BRINGING THE AMERICANIZED PÜCKLER BACK TO GERMANY: CHARLES ELIOT AND THE GERMAN PARK REFORM MOVEMENT

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This paper does not focus upon Pückler’s influence in America but rather on how the German planner Werner Hegemann characterized the landscape architect Charles Eliot as the American heir to Pückler and, further, how Hegemann and his landscape architect colleague Leberecht Migge’s “re”-introduction of Pückler’s ideas via Eliot’s work to Germany in the years before World War I affected landscape planning. 1 Within the context of landscape history, the years between 1890 and World War I may be understood as a pivotal period of transition between the landscape park era of Pückler and the open space concepts of Weimar modernism. This line of development from Pückler to Eliot in the late nineteenth century, and then to Hegemann and Migge in the early twentieth, may be but one of several informing the development of modernist landscape planning, but it is an important one, revealing a continuity of ideas in which Pückler’s work played a critical, if heretofore unacknowledged, role.

Werner Hegemann was trained as an economist and urban planner, not as a landscape architect, and he understood park planning as much from a social and economic perspective as from an aesthetic one. As part of his training, he studied under the socialist economist Charles Gide in Paris in 1903–1904; the following year, he journeyed to the United States, where he studied for a time with Simon Patten at the University of Pennsylvania in what was to become the Wharton School of Economics. 2 After completing his doctorate at the University of Munich in 1908, Hegemann returned to the U.S. to work as a housing inspector in Philadelphia, and the following year he moved to Boston. While in Boston, he met the Olmsted brothers and their associates, some of the most important people in American park design at the time, and through them became familiar with the work of the recently deceased Charles Eliot. Because of his American experiences, Hegemann was invited to help organize the 1910 Städtebau (Urban Design) exhibition in Berlin, one of the most important exhibitions of the kind anywhere in the world before World War I. Hegemann was well connected in Germany: his uncle was the urban planner Otto March, who introduced him to the circle involved with the journal Der Städtebau founded by Theodor Goecke and Camillo
Sitte. Hegemann had already made the acquaintance of the influential architect Hermann Muthesius, who in turn may have connected him with Leberecht Migge.³

The well-attended Berlin exhibition focused upon a range of cities around the world, and was to have wide-reaching influence. A second exhibition on urban design organized by Hegemann in 1912 in Düsseldorf included additional material, such as the original color renderings of Daniel Burnham’s Chicago Plan and drawings of the first public park designed by Leberecht Migge, for Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel (Figure 1). In the years 1911 and 1912, Hegemann published two volumes, also entitled Der Städtebau, documenting the contents and focal points of the two exhibitions.⁴ Because of his training, he understood the contemporary city as the product of quantifiable economic and social forces that had resulted in densification and over-population in the nineteenth century, thus negatively impacting the quality of life for all. In these volumes, Hegemann presented urban planning as a new science dedicated to remedying these societal problems.

Figure 1: Aerial Drawing of Fuhlsbüttel Park by Migge, 1909. From: Jakob Ochs, “Deutsche Neuzeitliche Gärten” in Werner Hegemann, Ein Parkbuch (1911), facing page 12.
The second volume of Der Städtebau was devoted to landscape planning and prominently featured the work of Charles Eliot and the Olmsted Brothers firm in the United States. Hegemann focused exclusively on Eliot’s metropolitan park system for Boston (completely ignoring his other landscape work), which he interpreted from his planner’s perspective. An official plan of the Boston park system, which had probably hung in the exhibitions, was included in the volume, but in one corner of the drawing Hegemann added a plan of Berlin’s Tiergarten at the same scale, intended as a polemic to show how much greater in size the Boston parks actually were (Figure 2). He obviously hoped this would goad German authorities to take action. Eliot had conceived the metropolitan park system in the 1890’s as a large-scale park system at the bounds of the metropolitan area, his thinking influenced by Prince Pückler’s writings and his Muskau estate. The connection between Pückler and Eliot was a point not lost on the German observer Hegemann, who emphasized this transatlantic cultural translation in the second volume of Der Städtebau:

[T]he older Olmsted was open to these ideas, and the good old families of New England sent Charles Eliot as an understanding representative to Germany. The works of Pückler-Muskau affected Eliot like an epiphany; he carried the precious seed that would have dried up in Germany back to his homeland and brought it to an unexpected flowering in the park systems of Boston. From there, these ideas should return to Germany. With this somewhat dramatic narrative of events that had indeed taken place, Hegemann succeeded in making Eliot’s ideas seem less foreign to his German audience, thus rendering the Boston metropolitan park system an acceptable prototype for park planning in German cities.

The projects of Eliot and the Olmsted Brothers were not presented by Hegemann as patterns to be copied but as general models to guide and inform German park planning. Hegemann did not simply reproduce the American park materials but transformed them for his own purposes, via the media of exhibition and publication. In 1911, Hegemann also wrote a smaller booklet titled simply Ein Parkbuch (A Park Book), which focused exclusively upon American parks and landscape planning. Another booklet by him introducing the Chicago Plan to a German audience was also published that year, and the two were sometimes bound together. Ein Parkbuch accompanied a small traveling exhibition on American parks that toured various German cities; together, the book and exhibition raised consciousness on the topic among the lay public and professionals alike. Ein Parkbuch was financed in part by the garden design firm of Jakob Ochs in Hamburg, where Migge worked, and it may be assumed that the latter brokered this arrangement. This connection was not inci-
The Ochs firm was known throughout the German-speaking world as one of the most progressive representatives of garden reform, primarily because of Migge's work.

Although Hegemann was concerned with the entire range of urban planning and design issues, he considered the creation of public parks and urban landscapes to be among the most important tasks of the new

Figure 2: Plan of Boston Metropolitan Park System with scale plan of the Tiergarten, probably added by Hegemann. From: Werner Hegemann, *Ein Parkbuch* (1911), facing page 5.
discipline of planning. He and others saw themselves as members of a new generation, responding to new urban conditions, as he explained:

In this era of urban expansion, a mission of the highest cultural significance emerges for the park architect. Today his work must employ a scale that we have never known before, indeed even scarcely could imagine. For whom did the garden architects of yesterday work? For a few privileged.9

Cities had indeed expanded to a scale greater than had been known even in the mid-nineteenth century, during the era when park designers such as the senior Olmsted and Gustav Meyer were creating urban parks in New York City and Berlin, respectively. Fifty years before that, Pückler and his fellow aristocrats had designed park landscapes for the elite. Now these ideas had to be translated to a broader public, Hegemann believed, and on a greater scale. With that change in scale came a change in spatial sensibility; the transformation from city to metropolis required new park types, which is the reason why Hegemann embraced Eliot’s metropolitan park concepts. In Ein Parkbuch, Hegemann only presented the overall plan of Eliot’s metropolitan park system. He did not include any images of the actual parks, nor did he discuss Eliot’s design strategies in any detail. He also did not mention the conceptual debt to Pückler (the comments cited above were published a year later). Rather, Hegemann devoted more space to the description of actual parks designed by Olmsted (then deceased) and his sons, who operated the Olmsted Brothers firm. Yet Hegemann’s own reading of the comparatively smaller spaces in Franklin Park in Boston designed by the senior Olmsted in the late nineteenth century suggests some reasons for his appreciation of the extensive scale of the metropolitan parks:

In [the senior Olmsted’s] works, one finds everywhere attention to generous perspectives and their magnificent framing through the passionate care and exact understanding of the placing of selected trees; there are perspectives that are nearly closed-off in the distance, yet still allow a view towards forms further away, thus awakening a satisfying feeling of the endless . . . providing the city dweller with a welcome contrast to the daily experience of the walls of the dwelling. This precious distant view is almost entirely lacking in the Berlin Tiergarten, for example [emphasis added].10

The older Olmsted belonged to a nineteenth-century generation of designers who adapted principles inherited from the English picturesque to the needs of an urban public. Hegemann recognized the importance of framing the view, a central principle of the picturesque, but at the same
time he emphasized the desire to experience depth as a move towards sublime expansiveness; the preciousness of the picturesque tableaux was of less importance to him. As he mentions, the Berlin Tiergarten, designed in the early nineteenth-century in the picturesque or even gardenesque mode, was unsatisfactory to him because it lacked this sense of great depth. A photograph of Franklin Park chosen for Ein Parkbuch showed a crowd gathered near a temporary stage in an open field. What is particularly noticeable about the image is the complete lack of information about the landscape design; the primary focus is instead upon the open space of the field, and the human activities within it (Figure 3).

Hegemann consciously formulated his understanding of space in the context of the new metropolitan scale, as did Charles Eliot. In retrospect, Eliot’s writing and park work may also be interpreted in the context of Hegemann’s comments. Although Eliot in fact completely transformed Pückler’s ideas, the means by which he did so reveal the beginnings of a process of transition from the older picturesque park to modernist open

Figure 3: Photograph of Franklin Park, possibly supplied by the Olmsted Bros. Office. From: Werner Hegemann, Ein Parkbuch (1911), facing page 4.
space in the urban landscape. As Keith Morgan shows, the two most important concepts that Eliot took from Pückler in this context were the vision of comprehensive landscape planning at the scale of entire districts and the conviction that only minimal intervention was required to bring existing landscapes to reflect an aesthetic ideal, necessary to meet human cultural needs. Pückler had applied his ideas to his own large rural estate. Eliot, on the other hand, used these same principles to address the problems brought about by the new metropolitan scale. Eliot, who grew up in Cambridge and Boston, was a child of the city and had personally witnessed its rapid growth in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Together with his father, Harvard University president Charles W. Eliot, he had passed his childhood summers on the island of Mount Desert off the coast of Maine, a landscape known for dramatic, semi-barren mountain scenery. It could be said that for Eliot, the Boston metropolitan region extended to Mount Desert Island, which for him and others represented as much of a “wild” landscape as could be easily reached from the city. At the other end of the scale were the Boston Common and Public Garden, clearly delimited green spaces surrounded by the dense central city. In the older suburbs, the chain of parks designed by the senior Olmsted, referred to by Bostonians as the “Emerald Necklace,” possessed a more picturesque landscape character. Probably drawing upon Olmsted’s park ring concept, Eliot formulated his own plan for a series of parks, or “reservations,” to be located even farther out from the city center and created from existing landscapes situated both geographically and conceptually between wilder areas far from the city and the more refined parks of the urban center.

At the level of detail as well, Eliot’s discussion of the physical transformation of unimproved landscapes into functional public parks again suggests a new aesthetic preference for the sublimity of extensive open space. For Eliot, the primary purpose of the metropolitan parks was to provide the public with “the sight of something very different from public garden, square, or ball-field.” These reservations would provide the public who traveled to the outskirts of the metropolis via new electric street cars with, “scenery which possesses uncommon beauty and more than usual refreshing power.” From his mentor Olmsted, Eliot inherited the belief that the viewing of scenery provided positive psychological and therefore hygienic effects for urban dwellers. However, the character of Eliot’s metropolitan parks was to be entirely different from those created by Olmsted. For Eliot, the primary task necessary for transforming these areas into parks was the cutting away of not only undergrowth but whole stands of trees in order to open up the expansive views he deemed an essential park function. One of the pairs of illustrations by Arthur Shurcliff showing before and projected after images of tree-cutting efforts in
the metropolitan parks was intended to prove the importance of opening up distant views (see Figures 7 and 8 in Keith Morgan’s contribution, pages X and Y above). The composition of the vegetation was of little importance by comparison; depth rather than framing was emphasized. Further evidence of this intention is found in the photographs of newly cutover areas exhibiting an almost barren quality, uncannily reminiscent of the landscapes of Mount Desert Island, suggesting another possible biographical influence on Eliot’s thinking.

In his discussions of practical matters of landscape improvement, Eliot was less inclined to mention Pückler’s influence, but a comparison of Eliot’s written guidelines with the prince’s 1834 book *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* (Hints on Landscape Gardening) provides further evidence as to how Eliot put principles learned from Pückler into practice. Cutting away trees and vegetation was carried out through the use of the axe, which, Eliot noted, “must be used with discretion.” He apparently encountered some resistance to this strategy: “We are well aware that the axe is regarded with a sort of horror by many excellent people at this time,” he observed, but he then went on to insist that this was the only way to “rescue” scenery. Here, he was clearly influenced by Pückler, who had referred to the axe and the spade as the “brush and chisel” of park-making. Pückler further noted that without the axe, trees would grow over the head, out of control; the axe should thus not be allowed to rest in winter. Pückler discussed the axe in terms of maintenance and the opening up of views; for Eliot, however, it was the primary tool for the overall creation of the metropolitan park spaces. Eliot, unlike Pückler, distinguished his metropolitan parks from “landscapes” that were designed by a “landscape gardener,” believing instead that the metropolitan parks should be created and maintained by a “landscape forester.” In formulating the specific character of the metropolitan parks and the way it should be achieved, Eliot was reacting to a specific set of conditions, but he intrinsically conceived the new park type in the context of the new metropolitan scale.

Hegemann, and later Migge, derived two primary principles from Eliot’s metropolitan parks. First, the character of parks on the edge of the metropolis should be determined by the provision of extensive open space, not intensive landscape design. Secondly, park character and scale should be defined by the relative position in the metropolitan area and region, meaning that a range of park types should be implemented through coordinated systems managed by public agencies. Hegemann was not interested in the specific character of the Boston metropolitan parks, however, and along with his analysis of Franklin Park, he also presented the work of the Olmsted Brothers, particularly the series of small parks intended primarily for sporting use that they designed for
inner Chicago. Hegemann emphasized the functional, geometric planning of these small Chicago parks, in which all spaces were designated for specific purposes. Photographs of the Chicago parks showing children running races, swimming, or playing were intended to support the argument for active physical recreation. Park reform movements aimed at making parks more suitable for active physical use were then taking place internationally; everywhere, there was a new emphasis on health and exercise, particularly for children and youth.

Hegemann introduced the idea of American parks designed for physical culture into a cultural context dominated by the popular reception of Friedrich Nietzsche’s “life philosophy.” Nietzsche believed that it was through the body that humans encountered and understood the world, the body was the location of human life forces and should be celebrated as such. In terms of the experience of the landscape, this meant a shift away from passive aesthetic contemplation by the eye alone, as represented by the landscape park, towards the active use of outdoor space, in open air under the sun, as represented by the sports park. “Life reform,” a collection of popular movements beginning in the 1890s inspired by Nietzsche’s life philosophy, resulted in a widespread embrace of practices such as vegetarianism, physical culture, and even nude sunbathing. The new reform park as espoused by Hegemann and others would provide an ideal public location for such activities.

Park reform as a movement grew out of garden reform in the early years of the twentieth century. Both landscape reform movements aimed at reviving geometric modes of planning in order to create functional outdoor room-like spaces in complete opposition to the comparatively amorphous scenery of the picturesque. Hegemann’s Parkbuch of 1911 was highly effective in promoting new park reform ideas within a professional environment clouded by the protests of an older generation of garden designers who actively resisted. The reform of garden design was more acceptable to many, for it was thought that the traditional “German farmer’s garden” had been geometrically planned. This change was thus in keeping with German tradition and identity. Yet with the increase of scale in the public garden and park, geometric planning took on a different character that was immediately associated with the French Baroque, especially the work of Le Notre. For many Germans, such designs were associated with the hereditary enemy, France, and symbolized despotic power over humans and nature, rather than democratic or liberal rule. Hegemann would certainly not have been unaware of this problem, and his decision to include only parks from America was probably deliberately made to counter this tendency. Das Parkbuch was published by Wasmuth in Berlin, the publisher who brought out the widely acclaimed monograph on the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright that
same year. Although the Wright book had greater international circulation among architects, Hegemann’s Parkbuch had a similar revolutionary effect within the smaller field of landscape architecture in Germany. After Das Parkbuch and its accompanying exhibition on American parks, conservative resistance to geometric park planning as being “too French” virtually disappeared.

In an eloquent article on the “cultural meaning of open space” published in 1912, the architectural critic Gustav Platz cited the importance of Hegemann’s Parkbuch and Eliot’s work to German park reform and the new “people’s park” concept. Platz observed that, “On a small scale the concept of the people’s park idea is realized in the Fuhlsbüttel Garden (perhaps for the first time in Germany)”; that “garden” was Migge’s first public park design. Platz further called for an end to debates over garden and park design in order to “free garden design from the fetters of the schematic.” He concluded, “In this sense, the thinking and work of Leberecht Migge deserves appreciation.” Migge, who was instrumental in organizing and conceiving the park exhibition, and who undoubtedly convinced his employer Jakob Ochs to finance the book, was at this time gaining recognition as one of the most important designers in the field.

An illustration of Migge’s 1909 Fuhlsbüttel park was included in Ein Parkbuch as an important new example of German reform design. While it was Hegemann who initially brought American planning ideas over to Germany and Europe, Migge as a designer translated them in more detail to suit the German situation and strove to put these principles into practice through his own work.

Leberecht Migge, who like Hegemann was born in 1881, trained as a gardener first in a commercial nursery in Danzig and then in a government-run school for gardeners in Oranienburg in Berlin during the years 1899–1901. He was indelibly impressed by his experience in the commercial nursery; his ideal world was a world of gardens, but gardens that embraced technological advance and functionalism, not picturesque aestheticism. After Hegemann, Migge was the most important writer to bring Eliot’s work, and thus by implication the “Americanized” version of Pückler’s ideas, to Germany and continental Europe. In addition to his role in this particular story, Migge was one of the most recognized garden and park designers of his generation. The German historian Marie Luise Gothein presented him as an important young talent, concluding her 1914 international survey of garden history with an illustration of a private water park he designed in Hamburg. The critic Robert Breuer even went so far as to consider Migge on the same level of international importance for public park design as the senior Olmsted. After World War I, Migge was one of the few landscape designers to collaborate with modernist architects on the planning of vast housing estates. His writings
and design work are important to an understanding of modernist planning, not least because of the connection to Hegemann and Eliot and, by extension, Pückler.

During his training years at the gardeners’ school in Oranienburg, Migge would have been introduced to Pückler’s Andeutungen along with other gardening classics such as the Englishman Humphry Repton’s Theory and Practice of Landscape-Gardening. However, Migge almost never cited Pückler’s influence directly, possibly because the landscape park of the nineteenth century was unpopular in reform circles. On one occasion in 1915, Migge wrote a short commentary in the leading design journal Die Gartenkunst criticizing an article in a previous issue by another writer, whom he believed would have offended even Pückler with his nationalistic observation that Pückler’s work offered an authentically German mode, as opposed to “foreign” importations. In his piece, Migge also referred to Pückler as a “technician” rather than as an “artist,” a title that Migge himself wholly rejected. Aside from this, one can only infer Pückler’s possible influence on Migge. Eliot’s work as presented by Hegemann, on the other hand, was certainly a great catalyst to Migge’s thinking, and his work after 1911 cannot be understood without it.

In 1913, Migge published his first important book, Gartenkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts (Garden Culture of the Twentieth Century), in which he presented his concept of an urban “culture” based on gardens and gardening. One of the most significant features of the book is Migge’s systematic discussion of garden types in relation to the metropolis, a synthesis of his understanding of the Boston metropolitan park system and the German Werkbund discussion of good design types. The metropolis was to be understood as “the mother of all gardens,” not merely a necessary evil to be tolerated. Instead, Migge believed, the metropolis embodied the spatial and cultural matrix within which all types of gardens, including parks, would be created. He proposed that the metropolis must be understood as a whole in order to develop a “comprehensive general plan,” for green space. Once established, “open spaces, parks, promenades, and plazas in great numbers, very quickly lead from technical-managerial grounds alone to a park system.” Again in direct reference to Hegemmann and Eliot, Migge put forth the categories of “inner park” and “outer park,” the former being more urban and constructed, and the latter freer and less articulated. One of the most important features of the outer park, he wrote, was:

OPEN SPACES. This is a term that we in Germany still scarcely know. With this one refers to large-scale areas of cultivated land, meadows, or woods owned by the city, that for the long term are
kept free from building, or within which only limited settlement is allowed.\textsuperscript{37}

The term “open space” for Migge did not mean simply large-scale public space, but more specifically the kind of areas that were included in the outer parks. The necessity of open space was implied in Eliot’s writing, but Migge made it the primary focus. However, unlike Eliot, Migge was concerned not only with forests but also, more in keeping with Pückler’s own landscape planning, with a range of fringe landscapes including cultivated fields. The incorporation of existing landscapes was not to involve extensive reshaping of the land, but only minimal improvements: “Open spaces should not be a prohibitively expensive burden on the city budget, but in complete contrast—a relief valve.”\textsuperscript{38} This view was in keeping with the discussions of both Pückler and Eliot on creating park spaces from existing landscape. Migge added the dimension of social and fiscal responsibility.

Migge’s outer park concept was not simply a literal imitation of the Boston Metropolitan Parks, but more of a synthesis of the ideas and projects presented in \textit{Ein Parkbuch} and the accompanying exhibition. Migge combined Eliot’s vision of an outer park band of relatively unimproved areas with the lessons of the functional planning of the Olmsted Brothers’ small sports parks. In \textit{Gartenkultur}, Migge presents outer parks as a kind of neutral field for the insertion of more specialized spaces, which could include open air museums, race tracks, and even air-sports fields.\textsuperscript{39} This was obviously a more complex definition of the outer park than Eliot’s single-purpose vision of providing outstanding scenery for mental refreshment. Migge’s understanding of the outer park concept, and open space, was shaped by Eliot at the planning level, but it was also the product of a more comprehensive, international outlook. Among his park illustrations, Migge included the same photograph of Franklin Park that Hegemann had used. He also added others, such as one of Hyde Park in London showing only masses of children playing in a pond, that gave no suggestion as to the actual landscape design. Hegemann had introduced Eliot in Germany as the American heir to Pückler in order to render his work appropriate for Germany, and Migge further considered the problem of how a specifically German park expression would evolve:

\begin{quote}
If the spirit of the contemporary (on the whole even formless) English people’s parks are to be labeled \textit{naïve}, and if we term the sober and fantasy-less park architecture of the Americans simply \textit{rational}, so may our later social park period be conceived to promise the highest here: it should be \textit{monumental}. I hope that with us, the descendents of Goethe, the new and original that lie
\end{quote}
hidden in great richness within modern park design will emerge in new, unusual rhythms. The obvious nationalism aside, Migge implied that a kind of artistic transformation of the landscape was necessary to make the park a true cultural product. Park and garden reform had been based on the idea that landscape spaces should be architectural, geometric, or, in this case, “monumental.” How the open spaces of meadows and cultivated fields could be given monumental character he did not say, but he would soon approach this problem in his own work.

Although well received within the landscape profession in the German-speaking countries, *Gartenkultur des 20. Jahrhunderts* did not achieve the international recognition of Hegemann’s *Städtebau* volumes. It was, however, significant for bringing the fields of urban planning and garden and park design together in a comprehensive, cohesive system. It was one of the few works in the period to do so. Unlike Hegemann, Migge was a designer, and he put his park planning principles into effect through his own design work, first in the small park in Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel, and then in larger parks for Oldenburg (1911) and Leipzig (1913). In these latter two “people’s parks,” Migge employed strict geometric planning to create a series of large open spaces of turf or water surrounded by simple bands of trees and border plantings. Any historical association was avoided; instead the emphasis was asserted to be upon function and objectivity. Using the rhetoric of Nietzsche’s life philosophy, Migge wrote that in the large open spaces of the Leipzig park, the “reality of the soul” could be experienced by families and groups at play, for these spaces were intended to be charged with meaning. These were large-scale but nevertheless “inner” urban parks. The first “outer” park that Migge designed was for the new city of Rüstringen, for which he won the design competition in 1913 (Figures 4–6 and Plates 8–9, pages 186–87).

At Rüstringen, Migge combined the principles of functional planning with his understanding of the character of open space, which he had written could include cultivated fields and meadows. The park site was located at a considerable distance from the city center in an agricultural landscape of low, marshy land. The city architect for Rüstringen, Martin Wagner, explained Migge’s basic strategy:

The project by Migge used the characteristic marsh landscape as the starting point, to introduce a system of canals of modern intent, that has an extraordinarily practical worth. The extent of the city park areas was bounded by the strong broken outline of property ownership. The land lacked a natural orientation, a directive, fixed spine. This was created through a canal system that clearly traverses the entire extent of the park, and with stringent,
marked form connects the two primary entries for separate districts.\textsuperscript{42}

The park for Rüstringen was created by incorporating the surrounding cultural landscape as simply and economically as possible. The leitmotif of the composition, the canal system, was taken from the surrounding landscape. The Swiss garden architect Gustav Amman also praised Migge’s design for his studied respect for the existing “earth-form” (\textit{Bodenplastik}):

Small folds in the land, lower-water areas, the form and situation of gravel pits, etc., give suggestions for further development, for small terraces, canals, little valleys, and embankments. A study of the plan shown here shows the caring attention to all of these small, incidental implications.\textsuperscript{43}

Amman’s article was accompanied by a set of dreary “before” photographs of soggy fields and muddy cows juxtaposed with Migge’s “after” sketches of joyfully tumbling children and elegantly promenading adults. It was a brilliant graphic polemic, showing how Migge transformed the empty fields into modern open space while maintaining the existing forms of hedgerows and tree-lined paths. Echoing Migge, Amman

Figure 4: “Before” photograph of Rüstringen Park site, 1914. From: \textit{Die Gartenkunst} 12: 184.
Figure 5: “After” sketch of Rüstringen Park by Migge, 1914. From: Die Gartenkunst 12: 185.

Figure 6: Photograph of Rüstringen Park, c. 1918. Courtesy Wilhelms-haven Stadtarchiv.
claimed that new German parks as exemplified by Rüstringen aimed at “monumental design” through their great simplicity, in this instance by using architectural elements such as the terraces, small buildings, extensive pergolas, and the regular figures of the basin and canals. The embrace of the existing agricultural landscape had cultural significance as well, reinforced by the inclusion of an existing dairy made into an “open-air museum” (Freiluftmuseum) of traditional rural life. One of Migge’s sketches showed children playing among the dairy cattle, giving young city dwellers an experience they were thought to have otherwise lacked.

A comparison of this park design with the earlier work of Eliot and even Pückler shows that despite the new emphasis on functional and geometric planning, a line of continuity may be discerned. The principle of minimal intervention in the existing landscape espoused by Pückler and later taken up by Eliot was not used to create “natural” but rather cultural landscapes, recalling Pückler’s inclusion of “economic” elements of the working estate in his park. At Rüstringen, a new type of park and open space planning emerged. The relatively irregular land forms and spatial divisions were brought into a cohesive whole through the insertion of a few geometric elements and minimal movement of the land. Whether or not Migge was consciously influenced by Pückler’s thinking in this case, a similar impulse to respect the existing cultural landscape is evident. However, Migge made the park landscape “monumental” not through an image of perfection, la belle nature, but through the almost architectural use of pyramidal poplar allées, an approach that in Pückler’s day would have seemed old-fashioned.

Following World War I, Werner Hegemann continued to write about urban design, but his interest in park design was increasingly dominated by his overwhelming preference for architectural open space planning. During the 1920s, Hegemann was not really among the “modernists” in a formalistic sense. He turned, instead, to the urban spatial compositions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as concrete examples to be used to inform the shaping of the modern city. Migge, on the other hand, continued to develop his thinking on the fringe landscape around the city. In the 1920s, Eliot’s name disappeared from Migge’s writings, but the discussion of open space planning and outer parks remained. The understanding of a system of outer parks was solidified into a “greenbelt” idea, or a continuous landscape zone of open spaces, in which not only sport parks and other facilities would be located, but also small garden colonies and even limited housing areas. The greenbelt idea was derived in part from the metropolitan park system, but was conceived within Migge’s new urban organic agricultural system, which he referred to as “city-land-culture” (Stadtlandkultur). Green open space was now to
be utilized for both agricultural as well as recreational activity. Street and household waste from the city center would be brought to this outer zone for processing as organic fertilizer for use in the small garden colonies of the greenbelt.46

The line of development from Eliot to Migge shows how the concept of modernist open space evolved during the transitional period following the picturesque park era. Moreover, Migge’s own work of the 1920s challenges the commonly held perception that modernist planners only thought of green space as a content-less void, a neutral background to their dramatic buildings. Before the war, Hegemann and Migge had already associated open space with the freedom of the body. Initially in response to the food shortages of the early postwar years, Migge added the connection of the body to the soil through small-scale, intensive urban agriculture.

The first fully developed greenbelt was proposed for the city of Kiel in 1922, but it was in Frankfurt in the late 1920s within the architect Ernst May’s “New Frankfurt” program that Migge’s planning ideas finally would be executed, at least in part.47 In 1926 Migge, along with Frankfurt’s municipal garden office, planned a landscape combining park land, small garden colonies, and two housing settlements in the narrow Nidda river valley on what was then the northwestern edge of the city (Figure 7).48 The overall composition of the area was similar to Migge’s greenbelt proposals, except that the project concerned only one district, not an entire band around the city. This project is noteworthy for the subtle accommodation of the existing topographical features of the valley and the graduated passage from one landscape area to the next, all designed to reinforce the sense of a continuous flow of space. The long rows of two-story housing units that were perched atop a low bluff on one side of the valley defined the space architecturally and also provided residents with views outwards over the valley. Behind the housing was located the first row of small utility gardens that ended with the terrace wall, also overlooking the valley. The housing blocks were interrupted by small park-like spaces atop apsidal retaining structures that jutted out further into the valley, with stairs allowing passage to the level below. A gridded band of garden colonies continued along the line of the housing terrace above. Beyond the garden colonies, open parkland on either side of the Nidda River stretched uninterrupted among shade trees. On a smaller scale, Migge realized the range of spaces in the greenbelt concept, and though the valley park may not have satisfied a longing for the “endless,” a sense of openness and freedom were provided for the residents of the district. Although this planning concept had come a long way from Eliot’s metropolitan park system, and even farther from Pückler’s plans for his estate, the series of transformations that led up to this project were not
necessarily the product of an abrupt cultural break, as has often been assumed of modernist design.

As a footnote to this story, Migge’s overall plan for the city of Frankfurt, prepared in 1928 for Ernst May in the form of a bound report, demonstrates the extremes to which modernist planners could carry their idealized rationalizations. In his report, Migge presented a diagrammatic plan for the future development of Frankfurt that could also be understood as a general paradigm for universal application. Titled, “The Communal Colonial Park” (Der Kommunaler Kolonial-Park), Migge’s plan diagram completely inverted the relationship between dense urban core and outer park system that he had initially grasped from Eliot’s analyses (Figure 8). An enormous new city was to be built to the north of the existing city of Frankfurt. It would consist of a vast open park area at the core and be surrounded by a ring of low-rise housing and small garden colonies. The extensive inner park area would contain two large spaces within it, labeled simply “intensive agriculture”: one of the central concepts of the scheme was that the city should be able to grow the majority of its own food, and thus be relatively self-sufficient as a community. This scheme was obviously the product of a set of more complex assumptions taken from the garden city movement, from the anarchist belief in self-sufficiency, and even from the principles of organic gardening. However,
in comparison to Eliot’s metropolitan park system, here the desire for open space would no longer necessitate a flight from the city core, but in fact meant traveling inwards, reducing the distance and also making open space itself the main civic focus. The whole would remain a kind of metropolitan aggregate, but Migge ignored the reality that cities tend to grow outward in ring-like extensions. Migge’s city-as-park represents the kind of extreme rationalization of the desire for the good life, approaching a denial of reality, for which the modernists have been so heavily criticized since.

In retrospect, this series of transformations can be read as the use of the landscape as an ameliorating device in the face of increasing metropolitan and regional growth. Eliot adapted Pückler’s principle of minimal intervention not to reach the state of \textit{la belle nature}, but to achieve the illusion of an authentic natural landscape that was both a retreat from the metropolis and an integral part of it. Migge first understood this fringe landscape as offering a kind of spatial relief, but also as a place where the freedom of open space allowed for free movement of the body in sports and other activities. Migge later went beyond Eliot and Hegemann in proclaiming this zone the “greenbelt,” adding to the earlier formula a new kind of urban settlement pattern which would reconnect the people
to the land. Finally, Migge turned the outer fringe landscape inside out, making it the basis of the new city as a whole. If anything, this may be seen as a progression in which the relationship first between culture and nature, and then between city and landscape, was increasingly blurred, ending with a state in which the city core itself was to be replaced by a landscape of open space.

1 The research in this paper is based upon my PhD dissertation, “Leberecht Migge (1881–1935) and the Modern Garden in Germany,” (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 2005); as well as my Master’s thesis: “Scenic Illusions: A History of the Nature Pursuit at Mount Desert Island Maine,” (Yale University, 1995), which includes material on Charles Eliot and the Metropolitan Parks.


3 Introductory letter from Hegemann to Muthesius, September 9, 1901, Muthesius Papers, Werkbund Archive, Berlin. Migge introduced himself to Muthesius in 1909, and closely collaborated with him before World War I.

4 Werner Hegemann, Der Städtebau, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1911–12).


6 Hegemann, Städtebau, 360.

7 Werner Hegemann, Ein Parkbuch: Amerikanische Parkanlagen (Berlin, 1911).

8 My dissertation research has shown that it was Migge rather than Ochs who instigated connections to important figures such as Hermann Muthesius and Alfred Lichtwark, and who promoted the traveling exhibition.

9 Hegemann, Ein Parkbuch, 3.

10 Ibid., 7.

11 See Keith N. Morgan, “Pückler’s Influence on Charles Eliot and Regional Landscape Planning in the United States” in this collection.


16 Eliot, Charles Eliot, 710.

17 Eliot, Charles Eliot, 711.

18 Pückler, Andeutungen, 140.

19 Pückler, Andeutungen, 140.


22 Alfred Lichtwark could be called the “father” of German garden reform; he presented the “German Farmer’s Garden” as an historical prototype for new gardens: Alfred Lichtwark, Makartbouquet und Blumenstraße (Berlin, 1905), 38–39. First published in abbreviated form as an article in Hamburger Weihnachtsbuch (Hamburg, 1892), 202–12; first published as a book: (München, 1894).

23 For a consideration of how French garden tradition was associated with royalty and the English mode with democracy, see the important case study: Gert Gröning, Karl Thomanek, Edith Klink, Untersuchung der Gestalt und des Gebrauchswert des Viktoria-Parks in Berlin Kreuzberg, (Berlin, 1989). See also Heinz Wiegand, Entwicklung des Stadtgrüns in Deutschland zwischen 1890 und 1925 am Beispiel der Arbeiten Fritz Enckes (Berlin, 1975) 31–32.


25 Ibid., 268.

26 Ibid.


28 Marie Luise Goethein, Geschichte der Gartenkunst (Jena, 1914) 462.


33 Ibid., 28.

34 Ibid., 36.

35 Ibid., 36.

36 Ibid., 35.

37 Ibid., 35.

38 Ibid., 35.

39 Ibid., 35.

40 Ibid., 28.


42 Martin Wagner, “Rüstringer Parkpolitik,” Gesundheit 7 (1914): 204.


44 Ibid., 185.


46 See the discussion of the greenbelt and organic agriculture in: Willy Hahn and Leberecht Migge, Der Ausbau eines Grüngürtels der Stadt Kiel (Printed as manuscript: Kiel, 1922).

47 For the most complete study (in English) of May’s work in Germany before World War II, see Susan Rose Henderson, “The Work of Ernst May, 1919–1930,” (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1990). Migge’s contribution is discussed here as well.
Color presentation plans for Praunheim and Römerstadt were published in: Leberecht Migge, “Die Grossiedlung,” *Gartenschönheit* (1928): 48–51; a detail showed the overall valley plan. An earlier version of the valley plan was shown in the unsigned article “Die Bebauung der Nidda-Niederung. Das Projekt des Siedlungsamtes für die Stadterweiterung zwischen Rödelheim und Heddernheim längs der Nidda,” *Frankfurter Nachrichten*, November 24, 1927. Note that Boehm is also credited with these plans, but Migge published them as his own.