

Fellows



Wolfgang Hottner
IFK_Research Fellow

Duration of fellowship
01. March 2021 bis 30. June 2021

Wolfgang Hottner

PROJECT TITLE

Objections: On the History and Theory of Interventionist Translation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project focuses on forms of interventionist, polemical, and extreme forms of literary translation. With regard to various examples from different historical periods I aim to delineate a long-overlooked understanding of translation, whose primary goal is neither fidelity nor accurate reproduction, but rather the corrosion of one's own language. Translation is understood as an insurgent praxis, targeting linguistic and cultural universalism as well as ontological nationalism. Alongside the translations of George Eliot, Walter Benjamin, and Michel Foucault, Johann Jakob Bodmer's translations of John Milton's seminal epos *Paradise Lost* stand at the center of the project. The human "disobedience," around which Milton's work revolves, becomes a guiding theme for Bodmer's theory and practice of translation. I see Bodmer's Milton translations not just as a major catalyst in the modernization of German literature, but also as a primal scene of a concept of translation that attempts to shatter the "identity" of languages and national literary traditions.

CV

Wolfgang Hottner studied literature, philosophy, and art history in Munich, Berkeley, and Yale, and is currently a *Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter* at the Peter Szondi Institute for Comparative Literature at the Free University Berlin. He was a visiting scholar in the University of Tokyo's Department of German in 2019 and in the Department of Aesthetics at the Södertörns Högskola in Stockholm in 2020. His research focuses on literature and knowledge, theories of translation, and literary theory, and his second book (*Habilitation*), currently in progress, is on the history and theory of rhyme in modernity.

Publications

Kristallisationen. Ästhetik und Poetik des Anorganischen im späten 18. Jahrhundert, Göttingen 2020; „Im Bergwald. Walter Benjamins Polemik gegen Stefan George in der ‚Aufgabe des Übersetzers‘“, in: *Weimarer Beiträge* 66 (2020), S. 421–440; (Hg.), *Hélène Cixous, Die meineidige Stadt oder Das Erwachen der Erinyen*, übersetzt von Esther von der Osten, Berlin 2020.