind—originates, historically, in the particular spatial experience of the Jews of early modern Europe. This, of course, is a well-known fact; what surprised me far more in my research was how the sources—Christian and Jewish—revealed extraordinary attention not only to the walls, but also to a wide range of other liminal spaces and sites of passage. True, walls were the defining feature of segregation, and they often looked intimidating, but they were rarely insurmountable.

The picture that emerges is one with far more nuances than a more traditional, binary conception of segregation would suggest. Robert Bonfil has argued, from a more generalist perspective, that the rise of the *ghetti* in Italy led, unintentionally, to the making of a more distinct "Jewish" culture.[53] I think this is a stimulating argument, but it also seems to me that segregation, far from cutting Jews off from contact with the outside world, actually contributed to the increased interest in the Jewish condition that we observe in this period—an interest that took many forms, ranging from scholarly exchange ("Christian Hebraism") to more quotidian kinds of curiosity. Consider, for instance, Goethe's fascination with the Judengasse, Frankfurt's gated Jewish neighborhood, which he frequently "ventured into."[54] He explicitly cited the view through the gate as the initial trigger for his interest, which, while never entirely free of prejudice, eventually led him to study Hebrew. This is just one of many examples, but it might illustrate what I meant when, in an earlier response, I referred to boundaries as "sites of creation and production."

To return to my own trajectory, my initial idea was to sound out whether it is possible to write a history of Jewish-Christian interaction along these lines, using liminal spaces as a starting point to probe the dynamics of conflict and contact. I also was—and still am—interested in whether the technologies and terminologies of enclosure that emerged in early modern Europe created a framework—or even a foundation—for the way modern societies deal with the spatialization of social, religious, or ethnic difference. (The global "career" of the term "ghetto" strikes me as a good example.)

The case of Jewish segregation sparked my interest, but of course, as a phenomenon, it was by no means unique in this period. This brings me to the Editor's more general question about the role of boundaries in the constitution of (historical) space. Take urban space as an example. I sometimes wonder whether it is possible to liken the premodern European city to a Russian doll: in much the same way that a matrioshka doll contains a set of dolls of decreasing sizes, so did the premodern city

[53] Robert Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Anthony Oldcorn (Berkeley, Calif., 1994).
[54] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, in *Werke: Hamburger Ausgabe*, ed. Erich Trunz, 14 vols., vol. 9: *Autobiographische Schriften I* (Munich, 1998), 149–150.

contain a complex—and indeed characteristic—set of internal boundaries. These boundaries not only demarcated discrete spatial areas, but also indicated belonging to a particular social community. One could think here of ecclesiastical enclaves, such as monasteries; or gated academic communities (such the typical walled-in Oxbridge colleges from this period); or military installations, such as the intimidating fortresses that were often located in the heart of early modern cities.

All of these enclaves and compounds formed distinct political—and often also distinct juridical—entities in the midst of urban space. This complex system of internal boundaries was, on a macro level, mimicked and enclosed by the city walls. With very few exceptions, virtually every major premodern European city had city walls; in fact, they were often considered a defining feature of urban space. It is no exaggeration to say that systematic razing of the walls in the nineteenth century was one of the most transformative—and in some places also one of the most traumatic—processes in the history of the European city.[55]

The result of this historical process is the "open city," which has come to constitute the ideal of our time. Walled-in enclaves have largely disappeared from modern urban space; so have city walls. Openness seems to be the new credo. Yet, as we all know, social boundaries continue to permeate and organize urban space; if they are less visible today, it is largely because they have become more internalized, expressed—among other ways—through habitus, language, and status markers. Nor have physical walls and boundaries become extinct; it seems to me that they have merely been displaced—for instance, to the "gated communities" that have sprouted up on the urban periphery. Such processes of internalization and displacement might be considered examples of the "long-term genealogies" that I mentioned in an earlier intervention. My impression is that these genealogies still await more extensive research. Of course, the study of such genealogies confronts us historians with a tricky question—how to tackle and transcend boundaries of a non-spatial kind: the boundaries of periodization.

Carl: One of the themes that recurred consistently as I researched my book on segregation was the dialectical relationship between urban boundary-setting, with all its implications for what Lefebvre calls "spatial production," and power. On the one hand, building a wall, policing a border, or drawing a boundary requires huge investments of power; on the other hand, the producers of divided urban space went about their business with the hopes of reaping more power from their investment.[56]

What the spatial turn did for me as an urban historian interested in these boundaries was on the one hand a kind of confirmation of the importance of urban history's basic mission to explain space (to which Daniel has alluded), but also a second, rather vexed mission: to explore the explanatory power of space itself. Do spaces *do* anything? Or, to indulge in a bit of mischief: Can the spatial speak?

Since we're engaged in a discussion of the significance of certain kinds of space, I think we're inclined to answer "yes." We'd expect the same answer from other people who make their living getting spaces just so: architects, urban planners, civil engineers,

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[55] This process has been the subject of two recent studies: Yair Mintzker, *The Defortification of the German City, 1689–1866* (Cambridge, 2012); and Kristin Elisabeth Poling, "On the Inner Frontier: Opening German City Borders in the Long Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2011).

[56] Nightingale, *Segregation*, 11–12.

real estate developers, home redecorators, feng shui consultants, employers of household servants, and . . . urban segregationists themselves, of course. Ever since would-be god-kings consecrated themselves as such by putting up walls around their ziggurats, the assumption was that doing so mattered to what happened next—that is, the space newly delimited by the wall or boundary would cause something about their future, that is, a part of our past that historians need to explain.

So: Did it? Did it do what its producers wanted it to do? Are the producers' intentions—usually expressed in veiled ways in the historical record—the best touchstone for understanding the consequences of an act of spatial production? If it didn't do what it was supposed to do, did it do anything worth examining? Or can a space achieve a "life" of its own that shapes many people's intentions in a whole variety of ways? If so, what explains that variety? Has space actually "spoken" in the end, or do people control the consequences of spatial change so much that we have to look to them, not to spaces after all, to explain what spaces actually do?

Surveying people's seemingly endless energy to divide cities, from the temple-palace complexes and surrounding city walls of dozens of independently generated (then later connected) ancient, medieval, and early modern civilizations, to the dozens of types of zones for foreign merchants from across the world, to the Jewish ghettos the Editor and Daniel mentioned, to hundreds of divided colonial cities, to dozens of apartheid cities, to twenty-first-century "ghettos" of a thousand shapes and claims, and of course to the various border barriers that bristle across many miles of countryside of most continents (and oceans), it is hard not to conclude at least that people believe space does produce results. But the same survey reveals just the opposite: that all of these walls went up, and most, by far, also came tumbling down. The ziggurats are buried in the sand; Napoleon's generals did blow open the Venice ghetto's gates; those medieval walls (mostly) did come down. We can reasonably hope the same for the still-evident scars of apartheid, the many devilishly ingenious border-setting devices around American ghettos, and the border wall in Israel-Palestine.

Looking at that evidence, we have to ask another set of questions: Why the colossal faith in spatial agency? And why its history of repeated failures? I don't know the answers, but the method I have the most faith in right now is to think of space as one of a dozen or so historical phenomena that people turn to as levers of power. Space may speak, in other words, but so do large numbers of organized people, technological innovations of various sorts, violence and the threat of it, wealth and various market mechanisms, institutions, bureaucracies, and election systems, propaganda and other forms of "soft" power, the law, culture, customs, and so on. Without some use of these tools of power, divided spaces can't come into being. Nor can the spaces thus produced have any effect on their own once they're in place: borders require the threat of violence, for example; American segregation rests on the idea that the race of a house's occupants matters to its value. Turn any one of these tools of power against the power of space, and it's not clear how long spatial power will hold out. And, to abruptly reverse my drift, recognize that all forms of power have at least some, and at most total, dependence on the space in which they are produced. Additionally, walls, borders, and boundaries, for all their power, do not remotely encompass the totality of spatial politics. Organized crowds require gathering places. Most technologies need shelters of some kind. Violence requires spaces of coordination and execution. So does the power

of wealth; furthermore, it is often exercised in the buying and selling of space. And so on. Finally, if it's worth thinking of segregation or the building of a corporate headquarters or a parliament building as the "exercise of spatial power" or "spatial strategies," let's keep wide open the idea that such strategies are always vulnerable to spatial counter-strategies, including ones that use spaces precisely designed to prevent resistance against their own producers.

At the Editor's request, I will end with a couple of examples of the contingencies of spatial strategy production from my book and one from a recent newspaper article. While urban division is an ancient and hoary art in the annals of politics, it's not always the first or preferred strategy for some of the most oppressive of political arrangements. The Atlantic slave trade depended on dozens of port cities in the Americas; all of them in turn needed slaves to operate them. Segregating slaves in their own neighborhoods, though, was universally considered a terrible idea, for slave owners feared that slaves' distance from their owners and proximity to one another would result in massive slave revolts that would end the trade entirely. So slaves were largely forced to live with their masters, and one tool of slave resistance was the creation of informal slave neighborhoods, often next door to those of freed black people (and a smattering of whites). The potential for segregation to backfire always lingers over the segregationist imagination. Sometimes the paranoid imagination it fosters creates political capital of its own, in the form of scapegoats who are easily identifiable precisely because they live apart and are probably conspiring in their neighborhoods: such was the case of many foreign merchant groups as well as ghettoized Jews. Venice could have expelled its Jewish population but eventually decided it was too useful, not only for its medical practitioners and moneylenders, but also because it could serve as a handy and despised group to deploy during social crises: if the people are restless about something you've done, just point to the ghetto. Sometimes, though, segregated zones could become sites of revolutionary upheaval: under apartheid, the iconic townships, complete with their panoptical urban planning and buffer zones, turned out to be the system's Achilles' heel, precisely for reasons that slave owners had predicted: Soweto is now known for resistance probably more than for oppression. Harlem is as much or more often cited as a storied capital of black America than as a reminder of the nefarious means by which it and other segregated ghettos came into being.

In the deck of cards we as historical actors possess to change our fate, playing with space can be a strong or a weak move. It's good for us as historians to recognize that space is in our subjects' deck of cards, but we should not imagine it is always their ace in the hole. Spatial turn, sure. Just don't fall into the trap of spatial determinism.

Tamar: I must confess that I am generally suspicious of "historical turns." I tend to think that, often, while turning toward they also turn away from, leaving behind too many important things. As with Daniel, my own interest in interrogating space had very little to do with the spatial turn. It came out of a previous book, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Spain in Spanish America*, in which I strove to understand why some individuals and groups were recognized as members of the community while others were rejected or never vindicated this status.[57] I also wanted to know

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[57] Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Spain in Spanish America* (New Haven, Conn., 2003).

how members could lose this condition, who decided on these issues, when, why, and how. As I surveyed these dynamics (in early modern Spain and Spanish America, though I also made brief suggestions regarding England, France, and Italy, demonstrating that their case may have not been substantially different), I realized that, while I asked about membership, I took communities for granted. That is, I had assumed that communities existed and individuals and groups could or could not become members. But how did communities come into being? How did places where people lived differ from those we (or they or their contemporaries) recognized as a "community"?

Latin American historians have long insisted that Spaniards were urbanites and that urbanism mattered. They have described how, soon after arriving in the Americas, Spaniards established settlements in order to control both people and land.[58] These settlements adopted a repetitive form that royal instructions mandated. Similar to what urban codes establish today, these instructions regulated the shape of houses, the linearity of streets, the size of the urban territory, and the uses each area could have. These comprehensive directives were to secure the domestication of space and the civilizing of the inhabitants.[59] They were so central to the colonial enterprise that eventually they were also employed vis-à-vis the native population, which was forced to reside in villages that adopted that very same design.[60] In other words, space was everything, and its control, management, and beautification had a direct impact on both polities and individuals.[61]

Yet Spanish American cities had no walls. Furthermore, if one descended from royal instructions to daily practices, from symbols to social negotiations, from macro to micro history, what urbanism meant lost its clarity. Those said to be citizens of a community could live dozens of miles away and still be considered members. Settlements could emigrate from one place to the next. Typified as "nomad" enclaves, in such cases what moved were not the structures, the streets, or the buildings, but the people, the authorities, the legal privileges, and the social structures.[62] The same thing happened in Portugal, the most famous example involving the city of Mazagão, which transferred from Africa to Brazil, with a lengthy "stopover" in Lisbon.[63] Meanwhile, Indians who were said to have been resettled in new Spanish-shaped and Spanish-controlled settlements sometimes physically moved to a new location but more often remained in their original habitat, which suffered only very limited material transformations. What did all this tell us about early modern conceptions of place and space? How similar or different were they from our own?

Having asked what distinguished a non-community from a community and having engaged with how enclaves could become communities, I ended up writing *Frontiers*

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[58] Javier Aguilera Rojas, *Fundación de ciudades hispanoamericanas* (Madrid, 1994).

[59] Francisco de Solano, ed., *Normas y leyes de la ciudad hispanoamericana*, vol. 1: *1492–1600* (Madrid, 1996).

[60] Akira Saito and Claudia Rosas Lauro, eds., *Reducciones: La concentración forzada de las poblaciones indígenas en el Virreinato del Perú* (Lima, 2017).

[61] Maria Elena Martinez, "Space, Order, and Group Identities in a Spanish Colonial Town: Puebla de los Angeles," in Luis Roniger and Tamar Herzog, eds., *The Collective and the Public in Latin America: Cultural Identities and Political Order* (Brighton, 2000), 13–36.

[62] Alain Musset, *Villes nomades du Nouveau Monde* (Paris, 2002).

[63] Laurent Vidal, *Mazagão, la ville qui traversa l'Atlantique: Du Maroc à l'Amazonie (1769–1783)* (Paris, 2005).

of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas.[64] Among other things, my aim was to demonstrate that places were fragile and fluid constructions that depended on constant negotiations and required relentless care and protection against incessant contestation. Not very different from what anthropologist Arjun Appadurai argued in "The Production of Locality" and *Modernity at Large* and historian Angelo Torre sustained, as far as I could see, places were ever-shifting conglomerates that could never be stopped or appropriated.[65] Not only were they subject to historical change and shaped by social forces (to borrow Daniel's words), they were also relational, contextual, and ambiguous. Involved in their making was a great variety of actors who expressed vindications that were performative. To create them, it was necessary to activate a wide range of resources and techniques that strengthened relations among community members at the same time that they generated a context for these relations and produced subjects.

Given this operating hypothesis, the fixing of boundaries (whether spatial or social) was for me only one challenge that these formations faced. Others involved ecological and technological constraints and the management of internal social relations, to mention but two examples. The technologies that were employed to meet such challenges could include control over space (whether by constructing houses, directing movement, or building a wall), but they also required other means such as ordering time, inventing rituals, elaborating theories regarding the right to land, the right to membership, and so forth.

Back to my own work, rather than assuming that Spain and Portugal preexisted the setting of their boundaries, I sought to examine how they were imagined, created, maintained, and strengthened through the everyday interactions of those who vindicated their existence and wished to define and defend it against those who contested their pretensions. My move, therefore, was to some degree a- or even anti-spatial. It sought to demonstrate that if walls, borders, and boundaries were used to demarcate a space, they were (as Carl noted) but one technology among many. To follow the Editor's question, they divided, defined, created, clarified, and manipulated spatial contours, but only to the degree that we wanted them to do so and others agreed. As I mentioned earlier, in European history, mountaintops were long thought to be natural barriers, but when cattle-raising became an important economic activity, these very same mountaintops were transformed into places of encounter. The same was true of rivers, which could divide or unite (or do both things at the same time). Longer genealogies, therefore, could indicate not only the immigration of physical markers of separation from city walls to gated houses and neighborhoods (as Daniel and Carl rightly suggested), but also the use of the same markers to sometimes divide, sometimes unite. The European Union, for example, has long advocated cross-border collaboration. There are now trans-European cities that span more than a single state and villages that belong to two different polities but pretend to be a common polis. Oddly, however, what unites them is nothing other than the border that crosses them

[64] Tamar Herzog, "Terres et déserts, société et sauvagerie: De la communauté en Amérique et en Castille à l'époque moderne," *Annales HSS* 62, no. 3 (2007): 507–538; Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession*.

[65] Arjun Appadurai, "The Production of Locality," in Richard Fardon, ed., *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge* (London, 1995), 204–225; Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*: *Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, 1996), 178–199; Angelo Torre, *Luoghi: La produzione di località in età moderna e contemporánea* (Rome, 2011).

in the middle. Apparently, not only can walls have windows (as in Daniel's example), but borders can have them, too.

Thus, while I agree with Carl that space is only one card in the deck, I would argue that, like all other instruments employed in the creation of place, it is a card whose meaning constantly changes. Rather than expressing a preestablished reality, or even a firm belief, it expresses a vindication, a plan, a desire that may focus on the wish to obtain power, or to define the contours of a place, but whose success (or failure) often depends on other factors.

Keren: Like Daniel, I was not (at least initially) deeply engaged with the canonical literature associated with the "spatial turn." Rather, I was influenced by different reevaluations of space (tied to the broader "transnational turn") reshaping my discipline.[66] Both the critique of area studies and the critique of the nationalist and ethnic paradigms that have long defined African history impacted my thinking and methodology.[67] As Mahmood Mamdani once said, the area studies enterprise treats "state boundaries as boundaries of knowledge, thereby turning political into epistemological boundaries."[68] Some of the most innovative recent work in my field has challenged the racialized, ethnic, and geographic boundaries through which the continent is so often understood.[69]

To echo Carl, the Editor, and others, I agree that we should think of space not simply as context, but as an analytical lens and historical "actor" of sorts with agency of its own.[70] I also concur with the point that walls and borders should be thought of not merely as constraining and restrictive, but as productive and generative. The borders I study—the internal and international boundaries of the colonial and postcolonial state—have reconfigured space in a variety of ways. From the late nineteenth century onward, territorial borders have been key technologies in reinforcing systems of ethnic and racial segregation, confining nomadic populations to the geographic and

[66] Christopher A. Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connelly, Isabel Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol, and Patricia Seed, "*AHR* Conversation: On Transnational History," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1441–1464.

[67] For recent critiques of the dominance of the nationalist paradigm in African studies, see Frederick Cooper, *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State* (Cambridge, Mass., 2014); Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington, Ind., 2011); Sana Aiyar, *Indians in Kenya: The Politics of Diaspora* (Cambridge, Mass., 2015). For recent critiques of the ethnic paradigm and its centrality to African studies, see Kwaku Larbi Korang, "Where Is Africa? When Is the West's Other? Literary Postcoloniality in a Comparative Anthropology," *Diacritics* 34, no. 2 (2004): 38–61; Jemima Pierre, *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race* (Chicago, 2013); Christopher J. Lee, *Unreasonable Histories: Nativism, Multiracial Lives, and the Genealogical Imagination in British Africa* (Durham, N.C., 2014).

[68] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, N.J., 2001), xii.

[69] For the importance of producing African macrohistories grounded in wider geographic areas (and longer time scales), see Steven Feierman, "Colonizers, Scholars, and the Creation of Invisible Histories," in Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture* (Berkeley, Calif., 1999), 182–216; David L. Schoenbrun, "Conjuring the Modern in Africa: Durability and Rupture in Histories of Public Healing between the Great Lakes of East Africa," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (December 2006): 1403–1439; Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community* (Cambridge, 2009); Rudolph T. Ware III, *The Walking Qurʾan: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2014).

[70] For more on non-human agency, see Timothy Mitchell, "Can the Mosquito Speak?," chap. 1 in Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, Calif., 2002), 19–53.

social margins of the state, and creating a stratified regime of mobility. This was true not only in East Africa, but also across the British Empire.

In colonial Africa, borders helped to produce new understandings of sovereignty and indigeneity. My own analyses are deeply indebted to the work of Liisa Malkki (and her theories about the sedentarist metaphysics of the state) and Mahmood Mamdani (who theorizes about the politicization of indigeneity under colonialism).[71] In my first book, I examine the connections between border-crossing, reactionary nativism, and hatred of the "internal stranger."[72] Somalis in Kenya have lived within the boundaries of the country for generations (in many cases, since long before its founding). However, they have often been seen as foreigners and treated as "out of place" within the country.[73] Given my interest in the ways in which certain groups are rendered "foreign," I find Daniel and Carl's points about the relationship between segregation and familiarity/intimacy quite compelling.

I also appreciate Suzanne's suggestion that we examine "the broad spectrum of ways in which boundaries and borders were imagined during the last millennium." The nation-state has introduced (and helped to globalize) certain ideas of space, which have had profound implications for our understandings of belonging, political membership, and citizenship. According to the political theorist William Connolly, the nation-state is predicated on an assumption that "the boundaries of a state must correspond to those of a nation, both of these to a final site of citizen political allegiance, and all three of those to the parameters of a democratic ethos."[74] But this is hardly universal, and these nationalist understandings of space seem parochial when compared to the diverse ways in which borders were imagined and enacted over the last millennium.

Examining the frontiers of the colonial and postcolonial state has also enabled me to take up Connolly's call to resist "overdetermined drives to *overcode* a particular set" of boundaries.[75] Studying these frontiers, I was struck by the multiplicity of spatial logics at play. (Here's where I think there are some interesting parallels between Tamar's research and my own.) I focus much of my attention on nomadic and diasporic populations whose relationship to land, geographies, and larger imagined communities (often deemed "ethnic" and "religious") did not always conform to the demographic, secular, or territorial logics of the state.[76] In the nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for nomadic livestock-herding populations to map out rights to land through access to wells and water resources, rather than to neatly defined territories. Paths, routes, and localities (holy sites, grazing lands) were often more important than "two-dimensional" ideas of space.[77] It was also commonplace for people to trace

[71] Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago, 1995); Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J., 1996).

[72] Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*. On the question of the internal stranger, see Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (London, 2000); and Shira N. Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's Liberal Settler State* (Stanford, Calif., 2013).

[73] Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, 11, 49, 65.

[74] William E. Connolly, "Pluralism, Multiculturalism and the Nation-State: Rethinking the Connections," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 1, no. 1 (1996): 53–73, here 58.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*, 4.

[77] John C. Wood, "Roads to Nowhere: Nomadic Understandings of Space and Ethnicity," in Guünther Schlee and Elizabeth E. Watson, eds., *Changing Identifications and Alliances in North-East Af-*

their descent through genealogies to important (and often spiritually empowered) patriarchs (and in some cases matriarchs), rather than tying their origins to specific homelands.[78] So in trying to move beyond a statist understanding of space, it might be worthwhile to consider a more diverse and expansive understanding of territory, geography, and borders.

Bill: I was initially trained as an architect, so the classics of the spatial turn—especially Lefebvre, Certeau, Harvey, and Soja—have been part of my intellectual life since the beginning.[79] But in architecture there was no mention of the spatial turn as such; it was simply spatial theory. As I changed paths and became a historian, I found it helpful to see these texts, especially Lefebvre and Harvey, less as part of a spatial canon and more as part of the broader neo-Marxism of the 1960s and 1970s, with heated debates about the relationship between an economic base and a political-intellectual superstructure. Was space simply a reflection of a particular economic system, or was it something more autonomous that could act as a force with its own logic?

What I noticed, however, is that on all sides, even beyond the neo-Marxists, the basic social dynamic is between top-down design and bottom-up resistance. The former could be called "abstract space," "representations of space," or "strategic," while the latter was "differential space," "spatial practice," and "tactical." I see something similar in Carl's latest response, and perhaps in Tamar's as well: attempts to structure space are intentional strategies of power, and they are often thwarted and always impermanent. This is a dialectic of attack and riposte, where borders are weapons.

But as useful as it is to distinguish the spatiality of intention from the spatiality of practice—and it is very useful indeed—my own research has not found the design vs. resistance dynamic to capture what I see in my sources. On the one hand, designers—that is, technocrats, elites, and colonizers of various stripes—can never fully reshape the world and are often unaware of the larger implications of their creations; on the other, while I did see some overt resistance, more often I saw appropriation, adaptation, or simply *use*. In other words, instead of seeing space only as a form of social confrontation, I came to see it more as an infrastructure: a shared resource, created through a contingent process of success and failure, open to creative and unforeseen uses. As with all infrastructures, freedom and constraint can never be separated, as different spatialities always favor certain activities over others even as their uses inevitably defy expectation. This is a trialectic of design, construction, and use, where borders shape what's possible and their material specifics really matter.

Let me make this more concrete. My recent book *After the Map: Cartography, Navigation, and the Transformation of Territory in the Twentieth Century* focuses on various

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rica, vol. 1: *Ethiopia and Kenya* (New York, 2009), 225–240, here 235. See also Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between "smooth" and "striated" space. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York, 1986). Christopher L. Miller has accused Deleuze and Guattari of replicating romantic, Orientalist, and colonial ethnographic views of nomadic and non-Western people. Miller, "The Postidentitarian Predicament in the Footnotes of *A Thousand Plateaus*: Nomadology, Anthropology, and Authority," *Diacritics* 23, no. 3 (1993): 6–35.

[78] For the importance of genealogies to the Indian Ocean world, see Engseng Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley, Calif., 2006).

[79] I cite the neo-Marxists above; the outlier is Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley, Calif., 1984; original French ed. 1980).

attempts since the late nineteenth century to overcome national boundaries with new forms of geographic knowledge and spatial technology. These internationalizing and globalizing projects could be cartographic, mathematical, or electronic—maps, coordinate systems, and GPS—each with a different way of crossing borders. In all cases, I found that a social model of aggression vs. resistance was not a terribly helpful way to understand how borders were being reshaped.

For example, when the U.S. Army created a new alternative to latitude and longitude in 1948 that could be used for precision targeting anywhere on the planet (thus globalizing a project first initiated by the French during World War I), the goal was to create a purely military system that would be used throughout the non-communist world. I often get asked how this project was resisted by reluctant allies wary of U.S. hegemony, and I do have some evidence of this kind of pushback. But what I saw much more often was the system being used far beyond what the U.S. Army had in mind. It wasn't just used for global military coordination, but also for domestic surveying (even when mathematically improper), global scientific cataloguing in archaeology or zoology, international treaties, and eventually even recreational hiking. I saw something similar with GPS and its predecessors. Instead of the British and Germans destroying each other's boundary-crossing navigation systems during World War II, they borrowed them for their own purposes. Instead of the U.S. Department of Defense maintaining control of GPS as a closed military system, both its initial existence and its present-day ubiquity are products of its civilianization and its hybridization with other technologies. In all cases, I did not see any sharp dichotomy between globalizing forces and national territoriality—attack and resistance—but rather borders being challenged by new forms of spatial infrastructure that were sponsored by states and reinforced or reshaped by commercial and civilian uptake. And I saw the agency of these infrastructures exceeding not just designers' intentions, but users' intentions as well.

So zooming out to the Editor's question, I agree that it's crucial to see walls, borders, and boundaries as part of the active shaping of a socially productive and generative spatiality. But when we think of how space is shaped—or, conversely, how borders are spatial—I don't think we should only focus on how space is openly contested. Instead, I tend to see spatiality at its most powerful precisely when its power goes unnoticed, and when diverse users participate in (and inevitably redirect) a project of bordering—or in my case, debordering—without great fanfare. This is how late-twentieth-century forms of unbounded subjectivity and governance can happily coexist with national spaces that remain quite consequential. National borders can structure identity, travel, and migration even as GPS enables new forms of transnational intervention, both military and civilian. Seeing space in terms of infrastructure, and not just in terms of identity, meaning, or contestation, is how I understand what borders can produce. They are productive through their *use*, and what's produced are power relations of access, mobility, and difference.

Tamar: As a follow-up, may I say that I agree that the complex dynamics that create a "place" can never be summarized by a top-down or bottom-up approach. Instead, a plethora of actors are involved, who rarely form (or wish to form) stable factions, or even necessarily have a clear vision (or a consensus) about a goal to achieve. Space,

furthermore, is but one aspect of the relationship that ties actors and constructs communities ("places"). In my own research, I mostly observed how peasants and colonizers made claims not for space, but for usage rights: to collect wood, let cattle graze, or dominate indigenous peoples. They rarely cared about "constructing their community" or "defining their territories," but their daily activities (whatever those were and whatever reasons led these actors to perform them) ended up defining both. These actors sometimes were aware of it, sometimes not; they sometimes tied their activities to bordering, sometimes not; sometimes they acted because it was useful for them, and sometimes they responded to what others initiated. But whatever the case was, when a resource became contested, I mostly wanted to understand why. In other words, if borders shaped what was possible, what was possible shaped the border. When "my" peasants moved from gathering to cultivation, their relations to the land had mutated. Fixing a border might have been the last thing on their minds, but the new economic activity they performed (to take but one example) did generate a new definition of who they were, and what their space was. This change could go unnoticed, or provoke contestation. But the question of whether contestation occurred had very little to do with what was done, by whom; instead, it was related to the vision, ability, context, understanding, and wishes of those watching. That a military technology invented in the U.S. was used for other purposes signals to me that it filled a need for others, who then used it for their own purposes, taking it in new directions; but if this happened, it also signals that the U.S. did not mind, or it could not mind. This indicates that there was something (legally, socially, economically, etc.) that, over the years and as this technology underwent changes, did not promote or allow resistance.

Suzanne: There's no question that space is generative, producing identity through exclusion, and it's useful to ask how walls, borders, and boundaries help to configure and define space. A crucial point of reference for this process in the premodern setting is Dominique Iogna-Prat's *Ordonner et exclure*, which both in itself and in the debate it engendered did much to reveal how the manipulation of space—real, physical spaces and also metaphorical or symbolic spaces—generates identity.[80] For Iogna-Prat, the point of focus was Cluniac identity, which could readily be extended to a broader consideration of monastic identity in general and even Christian identity itself, at least as understood and constructed in the twelfth-century context. Iogna-Prat demonstrated clearly, using the Cluniac case, how the act of defining what is excluded produces a construct of the self—both singular, individual identity and collective, group identity. His foundational work was complemented by a host of related contributions, perhaps most strikingly the writings of Jeremy Cohen, whose 1999 book *Living Letters of the Law* revealed the intersection of the exclusions of the Judaic "other" and the Muslim or "Saracen" other, both in the service of constructing and reinforcing Christian identities.[81]

These accounts of the spatial substrate of the discourse of premodern alterity have

[80] Dominique Iogna-Prat, *Ordonner et exclure: Cluny et la société chrétienne face à l'hérésie, au judaïsme et à l'islam, 1000–1150* (Paris, 1998); translated into English as *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam, 1000–1150*, trans. Graham Robert Edwards (Ithaca, N.Y., 2002).

[81] Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley, Calif., 1999).

shaped medieval scholarship in significant ways, and have given rise more recently to studies of alterity that focus more on the ethnographic dimensions of the phenomenon.[82] Just in the last few months, however, this spatial discourse concerning alterity has taken on a new resonance within the field of medieval history, and medieval studies more generally. In part, this is the result of the increasing focus on subaltern identities in the premodern setting, and on the ways in which the excluded "others" of medieval Europe—Jews, Muslims, those who were seen as non-normative in terms of sexuality or gender—have become more central to contemporary scholarship. In part, it is the result of a shift in the North American political climate that is felt within universities and colleges as well as elsewhere, and which is being felt within our scholarly organizations and academic fora.

Here I want to pause briefly to reflect on a caveat that we were offered early in this process: that is, in thinking about walls, borders, and boundaries, we might wish to avoid overly political or contentious contemporary resonances of this theme, focusing instead on the purely historical and methodological implications of these terms. In this case, however, our discipline and our methodologies are very directly impacted by boundary-policing within the field, and literal concerns about physical space—at conferences, within academic institutions, and in public fora. Who speaks, and who is obliged to listen, have become central questions within our culture, within our workplaces, within our communities. This phenomenon emerged dramatically and energetically over the last few weeks in the aftermath of one of the major annual events in the field of medieval studies, the July 2017 International Medieval Conference, which was centered on the theme of "Otherness." Medieval studies has become a magnet for white supremacist audiences, both those drawn from the general public, who are attracted by the novelty goods displayed at such conferences, and those elements that are embedded within our own academic institutions. The Leeds organizers have reflected on the aftermath of this event, and a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* places the Leeds event in a broader context.[83] Right-wing media picked up on this article, in turn, reworking the content to ridicule the efforts of scholars, including the "Medievalists of Color" collective, which worked to organize roundtable events at Leeds and other medieval studies conferences (including the annual North American gathering, the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in May 2017, and the annual meeting of the Medieval Academy in April 2017). (I won't link to these right-wing sites, but they can readily be found.) To their very great credit, several scholarly organizations—including the Medieval Academy— have shared with their membership the statement by Medievalists of Color, along with a reaffirmation of their commitment to build and strengthen a more inclusive field.[84]

[82] Shirin A. Khanmohamadi, *In Light of Another's Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2013); Kim M. Phillips, *Before Orientalism: Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245–1510* (Philadelphia, 2013); Joan-Pau Rubiés, *Medieval Ethnographies: European Perceptions of the World Beyond* (London, 2009).

[83] Statement by Axel Müller, Director, International Medieval Congress, https://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2017.html; J. Clara Chan, "Medievalists, Recoiling From White Supremacy, Try to Diversify the Field," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 16, 2017, http://www.chronicle.com/article/Medievalists-Recoiling-From/240666.

[84] "On Race and Medieval Studies," Medieval Academy Blog, August 2, 2017, http://www.themedievalacademyblog.org/on-race-and-medieval-studies/.

What has been revealed by this rapidly unfolding dynamic is the extent to which our own disciplinary structures participate in the building of conceptual boundaries that limit and exclude participation by those who bring ethnic, racial, and other diversity to the table. While this phenomenon is evident in broad terms within the discipline of medieval studies, it is particularly acute within certain subfields, such as early medieval European history (evident in the Leeds context) and "Anglo-Saxon studies." The affiliation of this disciplinary label with certain strands of white supremacist thought—both historically, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and in political discourse today, right now—has caused scholars who previously described themselves as "Anglo-Saxonists" to reconsider what this might mean in terms of the current political climate. The biennial meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, which took place July 31–August 4, included consideration of a recent proposal from within the membership to consider these white supremacist affinities of the term. To what extent is the self-acknowledged overwhelming whiteness of the discipline the result of happenstance, and to what extent is it reified by the conceptual boundaries of the field?

It is all too easy to relegate our consideration of walls, borders, and boundaries to the realm of the abstract, and it may be reasonable to try to draw a line that separates contentious political phenomena—the refugee crisis, Brexit, separation barriers—from our discussion here. But the debate concerning who is allowed to speak and who must listen—who is central to the discipline and who is an outsider—is on fire right now within the discipline of medieval studies, a field that in this context may be the proverbial canary in the coal mine. The walls that lie outside our institutions are also present within them, even though they may be—for the moment—only periodically visible.

AHR **Editor:** Suzanne's comment rightly brings us to what most readers will likely consider fundamental and most urgent about our topic, "walls, borders, and boundaries": the role these "key technologies" (Keren) serve, to exclude and divide or, conversely, to protect and privilege. And I am grateful to her for reminding us how these "walls that lie outside our institutions are also present within them." (Only someone unfamiliar with the enormously creative—and sometimes contentious—intellectual culture of medievalists would be surprised that this sort of chastening call both to the present and to our own profession would come from a medieval scholar.) Boundary-policing, she observes, plays a direct role in our "disciplines and methodologies"—and in our scholarly journals, as I have been reminded. (The whole debate over open access is charged with accusations of exclusion, elitism, paywalls, and the like.)

Suzanne's account of what has transpired among medievalists alerts us to the relevance of boundary-making among academics; it also suggests a question I would like to pursue as a way of concluding this conversation. She notes how the subfield of Anglo-Saxon studies has been seized upon by white supremacists for obvious purposes—something that, I infer, has caused many students to reconsider the political and racial implications of this venerable designation. So here we have a discipline, medieval studies, increasingly characterized by openness and an interest in the "other"—clearly, thereby, breaking down boundaries—witnessing a counter-trend in its midst, a closing-off and retrenchment on the part of a politically motivated subgroup. My

question is whether we want to entertain this as exemplifying a dynamic that we observe elsewhere, across historical time and space. I know we want to avoid overarching narratives, simplified accounts, and teleological histories. Nevertheless, we have alluded, for example, to the dynamic of globalization creating, intrinsic to this process, zones of heightened control; or the opening of imperial spaces giving rise to segregated cities; or (as Keren noted citing Wendy Brown) the "frenzy" of wall-building after the Cold War as a reaction to the waning of nation-states' sovereignty; or the building boom of gated communities in the wake of desegregation; or, to return to Suzanne's example, the challenge of intellectual openness fostering its opposite; or even (to extend the dynamic) the back-and-forth movement of rites of passage (thinking more of Victor Turner here than of van Gennep) from structure to communitas back to structure. In short, in your experience, is it useful and valid to think about this kind of dialectic as intrinsic to the history and anthropology of "walls, borders, and boundaries"?

Daniel: Suzanne referred to "boundary-policing within the field," and I concur that this is an excellent starting point for the final round of our conversation. I generally find it remarkable that so much of our knowledge economy—whether academic or not—employs metaphors and concepts associated with boundaries (and their protection): the Editor already pointed to "paywalls," but one might also mention the idea of academic publications and their editors as "gatekeepers." Not to mention the profusion of liminal metaphors in the digital world more generally: the countless "portals" and "gateways" of the Internet, the myriad "passwords" and "access keys" that "unlock" our accounts and software, and of course the "firewalls" that are supposed to protect us from hacking and unwanted intrusion. Given that the brave new digital world is often said to be all about openness and open access, this lexicon of digital fortification is quite remarkable! Perhaps an example of the dialectic of openness and closure that the Editor has asked us to reflect on?

On a more general note, I have long been intrigued by the question of why, exactly, in our time it is common to think of openness as something that must be intrinsically (and morally) superior to all other forms of knowledge circulation. There certainly seems to be a gulf between the invocation of openness as an ideal, on the one hand, and the undeniable persistence—sometimes even proliferation—of boundaries, on the other. In my research I have tried to approach this question from different perspectives (especially in my studies on secrecy), and it also plays into my current book project (a cultural history of transparency).[85] I agree with the Editor that one can think of the relation between openness and closure as a dialectical process. I'm less sure I'd call it a "back-and-forth," at least not in the sense of a pendulum that swings from openness to closure or vice versa. Things get most interesting (I find) when these categories are entangled, and the history (and anthropology) of "open secrets" strikes me as a particularly intriguing case.

But to return to the question of how the dialectic between openness and closure manifests itself in spatial contexts: as we have discussed, there seem to be very few cases of borders and walls that proved impermeable; at the same time, total openness

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[85] Daniel Jütte, *The Age of Secrecy: Jews, Christians, and the Economy of Secrets, 1400–1800*, trans. Jeremiah Riemer (New Haven, Conn, 2015).

is much easier to invoke than to achieve. Here again, then, the dynamic at work is less that of a pendulum, and more one characterized by internalization and displacement.

The city walls I talked about are, I think, a case in point. In most European cities, the walls were razed in the nineteenth century, sometimes with great enthusiasm. This is remarkable because in the heyday of neo-Gothic architecture, all kinds of "medieval" buildings were reconstructed or built from scratch. Not the walls, however: in most cases, they had disappeared for good. The idea of the city as a walled space—a powerful idea for centuries, if not millennia—came to be replaced by the ideal of the "open city." But, as we discussed, the open city is by no means devoid of boundaries. We talked about immaterial boundaries (say, class boundaries) that permeate urban space: they might be more subtle than the walls of an earlier age, but they are hardly less effective. (As far as America is concerned, I am always struck when I come to a city where I am told to avoid an area beyond a certain street.) And as mentioned in an earlier reply, there are also the very tangible walls that surround the "gated communities" at the periphery. These two examples might illustrate what I meant by internalization and displacement.

The disappearance of city walls was no doubt a major caesura in the urban history of Europe. The initiators and supporters depicted the dismantling of the walls as an act of liberation, but of course this does not mean that we as historians should adopt the same language. Where contemporaries saw liberation, we historians also see loss. And by loss I don't even mean the disappearance of the physical structure, but rather the waning sense of what it means to enter and navigate a city. Richard Sennett has a point when he argues that urban space "has become a means to the end of pure motion—we now measure urban spaces in terms of how easy it is to drive through them [and] to get out of them."[86]

Of course, we cannot resurrect the walls of former times; nor should we. What we are left with is their history. And that's where we as historians can make a productive contribution—not least by complicating binary notions about walls and other spaces of demarcation. Walls per se are neither a good nor a bad thing. They fulfill a particular function in a particular societal context. Whether this function is positive or negative depends on what people do with these walls and what they expect the walls to do (not necessarily the same thing, as we have seen!). In the most interesting cases, walls and boundaries might have effects that were unforeseen and that prove to be productive or creative. I entirely agree with Bill, who suggested that we see space not so much as "a form of social confrontation," but rather as "a shared resource, created through a contingent process of success and failure, open to creative and unforeseen uses."

What does this mean in practice? I think that one task of the historian is to explain why walls that have lost their function might still be worthy of (partial) preservation—not only for scholarly, but also (and more importantly) for educational purposes. As a historian (and a citizen of Germany), I think that the near-complete dismantling of the Berlin Wall was not a terribly wise decision. At least Berlin has more recently developed a "Berlin Wall Trail"—now a highly popular attraction and the kind of project through which we as historians can increase awareness of the role that walls and

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[86] Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York, 1994), 17–18.

boundaries have played (and continue to play) in the making of particular places and communities.

Bill: The violence of last weekend's Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, following Suzanne's report of the controversies in medieval and Anglo-Saxon studies, must, I fear, inevitably influence our discussion here.[87] What we've seen in the last few days has been a vivid reminder of how socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion operate in ways that can be both crisp and wall-like (the Mason-Dixon line as a persistent metonym for regional division) and also, at the same, more diffuse (bronze statues in prominent public locations). Space immediately invokes identity, law, politics, and on and on.

Also at stake in the last few days has been the macro-narrative of U.S. history: If the moral arc of history is bending, what is it bending toward? The Editor's question and Daniel's response raise something similar: Are there macro-narratives of walls, borders, and boundaries? If so, how do they bend? If not, how else might we characterize what we see historically?

One of the first points I try to make in my undergraduate seminar ("Cartography, Territory, and Identity") is that there is no macrohistorical trend from ill-defined frontiers to sharp "modern" boundaries. Instead, we see shifts in the scale and meaning of both fuzzy and sharp transitions. There are countless examples of sharp boundaries in the premodern era, although very few that look like the kind of political boundaries we might recognize, and there are many good examples of boundaries becoming less sharp (though perhaps not less precise) today. The cases I've explored in my own research have, thus far, tended to be official, such as the new categories of territory created by the UN Law of the Sea (which have created what I call a "feathered edge" of sovereignty in the oceans) or the layering of regional administrative blocs over and within national territories (which have proliferated in lockstep with the hardening of the nation-state ideal). But there are also others, less official, that I am just beginning to investigate now, such as forms of late-twentieth-century bioregionalism or the geographic prejudices of the environmental sciences. The twentieth century certainly does not represent the apotheosis of the crisp, thin line.

In other words, just as Daniel asks us to question why the ideal of "openness" seems to have such mega-historical force—even a kind of beneficent inevitability—I have also questioned the common assumption that sharp boundaries are modern (and that modernity is about sharpness). A trend toward sharpness implies a trend toward separation and homogeneity: the partitioning of the world into ethnic nation-states. Putting these two questions together, already we see a familiar dialectic, where modernity is simultaneously about spatial openness and spatial partition, depending on the context or the motivation. And I think we can see this at play in Charlottesville, too.

The Editor suggested the idea of a "back-and-forth"; Daniel instead suggested "internalization and displacement." My own metaphor, while somewhat unrefined, is that of whack-a-mole. Bordering wanes in one domain only to pop up again somewhere else—at a different scale, with different official status, as a continuation but

[87] The rally took place on August 11–12, 2017. It was organized to oppose the removal of a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee.

also a redirection of the original power dynamic. Internal administrative borders become external international borders; village boundaries become property lines; mapping meant to overcome boundaries creates its own in turn.

One final thought, which I've been mulling over during the last few rounds of discussion, is about the relationship between walls, borders, and boundaries and Waldo Tobler's "first law of geography," which he proposed, only somewhat tongue-in-cheek, in 1970. It states that "everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things."[88] Walls, borders, and boundaries are meant to influence this dynamic of near and far. Walls make nearby points more different, while a well-bounded territory is also designed to make its internal contents more similar. As part of our final question, I find Tobler's law helpful as a way of thinking about what we might call spatial entropy. The teleologies of bordering and anti-bordering are both low-entropy states, with a great deal of order. We should expect—and as historians we can offer good evidence—that these low-entropy situations take a great deal of work to sustain and are unlikely to persist in their pure state.

So as much as I might want to agree with Theodore Parker (and Martin Luther King Jr.) that the moral arc of the universe bends toward justice, I ultimately find myself agreeing with Ta-Nehisi Coates that the arc instead bends toward chaos.[89] Crucially, however, this means a state of maximum entropy, not a state of maximum injustice. In spatial terms, this means that neither openness nor partition is the neutral state, and I see the arc of entropy driving the dialectic that the Editor invokes: we see the churning of a lumpy, variegated space, as projects of both openness and separation are eroded and replaced by others.

Tamar: Daniel and Bill rightly remind us that modernity (as a discourse, a project, and a practice) was plagued with contradictions. If, on the one hand, "progress" heralded the breaking of (some) boundaries, it also involved the making of many others. Yet, neither openness nor closure has an intrinsic value. Divisions, separations, walls, and boundaries are not necessarily bad; nor is their absence always good. Equality does not require sameness. It only demands that we condemn attitudes, behaviors, and speech that establish inappropriate divisions. As happens with all other boundaries, the one separating what is relevant from what is not in each given case is in constant flux and is subject to negotiation. The French Revolution abolished distinctions by estate, declaring them both illegitimate and inconsequential. Since then, we have also banished distinctions (and I may be forgetting some) by race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and age. In the meantime, we also created others.

Divisions also permeate our academic work. The past we wish to reconstruct is impossibly dense in contexts, actors, places, times, and meanings. To describe, analyze, and understand it, we carve a path, allowing our vision to go only so deep, so far, and so wide. We deliberately and artificially stop at a certain moment, as if we have hit a wall. Although our method is not aimed at exclusion, it can lead to the construction of

[88] W. R. Tobler, "A Computer Movie Simulating Urban Growth in the Detroit Region," *Economic Geography* 46, Supplement (June 1970): 234–240, here 236.

[89] Ta-Nahisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York, 2015), 28. His more memorable statement came on the *Daily Show* on July 23, 2015. After Jon Stewart said to him, "You don't have that feeling that the arc of history may be long, but it bends toward justice," Coates replied, "I don't. I think it bends toward chaos."

true barriers. This also happens when academic specializations (geographical, thematic, by period, and so forth) are read as frontiers that should defend those on the inside against others who, on this occasion, are classified as outsiders. From this perspective, intellectual communities are not very different from the places I described in my earlier responses. They too are very fragile constructions that require constant work to create, elicit, and maintain a sense of belonging, including border-making and surveillance. The main peril such communities face is the possibility that they could be appropriated. This danger it is at the heart of the challenges that medievalists—but also many Americans—face today. What to do when someone does things in your name that you would spend a lifetime protesting against?

Back to the macro-narrative of walls, borders, and boundaries, I fear they tell no clear story and have no clear teleology. As a tool, as a symbol, as a claim, and as a practice, they have a plethora of meanings, and although there are times when they may matter greatly, such is not always the case. How and why they matter also mutates. Frost, whom I invoked in my first response, seemed to argue that nature does not like walls. However, nature may destroy some walls, but it also fabricates, displaces, and changes the form of others. Humans do the same. The main difference is perhaps that humans sometimes remember the wall even after it is long gone or has radically mutated. On occasion they continue to assign to it importance and significance. The interpretation of political events in the United States often references a line dividing the North from the South, but even though such a division is on our minds, it is unclear that it carries (or should carry) the same connotations that it had 50, 100, or 150 years ago. Geography matters, but the old frontier has evolved and new frontiers have emerged. At stake, to hijack what Daniel described with regard to the Berlin Wall, is what role past walls play in the present, why they are invoked, by whom, and for what end.

Keren: I would also like to thank Suzanne for reminding us of the political significance of this topic and its relationship to the "border work" that occurs within our own academic disciplines and subfields. My own (African studies) has been rife with debates of a similar nature. The current composition of many African studies programs in the United States and Europe is partly the result of external structural factors (for example, class barriers to entering Ph.D. programs and the lack of adequate funding for African universities). But I would be remiss to neglect the boundaries within the academy itself, and the internal forms of gatekeeping that keep the field exclusive and often alienate scholars of color and working-class students and graduates.

As in medieval studies, efforts to rethink the area studies paradigm have existed in tandem with attempts to make the field more inclusive. Many proponents of Africana (or African American and African studies) departments argue that studying the continent within a pan-African framework would open the field to black radical traditions that have been historically sidelined.[90] The Department of Middle Eastern, South

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[90] Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing the Black Radical Tradition, from W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral* (Lanham, Md., 2010). For more on the controversy over African studies, see Philip D. Curtin, "Ghettoizing African History," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 3, 1995, A44; Black Historians' Response, "The Significance of Race in African Studies," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 7, 1995, B3; and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, "The Perpetual Solitudes and Crises of African Studies in the United States," *Africa Today* 44, no. 2 (1997): 193–210.

Asian, and African Studies at Columbia University offers yet another model. This department evolved out of efforts to rethink the older, now-outdated Oriental Studies Department.[91] Still other historians are keen on positioning the continent within transcontinental regional histories. (Abdul Sheriff, for example, approaches the history of East Africa within the broader context of the Indian Ocean world.)[92] In light of V. Y. Mudimbe's critique of "Africa" as a category of European provenance, there is conceptual value in looking at these older geographic spaces.[93]

The debate over the future of African studies, thus, is not so much about the removal of disciplinary boundaries as about their remaking. All disciplinary fields have constraints and contours, and this will inevitably involve exclusions. The question is whether these boundaries can be rethought in response to new research, to better resonate with contemporary theoretical and political concerns, and to be more inclusive toward historically marginalized groups.

This brings me back me to the Editor's questions: Can these contemporary disciplinary debates serve as a metaphor or mirror for broader patterns of historical change? Does the seemingly dialectic process (opening and closure) that is reshaping fields like medieval studies exemplify "a dynamic that we observe elsewhere, across historical time and space"? I agree with what others, such as Bill and Daniel, have already said: namely, that the waxing and waning, making and remaking of borders does not fit any neat linear trajectory. I also appreciate Bill's critique of the model of top-down power and bottom-up resistance. Bordering practices are probably better thought of as more neutral and unpredictable processes.

Thus, in imagining more progressive futures, I would suggest thinking not in terms of generalizable abstractions or even macrohistorical processes, but rather through specific historical examples. In this conversation, several of us have cited contingent moments of political and institutional opening when boundaries and/or walls were able to be reconfigured and reimagined. How do these case studies help us think through our present moment? In my own work, I examine efforts by Somalis to amend and/or transgress colonial and postcolonial frontiers. Over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Somali and northern Kenyan political thinkers envisioned diverse political futures. Analyzing these heterodox political models is one way of upending teleologies, and of grasping the critical resonance between the past (and "past futures") and the present.[94] For instance, during the heyday of nationalism in the 1960s, many pan-Somali proponents (not unlike Kurdish nationalists) sought to unite various territories in Northeast Africa into a single nation-state. While this vi-

[91] Subah Dayal, Wendell Marsh, Keren Weitzberg, and Alden Young, "Cypher on the Future of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Africa/a Studies," *The Martyr's Shuffle*, April 20, 2017, https://www.the martyrsshuffle.com/single-post/Cypher-on-the-Future-of-Middle-Eastern-South-Asian-and-African/a-Studies.

[92] Abdul Sheriff, *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar: Integration of an East African Commercial Empire into the World Economy, 1770–1873* (Athens, Ohio, 1987). See also Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley, Calif., 2008); Michael N. Pearson, *Port Cities and Intruders: The Swahili Coast, India, and Portugal in the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore, 1998); and Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse, eds., *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* (London, 2007).

[93] V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, Ind., 1988).

[94] Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (1985; repr., New York, 2004).

sion has lost much of its political saliency in recent decades, the idea of a "Greater So-malia" continues to be reimagined. Today, many Somalis seek citizenship rights in Kenya, while at the same time participating in more deterritorialized, globalized So-mali networks. So while the physical borders of the Kenyan state have remained in-tact, people continue to find ways to cross and think beyond existing national bound-aries.[95]

Daniel's comments also reminded me of Derrida's thoughts on open cities and cit-ies of asylum, especially as they relate to a renewed ethics of hospitality. Derrida (in-sofar as one can paraphrase his ideas) describes hospitality as a kind of paradox. An ethics of unconditional hospitality should inform and animate our politics and our very notion of what it means to welcome the stranger. Yet hospitality must inevitably have limits, as fully opening one's borders to the "other" is unfeasible. In addition, overly utopian visions threaten to undermine efforts to implement meaningful changes at the level of policy and the law.[96] These tensions, inherent to the very idea of asylum, must be constantly attended to. It's perhaps in this spirit that we should think about the history and anthropology of walls, borders, and boundaries.

Carl: I will frame my answer to the Editor's last question within a response to Bill Rankin's very interesting comments concerning top-down versus bottom-up analyses and the distinction between resistance and "unforeseen use." I found Bill's discussion of his work on mapping to be fascinating and challenging. It provides very convincing examples for his points, and I largely agree with him more generally. I will also push back gently on the impulse to call wall-building "neutral," Keren, no matter how "unpredictable" it surely can be. I realize I may not have fully understood the mean-ing of "neutral" you intended.

Bill is right on for my subject: No historian of urban segregation should ever fall into the trap of polarized top-and-bottom narratives. Dividing a city, and life in a di-vided city, as my research in *Segregation* amply demonstrates, is always something that involves many competing groups with a wide range of relationships to the means of spatial production, including the modes of wall and boundary production.

I don't know if we know enough to say this, but Bill is probably also right that in cities, most urban residents at most times have to be content with using existing large-scale urban spaces, particularly large walled spaces, which are so expensive and so hard, in their own best interests, even if often in ways that other, more powerful par-ties, no matter who they are, hoped would not be possible. But that still leaves an enormously wide range of possibilities.

What do we call those possibilities? Like Bill, I've always found the words "resis-tance" and "transgressive" too narrow and too freighted with left-heroism to serve as a catchall for the wide range of behavior that, for example, lies within the power of anyone who can move across space and sometimes across even the hardest walls. Bill's "unforeseen use" seems more capacious and gestures to a wider context ("unfore-

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[95] I expand upon this point in Weitzberg, *We Do Not Have Borders*.

[96] Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif., 2000); Derrida, "Hostipitality," trans. Barry Stocker with Forbes Mor-lock, *Angelaki: Journal of Theoretical Humanities* 5, no. 3 (2000): 3–18 (note that the title of this article is a neologism coined by Derrida by combining the terms "hostility" and "hospitality"); Derrida, *On Cos-mopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London, 2003).

seen" presumably by someone more powerful who matters to the situation at hand), but it shouldn't be used to deny that just because lower-power people can't always build, destroy, or police space in their own interests, they can in some instances make vast changes in the spatial order of cities, including, rarely, some walls and boundaries.

Three examples will have to suffice to give some idea of the range of possibilities: First, the ordinary residents of Berlin who rained sledgehammer blows down upon the Deustche Demokratische Republik's (DDR) infamous concrete wall through town. Today's open-air Berlin Wall Memorial, alluded to by Daniel, devoted to what remains of the wall along the Bernauer Strasse, includes a small cross-section of the entire DDR security zone (two walls, actually, separated by a no-go zone once used to run dogs and place vehicular obstacles, the whole thing festooned with towers for guards and snipers) that is framed and cut off from view by two newly built perpendicular walls, both much higher and stronger, designed to entrap and control the zone of infamy between them, and create a space in which to contemplate evil. The project demonstrates just how one powerful and confident wall-building national state, the Bundesrepublik, can amplify the effects of the sledgehammer wielders, and totally turn the tables on a defeated one. More overwhelming to the global urban spatial order are the actions of some of the millions of the world's poorest people who cross property boundaries to build shantytowns or "slums" in today's megacities. Such crossings often create new stark boundaries—aerial photos of the line between slum and definitely-non-slums don't lie, and slum-dwellers remain among the most vulnerable people on earth. But it is pretty hard to minimize their collective impact on urban divides or massive spaces everywhere in the Global South (their forebears still ringed Global North Paris with *bidonvilles* just sixty years ago). Finally, there are wall-crossers everywhere, such as the one in the accompanying photo, which I shot during a full-on traffic jam in Jerusalem in 2015. (See Figure 1.) "Unforeseen use" actually seems too small a term for them.

Yes, walls and policed boundaries often help create historic continuity, and yes, the contingencies and contradictions created by the multifarious conflicts that both produce and are produced by those walls and boundaries can leave us grasping for words to adequately fathom their ambiguities. In the midst of all that, though, I will stick my neck out, perhaps foolishly. It's not presentist to say that there is one fact that crosses all boundaries of time, place, and academic field: some people have more control over creating walls and boundaries than others. That power is ultimately, if only partly, rooted in the very real capacity to cause stone to be placed upon stone, or to cause a body and a pointed weapon to be placed on an imaginary line. It is also heavily, if maybe not universally, rooted in an overdetermined and almost clichéd discursive strategy: the wall builder's capacity to claim walls' indubitably ancient and foundational protective function, even when its far-overriding existential purpose is to enable the imposition of more power and possibly more suffering over more space and more people. World history, like our contemporary reality, contains too many stories of extremely powerful people howling about highly personalized victimization and self-defense in the name of conquest and slaughter. Walls and boundaries are just too deeply implicated in that history to be let off the hook for all their very real ambiguities. Inequality of power, highly layered and difficult as its measure may be in

FIGURE 1: Wall-crossers in the midst of a traffic jam, Jerusalem, 2015. The ease with which people can cross even this fearsome section of the Separation Barrier between Israel and the Occupied West Bank decisively brings into question the determinacy of walls' physicality. Routine acts such as this also prove to many that the Barrier's official purpose, self-defense—based on a rationale for wall-building that has prehistoric roots—is actually a cover for conquests of Palestinian territory. Photo by Carl Nightingale, 2015.

practice, must remain the basis for our moral evaluation of all human-built limits on space.

Suzanne: It's been a pleasure to participate in this conversation: I've learned so much from all of you, and it's been fascinating to see this exchange unfold against the backdrop of events both within our political culture, especially in the wake of Charlottesville, and within our discipline, involving internal fault lines related to race, ethnicity, and gender as these align with renascent white supremacy.

The Editor's question picked up on some comments that I had made on recent developments within medieval studies, especially the subfield of Anglo-Saxon studies, stating that it "has been seized upon by white supremacists for obvious purposes— something that, I infer, has caused many students to reconsider the political and racial implications of this venerable designation." I would nuance this a bit, to say that it's not so much that the academic field has been "seized upon" as that this nationalist impulse has always been deeply rooted within the field, and this is part of what has made the subject area so attractive to white supremacists. In other words, the tendency has always been there: it's that the shift in the political climate has rendered visible certain elements within the field of medieval history, including explicitly racist, Islamophobic,

and antisemitic aspects, which were already immanent. Perhaps the siloed nature of academia, which several of us have noted, is part of what has obscured our awareness of this dangerous potential within medieval historical studies; more generally, the boundaries that we erect between disciplines and between the university and the wider world may have prevented us from seeing the ways that popular culture adopts and, sometimes, weaponizes tropes from the premodern past. The rise of blogging and open-access publication may encourage academics to break out of our silos, but it remains to be seen what impact we can have through greater public humanities engagement.

In this context, Daniel's comments on the virtual walls and boundaries that circumscribe the flow of knowledge are striking. He draws attention to the terminology of digital access—paywalls, gatekeepers, portals, etc.—stating that "this lexicon of digital fortification is quite remarkable." This point is, I think, a crucial one: the boundaries that limit access, in terms of both who is able to be published (or speak) and who is able to access those publications (or to hear), are currently very much up for renegotiation. This can be seen on a large scale, with economic negotiations at the national level (as in Germany's current standoff with Elsevier), as well as on a smaller scale, with the rise of various new "start-up" models for open access publishing.[97] If we want the intensive research and analytical thought that is carried out within the walls of our academic institutions to have an impact upon the wider world, it is imperative to engage with these digital platforms and to work toward better models of access and exchange.

Turning from the metaphorical walls and boundaries that limit and police access to information to literal, material walls, I would also like to highlight Daniel's observation, in connection with the dismantling of European city walls in the nineteenth century, that "walls per se are neither a good nor a bad thing." He adds that "one task of the historian is to explain why walls that have lost their function might still be worthy of (partial) preservation—not only for scholarly, but also (and more importantly) for educational purposes." Daniel's example is the Berlin Wall, but Bill's allusion to preservation in the context of American history, especially with reference to Confederate monuments, invites us to consider the task of the historian in the collective effort of remembering the past. The impulse to destroy and deface monuments, especially statuary, is familiar to those of us who study the Reformation, or the French Revolution, or even just those of us who recall the Bamiyan Buddhas. Remembering this history of violent iconoclasm, however justified, inevitably must give us pause. At the same time, there is no denying the ongoing violence that is done to marginalized populations by the continued presence of monuments that are less commemorations of Confederate valor than performative acts set out in tandem with American segregation legislation of the early twentieth century. The Marian symbolism of the Confederate Women's Monument erected in Baltimore in 1917, for example, uses explicitly medie-

[97] David Matthews, "German Universities Plan for Life without Elsevier," *Times Higher Education*, September 5, 2017, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/german-universities-plan-life-without-elsevier. For an overview of these new models, see Joe Deville, "Open Access Publishing and the Future of the University," Mattering Press, September 29, 2016, https://www.matteringpress.org/blog/open-access-publishing-and-future-university; on their economic dimensions, see Eileen Joy, "3,200 Persons + $10 Per Month = Sustainability: How You Can Help," Punctum Books, August 18, 2016, https://punctumbooks.com/blog/3200-persons-10-per-month-sustainability-how-you-can-help/.

FIGURE 2: The Confederate Women's Monument was one of four statues in Baltimore, Maryland, that were taken down during the night of August 15–16, 2017. Photo by Suzanne Conklin Akbari, January 2017.

val iconography to construct a narrative of martyrdom that was used to justify segregated housing law in Baltimore in that period. This statue is one of four that were removed overnight by order of the mayor and city council this past summer.[98]

[98] Nicholas Fandos, Russell Goldman, and Jess Bidgood, "Baltimore Mayor Had Statues Removed in 'Best Interest of My City,'" *New York Times*, August 16, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/16/us/baltimore-confederate-statues.html.

Medieval historians—in concert with those who work on American history—have something to contribute to this story of how communal memorialization of the past serves the community, precisely by excluding others. Tamar gestures, poignantly, to the "danger [that] is at the heart of the challenges that medievalists—but also many Americans—face today. What to do when someone takes up your name and does things that you would spend a lifetime protesting against?" As we consider the nature of walls and boundaries—both in historical context and within our own discipline—this is a question we must ask ourselves, and one that I hope our readers will take up as a challenge.

AHR **Editor:** It's not surprising, given the nature of our topic, that we've concluded our conversation by attending to the present. Still, I think we've been properly attentive to the past, which will, I hope, help our readers appreciate the vast range of phenomena and experiences evoked by "walls, borders, and boundaries" across time and space. In the contemporary world, there may be a disposition to look upon barriers of various sorts disapprovingly—as obstacles to the free flow of people, things, and ideas, and, even worse, as symptomatic of a mindset that wants to close off or shut down openings to the wider world. But I think our conversation has reminded us that walls can also protect as well as keep out, that they can help define and clarify relationships in helpful ways, and that, in any case, in history they are rarely permanent and always subject to the workings of human agency. They can cut both ways: what appears to be fundamentally obstructionist or distorting in one period might be seen as salutary, even necessary, in another. For example, the same populations that were subject to pernicious racial redlining in many U.S. cities now find themselves without protection in the face of rampant unregulated gentrification. And as I write, discussions are taking place in Washington over the vulnerabilities of social media to the meddling of outside political and ideological forces, raising the specter of regulation, which is to say, the creation of barriers, or at least filters, against the free flow of information and unimpeded virtual interaction that is a celebrated feature of the Internet. To be sure, there are many voices in favor of walls that say "keep out," but there are others urging us to consider gateways and protections as means to promote values like privacy, the legitimacy and authenticity of sources, and the civility of public discourse. And what other ways are there to protect natural resources, land, species, and the like without imposing borders that say, in essence, "keep out!" Even our supposedly "globalized" world is not absent gateways, conduits, and passageways. Some borders might now have been rendered meaningless, and (some) walls have disappeared. Still, the need to manage the movement of people and goods persists, requiring mechanisms or devices to manage this movement. Most dramatically, in Europe, the refugee crisis has prompted many to rethink the open-border policy of the EU, while Brexit has made rethinking the UK's borders the order of the day. "And the walls came tumbling down!" goes the gospel song. Not so fast.

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