

Introduction

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ABSTRACTS

Im Mittelpunkt des Themenheftes steht das Verhältnis von Ort und kultureller Begegnung, sowohl in konzeptueller als auch in empirischer Hinsicht. Die Einleitung zeichnet die Debatten um die Konzepte Ort, Raum und Begegnung nach und plädiert für eine positive Neubewertung des Ortsbegriffs, der im Zuge von *spatial turn* und Globalisierungsdebatten vom Raumbegriff nahezu verdrängt worden war. Wie das Themenheft insgesamt, argumentieren die Autorinnen für eine Perspektive auf Orte, die Räumlichkeit und Praktiken der Begegnung verbindet, indem sie Orte als Produkte sozialer, materieller und konzeptueller Beziehungen versteht. Sie knüpfen an theoretische Überlegungen zur Relationalität von Ort und Raum an, wie sie u. a. Tim Ingold (Ethnologie), Doreen Massey (Geographie) oder Karl Schlögel (Geschichtswissenschaft) dargelegt haben. Damit rücken die relationalen Prozesse ins Zentrum der Aufmerksamkeit, durch die sich, oft auch über Zeiten und Räume hinweg, Orte herausbilden. Sie sind also nicht nur Bühnen für oder Kontexte von Begegnungen, sondern erst durch diese konstituiert. Durch den Blick auf die Herausbildung von Orten durch Begegnungen werden auch Handlungsspielräume (*room for manoeuvre*) erkennbar, die solche Begegnungen eröffnen: Weder Identitäten noch Geschichte(n) sind unabänderlich an einen gegebenen Ort gebunden, sondern ebenso dynamisch wie die Beziehungen, die die Orte formen. So wird auch deutlich, dass (kulturelle) Begegnungen in ihrer Vielfältigkeit erst gemeinsam mit den Orten der Interaktion entstehen. Auf diese Weise erschließen sich neue Sichtweisen auf frühere wie aktuelle Formen globaler Verflechtung und Mobilität. In diesem Sinne bearbeiten die Beiträge des interdisziplinär angelegten Themenheftes Fallstudien vom 17. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart. Sie entwickeln vor dem Hintergrund historischer, literatur- und religionswissenschaftlicher Fragestellungen die in der Einleitung formulierte prozessuale Perspektive fort.

This thematic issue of *Comparativ* examines the relationship between place and cultural encounters in conceptual as well as empirical respect. The introduction delineates the discussions

revolving around the concepts of place, space, and encounter. It proposes a reappraisal of the concept of place, which had almost been pushed off the agenda by the *spatial turn* and globalisation debates.

The authors of the introduction and of the other thematic contributions argue for a perspective on place which connects spatial configurations and practices of encounter, understanding places as products of social, material, and conceptual relations. In doing so, they take up theoretical reflections about the relationality of place or space as put forward by Tim Ingold (in social anthropology), Doreen Massey (in geography) or Karl Schlögel (in history). All of their approaches emphasize that places are formed in relational processes, often spanning across time and space. In this sense, places are not mere stages or contexts for events of encounter but are being constituted by them. From such a perspective, the room for manoeuvre, which opens up through interaction, becomes apparent: Neither identities nor (hi-) stories are inalterably bound to pre-existing places, but they are just as dynamic as the relations forming particular sites. The great diversity of (cultural) encounters only emerges jointly with the respective places of interaction. Such lines of thought also allow for new approaches to past and current forms of global connections and mobility. In this sense the contributions united in this interdisciplinary thematic issue examine case (or: place) studies from the 17th century up to the present. Grounded in historiographical, literary- and religious-studies scholarship, they undertake to further refine the process-oriented perspective presented in the introduction.

1. Room for Manoeuvre: Global Mobility and the (Re-)Making of Places

Place occupies key positions in current public debates, such as those about migration: People leave their homes, supposedly their “own” places, and have to find their way around in new locations. Those who claim to have occupied those sites before seem to fear the dissolution of familiar places by the arrival of “strangers” and ways of life, which are perceived as different. Such fears engender struggles to conserve specific particular places. In this context, a sense of security through local rootedness appears to be in great demand, as recent discussions, e. g. about *Heimat*¹ in Germany, and the rise of nationalist political movements across the world, indicate. Yet, obviously, “a place called home” appeals to those who feel threatened by assumed global movements of people, goods, and capital touching on comfortable provincial life. Across the political spectrum, places associated with the familiarity of first-hand contacts seem to promise a remedy for the discomfort with globalism and modern “time-space compression”². In contrast to abstract

1 The German Federal Ministry of the Interior has added the field of “Heimat” to its official name: <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/startseite/startseite-node.html> (accessed 13 August 2018). While the language of ‘homeliness’ still raises suspicions of nationalist, even chauvinist overtones, it has become current throughout the German political spectrum and is often used approvingly, see e. g. a whole series of articles dedicated to the question “What is ‘Heimat?’” in the liberal-leftist newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* throughout the months of January and February 2018: http://www.sueddeutsche.de/thema/Was_ist_Heimat (accessed 19 March 2018).

2 Its unsettling nature was already diagnosed by D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford 1989, p. 284.

notions of space, they appear to offer stable and concrete rooms, in which resistance against or retreat from a world in flux is possible.³

Public debates tend to ignore the entanglements of a global world, in which places are not autonomous but local and global at the same time. Instead, places appear somehow endangered. Fears of deterritorialization⁴, in this case conceived as the dissolution of place(s) as a consequence of migration, abound. Yet, as of globalization theories already emphasized in the 1990s, processes of deterritorialization are inherently linked to reterritorialization, that is, to creative processes of cultural productivity and identity formation. Thus, being part of global flows always stimulates local reworking.⁵ In this sense, scholars of globalization hinted at the productive, scale-spanning effects of globality and the cultural encounters it induces, and began to question the opposition between abstract global processes and concrete local practices. Undermining the global/local-dichotomy, also suggests that a space/place-opposition might be misleading.

A similar point emerged from theoretical debates that started after the turn of the millennium in reaction to the “spatial turn” in the humanities and social sciences.⁶ In this context, notions of relationality, highlighting the role of interactions and exchanges in the formation of place or space and vice versa, gained in importance. We take up the idea that the dynamic, continuous processes of relating that characterise situations of encounter are constitutive for the making, unmaking or remaking of places, just as much as places shape encounters. Thinking in terms of relationality opens up new rooms for manoeuvre for those who encounter because – in this perspective – experiences, differences and identities are not only formed in relations, they also constantly produce new relational possibilities to experience, identify, differentiate, or to un-/ make place. Hence, actors in such processes might always relate differently; encounters in this sense open up a whole scope of potential places. These lines of thought are taken up and developed in the current special issue.

The following contributions draw attention to several different constellations of place-making in and through encounters. In the light of current social processes and of a conceptual resurgence of place, interdisciplinary investigations of the co-constitution

3 D. Harvey, *From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity*, in: J. Bird (ed.), *Mapping the Futures*, London 1996, pp. 3–29.

4 Initially put forward by G. Deleuze and F. Guattari (*Capitalisme et schizophrénie: L'anti-Œdipe*, Paris 1972), the term *deterritorialization* is now frequently used to describe processes of cultural globalization, referring to the loss of a supposedly natural relation of culture to geographical and social territories (J. Tomlinson, *Globalization and culture*, Chicago 1999). A. Giddens and R. Robertson describe it as a process whereby locally situated “worlds” become more global. A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 1990; Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London 1992; see also A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis 1996 on flows and deterritorialization.

5 According to Deleuze and Guattari, the terms *deterritorialization* and *reterritorialization* refer to the fluid and dissipated nature of human subjectivity in contemporary capitalist cultures. Deterritorialization is always accompanied by reterritorialization, as the example of the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs demonstrates. See also concepts of local appropriation or glocalization: H. P. Hahn, *Antinomien kultureller Aneignung: Eine Einführung*, in: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 136 (2011) 1, pp. 11–26; Robertson, *Globalization*.

6 See section 2 below for a summary of these developments.

of place and encounter are clearly in order. They contribute to a better understanding of contemporary as well as historic mobile worlds. Studying how places are formed by and at the same time form interactions helps to counter provincialism and nostalgia. Moreover, it allows for genuine interdisciplinary debates and cooperation on specific empirical grounds, providing a viable alternative to vague references to a paradigm of spatial turn.⁷

In preparation of our interdisciplinary studies of place and encounters, it is necessary to briefly introduce the conceptual resurgence of place since the turn of the 21st century and its relation to discussions of spatial theory. A closer look at the development of this field reveals that space and place might actually be complementary rather than competing concepts. Afterwards, a framework which integrated (cultural) encounters and relational conceptions of place will be outlined. It links the individual case studies of encounters united here. The contributions to this special issue put the theoretical concepts to an interdisciplinary test, probing how well they are compatible with empirical material about diverse interactions across cultural boundaries.

2. Back to Place?

In comparison to space, place has been a somewhat unfashionable category in the humanities and social sciences for some time. Western notions of modernity as marked by accelerated transnational flows of people, things, capital, practices and ideas, accompanied by omnipresent new media, seemed to render it unnecessary. By the 1970s and 1980s, concepts of movement across space, connections and processes of deterritorialization appeared more up to date than those of bounded culture and place. With the “spatial turn”,⁸ academic works foregrounded space, while place appeared provincial, nostalgic, and static. Space was conceived as socially constructed, thus forming both a ground and product of social life.⁹ It appeared dynamic, always changing. In descriptions of hypermodernity, place merely took on negative form as “non-place”¹⁰ or “heterotopia”¹¹, and it was largely overshadowed by notions like that of a “space of flows”.¹²

7 J. Döring and T. Thielmann harshly rebuke such academic practices: J. Döring and T. Thielmann, Einleitung: Was lesen wir im Raume? Der *Spatial Turn* und das geheime Wissen der Geographen, in: Ead. (eds.), *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Bielefeld 2009, pp. 7–45, at 10.

8 For a compact overview, see D. Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften*, Reinbek 2007, pp. 286–287.

9 This conception harked back to the Marxist theory of H. Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace*, Paris 1974.

10 M. Augé, *Non-lieux: Introduction à une anthropologie de la surmodernité*, Paris 1992.

11 M. Foucault, *Des espaces autres: Conférence au Cercle d'études architecturales*, 14 mars 1967, in: *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* 5 (1984), pp. 46–49.

12 M. Castells created this metaphor to describe the predominance of electronic information networks. Döring and Thielmann, Einleitung: Was lesen wir im Raum?, pp. 14–15. See also the metaphor of “scapes” introduced by A. Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*.

In a much-quoted reference of the new spatial orientation, Michel de Certeau was referring to space as “the effect produced by the operations that orient it”.¹³ In contrast, he conceived of place as given physical-geometrical location, implying that place was to be regarded as a container-like, dead category. For de Certeau “a place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence”. As “an instantaneous configuration of positions” place therefore “implies an indication of stability”.¹⁴ All in all, however, de Certeau ultimately favoured neither space nor place but focused on subversive practices in time – as a means of resistance open to the lower classes.¹⁵ Nonetheless, his seeming denigration of place chimed in with many other academic voices. Increasingly, scholars understood space, constituted in and through socio-material practices, as permeated by power relations. They made a point of examining how space was produced in and itself produced processes of domination and marginalisation.¹⁶

Paradoxically, this expanding conceptual scope of space brought new impulses to the study of imagined and concrete places. It had proven impossible to completely reduce place to the status of a physical locality. In the 1970s, geographer Yi-Fu Tuan had already stressed the sensual and emotional relations humans develop towards geographical locations, which become places only in lived experience.¹⁷ It is hardly surprising that the idea of local attachment and “senses of place” established in practices of everyday life held particular appeal for anthropologists.¹⁸ As Clifford Geertz pointed out, the “anthropology of place” brings ethnographic exactitude and living details to all kinds of analyses of “the grand complexities that plague the world.”¹⁹

Indeed, the stunning current renaissance of place as a category of analysis has originated in several fields of study. As indicated above, scholars of globalization in the 1990s contributed to bringing place back into focus.²⁰ However, they often did so by contrasting

13 M. De Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien* [The Practice of Everyday Life], S. Rendall (trans.), Berkeley 1984, p. 117. “Est espace/l'effet produit par les opérations qui l'orientent,” M. De Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien*, Paris 2007, p. 173.

14 De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 117. “Est un lieu l'ordre (quel qu'il soit) selon lequel des éléments sont distribués dans des rapports de coexistence. [...] une configuration instantanée de positions. Il implique une indication de stabilité.” De Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien*, pp. 172–173.

15 M. Füssel, *Tote Orte und gelebte Räume: Zur Raumtheorie von Michel de Certeau* S. J., in: *Historical Social Research* 38 (2013) 3, pp. 22–39.

16 See P. Bourdieu, *Physischer, sozialer und angelegener physischer Raum*, in: M. Wentz (ed.), *Stadt-Räume*, Frankfurt a. M. 1991, pp. 25–34; M. Foucault, *Des espaces autres*. Yet, the concept of place was not completely absent from these discussions, e. g. D. Massey, *A Global Sense of Place*, in: *Marxism Today* 38 (1991), pp. 24–29; P. Bourdieu, *Ortseffekte*, in: P. Bourdieu et al., *Das Elend der Welt: Zeugnisse und Diagnosen alltäglichen Leidens an der Gesellschaft*, Konstanz 1997, pp. 159–167; E. W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, London 1989.

17 Y. Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*, Englewood Cliffs 1974; Id., *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis 1977.

18 See e. g. S. Feld and K. H. Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place*, Santa Fe 1996.

19 C. Geertz, *Afterword*, in: S. Feld and K. H. Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place*, pp. 259–262, at 262.

20 See e.g. S. Sassen, *Places and Spaces of the Global: An Expanded Analytic Terrain*, in: D. Held and A. McGrew (eds.), *Globalization Theory: Approaches and Controversies*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 79–105. See also footnote 4 for more general works on globalization.

the global, associated with space and flows, against the local, associated with place, rootedness, identity and sensuous experience.²¹ In the wake of such conceptions, investigations on particular locations in a globalized world have been flourishing, with e.g. port cities being a favourite in recent works of global history.²² There is, however, still a tendency in Global Studies to regard places primarily as “nodal points” in global networks, implying their relegation to the status of temporary “stops” or “crystallizations” of flows of global modernity.²³ Such notions of globality, easily aligned with discussions of a putative “disappearance of space”,²⁴ once more threaten to submerge lived experiences as well as political or power-related aspects of place.

Interestingly, the work of Martina Löw, usually considered as exemplar of the “spatial turn”,²⁵ offers a reintegration of the politics of place into a sociology of space. At first sight, she seems to subscribe to an abstract conception of place (“Ort”) as an empty physical location filled by living practices of spacing. Yet, her terminology betrays a need for active aspects of place as she defines spacing as a process of placing and being placed (“Prozeß des Plazierens bzw. Plaziert-Werdens”).²⁶ In describing location or place (“Ort”) as the target and result of placing (“Ziel und Resultat der Plazierung”),²⁷ she emphasizes that acts of spacing endow locations with symbolic meaning. This in turn shapes perceptions and memories of places, exerting considerable influence on the lives of people.²⁸ Löw’s sociology of space thus reconnects to debates on *lieux de mémoire* and places of (cultural) heritage.²⁹

The field of urban studies just after the turn of the millennium provides some further hints that scholars were beginning to grapple with an abstract notion of space. They highlighted e. g. how cities as bounded, yet diversely connected places were structured

21 See A. Escobar, *Culture Sits in Places: Reflections on Globalism and Subaltern Strategies of Localization*, in: *Political Geography* 20 (2001), pp. 139–174; Hahn, *Antinomien*; Robertson, *Globalisation*.

22 Interestingly, an architect and urban planner sums up research on the history of port cities for a major world-historical handbook. C. Hein, *Modern Cities: Interactions: Port Cities*, in: P. Clark (ed.), *Oxford Handbook on Cities in History*, Oxford 2013, pp. 809–827. The classic work on port cities as localities, in which transcontinental movements of goods and people converge, is P. Chaunu, *Séville et l’Amérique aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, Paris 1977, but see also an immense number of recent works such as C. Antunes, *Globalization in the Early Modern Period: The Economic Relationship between Amsterdam and Lisbon, 1640-1705*, Amsterdam 2004; M. Bustos Rodríguez, *Cádiz en el sistema atlántico: La ciudad, sus comerciantes y la actividad mercantil (1650–1830)*, Cádiz 2005; H. Weiss, *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolisation: Nordic Possessions in the Atlantic World during the Era of the Slave Trade*, Leiden 2016.

23 Thus, SAGE’s “Encyclopedia of Global Studies” equates “global sites” with UNESCO’s world heritage. H. K. Anheier, *Sites, Global*, in: H. K. Anheier and M. Juergensmeyer (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Global Studies*, vol. 1, Thousand Oaks 2012, pp. 1548–1551.

24 Döring and Thielmann, *Einleitung*, p. 14.

25 Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns*, p. 291.

26 M. Löw, *Raumsoziologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 2017, p. 198.

27 *Ibid.*

28 *Ibid.*, pp. 198–203.

29 At the root of these discussions was P. Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 7 vols., Paris 1984–1994; for a recent critical appraisal, see B. Majerus, *Lieux de mémoire – A European Transfer Story*, in: S. Berger and B. Niven (eds.), *Writing the History of Memory*, London 2014, pp. 157–171; R. Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, New York 2013.

by a complex internal spatial layout and distinct identities linked to it.³⁰ In this sense, historian Karl Schlögel,³¹ who accords due attention to the peculiar physical and symbolic topography of the city as an expression of its history, pointed out that the abstract space of the map always remained connected to lived-in places, “Örter”³². Schlögel’s approach has been censured for its supposed disregard of power and politics – compared to international postcolonial versions of the spatial turn³³ – and for its allegedly “German” emphasis on (mere) “local and regional spaces of experience”³⁴. This, however, misses the important point Schlögel’s consideration of places made: Place is not just a simplified, small-scale, somewhat nostalgic view of complex spatial relations. Schlögel, like other scholars of urban space, demonstrates that a focus on place can remind us of the puzzling complexities of the material and the social and of the contemporaneous existence of multiple historical times with the present. Although historiographic debates tend to favour time over place, there is no evidence for linear time being real.³⁵ Looking at place thus makes one realize that time exists in movements and layers, not as a linear category of one event happening after the next. The materiality of place, which presents time and events simultaneously, helps to approach the complexity of lifeworlds and the encounters of which they are made up. Schlögel’s thoughts connect surprisingly well to constructionist and interactionist perspectives, which are helpful for an understanding of the making and unmaking of difference in urban encounters. Works of scholars of religion on the material dimension of religious diversity, its experience and management in urban space and time provide telling examples. They study the sensuous, tangible presence of religious traditions in cities by connecting the spatial, material and aesthetic dimensions of (religious) encounters and co-existence.³⁶

All these approaches challenge scholars to analyse places’ material, sensuous-experiential, performative, temporal and power aspects. Such issues have already been raised from various theoretical positions.³⁷ The British-American geographer John Agnew identifies

30 See e. g. S. Gunn and R. J. Morris (eds.), *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850*, Aldershot 2001, with its introductory chapter by S. Gunn, *The Spatial Turn: Changing Histories of Space and Place*, pp. 1–14.

31 He tends to be regarded as the main initiator of a spatial turn in German historiography, e. g. Döring; Thielmann, *Einleitung*, p. 20.

32 K. Schlögel, *Kartenlesen, Raumdenken: Von einer Erneuerung der Geschichtsschreibung*, in: *Merkur* 56 (2002) 4, pp. 308–18, at 308; see the same term in K. Schlögel, *Die Wiederkehr des Raumes*, in: *Id., Promenade in Jalta und andere Städtebilder*, Munich 2001, pp. 29–40, at 39. See also his works: *Moskau lesen*, Berlin 1984; *Petersburg 1909–1921: Das Laboratorium der Moderne*, Munich 2002.

33 Such criticism is e. g. voiced by Bachmann / Medick, *Cultural Turns*, p. 300.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 302 [translation AFK].

35 M. Middell, *Der Spatial Turn und das Interesse an der Globalisierung in der Geschichtswissenschaft*, in: Döring and Thielmann (eds.), *Spatial Turn*, pp. 103–123, at 109–112.

36 See M. Burchardt and S. Höhne, *The Infrastructures of Diversity: Materiality and Culture in Urban Space – An Introduction*, in: *New Diversities* 17 (2015) 2, pp. 1–13; K. Knott, V. Krech and B. Meyer, *Iconic Religion in Urban Space*, in: *Material Religion* 12 (2016) 2, pp. 123–136.

37 See e. g. A. Escher and S. Petermann (eds.), *Raum und Ort*, Stuttgart 2016; Feld and Basso, *Senses of Place*; T. Hünefeldt and A. Schlitte (eds.), *Ort und Verortung: Beiträge zu einem neuen Paradigma interdisziplinärer Forschung*, Bielefeld 2017.

four major strands of thought, in which a re-integration of place and spatial theories is attempted: “the humanist or agency-based, the neo-Marxist, the feminist and the contextualist-performative”³⁸ orientations. Feminist and/or Marxist approaches e. g. consider movements of experiencing subjects in conjunction with processes of place-making, using this as a basis for anti-capitalist critique. Doreen Massey thus examines the human consequences of mobility in the era of globalization. She asks what this mobility means for the sense of place but also for relations between place, culture and identity. On the basis of her findings, she argues emphatically for renewed attention to the concept of place and its socio-economic implications:

*“Places” – their characters and the differences between them – continue to matter: they matter to capital which exploits the different characteristics of place – in other words, uneven development; and they matter to people because of our senses of belonging and identification, and the quality of our geographical imaginations.*³⁹

Her understanding of places focuses on social relations and the senses of place that develop from them: Places are not containers but open articulations of connections and differentiations, and identities of places or in them are fluid products of interrelations. In this way, difference (of experience) is continuously produced and may also give way to political change.⁴⁰ Such a relational concept of place allows for (re)thinking difference and its political consequences, and likewise encourages diversity within global studies, e. g. in the writing of global histories from a “Southern” perspective.⁴¹

A similar effort to integrate relationality with the human experience of and the attachment to place has been made by a scholar concerned with truly far-Northern viewpoints. Social anthropologist Timothy Ingold, an expert on circumpolar hunting and herding, explicitly argues against the notion of space as “the most abstract, the most empty, the most detached from the reality of life and experience.”⁴² In contrast, he considers places as “knots”, asserting that “the threads from which they are tied are lines of wayfaring.”⁴³ For him, place should be studied as a phenomenon in the making, as a result of movement and not as a bounded entity existing in space.⁴⁴

38 J. Agnew, Space: Place, in: P. Cloke and R. Johnston (eds.), *Spaces of Geographical Thought: Deconstructing Human Geography's Binaries*, London 2005, pp. 81–95, at 89.

39 D. Massey and P. Jess, Introduction, in: Eaed. (eds.), *A Place in the World?* Oxford, 1995, pp. 1–4, at 4.

40 See also Agnew, *Space: Place*, p. 91; D. Massey, *Space, Place, Gender*, Minneapolis 1994. For a ‘political reading’ of place see also Escobar, *Culture Sits in Places*, and the authors he cites.

41 This would include the recognition of theories from the South and the so far asymmetrical entanglements of Northern and Southern knowledge production. Such complex changes could not remain without impact on prevailing notions of place and on the competition over the ownership of (e. g. religious) places. See D. Chidester, *Space*, in: M. Stausberg and S. Engler (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Study of Religion*, Oxford 2016, pp. 329–339. Escobar, *Culture Sits in Places*, likewise focuses on “subaltern strategies”. See also U. Freitag and A. von Oppen (eds.), *Translocality: The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*, Leiden 2010.

42 T. Ingold, *Against Space: Place, Movement, Knowledge*, in: Id. (ed.), *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, London 2011, pp. 145–155, at 145.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

44 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

To take the production of place and place-experience into account reveals a baffling intermixture of materiality, practices, sensuous perceptions, imaginations and social constructions, which make and mark places as emerging relational knots. It can also serve to remind us that places are not only fashioned by actors who are sensuously and materially involved in movement and encounters, but also by actors who are involved on a discursive level. The “topographical turn” thus draws attention to the changing representation techniques that underlie culturally prevailing spatial concepts.⁴⁵ The term “topography” here refers to acts of describing and thereby drafting places. As Sigrid Weigel points out, space only becomes accessible to analysis in cultural studies when it or something about it is transformed into text, something that is readable.⁴⁶ Following J. Hillis Miller, the topography of a place is nothing which already exists, just waiting to be described; it is produced by means of a performative speech act.⁴⁷ Thus, while the spatial turn is devoted to practices that constitute space, the topographical turn is concerned with forms and techniques of representation. Against this background, writers likewise participate in relational place-making.

All in all, recent works highlight that it takes acts of relating to make places come into being. At the same time, the conceptual resurgence of place in the last decades has taken into account the power exerted on actors by locations and meanings attached to them. All of this points to the necessity of reintegrating actors and places as they co-constitute each other. This has two important implications, which are addressed – more or less explicitly – in all the contributions to this issue.

Firstly, the conceptual separation of space and place, one conceived as active, practised, living, the other as abstract, geometrical, unchanging, turns out to be of very limited use. All of these aspects are ultimately inherent in acts of place-making. Indeed, space and place turn out to be more complementary than competing concepts.

Secondly, a conception that links place-making to acts of relating implies that there is someone or something “other” than the actor, who or which can be related to. It is this idea of relationality that links place, as it is conceived here, to the concept of encounter, which requires further attention.

3. Place and (Cultural) Encounters

A relational concept of place-making posits place as one of the constituent elements of any interaction and, at the same time, as constituted through interaction. A firm con-

45 W. Hallet and B. Neumann, Einleitung, in: Eaed. (eds.), *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur: Die Literaturwissenschaften und der Spatial Turn*, Bielefeld 2015, p. 12.

46 S. Weigel, Zum „topographical turn“: Kartographie, Topographie und Raumkonzepte in den Kulturwissenschaften, in: *KulturPoetik 2* (2002) 2, pp. 151–165, at 160.

47 J. Hillis Miller, *The Ethics of Topography* [Die Ethik der Topographie], R. Stockhammer (trans.), in: R. Stockhammer (ed.), *TopoGraphien der Moderne: Medien zur Repräsentation und Konstruktion von Räumen*, pp. 161–196, at 183.

ceptual link between interaction and encounter has already been established by Erving Goffman's classic work.⁴⁸ Yet, in defining "encounter" from a sociological and intracultural perspective, Goffman limits it to a "focused gathering", task-oriented face-to-face interaction of individuals.⁴⁹ While this focus has been adopted among practitioners of intercultural training,⁵⁰ research in diverse fields of the humanities and social sciences has established a wider understanding of encounter. It has become an umbrella term for diverse forms of interaction, comprising e. g. Urs Bitterli's influential categories of "contacts, collisions and relationships"⁵¹. While his approach still suggests an encounter between discrete given entities and as such cannot overcome notions of cultures or identities as containers, theorizations of encounters that focus on dynamic interactions and relationships in time and space are different. They connect very well to relational concepts of place.

Mary Louise Pratt's concept of the contact zone is an attempt to demonstrate the effects of a spatial and temporal co-presence of individuals and societies previously separated, e. g. geographically and historically, but whose routes and habitats now intersect. Pratt scrutinizes the conflictual and asymmetric (power) relations in the newly shared social spaces as they bring forth "transculturation", a typical phenomenon of the contact zone.⁵² Paul Gilroy's "Black Atlantic" likewise focuses on the relationship between transculturality and place-making.⁵³ Homi Bhabha's notion of "third space" or David Chidester's concept of "frontier zones" emphasize the co-constitution of encounters, places and academic categories. By focusing on dynamic (often asymmetric) processes of hybridization or mediation they overcome simplifying notions of cultural encounter as unambiguous contact between two given entities, emphasizing the relational constitution of identities and knowledge instead.⁵⁴

Following these ideas, studying encounters means to study the co-production of (power) relations, cultural differences and places as material or imaginative contact zones in changing historical contexts. As places are made and unmade by continuous social practices of relating,⁵⁵ they engender cascades of further processes of place-making and interaction. Thus, places as well as (cultural) difference are produced in and through en-

48 E. Goffman, *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*, Indianapolis 1961.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

50 See e. g. R. Brislin, *Cross-Cultural Encounters: Face-to-Face Interaction*, Boston 1981.

51 U. Bitterli, *Alte Welt – neue Welt: Formen des europäisch-überseeischen Kulturkontakts vom 15. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* [Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures, 1492–1800], R. Robertson (trans.), Stanford 1989, p. 20.

52 M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London 1992. The current debate on transculturality is in turn linked back to the spatial turn. D. Kimmich and S. Schahadat, Einleitung, in: Eaed. (eds.), *Kulturen in Bewegung: Beiträge zur Theorie und Praxis der Transkulturalität*, Bielefeld 2012, pp. 7–22, at 11.

53 P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Cambridge 1993.

54 H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London, 1994; D. Chidester, *Savage Systems: Colonialism and Comparative Religion in Southern Africa*, Charlottesville 1996. Chidester does however not refer to Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis. In his later book *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion*, Chicago 2014, Chidester avoids the term "frontier zones" and focuses on the relations between the science of comparative religion and the imperial project, and rather speaks of colonial contact zones, see pp. x–xi.

55 That this also happens in poetic texts, is pointed out by E. Glissant, *Poétique de la relation*, Paris 1999.

counters. This view bridges the gap between analyses of representational constructions of (cultural) difference⁵⁶ and studies that take into account the bodily and material aspects of interactions and relationships.⁵⁷ In interactions, human as well as non-human actors may participate and contribute to the creation of place in and through their practices of relating.⁵⁸ With such a broad notion of encounter, which comprises a wide variety of relations (and *relata*), we are able to consider not only instances of cooperation, appropriation or imitation, but also those of mis- or non-understanding, situations of failing and disrupted communication,⁵⁹ or cases of rejection, exclusion and denial.

Focusing on the emergence of place through interactions allows us to study the multiple possibilities and potentials of encounters in the making – and at the same time the limitations produced by hierarchies, lacking opportunities and material conditions. This conceptual focus serves as a reminder to look at the conditions under which encounters “take place”, how these conditions are themselves produced in the act, remembered or forgotten. While some contributors to this special issue conceive of encounters as face-to-face contacts, sometimes even physical clashes of human players, others foreground contact between different cultural systems. All focus on processes of relating and differentiating, temporarily bundled in locations. In sum, this allows for taking up the challenge to (re)consider socio-cultural as well as non-human, material and ideational aspects of encounters. Their combination opens up room for manoeuvre in relational processes, as the possibilities of concrete or imagined, actual or potential forms of association are multiply for the participants.

As a heuristic analytical tool, “place” thus assists in approaching encounters comparatively. Processes of place-making are not only circumscribed by restricting conditions of encounters but also bring forth enabling (temporary) results. Encounters span local, regional and global levels as relations may cross scales.⁶⁰ Studying places and encounters co-making each other thus helps to overcome the dichotomous ways in which places or spaces are often differentiated, e.g. as centre or periphery, local or global. “Placing” encounters in this way avoids some of the abstractions inherent in certain alternative concepts.⁶¹

In the wake of this approach, the contributions to this special issue focus on place and practices of place-making, while not necessarily subscribing to the more radical objec-

56 E. Hallam and B. V. Street (eds.), *Cultural Encounters: Representing “Otherness”*, New York 2000.

57 See e.g. S. Jobs and G. Mackenthun (eds.), *Embodiments of Cultural Encounters*, Münster 2011.

58 Today different approaches include non-human participants (e.g. technologies, physical environment, spirits) in their thinking about relations and relationality. See for example Actor-Network theorist B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford 2005, or new materialist K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Durham 2007.

59 See Topic: Cultural Understanding and Non-Understanding/Thema: Kulturelles Verstehen und Nichtverstehen, in: *International Yearbook for Hermeneutics* 16 (2017), pp. 121–282.

60 See C. Powell, *Radical Relationalism: A Proposal*, in: Id. and François Dépelteau (eds.), *Conceptualizing Relational Sociology*, New York 2013, pp. 187–207.

61 See e.g. “translocality” as proposed by U. Freitag and A. von Oppen: Introduction. ‘Translocality’: An Approach to Connection and Transfer in Area Studies, in: Eaed. (eds.), *Translocality: The Study of Globalising Processes from a Southern Perspective*, Leiden 2010, pp. 1–21.

tions against space. We understand places and space not as given substances, but rather as products of interrelations, of contact or its denial. This becomes a point of departure for developing a new comparative and interdisciplinary perspective on the dynamic co-production of place and encounters marked by cultural differences.

4. Contributions

The contributions to this special issue cover place-making in locations as different as Ostend, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Kalacoon (in today's Guyana), Salvador da Bahia, Galápagos, Haiti, Bermuda, and Madagascar. Their temporal range extends from the early modern period to the present. They draw on theoretical and methodological approaches and empirical findings from such different disciplinary fields as cultural and environmental history, literary studies, social anthropology, human geography, and the study of religion. Looking through these different lenses, the individual chapters attest to the value of new conceptualizations of place for the analysis of encounters.

The basis for this project was created in 2016 by a panel discussion and workshop addressing issues of place and (cultural) encounter.⁶² Looking at specific examples of historical and present situations as well as fictions of encounter, the workshop's conversations explored the potential of locating such situations, whether in the "meshwork" of personal trajectories (Tim Ingold), in "geopoetics" (Kenneth White), or in imagined transcultural places. Building on the discussions and exchanges of this event, the following chapters analyse case studies of (cultural) encounters at the micro-level and reflect on wider theoretical implications of processes of place-making through relations. The individual contributions to this volume thus explore potential uses of innovative conceptions of place in the analysis of intercultural and even interspecies encounter.

Anke Fischer-Kattner examines spatiality and location in early modern sieges by focusing on violent encounters at Ostend. During the Eighty Years' War, in which the Netherlands acquired their independence from the Spanish Habsburg monarchy, the siege of Ostend (1601–164) raised immense contemporary attention across Europe. It was presented as a bloody encounter of inconceivable length. The muddy trenches of Ostend on the one hand call to mind later war experiences in Flanders, thus inviting comparative approaches to "spaces of violence" (Jörg Baberowski)⁶³ with their general characteristics. On the other hand, this massive siege operation can be regarded in the light of new conceptions of "place", which emphasize particularity created in the crossing of individual trajectories. Contemporary sources such as broadsheets and prints depicting the siege of Ostend demonstrate that both perspectives pervaded perceptions and interpretations

62 This event was organized by the interdisciplinary Scientific Network "Dynamics of Intercultural Encounter" (<http://www.dynamiken-interkultureller-begegnungen.de/>), funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). It brought together early-career researchers and established scholars from various disciplines.

63 His conceptual proposal has been taken up rather eagerly in the field of history, particularly for the 20th century: J. Baberowski and G. Metzler (eds.), *Gewalträume: Soziale Ordnungen im Ausnahmezustand*, Frankfurt a.M. 2012.

already at the time of the wars. Original documents themselves contributed to Ostend's becoming one of the iconic places for the formation of a new Dutch identity – in spite of its capture by the Spanish. The story of the siege thus exemplifies how activities of violence and representation interweave. It substantiates Michel de Certeau's metaphorical likening of warfare and story-telling as spatial practices. Practices and representations of violence contributed to the making of a "war landscape",⁶⁴ in which new boundaries of identity and alterity were produced. By means of an analysis of spatial constructions, the violent encounters and daily life of the siege are linked to the emergence of the new Dutch state in early modern Europe.

Franziska Torma focuses the production of "place" as field for research by William Beebe, an American naturalist and travel writer. He counts as a founding-figure of tropical ecology. Torma analyses his contribution to this field in terms of place-making activities. Her starting point is Beebe's observation that representations can never recreate the material experiences that made a place. Peter Turchi has called this problem "the challenge of representation"⁶⁵. In William Beebe's case, this challenge opened up a tricky room for manoeuvre: Various activities might happen at one spot but create very different notions of place, which could be formed as narrated landscape, room for bodily experience, or site of research. In order to set up a frame for a scientific approach to nature, Beebe had to deliberately reduce the complexity of the place of his fieldwork by silencing its imaginative and sensuous notions. Torma uses Beebe's printed travel accounts as a key to uncover the abovementioned different, but entangled notions of place, drawing on concepts put forward by Peter Turchi, Yi-Fu Tuan, and John B. Harley.

Katharina Bauer explores the significance of European locations in the writings of Aleksey Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1883–1945), a neo-realist writer and prominent figure between 1910 and 1945 of Russian respectively Soviet literature. The more the author deals with questions of national identity in his writings, the more important his encounters with other cultures become, as they give him the chance – or force him – to glance at Russia from an outside point of view. Presenting some of the author's journeys to Germany and France between 1908 and 1935, this contribution demonstrates how his topographies of the visited European cities oscillate between explicitly subjective descriptions, references to literary topoi and an instrumentalisation for geo-cultural purposes in the Soviet context: Over the years, the first, allegedly productive encounter with European cultures changes into an experience of deep estrangement combined with the claim of the Soviet Union's cultural superiority. Yet, there are other texts that give Tolstoy "room for manoeuvre" to express a much more personal view of Europe than in his official writings. The theoretical framework of the analysis is based on Detlef Ipsen's definition of places as "focal points of an immediate perception, of cultural interpretation and meaning and of social

64 This concept was put forward in K. Lewin, *Kriegslandschaft*, in: *Zeitschrift für angewandte Psychologie* 12 (1917), pp. 440–447.

65 P. Turchi, *Maps of the Imagination: The Writer as Cartographer*, San Antonio 2004, p. 20.

action.”⁶⁶ Underlining both the concrete experiential character as well as the meaning-making potential of places, his definition applies to all genres, which Tolstoy uses, may they be literary or documentary. For tracing Tolstoy’s changing interpretation of the places visited, Susanne Frank’s works on *geo-kulturologija* and its relation to geopoetics gave important impulses.

Martina Kopf examines transcultural place-making and the search for Brazilian identity, Brazilianness, in Brazilian author’s Jorge Amado’s (1912–2001) writing. Amado’s preferred setting is the Brazilian federal state of Bahia known for its strong cultural ties to Africa and its large Afro-Brazilian population. In Amado’s novel *Tenda dos milagres (Tent of Miracles)* (1968), Bahia’s capital, Salvador, is portrayed as a place where cultural influences of African, Brazilian indigenous and European origin collide. It is at Salvador da Bahia’s historic centre, also known as the Pelourinho, that he situates a kind of Afro-Brazilian ‘university’. The Pelourinho becomes a constituent element of interaction, where Brazilian culture as transcultural, namely Mestizo, culture is practised. In describing Salvador da Bahia as the cradle of Brazilian culture, thus locating culture in a special place, Amado contributes to defining Brazilianness. Transcultural place-making helps to define Mestizo identity in a national as well as in a cultural framework. Searching for Brazilianness moreover means to reevaluate and emancipate the former colony in attributing to Brazil a pioneering task: Salvador da Bahia is drafted as the world’s umbilicus, and the mulatto, the result of intercultural encounters, becomes the human “of the future”. This raises the question how transculturality shapes a place. The contribution thus connects to Paul Gilroy’s statement that transcultural concepts emphasize not only dynamics and restlessness in space or place, but also the creativity which is linked to it.⁶⁷

Eva Spies focuses on current South-South mission encounters in Madagascar. Her contribution follows a Malagasy pastor sent to a small town in the Central Highlands of Madagascar, where he is to establish a branch of Winners’ Chapel, a Nigerian Pentecostal-charismatic church. However, to “win the place for Jesus” – as he described his task – it was not enough to preach and wage spiritual warfare against territorial spirits. It rather turned out that the pastor needed to relate to the place, the people, and himself with the help of a ritual. This enabled him to bind himself to the place, and the inhabitants to Jesus. Referring to theoretical approaches that understand place not as a given but as an emergent product of relations, i. e. constituted in and through processes of relating (as proposed by Timothy Ingold, Doreen Massey, and Christopher Powell), the chapter regards the performative engagement of the pastor with his surroundings as processes of place-binding. Through these, inhabitants, practices and ideas emerge and relate, and the place comes into being as a taking-place of relations.

66 “[...] ist es sinnvoll, Ort als Kristallisationspunkte der unmittelbaren Wahrnehmung, der kulturellen Deutung und Bedeutung sowie des sozialen Handelns aufzufassen.” D. Ipsen, *Ort und Landschaft*, Wiesbaden 2006, p. 64 (transl. K.B.).

67 P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic [Der Black Atlantic]*, T. Zacharias (trans.), in: *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* (ed.), *Der Black Atlantic*, Berlin 2004, pp. 12–31, at 16.

Jointly, the contributions to this volume confirm the importance attached to place in recent theoretical debates. They illustrate how a focus on activities of place-making encourages interdisciplinary discussion which produces fresh looks at case studies of encounters and the places brought forth by them. In the end, it is only in and through encounters – between the inhabitants of present, past or imagined worlds as much as between different academic disciplines – that new perspectives emerge. Such contacts might not engender unquestioned consensus or a fusion of horizons. Nonetheless, producing knowledge relationally, in confrontation with “others”, is an extremely stimulating enterprise and possibly the only way to create new insights at all. To acknowledge this opens up room for manoeuvre for future research and theory building – and hopefully for some movement in current public debates as well.