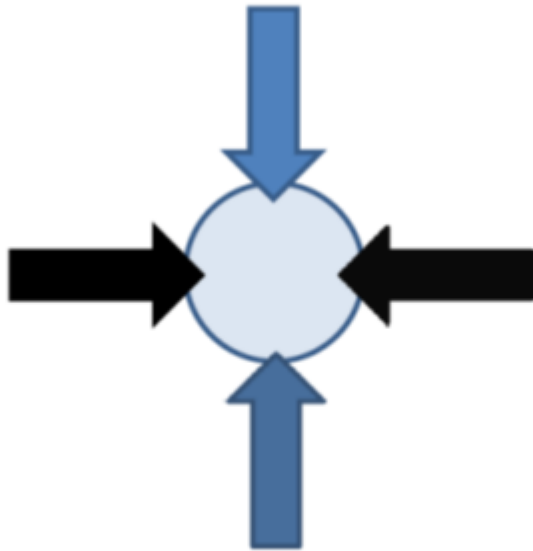


Workshop, Munich, October 27-28, 2016

Room for maneuver: The role of place in intercultural encounters and conflicts



When shall we three meet again?
 In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

When the hurlyburly's done,
 When the battle's lost and won.

That will be ere the set of sun.

Where the place?

Upon the heath.

There to meet with Macbeth.

As Shakespeare's three witches are planning to meet with Macbeth in the famous introductory verses of the play, they indicate the essentials converging in any interaction – time, place, and participants. An open panel

discussion and workshop focus on the second of these elements – *place* – in intercultural encounters. The Weird Sisters remind us of the magic of meeting with the unfamiliar, in which the uncanny is always inherent. The "heath", upon which they meet Banquo and Macbeth, becomes a dangerous place by their presence and acts. Yet, even when transcendental powers are not involved, the room for maneuver opening up in situations where actors are confronted by what they perceive as (cultural) differences is fraught by chances and risk. What, then, is the role of *place(s)* in such encounters?

The concept of *place* seemed somewhat unfashionable in the humanities and social sciences at the start of the new millennium, when space was cast as socially constructed, relational, dynamic, and alive. In contrast to this perspective on space, and following Michel de Certeau, *place* has been conceived as given physical-geometrical location, as a container-like, dead category. Alternatively, *places* could appear as provincial, nostalgic, historical sites. Yet, there has been a stunning renaissance of *place* in the last years: Neo-Marxist, feminist, and phenomenological approaches have rediscovered the concrete, experiential, and performative aspects of location. They point to the baffling intermixture of materiality, practices, sensuous perceptions and social constructions that makes and marks *places*. This focus on the material, social and existential notions of place forms an ideal starting point for transdisciplinary conversations about intercultural encounters.

A panel discussion and workshop which will address these issues are organized by the Scientific Network "Dynamics of Intercultural Encounter" ("Dynamiken interkultureller Begegnungen"), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). The event brings together early career researchers and established scholars from various disciplines. Looking at specific examples of historical and present situations of encounter, our conversations will explore the potential of locating such situations: Participants are encouraged to analyze case studies of intercultural contact at the micro-level and to reflect on wider theoretical implications of processes like place-making and place-binding through encounters. The specificity of *place* challenges us to consider physical as well as socio-cultural

aspects, environmental conditions as well as changes induced by actors, materiality as well as ideas. Yet, one main challenge will be to go beyond these simple dichotomies in the conversations of our workshop.

Please, simply join us for the panel discussion. For the workshop, we ask you to register with anke.kattner@unibw.de.