

Diachronic Interculturality (Dia In)

The 'Diachronic Interculturality' project aims to expand upon interculturality research, which to date has been centered primarily upon the present, in two ways: first, by adding an historical component to the field, and second, by incorporating the circumstance that cultures are related to one another not just in synchronic, but also in diachronic, ways.

Intercultural constellations of relationships that have a cross-temporal character are particularly relevant in the context of 'epochal thresholds' (Blumenberg) around 1800 and 1900, as these are moments at which breaks with tradition surface and cultural repositionings appear to be necessary. While socio-cultural processes of change during these periods are completed largely without public awareness, a delicate sensorium is reflected partially in literature for the scarcely noticeable turns of these eras. Accordingly, the primary enquiry in the investigation of diachronic constellations of interculturality in literature focuses on the role that is ascribed to the combination of historical and intercultural aspects in the context of cultural paradigm changes and their intellectual challenges.

This project will analyse German-language texts from the time around 1800 and 1900 in which temporal and cultural determinations of difference in the form of historical foreign cultures play a central role. This process concentrates on literary and literary-philosophical texts that seek to overcome the classical opposition of synchrony and diachrony in a way that is inherent to the text and to develop new horizons of possibility for thought by means of intercultural constellations. A fundamental consideration in this approach is the assumption that cultural diversity is based on principle upon the potential for innovation and development, which can be made productive for cultural and aesthetic innovations. The project thereby achieves not just a historicisation of intercultural literary studies, but also a stronger connection to questions pertaining to aesthetics and genuine literary studies concerns.