

Fellows

Bettine Menke

IFK_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship

01. March 2020 bis 30. June 2020

Bettine Menke

PROJECT TITLE

On Babble: The Many Languages in the Language I Speak or Write

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Putting the multilingualism of the language that I speak and write into perspective allows for the subversion of the notion of languages (and their territorialism) as closed and homogeneous, as well as the subversion of traditional models of translation. This is because the inherent multiplicity within one language is untranslatable, with any traditional translation into *one* language inevitably omitting it. Conversely, translation can turn the language presumed to be one's own into something other, something foreign. The promotion of this notion is a matter of urgency, today more than ever, because so many write and speak a language that is not one's or their own: minorities, migrants, minor languages, languages-in-the-making. Such linguistic situations can be turned into productive strategies for articulation and writing (by Kafka, Celan, Joyce, Derrida, Cixous, Tawada). Unaccountable multilingualism encounters the non-closed, the nomadic: *Yiddish*, "*Mauscheln*," *pidgin*, which—in the interest of constructing national languages—have been dismissed as mishmash-languages or no languages at all, as no-one's mother tongues, mere babble.

CV

Bettine Menke has been Professor of General and Comparative Literature at the University of Erfurt since 1999 and is an internationally renowned Walter Benjamin scholar. She has also taught at the University of Konstanz, the Europa-Universität Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt (Main), the Philipps-Universität Marburg, and the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her fellowships have taken her to the IKKM Bauhaus Universität Weimar and the Kulturwissenschaftliches Kolleg at the University of Konstanz.

Publications

„Kafkas Zerstreungen“, in: Stefan Höhne und Manfred Weinberg (Hg.), *Franz Kafka im interkulturellen Kontext*, Weimar/Köln 2019, S. 229–262; gem. mit Juliane Vogel (Hg.), *Flucht und Szene*, Berlin 2018; "'Whatever one calls into the forest ...' . translations – echoes", in: Andrew Benjamin und Beatrice Hanssen (Hg.), *Benjamin and Romanticism*, London/New York 2002, S. 83–97 und S. 218–224; *Das Trauerspielbuch*, Bielefeld 2010.