CALL FOR PAPERS

Annual Conference of the Society for Intercultural Philosophy (GIP)
“Topoi, Places, and Spaces in an Intercultural Perspective”

May 9-11, 2024
University of Tübingen
Languages: English and German
Deadline for submission of abstracts: January 15, 2024

The study and intercultural comparison of topoi, places, and spaces are of great importance for intercultural philosophy: (i) Intercultural thought itself can be described as a topographical one, building on European philosophy’s stronger turn to space in the second half of the 20th century. (ii) Differently designed places and spaces may open up new and non-text-based accesses to other cultural life-worlds.

(i) While in the first half of the 20th century the focus of European philosophy was rather on reflections about time and temporality (Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger), the passage to the second half of the 20th century is accompanied by a shift from a focus on time to the relevance of topos and spatiality (Merleau-Ponty, Blanchot, Deleuze, Foucault, Derrida). Parallel to the new relevance of topos and spatiality in philosophy, the birth of structuralism and structuralist anthropology marks the 1960s, where the question of topos gains anthropological and cultural importance. To this topological interest comes the process of decentralisation. The backlash of postcolonial movements awakens national/indigenous self-consciousness as situated “we”. The way the Negritude movement marks the African thought in 1960s and 1970s shows strongly the necessity of “other locations from which thinking could start” (Eboussi Boulaga). Comparable philosophical thematization of topos and location of thought have also been outlined in other geographies and languages, as for example in the Arabic speaking world (Abed al-Jabri). The process of decentralisation is an important counterpart of the cultural turn. If the homogeneously imagined and measurable space is the signum of modernity and its idea of globality, we are currently experiencing a return to a multiplicity of situated forms of life and lived spaces. This is strongly being discussed in relation to decolonial perspectives in anthropology ("ontological turn": Viveiros de Castro, Descola, Holbraad) and the critique of the nature-culture divide in literature and science & technology studies, feminist theory, and critical posthumanism (Butler, Haraway). However, these approaches often lack an eye for the historical depth and intellectual-historical significance of the respective spaces, including the homogeneously imagined space of modernity. This highlights the importance of interdisciplinary exchange on these issues.

(ii) Images and artworks, as well as architecture and even landscapes, provide a unique access to cultural traditions and their thinking. Watsuji’s famous study on climatic influences on humanity is an early example for this, but also with respect to arts and architecture this has already been shown (latest by Descola in his Les forms du visible) – and particularly well so with reference to East-Asia (Suzuki, Ohashi, Obert). However, the relational structure of spaces and places to cultural traditions becomes relevant also the other way around. This is most obvious with respect to environmental issues. In environmental studies non-Western approaches become more and more relevant. This is true with respect to the acknowledgement of Amerindian epistemologies already mentioned above but it is also the case with respect to African epistemologies which raise inspiring alternative paths of thought.
Finally, eco-phenomenology (Toadvine, Brown), rhizomatic and nomadic thinking (Deleuze & Guattari), and religious studies contribute to the discussion of lived spaces. However, these different strands of thought have so far hardly been brought together and made fruitful for intercultural philosophy. We would like to make up for this with our conference.

Abstracts for presentations of 20 min are invited for one of the following six sections:

- Dwelling, Belonging, and Phenomenology of Spatiality
- Nomadic Thought, Imaginary Geography, Utopia and Dystopia
- Aesthetics, Architecture, and Landscapes
- Knowledges of Ecology
- Decoloniality and Global History
- Religious Places and Spatiality in Religion

Please send an abstract of 500 words max. to abbed.kanoor@ciis.uni-tuebingen.de. Deadline is January 15th 2024. Please indicate in which section you would prefer to speak. Please also send a short bio. Successful applicants will be notified by early February.

The conference is planned as a face-to-face event with some hybrid components.

PD Dr. Niels Weidtmann
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President
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