

Making *Hamlet* German

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Making *Hamlet* German

Forms of Translation and Recreation

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Table of Contents

Abstract	VII
Acknowledgement	IX
A Note on References	XI
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Shakespeare and Retranslation	1
1.2 Outline	7
1.3 Literature Review	10
1.3.1 <i>Retranslation</i>	10
1.3.2 <i>Shakespeare in Germany</i>	18
2. Hamlet and Schlegel – Between Romantic Ideal and Fidelity	25
2.1 Introduction	25
<i>Part 1 – Literary Retranslation, Shakespeare and Treue</i>	26
2.2 Schlegel's Understanding of <i>Treue</i>	31
<i>Part 2 – Schlegel's Shakespeare</i>	35
2.3 Hamlet	35
2.4 Ophelia	41
2.5 Conclusion	45
3. Hamlet and Hauptmann: Mediating Art with Politics	47
3.1 Introduction	47
<i>Part 1 – Adaptation within Translation Studies</i>	49
3.2 Literary Adaptation	49
3.3 Time, Ideology and Cultural Norms	57
<i>Part 2 – Hauptmann's Compound/ Hybridized Variant</i>	60
3.4 Hamlet	62
3.5 Ophelia	69
3.6 Conclusion	71
4. Hamlet and Fried: Poetization of a Classic	75
4.1 Introduction	75
<i>Part 1 – Nachdichtung</i>	78
4.2 <i>Nachdichtung</i> and Translation: Concept and Definition	78
4.3 Shakespeare <i>nachdichten</i>	81

<i>Part 2 – Fried's Nachdichtung</i>	92
4.4 Hamlet	93
4.5 Ophelia	101
4.6 Conclusion	109
5. Hamlet and Frank Günther: Finding Hamlet's Voice in Retranslation	113
5.1 Introduction	113
<i>Part 1 – Retranslation as an Act of Difference</i>	115
5.2 Shakespeare, Linguistic Change and the Question of Difference	115
<i>Part 2 – Günther's Retranslation</i>	122
5.3 Hamlet	123
5.4 Ophelia	131
5.5 Conclusion	136
6. Hamlet and Schanelec and Gosch: a Hamlet for the Stage	139
6.1 Introduction	139
<i>Part 1 – Theatre Translation</i>	142
6.2 Theatre and Retranslation – Shakespeare for Today's Theatres ..	142
<i>Part 2 – Schanelec and Gosch – Transforming Hamlet for Today</i>	150
6.3 Hamlet	150
6.4 Ophelia	158
6.5 Conclusion	163
Conclusion	165
Bibliography	171
Primary Sources	171
Secondary Sources	171

Abstract

This book examines the retranslation and recreation of *Hamlet* in Germany in the twentieth and the early twenty-first century by studying the interrelationship of translation studies, adaptation studies and reception studies. It intends to trace emerging patterns in the (re-)translation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* regarding metaphors and images that have become identifiably 'Shakespearean' in the German tradition. Four retranslations, all published within a period of eighty years, serve as the basis for this research. They include the recreation by Gerhart Hauptmann (1927), the interlingual transpositions by Erich Fried (1972) and Frank Günther (1988/1997) as well as the stage translation created by Angela Schanelec and Jürgen Gosch (2001).

This study adopts a comparative approach to the topic, juxtaposing the retranslations and recreations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to Schlegel's canonical translation of the Long Nineteenth Century. By comparing and contrasting succeeding translations to the Schlegelian translation as well as their direct predecessors, it can be assessed to what extent retranslators have engaged with previous solutions, thereby benefitting the creation of a translating tradition. The book furthermore assesses to what extent images have been mediated to fit temporal as well as socio-cultural expectations. Beyond the linguistic examination of the translations, it is the author's aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the process of retranslation as a whole. Unlike previous studies, this one highlights the dependency of the retranslating process on other forms of recreation and hence explores the diverse forms the process may take. By shedding light on the different approaches taken by the four retranslators, or recreators, it appears possible to show that the term 'retranslation' may be better understood as an umbrella term for all processes seeking to update, recontextualise and engage with existing versions of a source text.

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In 1624, John Donne famously wrote, “No man is an island”. While writing a thesis and the subsequent rewriting of it for publication purposes appears to be a solitary act, appearances are deceptive. Indeed, neither my thesis nor the following would have been possible without the professional advice and encouraging words I received from many. Therefore, I would like to thank everybody wholeheartedly for all they have done. Particular thanks go to my examiners, Professor Sean Allan and Professor Duncan Large, for their thought-provoking questions during my viva. Thanks go also to my supervisor, Doctor Michael White, and the staff of the German Department at the University of St. Andrews for every minute of their time they could spare.

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A Note on References

In discussions of the German retranslations of *Hamlet*, this study forgoes the traditional citation of the play's lines. Instead, citations solely indicate page numbers. This decision is primarily owing to the information regarding the play's lines and their numbering being omitted in the translations. As change is always inherent in an interlingual transposition, it may be suspected that the traditional numbering of lines is not conferrable.