

# Irritation

## An International Conference (13-14 September 2013, Tübingen University)

Irritation:

- *Excitement of anger or impatience; exasperation, provocation, vexation, annoyance.*
- *Excitement of a bodily part or organ to excessive sensitiveness or morbid action; the resulting condition.*
- *The inducement of some vital action or condition (as motion, contraction, nervous impulse) in an organ, tissue, etc. of an animal or plant by the application of a stimulus. (OED)*

Irritation is a phenomenon of the boundary: it registers and marks a person's specific experience of contact with a stimulus in the form of annoyance, vexation, or even exasperation. Unlike other affective responses like disgust or contempt, however, irritation does not break contact with the irritant but rather attaches itself to it, won't let go of it and won't be let go by it. It allows us to think of the "contact" zone in the widest sense – between readers and texts, between texts, between people and communities – as an interzone which is defined by a dynamic of both fascination and aversion, curiosity and incomprehension, stimulation and response.

This conference takes as its point of departure the notion that a focus on irritation in literary and cultural studies may serve as a useful and stimulating tool for the investigation of the specificity of literary works, cultural interactions, social events at the moment of contact. Irritation is indeed an irritant, but also an indispensable symptom of vitality.

The event is hosted by the Tübingen section of the EMJD "Cultural Studies in Literary Interzones" Programme, an EU-funded PhD Programme dedicated to investigating the many ways in which "contact" is being played out in various literary and cultural interactive constellations.

Date:

13 – 14 September 2013

Place: Tübingen University, Faculty of the Humanities

Organizers: Ingrid Hotz-Davies, Dorothee Kimmich, Horst Tonn

**Support:** for PhD students from the Interzones programme who are currently not resident in Tübingen, there is the possibility of financial support.

**Submissions/Deadline:** Please send short exposés (no more than half a page!) with preliminary title by **1 June 2013** to

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