



Of imagining a space –

The post-colonial Indochina as a literary construct

The issue of this project is the post-colonial imagining of Indochina in mainly French literature. Starting with the historical and geographical roots, it is shown that the imagining of a territory called Indochina began in the 19th century and still has an impact on the narration of the territory. The creation of a colony with this name began in 1862 and ended with the battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Until today, this aspect of the French past is a taboo.

The publication of Marguerite Duras' novel „L'amant“ in 1984 gave a new impetus to this subject. Others followed. The objective of this project is to follow these traces left mainly in texts but also in maps, films, and pictures included in the novels. The digressions between the media leads to a comparison which shows that all media apart from the literature tend to limit their view on Indochina and to cover up the darker parts.

The novels develop a critical view on historical science and question its task to maintain history by remaining neutral. It is shown that by telling the story of Indochina without skipping the resulting disastrous impact on the whole society literature has an important task. Creating a story by imagining and by intensifying the narration, literature as a commentary in the sense of Michel Foucault helps to remember why war is still part of every man's and woman's life and why it should stop.