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Thirty Times 'More Fair than Black': *Othello* Re-Translation as Political Re-Statement

This essay[1] analyses one couplet – the Duke's parting shot, "If virtue no delighted beauty lack, / Your son-in-law is far more fair than black" (1.3.291–2)[2] – in about thirty of the German re-translations and adaptations of *Othello* which have been published since the 1760s.[3] The corpus is comprehensive for the post-war period. A glance at the historical distribution (Table 1) shows two marked upsurges, in the 1970s and especially in the 2000s. New German *Othello*s are appearing nowadays at an increasing rate, both in absolute terms and relative to re-translations and

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1   This essay represents an early phase in an evolving and expanding research project. It was substantially completed in winter 2009. I am very grateful to Michael Neill, Gerd Baumann, Marie Gillespie, and Andy Rothwell for comments on early drafts, and to Balz Engler for many helpful corrections and suggestions on the last draft. Versions of the Duke's couplet in all languages are being crowd-sourced at www.delightedbeauty.org, and the site also records work by an interdisciplinary team at Swansea University, devising data visualization techniques to facilitate exploration of variation in re-translations. A far shorter essay, based on German and French versions of the Duke's couplet (French supplied by Dr Matthias Zach), is forthcoming in the *Cambridge World Shakespeare Encyclopedia.*

2   Unless otherwise stated, the reference edition is Michael Neill: *The Oxford Shakespeare: Othello, the Moor of Venice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006).

3   Two main sources are cited below as *BB* (with catalogue number: C10 etc.) and *TT.*

   BB = Shakespeare – deutsch. Bibliographie der Übersetzungen und Bearbeitungen, ed. Hansjürgen Blinn and Wolf Gerhard Schmidt (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2003). *BB* documents about 300 editions of all or part of Shakespeare's works, and 52 stand-alone editions of *Othello.* Dates of publication up to 2000.

   TT = Verband Deutscher Bühnen- und Medienverlage e.V., 'VDB-Katalog', at www.theatertexte.de (last accessed 12 December 2010). TT is a catalogue of theatre scripts, where rights are owned by members of the association of German stage and media publishers (VDB). At *TT* I found 33 *Othello*s, including five pre-2000 not in *BB*, and seven post-2000. My thanks to Dr Arnd Zapletal at *TT* for help with queries, and to all the staff at the various publishers who sent me hard copies or digital files.

   Markus Marti's "Shakespeare in Europe" website has a valuable checklist of translations into several languages: http://pages.unibas.ch/shine/translators.htm, accessed 1 June 2011 (University of Basel, 2007).

adaptations of other Shakespeare plays.[4] Evidently, *Othello* is becoming more and more of a myth to think with. Studying re-translations illuminates the history of the translating culture: its literary language, its canons of style and taste, and its ideological politics. This essay argues that the German re-translations of the Duke's couplet can be grouped into historical periods, demarcated by political changes; in each period the representation of the 'fair/black' hero in this couplet obeys distinct, ideologically grounded rules. The essay also seeks to demonstrate a more contentious proposition, namely that reading re-translations can deepen understanding of the source text. Even advocates of translation studies in literary analysis don't necessarily agree with this. Marilyn Gaddis Rose writes that the "patient research" involved in studying re-translations "can be immensely useful to literary historians." But she goes on: "It does not, however, lead a reader into a text for the most profound experience. Certainly it does not provide us with new internal mental spaces for thinking about a text."[5] On the contrary, I hope to show that when we consider the interpretative readings performed by generations of re-translators, we must reconsider our interpretation of the source text, as we re-read it with them.

My method combines close reading with a version of Franco Moretti's "distant reading".[6] It entails sampling large numbers of cognate texts (regardless of renown or imputed worth) in order to detect historical patterns – genetic and ideological – and in this case also in order to discover what the aggregate of differences reveals about the translated source. Unlike Maik Hamburger, a leading contemporary director, dramaturge, and translator, I do not find that the differences in the re-translations can be read as a "long process of 'cumulative self-correction'", in which Shakespeare's German translators, "each profiting from the work of [his] pred-

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4   For reasons mentioned below, all Shakespeare's plays are being re-translated and re-adapted more frequently now than ever before. Probably, too, a higher proportion of scripts are lodged at *TT*. But compare figures for *Othello* and the always more popular *Macbeth: BB* lists 52 editions of *Othello*, 114 of *Macbeth*; *TT* has 10 post-2000 *Othello*s, and 13 post-2000 *Macbeth*s. This shows that until 2000, *Macbeth* was twice as frequently re-translated or adapted. Since 2000, *Othello* has almost caught up. However, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest* remain clearly in front.

5   Marilyn Gaddis Rose, *Translation and Literary Criticism: Translation as Analysis* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), 53.

6   Franco Moretti, Graphs, *Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London: Verso, 2005).

Table 1: German *Othello* translators, redactors, adaptors
To 1920: all distinct versions of the Duke's last couplet found. From
1920: all translations and adaptations consulted.
By approx. dates of publication, or translation activity, if known to
be significantly earlier.
<u>Key</u>
Bold type = adaptation without the couplet. ***Bold italic*** = adaptation with the couplet. * = not in BB (post-2000: all).
[S] = study edition. [T] = translated from a third language. [Y] = for young people.

1760–1860	1860–1920	1920–40	1940s	1950s
Baudissin Benda Eschenburg/ Eckert **Kringsteiner** Schiller Voss Wieland	Bodenstedt Gildemeister Gundolf	*Engel Wolff	*[S]Brunner *Schwarz *von Zeynek	Flatter Rothe Schaller
1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	*2000s
Schröder	[S]Bolte/ Hamblock [S]Engler Fried [S]Klose Laube *Lauterbach Swaczynna	*Rüdiger	Günther *Motschach	**Bärfuss** Buhss [TY]**Dethier** Karbus [Y]**von Düffel** [T]**von Verschuer** Wachsmann ***Zaimoglu/ Senkel*** **Zimmer**

ecessors", "come ever nearer to the demands of the original".[7] My sample shows, instead, that ideologically controversial lines – and *a fortiori*, whole plays – keep being differently re-translated, in ways which embody contemporary ideologies. There is no guarantee that translators (or any

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7   Maik Hamburger, "Translating and Copyright," in *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. Ton Hoenselaars (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), 148–166, here: 154, 157, quoting Pierre-Daniel Huet, as quoted by George Steiner.

other interpreters) approximate to an original truth, whether located in Shakespeare's time or any other.

In order to cover thirty re-translations and 250 years, I focus here on just the one difficult couplet. Its lexis encapsulates many of the play's themes: race/colour, morality, power, gender, beauty, affect, and kinship. Its syntax exemplifies two rhetorics and prosodies: in the first line, courtly obfuscation, abstraction, ambivalence, delay, and awkwardly colliding consonants; in the second, blunt directness, pleasing assonance, and potentially amusing punning. With this ornate quasi-syllogism,[8] the Duke draws a line, in the name of the state, under Brabantio's challenge to Desdemona's marriage, and declares Othello a good man. But in doing so he highlights his colour difference. The couplet in the end returns with "more fair than black" to equivocating ambivalence, and with "black" to "lack": the rhyme and rhetoric combine with the first line's obscurity to equate "black" with "beauty lack", lack of beauty. A 1970s schools edition glosses the couplet as follows: "your son-in-law's virtues are so fine that they completely overwhelm any qualms you may have at his Negro race."[9] Such paraphrase endorses racism, as do the Duke's words themselves. James Schiffer (quoting Ania Loomba) comments: "To praise Othello's virtue, the Duke slanders his race. […] Othello is granted the status of 'honorary white,' with all the privileges and insults that term suggests."[10] The Duke's recommendation of Othello may once have seemed – to whites – full-hearted, but no longer. Some US productions of the 1990s cut the couplet, as well as Othello's self-lacerating "Haply, for I am black" (3.3.265), for the sake of 'political correctness': to spare the audience the embarrassment of hearing racist speech from a figure of iden-

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8   My thanks to Alan Finlayson for pointing out that the couplet is an enthymeme, an example of "'quasi-logical' arguments that employ only some parts of a syllogism or rely on premises that are probable rather than certain": Alan Finlayson, "From Beliefs to Arguments: Interpretive Methodology and Rhetorical Political Analysis," *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9/ 4 (2007), 545–563 (557).

9   *Othello. The South Bank Shakespeare*, ed. C.W.R.D. Moseley (London: University Tutorial Press, 1974).

10 James Schiffer, "*Othello* Among the Sonnets," in *Othello: New Critical Essays*, ed. Philip C. Kolin (London and NY: Routledge), 325–345, here: 335, citing Ania Loomba, "Sexuality and Racial Difference," in *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Othello*, ed. Anthony Gerard Barthelemy (NY: Hall, 1994), 162–86, here: 181.

tification.[11] In one 1997 UK production, the Duke spoke the couplet "'as a forced, embarrassed attempt to defuse the racial tension with, as it were, a slightly off-colour joke'";[12] in another, "the chuckle from the officers that accompanies this remark suggests that they know Othello isn't one of them, but they need him badly and – right now – they don't intend to dwell on it."[13] It seems plausible that the Duke intends the polysemy of "fair" and "black" to be taken humorously, but if so, with what intent and what effects with regard to the main players in the scene, and the bystanders, and the audience? Do those who laugh laugh as he meant them to laugh? Or might his wordplay be neither meant nor taken humorously? "The humour of a pun depends very much on 'the expectations shared by the framer of the message and the addressee'";[14] the Duke's puns implicitly test the 'common sense' of on- and off-stage worlds. Translators are in exactly the same position as directors and actors, as Dirk Delabastita argues:

> Any understanding and evaluation of Shakespeare rests on textual, cultural, and ideological codes which are largely independent from the linguistic barrier as such. The operation of these codes therefore tends to confront editors, critics, directors, adapters, and other English-speaking rewriters of Shakespeare with much the same difficulties and dilemmas as those facing the translators abroad.[15]

But puns present particular challenges for translators.[16] It helps that one can render a given term as a contrary of a contrary of it, a procedure

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11 Alan C. Dessen, *Rescripting Shakespeare: The Text, the Director, and Modern Productions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 9.

12 Jude Kelly's production at The Shakespeare Theatre, Washington DC, 1997, reviewed by James N. Loehlin, cited in *Othello*, ed. Julie Hankey (*Shakespeare in Production*; 2nd edition, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 147.

13 Sam Mendes's production at the Royal National Theatre, London, 1997, reviewed by Robert Butler, "The Critics: Black and White and Noir All Over," in *Independent on Sunday*, 21 September 1997, www.independent.co.uk/lifestyle/the-critics-black-and-white-and-noir-all-over-1240286.html, accessed 1 June 2011, cited with altered punctuation in Hankey, *Othello*, 147.

14 Bistra Alexevia, "There Must be Some System in this Madness," in *Traductio: Essays on Punning and Translation*, ed. Dirk Delabastita (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), 137–154 (138), quoting Muriel Vasconcellos.

15 "Introduction: Shakespeare in Translation: A Bird's Eye View of Problems and Perspectives," in *Ilho de Desterro* 45 (2003), 102–115 (107).

16 See, compendiously, Dirk Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue: An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay, with Special Reference to Hamlet* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993).

which is often appropriate in Shakespeare translation, with his constant playing on inconstant oppositions. Here the procedure is doubly licensed by the Duke's double negative ("no … lack"). Like Timon's gold, a translator can "make black white, foul fair, / Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant" (*Timon* 4.3.1664–5). The semantic, figurative and connotative fields of English "black" and German *schwarz* happen to be fairly similar – yet surprisingly many translators eschew that seemingly obvious choice. For "fair", German offers no obvious choice: the several meanings can only be conveyed by several words. Since German Shakespeare translators (with rare exceptions until very recently) obey a convention that a pair of rhyming iambic pentameters must be formally mimicked as such, their options are even more limited, although they have a surfeit of choices. The lack of rhymes for "schwarz" encourages translators to search for alternatives, but this purely technical factor does not fully explain the variation in translations of the word.

The Duke's uses of "fair" and "black" are glossed by only the most recent Anglophone editors: a sign of increased sensitivity to race-related terminology. "Fair" is triply glossed by Michael Neill as "fair-skinned", "beautiful", and "free from moral blemish", and by Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen as "beautiful/pale/virtuous".[17] They gloss "black" as a corresponding series: "ugly/dark-complexioned/wicked". Neill's triple gloss on "black" does not correspond so exactly to his gloss on "fair": "dark-skinned", "baneful, malignant, sinister", and "foul, wicked". "Baneful" suggests by its contrary a further possible gloss on "fair": "auspicious". The sovereign is blessing both a marriage and a military expedition, so he might be expected to pronounce judgment on Othello in terms of his, his wife's, and his companions' anticipated destiny. But surely more obviously, "if one opposite of 'fair' is 'black', another is 'foul'"[18] with the primary sense of 'ugly': hence Bate and Rasmussen's gloss "ugly" for "black" (an important choice in German translation history, as we will see); and by the same token, the primary contrary of "black" makes "fair" here mean "white".

In a recent short story, Zimbabwean writer John Eppel depicts a Bulawayo schoolteacher mulling over the adaptation of these lines for a school production in which the sole white actor will be playing Othello.

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17   William Shakespeare, *Complete Works* (The RSC Shakespeare), ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
18   Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (Frogmore: Paladin, 1974), 26.

In his reflections he assumes that the Duke's comment on Othello is equivocal:

> […] what about:
> If virtue's qualities are always rare
> Your son-in-law is far more black than fair.
> Bit clumsy. What if I change "fair" to "white"? Um … what about:
> If virtue lack no beauties that delight
> Your son-in-law is far more black than white.
> Better: "white" has fewer positive connotations than "fair". Needs more work, though. Certainly
> needs more work.[19]

Translators are adaptors working into another language, and English is always another language, too, in different times and places. Translators' choices might be analysed in terms of personal style, but I hope to demonstrate that – as Eppel's story implies – they are over-determined by ideological factors at work in the translating culture. This is not only a matter of lexis ("virtue" and "delighted" are similarly problematic here). Syntax and rhetoric often must change in translation between languages, and they circumscribe the implicit dramaturgy of the translated lines. Different choices impute different intentions to the Duke, for example by varying the extent to which, in speaking to Brabantio, he seems to include Othello as an interlocutor, or refers to him only as an object of others' regards, whether admiring, or fearful, or contemptuous. He must, surely, look to meet Brabantio's gaze as he speaks, but does he also look to meet Othello's? ("The stranger soon learns that where the mouth may deceive, the eyes tell nothing but the truth."[20]) In raising such questions, the re-translations of the Duke's fourteen words offer a micro-history of German Shakespeare translating and of German ideologies with regard to state power and the black hero. And in their diversity they reveal implications in the source lines which monoglot readers not only might miss, but do miss, and must miss, unless they take the detour through the work of translation.

This research was prompted by a controversial, radical 'tradaptation' commissioned by the Munich Kammerspiele, first staged there in 2003,

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19   John Eppel, "Orthello" [sic], in *Writing Now: More Stories from Zimbabwe*, ed. Irene Staunton (Harare: Weaver Press, 2005), http://od.dk/undervisning/article/orthello-af-john-eppel, last accessed 1 June 2011.

20   Caryl Phillips, *The Nature of Blood* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 126.

and published by the writers in 2004.[21] Feridun Zaimoglu and Günter Senkel's *Othello*, in a production directed by Luk Perceval, has the status of a contemporary classic. At the time of writing it has just opened at the Thalia Theater Hamburg, after being in repertory in Munich for five years. It has toured widely. At Stratford in 2005, the script's obscene contemporary language, scrolling on surtitles in a literal back-translation, gave great offence. In Iago's quayside jokes to Desdemona (2.1.129 ff.), for example, Zaimoglu and Senkel overturn the entire German translation tradition by not translating the words of the couplets, but instead giving Iago current misogynist, racist jokes, such as: "How do you stop five blacks from raping a white woman? Throw them a basketball."[22] The provocation offered here is arguably more faithful to the part of Shakespeare's Iago than most translations, which go by the words, instead of seeking contemporary cultural equivalents. Zaimoglu and Senkel's modernizing tradaptation strategy involves a far stronger, more consciously ideological interpretation of the text than most translations or adaptations – in part because Zaimoglu's Turkish background entails a distinctive perspective on racism. Not that they always "tradapt" so loosely. About 90 % of their text derives quite directly from Shakespeare. In the Duke's couplet, eschewing verse metre and rhyme, they are more strictly faithful than many translators, except in their choice for "fair":

> Zaimoglu/Senkel: *Solange männliche Tugend mehr zählt als Schönheitsfehler, kann man sagen, Ihr Schwiegersohn ist eher edel als schwarz.*[23]

> So long as male virtue counts more than minor blemishes [literally: beauty-failings], one can say your son-in-law is more noble than black.

We will come back to the ideological significance of their choices here. The writers claim to have consulted "more than a dozen" previous translations,[24] and when I began to think about comparing theirs with others', it occurred to me that rhyming couplets offered a useful litmus test, a trial of translators' mettle. The re-translations of Iago's quayside jokes offer

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21 Feridun Zaimoglu and Günter Senkel, *William Shakespeare: Othello* (Münster: Monsenstein und Vannerdat, 2004). See Tom Cheesman, "Shakespeare and Othello in Filthy Hell: Zaimoglu and Senkel's Politico-Religious Tradaptation," in *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 46:2 (2010): 207–220; Carol Chillington Rutter, "Watching Ourselves Watching Shakespeare – Or – How Am I Supposed to Look?," in *Shakespeare Bulletin* 25:4 (2007): 47–68.
22 Zaimoglu and Senkel, *William Shakespeare*, 34.
23 Zaimoglu and Senkel, *William Shakespeare*, 26.
24 Zaimoglu and Senkel, *William Shakespeare*, 122.

very rich material; indeed, more German re-translators and redactors have tinkered with them over the generations than with the Duke's couplet. But his play on "virtue" and "lack", "fair" and "black" makes an ideal sample for initial analysis, because translators are forced to make choices which reveal their ideological positions on basic questions posed by *Othello:* what does "black hero" mean? What does the play's representative of state authority think it means?

One meaning of "fair" is almost certainly not in play in the Duke's couplet: the sense of "just" or "even-handed". The line has meanwhile acquired that additional – anachronistic – meaning, as witnessed by some current student editions with translations into modern English. In the first, "valour" is a good explanatory translation for "virtue", but the ambiguity of "fairer" permits a misleading pun on "more just":

> Durband: If valour is the measure of true beauty, your son-in-law is fairer than he's black.[25]

The second example, catastrophically bad, documents a disturbing divorce between scholarship and educational publishing. The translator apparently works from intuition alone, using no reference works. He overlooks a negative and reads "fair" as plain "just":

> Scott: If virtue is missing delightful beauty,
> Your son-in-law is far more just than black.[26]

The third, the most simplified, raises a different problem of anachronism by invoking a phrase which has only been current since the 1960s, the slogan "Black is Beautiful":[27]

> Crowther: If goodness is beautiful, your son-in-law is beautiful, not black.[28]

This is arguably appropriate for young readers today: it implicitly affirms an anti-racist tenet, by making the Duke contradict it. But "black" is not

25 *Shakespeare Made Easy. Othello*, modernised by Alan Durband (London: Hutchinson Education 1989; repr 2001, 2006).

26 Enotes: *Othello Text and* Translation, at www.enotes.com/othello-text, accessed September 2009; the text is from *Othello. Side by Side*, ed. James Scott (Clayton, DE: Prestwick House, 2005).

27 *Wikipedia* (at December 2009) credits the phrase to John S. Rock (1825–66), but this cannot be confirmed. The sources given by *Wikipedia* do not contain the phrase in question. My thanks to Sara Martin, Associate Dean of Libraries, University of Detroit Mercy.

28 *No Fear Shakespeare. Othello*, ed. John Crowther (New York: Spark Notes, 2003).

the absolute contrary of "fair" in Shakespeare's far more ambiguous, comparative formulation.

Translations must often simplify. Translators can sometimes compensate for this by expanding on a source, introducing explanatory glosses into their text. In Shakespeare translations for the stage or for general readers, this option is limited by formal constraints. German Shakespeare translators operate within a tradition which imposes high standards as regards awareness of precursors, and of current textual and critical scholarship. Still, in translating lines like these they must pin their colours to an interpretative and ideological mast. It is one task to try to understand the Duke's words in terms of a reconstruction of Shakespeare's English, which predates the Atlantic slave trade and European imperialism, let alone decolonization, the Civil Rights Movement, and postcolonialism. It is another task to use a current language to convey an interpretation with playable or readable concision. Translations of literary texts are not transparent vehicles of some original meaning, stripped of linguistic specificity, reclothed in other words. Norms of "fidelity" or "accuracy" vary, as do the norms of "adequacy" or "appropriateness" which subsume them. Translators are writers of their own time. Their texts obey – or transgress – contemporary literary norms. Choices of words, syntax, and punctuation depend on an implicit understanding of what translators are supposed to do, and this varies between contexts. A theatrical producer demands an appropriately playable script; an academic publisher wants an appropriately faithful text; general publishers want appropriately readable versions, differing depending on the age, gender, class or cultural capital of anticipated readers. What these demands specifically imply is quite different in 1970 from what it was in 1790.

I. German *Othello*s: Overview and Periodisation

The first German *Othello* appeared in 1766 in the first complete plays edition, translated by Christoph Martin Wieland.[29] Others were soon trying to improve on it. By the 1830s the sheer mass of German Shakespeares was already startling: in that decade alone, eight distinct editions of the

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29 *William Shakespeare Theatralische Werke in 21 Einzelbänden.* Übersetzt von Christoph Martin Wieland. [1762–66; Neuausgabe.] Ed. Hans and Johanna Radspieler. Vol. 18: *Othello, der Mohr von Venedig* (Zürich: Haffmans, 1995); *BB* C2650 (original edition: C10).

complete plays came onto the market. Re-translating Shakespeare had become a kind of highbrow parlour game, and it is still a popular pastime – sometimes remunerative – among people involved professionally or as amateurs in theatre, literature, and literary scholarship. As Maik Hamburger points out, Germany's well-funded state theatres commonly cobble scripts together from several translations, and so avoid paying anyone else royalties, but they also often commission new scripts.[30] Trade publishers nowadays do so less often; most reprint out-of-copyright work, typically in a range of editions for different book market segments. Still, two new complete works editions are currently underway, both bilingual: the critical *Studienausgabe* under the patronage of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft,[31] with annotated English texts facing annotated German prose versions; and Frank Günther's literary and playable translations, printed facing the texts of the New Penguin Edition, with (modest) end-notes and commentaries.[32]

German critical editions once set a philological example to Anglophones. Nicolaus Delius's edition (1854–65) was the basis for Frederick James Furnivall's Leopold Shakspere (1880s) and Royal Shakspere (1890s). Arnold Schröer's parallel printing of First Quarto and Folio texts (1909) was long a standard tool for *Othello* research.[33] Delius, unlike Anglophone editors for a long time to come, saw the need to gloss "fair" at the Duke's couplet: "*einerseits = schön, andererseits = hellfarbig*" ("on the one hand: beautiful, on the other hand: light-coloured"); he also gave

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30　Maik Hamburger, "Translating and Copyright," in *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. Ton Hoenselaars (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), 148–166.

31　*Englisch-deutsche Studienausgabe der Dramen Shakespeares. Unter dem Patronat der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*, eds Rüdiger Ahrens et al., vol. 1, *Othello*, ed. Balz Engler (Munich: Francke, 1976; 2nd edn Tübingen: Francke, 1989); the most recent vol. (unnumbered [28]) is *Titus Andronicus*, ed. Markus Marti (Tübingen: Stauffenberg, 2008). See Werner Brönnimann, "Think-along Edition: The Bilingual *Studienausgabe* of Shakespeare," in *Hoensellaars*, 184–198.

32　Günther's translations of the plays have appeared since 1995 with Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag (Munich); also since 2000 with the bibliophile publisher ars vivendi (Cadolzburg), currently offering 27 volumes of his projected 39-volume "William Shakespeare Gesamtausgabe" (complete works; to be completed in 2014).

33　William Shakespeare: Othello: Paralleldruck nach der ersten Quarto und ersten Folio mit den Lesarten der zweiten Quarto und einer Einleitung, ed. M. M. Arnold Schröer (Heidelberg: Winter, 1909; repr. 1949).

the corresponding contraries for "black": *häßlich* ("ugly") and *schwarz* ("black"). He glossed "fair" slightly differently in Iago's quayside couplets (2.1.121): "fair *steht hier doppelsinnig = schön und blond*" ("here with double meaning: beautiful and blond").[34] As we will see, these glosses may have influenced subsequent translators, but what is more certain is that they reflect a cultural consensus already established by earlier translators, working from the texts established by earlier British editors, and those editors' glosses.

The corpus of *Othello* re-translations used here is naturally incomplete. Working translations commissioned by theatres, prepared by directors, dramaturges, and playwrights, are not usually published. If they are, they are not usually published in the regular book trade, but by theatre publishers. The history of this type of publication is obscure, but up until the 1960s, scripts for use by theatres were printed in small-book formats, later issued as loose-bound typescripts, and nowadays they are produced as pdf files. These scripts remain outside book trade circulation, being intended for use by theatres, under license. Some are offprints of trade published translations, or latterly photocopies of them; but many such scripts are extant only in specialised ('grey') formats, and may not be deposited in national libraries or other public archives.[35] Sometimes, independently of productions, translations are done by amateurs, outsiders seeking to attach their name to that of the Bard. These may find speculative trade or theatre publishers. Many translations in manuscript must be languishing in private drawers and attics, as well as in theatre archives. Many will have been lost. The potential scale is indicated by Ulrich Erkenbrecht's researches over many years on German versions of Sonnet 66: the third edition of his anthology reproduces 204 translations and adaptations.[36]

A minority of translations are reprinted; of these, few have a life of more than a few decades. The exception is the complete works associated with leading Romantic writers: the 'Schlegel-Tieck' edition (1825–33), hallowed by tradition in the course of the nineteenth century, and

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34 *Shaksperes Werke*, ed. N. Delius, 7 vols (Elberfeld: Friderichs, 1854–65). The note on the Duke's couplet was added in the 4th edition, 2 vols (Elberfeld: Friderichs, 1876).

35 Several scripts accessed through *TT* are neither in *BB* nor in the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek; see notes below.

36 Ulrich Erkenbrecht, *Shakespeare Sechsundsechzig* (3rd edn, Kassel: Muriverlag, 2009). It has to be said that a good many are by Erkenbrecht himself, or otherwise owe their existence to his anthology.

much tinkered with by later editors. Its variants remain the most often re-printed, most widely read, performed and quoted texts: most Germans' introduction to Shakespeare. All subsequent translations can be considered as ripostes to Schlegel-Tieck's archaisms, smooth cadences, and limited range of registers – nearly everyone speaking high style nearly all the time. It has provoked modernising efforts in every generation. On the other hand, some re-translations and adaptations replicate Schlegel-Tieck over long stretches.

In the Schlegel-Tieck edition, *Othello* (like twelve other plays) was translated by Wolf Graf Baudissin. His version of the Duke's couplet lacks any equivalent for "fair", while "black" becomes *häßlich:* "ugly".[37] Bate and Rasmussen suggest "ugly" here, but the *OED* and other modern reference works do not legitimate that choice. Yet it was legitimated by nineteenth-century scholarship: Delius's gloss cited above, or Alexander Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon*, where the meaning "ugly" is tellingly subsumed under the definition "of a dark complexion".[38] The point is, though, that Baudissin's choices were not idiosyncratic but ideologically determined. What clinches this is the fact that most other translations of the period display similar features, and few later translations do so. Using features of this kind, a historical sequence of implicit ideological rules can be reconstructed. Each rule dominates for a period demarcated by political events. No ideological domination is perfect: there are exceptions to some rules, as some translators adhere to past rules, some anticipate a future rule, and some are just idiosyncratic. But the dominant rule in each period is clear.

The political demarcation points are: German national unification (in progress from the 1860s, achieved in 1871); the end of the First World War (1918); the foundation of the two post-Second World War states (1949); unification (1990); and finally, most specific to the "fair/black"

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37 Needless to say, the semantic field of *häßlich* does not exactly equate with that of "ugly". For instance, *hassen* is "to hate", but "hateful" would be an unnatural translation of *häßlich* in this and most other contexts. My back-translations offer the closest or standard equivalents, with necessary variants, glosses and notes.

38 "Black, adj. […] 2) of a dark complexion; often opposed to *fair* […]. Synonymous to ugly" (with six references, none to *Othello*, e.g. "all the pictures fairest lined are but b. to Rosalind", *As* 3.2.98): Alexander Schmidt, *Shakespeare Lexicon* (Berlin: Reimer, 1902), consulted at Tufts University's Perseus Digital Library: www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/resolveform?lang=en&type=begin&formentry=1&doc=Perseus%3Atext% 3 A1999.03.0068, last accessed 1 June 2011.

theme, the redefinition of German citizenship on a non-ethnic basis (2000). In the most recent period – my starting-point – Zaimoglu and Senkel work from a new ideological rule, but other translators are still working to earlier rules. *Othello* translation today is characterised by unprecedented ideological diversity. The story can be summarized as follows:

1. Through most of the nineteenth century, in most translations (and in all the most frequently reprinted ones), Othello is represented as *not black.* A black hero is simply inconceivable. The Duke speaks as if Othello were not differentiated in terms of colour. To be praised as noble, his being a "Moor" must be unspoken. Rule: *Avoid colour terms.*

2. Late in the century – when the German nation-state was founded and acquired imperial colonies in Africa and elsewhere – Othello begins to be black. But colour terms are disassociated from physical appearance; instead they are associated with *light* or *lack of light.* This conceptual shift relates to the imperial 'civilizing mission'. Rule: *Translate "black" and "fair" metaphorically in terms of "(lack of) light"; avoid "black" as a physical descriptor.*

3. From the end of the First World War, until about 1950, modern racist categories are used in a fascistic conceptual framework. Othello is a fearsome black man, strongly gendered, and contrasted with "white". Rule: *Translate "black" as "dark" or as "black man"; translate "fair" as "white", or omit.*

4. From the 1950s to the 1980s (with no distinction between capitalist and communist German-speaking countries), Othello is *beautiful and black.* This conceptual pairing pre-dates (but is later reinforced by) the Civil Rights slogan "Black is Beautiful". Blackness is *exoticized* and *eroticized* in terms of an intentionally post-fascist, humanist state ideology, which is nonetheless uncritically Eurocentric. Rule: *Translate "black" and "fair" as "black" and "beautiful".*

5. A quantitative upsurge in re-translation activity occurs in the 1970s, when it becomes clear that visible "others", "guest-worker" immigrants, are beginning to settle in Germany, posing new questions about German hospitality. But this is not associated with any change in the translation rule.

6. In the 1990s, following unification and the ensuing racist violence, which brought the new Germany unwelcome international publicity, *moral anti-racist* re-translations intentionally challenge the racism inherent in hierarchical concepts of "black" and "white", but they

maintain a normative concept of whiteness. The Duke speaks for a paternalistic, pedagogical state, which seeks to discourage racist attitudes. Rule: *Translate "black" and "fair" as "black" and "white", and postulate a black-to-white metamorphosis.*

7. After 2000, there is unprecedented *diversity* not only in respect of dramatic form (more adaptations and works loosely based on Shakespeare) but also in respect of ideology. Most re-translators revert to the *exotic-eroticism* of the pre-unification period (1950s–80s), which thus re-asserts its dominance. Only Zaimoglu and Senkel's *Othello*, the most successful at the box office, is also ideologically innovative, reflecting the entirely new status of ethnic 'others' as equal German citizens. Its translation rule corresponds to political rather than moral anti-racism, from a minoritarian position. Rule: *Emphasise class over race.*

It might be objected that this sequence merely confirms a conventional view of cultural history as a superstructure resting upon a base of political history. Three answers can be offered. Firstly, this survey of a minute sample of textual *Othello*-work is not the end-point of the research. The comparison helps to identify past and present texts of particular interest – not necessarily the 'canonical' ones – which will repay further investigation, using a wider range of sources and interpretative methods, encompassing performances, other media, and reception. Secondly, the project emerges from my particular interest in recent and contemporary *Othello*-work. I guessed that knowledge of the past would illuminate the present, and it does. The findings regarding contemporary work are perhaps the most surprising. And finally, by uncovering the diversity of past and present German readings of *Othello*, the research enriches understanding of Shakespeare's lines, and of the play.

The quantitative upsurge in German *Othello*-work in the 21st century is coupled with a diversification of *kinds* of work. Adaptations (as distinct from would-be complete and – on their own terms – "faithful" translations) have not been seen since nineteenth-century burlesques,[39] and are now suddenly common. They include new works for young people, and adaptations translated into German from third languages. The overall increase in and diversification of kinds of work accords with general, in-

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39 Kringsteiner's *Othello, der Mohr von Wien* (1806) (*BB* C23790) is the only one I have consulted. Further Viennese burlesques: *BB* C23810 (1829), C23820 (1841), C23830 (1865), and Louis Taufstein's *Othello im Frack* (1901, according to Wikipedia.de; not in *BB*). Further parodic texts: *BB* C23870 (1885), C23890 (1887).

ternational trends in theatre work: increasing economic importance of the cultural industries, increasing cultural importance of innovation, lessening respect for tradition, increasing pedagogical work, and increasing international exchange. All these factors favour adaptations or tradaptations of cross-culturally familiar classics. Except for Zaimoglu and Senkel's, the German adaptations omit the Duke's couplet.[40]

II. Initial Prose Translations

Brabantio tells Othello he cannot believe that Desdemona "Would ever have, t'incur a general mock / Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as thou – to fear, not to delight" (1.2.70–2). Addressing the Duke, Brabantio uses less offensive language, but still refers to Othello as a fearsome thing – "what she feared to look on" (1.3.100). The Duke's phrase "delighted beauty", therefore, not only sets up his pun on "fair" by coupling "light" with "beauty", but offers a riposte to Brabantio: "delighted" can be read as the contrary of "fearsome". "Delighted" has invariably been glossed as "delightful" by editors since George Steevens in 1778.[41] The problem posed by the word's odd ending had first been noticed by Thomas Hanmer, who suggested "no delighting", and William Warburton, who let "delighted" stand in the text, but noted: "This is a senseless epithet. We should read *belighted* beauty i.e. white and fair."[42] His was the edition used by Wieland in the 1760s:

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40 Recent adaptations without the couplet (see Table 1): Lukas Bärfuss, *Othello. Kurze Fassung* (a.k.a. *Othello. Eine Blue-Movie*), produced in Hamburg, 2001 (*TT*); John von Düffel = *Othello. Therapie*, produced in Bonn, 2001 (*TT*); Uwe Dethier, *Othello*, trans. from the Dutch by Ignace Cornelissen, produced in Utrecht, 2001, Frankfurt, 2005 (*TT*); Leopold von Verschuer, *RadiOthello*, trans. from the French original (with English and Spanish passages) by Alvaro García de Zúñiga, produced in Zurich, 2008 (not *TT*; original text at http://blablalab.net/fr/images/7/79/RO_dialogues.pdf, accessed 12 December 2009); Hans Zimmer, *Othello steht im Sturm*, numerous schools productions since 2007 (*TT*).

41 '*Delighted* for *delightful*; Shakespeare often uses the active and passive participles indiscriminately. Of this practice I have given many examples.' 'There is no such word as belighted.' *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, ed. George Steevens (1778). Consulted in the database, *Editions and Adaptations of Shakespeare 1591–1911* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1997) (= EAS).

42 *The Works of Shakespear*, ed. William Warburton (London: Knapton, 1747). Consulted in EAS and *Othello*, ed. Horace Howard Furness, New Variorum Shakespeare, vol. 6 (repr. London: Dover, 1963).

Wieland: *wenn Tugend die glänzendeste Schönheit ist, so ist euer Tochter-mann mehr weiß als schwarz.*[43]

If virtue is the most radiant beauty, then your son-in-law is more white than black.

Wieland aimed to convey the sense for readers, not to write poetry for the stage. His prose translation, with scholarly annotations, sets a high standard for accuracy here, though he simplifies by cutting the double negative. For "delighted", Wieland's choice is influenced by Warburton, whose note highlights the root "light" in the word, as well as bringing "white" into play for "fair".

In the 1770 s, Johann Joachim Eschenburg's prose versions of the plays revised Wieland's texts in the direction of contemporary idiom:

Eschenburg: *wenn es der Tugend nicht an Reiz und Schönheit fehlt, so ist Ihr Schwiegersohn vielmehr weiß, als schwarz.*[44]

if virtue does not lack charm and beauty, then your son-in-law is far more white than black.

Eschenburg is slightly more precise than Wieland with "not lack", and he avoids archaism for "son-in-law". With "*Reiz und Schönheit*" (*Reiz:* charm, attractiveness), he may be influenced by Samuel Johnson's edition of 1765, which conjectured "no delight or beauty", glossing "delight" as "delectation or power of pleasing".[45] At the word "*weiß*", Eckert (Eschenburg's unasked-for editor) inserted a footnote: "fair *heißt im Englischen: blond und schön*" ("fair means in English: blond and beautiful"), thus inaugurating a minor tradition of confusion between "fair" of skin or complexion, and "fair-haired".

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43 *William Shakespeare Theatralische Werke in 21 Einzelbänden.* Übersetzt von Christoph Martin Wieland. [1762–66; Neuausgabe.] Ed. Hans and Johanna Radspieler. Vol. 18: *Othello, der Mohr von Venedig* (Zürich: Haffmans, 1995). *BB* C2650 (original edition: C10). On Wieland's sources see the Radspielers' edition, p.199 f.

44 *Willhelm Shakespears Schauspiele.* [Übersetzt von Johann Joachim Eschenburg.] Neue verbesserte Auflage [von Gabriel Eckert], Band 9, Mannheim: [Giegel], 1779. *BB* C40; this is Eckert's revised edition of C20 (1775–1777). Special thanks to Jill Hughes at the Taylor Library, Oxford, for facilitating access during St Giles Fair 2009! Eschenburg's Shakespeare is much praised by Erich Fried: see John Elsom (ed.), *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?* (London: Routledge, 1989; repr. 2004), p.39 f.

45 *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, ed. Samuel Johnson and George Steevens (1765). Consulted in EAS.

For "son-in-law", Wieland uses *Tochtermann* and Eschenburg *Schwiegersohn:* both current terms, but *Tochtermann* would become archaic during the nineteenth century. Most subsequent translators choose *Eidam*, which was already becoming archaic in 1800. *Schwiegersohn* became standard by the mid nineteenth century, and it is typical of the tendency to archaism in German Shakespeare translations that we won't see *Schwiegersohn* used in this couplet until the 1950s. Also archaic, from about the mid nineteenth century, is the second-person singular pronoun *ihr* (possessive *euer*; capitalization varies). The modern familiar form *du* (*dein*) is not used until the 1970s. As for "fair" and "black", given the editions they are working from, Wieland's and Eschenburg's choice of *weiß* and *schwarz* (white and black) might seem fairly commonsensical. And one might have guessed that their versions would have influenced later retranslators. But here's a surprise: not until the 1920s will a published re-translation choose *weiß* here; indeed this still continues to be a rare choice. Equally surprising is the rarity of *any* translation of "black", and indeed the complete absence of all colour terms from the most important (that is, most often reprinted) re-translations, until the later nineteenth century.

III. Period 1: 1800s to 1860s: Pre-National 'Colour Blindness'

By the turn of the nineteenth century several writers had produced verse versions for the stage, based on Wieland, without finding much contemporary favour.[46] Two prominent men of letters collaborated on a more elevated, aesthetically and philosophically 'idealised' *Othello* in 1804– 1805. Johann Heinrich Voss is renowned for his translations of Homer; his translations of most of Shakespeare's plays were published in 1818– 1829.[47] Friedrich Schiller was revising Voss's draft of *Othello* when he died. Voss drafted two versions of the couplet, but Schiller's was the

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46 Eighteenth-century re-translations I have not yet inspected include Schmid (*BB* C23700), Steffens (C23720), Schröder (not in *BB*; cf. his *Hamlet*, C9010), and Schubart (C23770). Schröder's *Othello*, no longer extant, reportedly so shocked Hamburg audiences that a happy ending was provided; see Sonja Fielitz, *Othello* (Shakespeare und kein Ende 03; Bochum: Kamp, 2004), 117 f., citing Aban Gazdar, *Deutsche Bearbeitungen der Shakespeare-Tragödien Othello, Macbeth, Hamlet und King Lear im 18. Jahrhundert*, (PhD diss., Munich, 1979).

47 *BB* C130 (completed with the help of his sons and published after the father's death).

one which made the final cut. The sequence of redactions reveals precisely what 'idealisation' means in practice. The most important features are the complete suppression of colour terms and of the comparative construction "more … than", with its intrinsic ambivalence, and the transformation of the syntax into an absolute injunction: a command which is addressed not only to Brabantio, but to all in hearing range – and the audience. Such general address is normally implicit in a Shakespearean character's parting rhyming couplet. The Duke's couplet is unusual in explicitly addressing "my noble signior". Idealising translations therefore 'normalise' the dramaturgy in terms of the Shakespeare canon. They also rob the couplet of any trace of humour.

The idealising effect had to be worked towards. Voss chooses "son" for "son-in-law", entailing a command to accord Othello full kinship, but his first version still includes a colour term, and also a suggestive variant:

> Voss: *Wenn's nur der Tugend nicht an Schönheit (Weisheit) fehlt, / Werd' Euer Sohn den Weißen beigezählt.*[48]

> If only virtue not lack beauty (wisdom), / let your son be reckoned among the white [men/people].

The racial, collective terms "whites" ("Europeans") and (implied by contrast) "blacks" ("Africans") are Voss's first recourse. The variant "(wisdom)" shows that Voss is considering a metaphorical, idealising reading of "beauty" as "wisdom", which offers a pun on *weis* (wise) and *weiß* (white) – just like the "wit/white" joke in Iago's quayside couplet (2.1.134–5).[49] But such punning is inappropriate for the dignified tone to which these translators aspire. In his second draft, Voss erases both the colour term and the suggestion of humour:

> Voss: *Wenn's nur der Tugend nicht an Reinheit fehlt, / Werd' Euer Sohn den Reinen beigezählt.*[50]

> If only virtue not lack purity, / let be your son be reckoned among the pure [men/people].

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48 Friedrich Schiller, *Werke. Nationalausgabe*, ed. H. H. Borcherdt, vol. 14 (Bühnenbearbeitungen, 2; Weimar: Böhlau, 1949), 356 (variants to p.167, ll. 23–24).

49 Schiller cut the entire quayside joking sequence, though Voss reported that Schiller had been 'sorry to have to' do so (Schiller, *Werke*, vol. 17, 370).

50 Ibid.

"Pure" is yet another plausible gloss for "fair"; and "black" can have the sense of "impure". But Voss's couplet now shows no trace of race difference; no trace in fact of corporeality. Idealisation is complete.

In his redaction, Schiller chose the most archaic available term for "son-in-law", but otherwise took the same approach, introducing a favourite term of his: *verklären*. This religiously connoted verb with the root *klar* (clear) means, roughly, 'to cause to appear spiritually purified' or even 'bathed in heavenly light'; it is usually rendered in English as 'transfigure':

> Schiller: *Wenn je die Tugend einen Mann verklärt, / Ist Euer Eidam schön und liebenswert.*[51]

> If ever virtue transfigured a man / your son-in-law is beautiful and lovable.

Verklärt is a fine, daring translation of the root meaning of 'delight', as glossed by Warburton rather than Johnson. But nothing here remains of colour, or of ambivalence. Voss's injunction has become a plain declarative statement. The Duke unreservedly recommends the beautiful, quasi-beatific ("black" deleted) hero.

Schiller's couplet, as published in Voss's posthumous text, was adopted in the 1830s in Ernst Ortlepp's much reprinted translation.[52] I have yet to inspect some other translations of the 1820s and 30s which were less reprinted.[53] One, by Johann Wilhelm Otto Benda, is very idiosyncratic, and arguably anticipatory: he uses the Romantically connoted, poetic term *licht* (bright-lit) for "delighted" (we will see *licht* for "fair" from about 1900), and he follows Eschenburg and Eckert in using *blond* for "fair", taking "fair" to refer to hair colour. This underscores the couplet's connection with Iago's quayside couplet sequence, where "black" versus "fair" has always been conventionally glossed as "brunette" versus "blonde" (although in context, skin colour must at least be implied).

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51 Schiller, *Werke*, vol. 14, 167. This version was published in 1806 under Voss' name (*BB* C23780).

52 Ortlepp's *Othello* appeared in the 1830 s both in his own complete plays edition, and in an edition by Adolph Böttger's translation team; the latter was widely disseminated in a cheap Reclam edition from the 1860 s: *BB* C330, 340, 350, 420, 530 etc.

53 E.g. Fick (1825–1827, *BB* C180), Meyer (1824–1828, C160), Kaufmann (1830–1836, C250); Körner (1836, C270). See also the checklist at Marti's 'Shakespeare in Europe' website.

> Benda: *Wenn es der Tugend nicht an lichter Schönheit fehlt, / ist vielmehr blond als schwarz, den euer Kind gewählt.*[54]

> If virtue not lack bright-lit beauty, / [he] is far more blond than black, whom your child [has] chosen.

This shows that the 'no colour' rule epitomised by Voss, Schiller, and Baudissin is not universally applied in the earlier nineteenth century. Benda's (partial) complete works failed to be reprinted: he was not translating in accord with dominant taste or ideology. The way his couplet shifts attention towards Desdemona – and her power to choose – has only one, partial parallel among other versions, and that is the only one by a woman (Hedwig Schwarz, 1941; see below). Benda's reading of "fair" and "black" is bluntly corporeal, and his implicit dramaturgy has the Duke seeming to ignore Othello's presence, speaking of him as an object of another's will, not directly stating Brabantio's kinship with him. All these features anticipate translations of the fascist period, and are absent in intervening translations.

The Schlegel-Tieck translation is better dramatic poetry than any we have seen so far. Although Baudissin suppresses colour references, he conveys something of the original couplet's ambivalence.

> Baudissin: *Wenn man die Tugend muß als schön erkennen, / Dürft Ihr nicht häßlich Euren Eidam nennen.*[55]

> If one must recognise virtue as beautiful, / you may not call your son-in-law ugly.

Like his idealising predecessors, Baudissin avoids a 'black' Othello: this 'Moor' might be vaguely Oriental, Arab, or North African; he might even be 'white'; he is certainly not sub-Saharan African; but above all his ethnic or racial specificity is not raised; it is not an issue for this Duke, as it is not an issue for any real or imaginable German state. Othello is, however, said to be called *häßlich*. To call him so must be morally wrong, because Othello is virtuous; however, by implication he *is* physically ugly. Just as important as the wording is the dramaturgy of the couplet. The syllogistic structure is yet clearer than in the original. It is under-

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54   Johann Wilhelm Otto Benda, *Shakespear's dramatische Werke*, vol. 19 (Hanover: Göschen, 1826); *BB* C190.

55   *Shakspeare's dramatische Werke* uebersetzt von August Wilhelm von Schlegel; ergänzt und erläutert von Ludwig Tieck (Berlin: Reimer, 1825–1833), vol. 8; *BB* C200. Numerous later editions; none of those consulted alters the wording of the Duke's couplet, although there are several revisions of Iago's quayside couplets.

lined by modal verbs with imperative senses, turning the original's comparative, ambiguous observation into an only slightly modulated command: "you are not allowed to call him ugly". This Duke unreservedly defends Othello; however, he does so without catching his eye. The second line has two second-person pronouns. State power speaks to Brabantio, insisting on his duty to recognize kinship with Othello, but without seeming to include Othello as a potential interlocutor.

No other German re-translation will ever be so widely disseminated as Baudissin's. Many later re-translations of *Othello* are essentially redactions of it.[56] All others, in relative terms, are 'minority' translations, with shorter lives in print and/or performance.[57] Baudissin's 'unblack' but 'ugly' Othello remains dominant. It currently circulates in a very cheap Reclam edition, at less than half the price of any other, and in many other editions besides. When *Othello* was issued in paperback in 2002 to tie in with the German release of the film *O* – an American high-school basketball drama, which may lie behind Zaimoglu and Senkel's choice of joke for Iago in the quayside scene – it was Baudissin's text that teenagers were offered.[58] It is still regularly staged. Some recent adaptations of *Oth-*

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56 Editions consulted which use Baudissin's Duke's couplet, but render Iago's quayside couplets differently: Schmidt in Ulrici's edition (1867–1871, *BB* C630), Vischer (1901 [translated in the 1880 s], C23920), Schücking (1912–1935, C1190), Bab and Levy (1923–1924, C1380), Meinerts (1958, C1920). An important edition not yet consulted is Hermann Conrad (1891, C950; 40th edn 1914).

57 An *Othello* of 1947 found neither in *BB* nor *TT* deserves special mention. Karl Brunner was a professor of English at Innsbruck University, Austria, before the Nazi 'Anschluss'. His protests cost him his job but he returned as Dean after the war. He launched a parallel text series, translating and editing *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*, as well as: *Othello, der Mohr von Venedig*, ed. Karl Brunner (Britisch-Amerikanische Bibliothek, 1. Abteilung, Englisch-amerikanische Studienausgaben, Band 2; Linz: Österreichischer Verlag für Belletristik und Wissenschaft, 1947). Brunner describes his text as a revision of Baudissin's, drawing on Conrad's revision (27). He varied Iago's jokes, but the Duke's couplet only in orthography (*Euern* for the commoner *Euren*).

58 William Shakespeare, *Othello*, trans. Wolf Graf Baudissin, ed. Günther Klotz (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch, 2002), with cover and inside photos from *O*, dir. Tim Blake Nelson (Miramax, 2001). The text and sparse endnotes are based on Klotz's edition of Schlegel-Tieck: Shakespeare, *Sämtliche Werke* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2000).

ello, or plays which quote from it, counterpose Baudissin's script and contemporary dialogue.[59]

There were many nineteenth-century rivals to Schlegel-Tieck, but at least in this couplet, most followed Baudissin. However, in the 1860s Friedrich Bodenstedt crossed Schiller with Eschenburg:

> Bodenstedt: *Wenn Tugend Reiz und Schönheit nicht entbehrt, / Ist Euer Eidam schön und liebenswerth.*[60]

> If virtue not lack charm and beauty, / your son-in-law is beautiful and lovable.

As in Schiller, "fair" is elaborately translated, but in non-colour terms, and "black" is not translated at all. But a radical break from 'colour-blind' or 'colour-suppressing' idealism was made by Wilhelm Jordan, contributing to another of the new complete works editions in the 1860s. Wilhelm Jordan was a liberal nationalist politician, a member of the 1848 national assembly. He is credited with coining the phrase 'the third German classic' (*dritter deutscher Klassiker*), assimilating Shakespeare to German national culture alongside Goethe and Schiller.[61] He has an odd habit as a translator of altering the sequence of clauses, apparently in the interests of rational clarity as he sees it. So here, he reverses the order of the lines in the couplet, destroying its rhetorical effect. But in other respects his translation is radically faithful. He is the first to translate "fair" and "black" as *schön* and *schwarz:* "beautiful" and "black". This pairing will not be seen again until the 1950s. Jordan was also ahead of his time in being the first translator (and for a very long time, the only one) to render 'virtue' with philological accuracy as *Mannheit*, "masculinity", "manliness", or "manhood" – capturing the presence of *vir*, and some of the implications of the Italian *virtù*.

As with the colour terms, recent Anglophone editors highlight the long overlooked ambiguity of "virtue" in this context, testifying to increased sensitivity to the representation of gender difference. Neill again glosses triply: "not merely 'moral excellence', but also 'manly

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59 E.g. the adaptations noted above by von Düffel (set in the afterlife, focusing on the female characters), Zimmer (set in a youth football club), and also Horst Vincon's drawing-room comedy *Mohrenköpfe* (1994) (all: *TT*).

60 *William Shakespeare's Dramatische Werke.* Trans. Friedrich Bodenstedt et al., ed. Bodenstedt, 9 vols (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1867–1872); *BB* C640; many reprints up to C1020 (1895–1899).

61 E.g. http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare, accessed 20 December 2009.

strength and courage'; the sense of 'inherent quality' (used e.g. of medicines, herbs, etc.) is probably also present." Reinforcing the latter two senses, moments later in the scene, Roderigo is surely mocking the Duke's usage when he confesses: "it is my shame to be so fond; but it is not in my virtue to amend it" (1.3.314). Here, Neill glosses: "power; strength of character". The implication of manliness is also apparent. In German re-translations, Jordan's emphasis on gender will not be heard again until the 1940s (couched within fascistic discourse) and then again in the 2000s:

> Jordan: *Mehr schön als schwarz ist euer Tochtermann, / Wenn Mannheit reizen und gefallen kann.*[62]

> More beautiful than black is your daughter's husband, / If manliness can charm and please.

In some respects, then, Jordan's example was not followed. But in one key respect it was: after him, the question of colour difference, hence ethnic or race difference, will no longer be suppressed in re-translating these lines. It may not be coincidental that Jordan's work appears when Germany is on the brink of coming into existence as a European nation-state, hence a political entity within which ethnic and race difference must be significant.

IV. Period 2: 1870s to 1920s: National-Imperial "Black to Light"

After German national unification and the foundation of the Wilhelmine Reich in 1871, versions of the couplet appear in which colour is essential to the meaning, but – unlike in Jordan's couplet – its ethnic or racial connotations are metaphorically disguised. A certain effort of poetic elaboration is necessary to achieve this effect: "black" is read as "absence of light" rather than physical coloration. My surmise is that these re-transla-

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62 *Shakespeare's Othello, der Mohr von Venedig.* Deutsch von Wilhelm Jordan (Bibliothek ausländischer Klassiker in deutscher Übersetzung; Hildburghausen: Verlag des Bibliographischen Instituts, 1868). My copy is bound in one unnumbered volume with Jordan's translations of *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth*, each with its own title page, in the same edition, but all dated 1865. This pre-dates any of Jordan's drama translations recorded in *BB*. Cf. *BB* C650: *Dramatische Werke und Sonette*, ed. Franz Dingelstedt et al., in 9 vols, in the same publisher, all plays dated 1867–1868; Jordan's *Othello* in vol. 7, 1867.

tions transport imperialist ideology. In the earlier nineteenth century, at least in well-received translations, Othello's blackness could not be reconciled with the sovereign gesture of recommending him, so it was suppressed. Towards the end of the century, for the first time, German culture confronts 'black' subjects directly: as imperial subjects. *Othello* becomes a text with which to think that encounter. The metaphors used in re-translating the couplet concern a 'light' (European or Christian or German civilization or culture) which is imagined as dispelling a 'darkness'.

The first of these translations is by Otto Gildemeister. He contributed twelve other plays to Bodenstedt's complete works edition, first published in the 1860s. His *Othello* was drafted in 1871–2 and appeared posthumously in 1902.[63] This means that Gildemeister's work predates imperial Germany's officially acknowledged aspiration to the status of a world power. The European powers' "scramble for Africa" began in the 1880s. At the time of the Berlin 'Congo Conference', in 1884, Bismarck briefly relented in his opposition to the state's acquisition of colonies, but only after he resigned as Imperial Chancellor in 1890 did German foreign policy become fixated on the proverbial "place in the sun".[64] Nevertheless, Gildemeister's couplet already implies a state sovereign who recognises racial difference, but interprets it metaphorically. 'Black' is 'black night', and 'fair' is 'bright day'.

> Gildemeister: *Eu'r Eidam, – wenn die Tugend lieblich macht, – / Gleicht mehr dem hellen Tag als schwarzer Nacht.*[65]

> Your son-in-law – if virtue makes [people] lovely – / resembles more the bright day than black night.

There is an immanent, partially buried metaphor of light and dark in Shakespeare's words: it had been noticed by Warburton and was high-

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63 *Shakespearedramen (Romeo und Julia, Othello, Lear, Macbeth). Nachgelassene Übersetzungen von Otto Gildemeister*, ed. Heinrich Spies (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1904). Spies's foreword (vii) states that Gildemeister's first draft of *Othello* was dated 28 October 1871, and the second draft appears to have been completed not long after.

64 The phrase was first used by Chancellor von Bülow in 1897: see Rachel J. Anderson, "Redressing Colonial Genocide under International Law: The Hereros' Cause of Action against Germany", *California Law Review* 93 (2005): 1155–1189, last accessed 20 December 2009 at http://ssrn.com/abstract=1117731.

65 *Shakespearedramen (Romeo und Julia, Othello, Lear, Macbeth). Nachgelassene Übersetzungen von Otto Gildemeister*, ed. Heinrich Spies.

lighted by Wieland with *glänzendeste* (most radiant). The question is: why do most re-translators overlook it, but re-translators in the imperial period – and sometimes in the following fascistic period – choose to elaborate this metaphor? In the imperial period, it is as if the 'colour-blind' taboo on representing the hero as black has been only partially overcome. Othello's blackness becomes undeniable – a literary fact which is visible because of imperial-colonial facts. But those facts must be ideologically disguised. Blackness is present but made invisible as a physical attribute, by being represented as (rhetorically: the absence of) the absence of light.

This tactic is more fully developed by Friedrich Gundolf in his 1909 re-translation. Later to become one of the most prominent academics in Germany, Gundolf was for many years the 'first disciple' of the cult poet Stefan George, who even 'named' him Gundolf (his given surname was Gundelfinger). George sought to renew German civilization on the basis of elitist, classicist aestheticism. The Master's message was first conveyed to a wider public by Gundolf's magnum opus, *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* ("Shakespeare and the German Spirit", 1911, reprinted into the 1950s). This landmark in German literary historiography still represents the highpoint of German cultural assimilation of the Bard as a nationally symbolic 'Germanic' writer; and no less a highpoint of German Jewish scholarship conceived and received as German national scholarship. In his translations of Shakespeare's plays, Gundolf combines condensed simplicity with delicate poetic suggestiveness. His couplet draws on Bodenstedt (hence Schiller and Eschenburg) for the first line. In the second line, Gundolf's Duke sounds rather precious. Turning "more than" into "less than", he chooses the most delicate available term for "less", *minder*, while for "fair", he uses *licht*, the adjective Benda used for "delighted". My back-translation is "bright-lit": *licht* is an intrinsically poetic adjective, favoured in Romantic and later poetry and song, but scarcely used in spoken German (where *hell* is standard for "bright" light, or for 'light' colour). Its associations include the noun *Lichtung:* a clearing in woodland, a lit space surrounded by darkness – later, a key term in Heidegger's vocabulary. The ethereal symbolic effect here recalls Schiller's use of *verklärt* ("transfigured").

> Gundolf: *Entbehrt die Tugend Reiz und Schönheit nicht, / Ist euer Eidam minder schwarz als licht.*[66]

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66 *Shakespeare in deutscher Sprache. Neue Ausgabe in sechs Bänden*, ed. and trans. Friedrich Gundolf, vol. 1 (Berlin: Bondi, 1920); *BB* C1320. This is a reprint of C1150 (10 vols, 1908–1918), with *Othello* in vol.2, 1909.

> If virtue not lack charm and beauty / your son-in-law is less black than bright-lit.

Only capitalisation distinguishes the noun *Licht* (light) from the adjective *licht:* in performance, the Duke might be heard to say that Othello "is (a source or an incarnation of) light". Contrasted with "black" in this way, *(L/l)icht* carries all the connotations of European enlightenment, civilization, modernity, and supremacy. The rhetoric of the lines is entirely affirmative. This Duke, like Baudissin's, whole-heartedly recommends Othello, although the implicit dramaturgy is again as ambiguous as Shakespeare's. Only the curious fact that 'black/light' metaphors in this couplet are specific to the period of the Wilhelmine Empire leads one to suspect that what is described in the passage from *schwarz* to *licht* is a will to assimilate "black" subjects to the "light" of German imperial civilization – and that, in Gundolf's case, some years after the horrors of the Herero genocide.[67]

V. Period 3: 1920s to 1950s, National-Fascist: 'Black to Dark'

After the First World War, the end of German empire, the loss of German colonies: national humiliation, which the victors reinforce by stationing French colonial troops in the Rhineland. They and their children constitute the first politically and demographically significant black presence within German territory. A little later, African-American musicians and sportspersons are stars in jazz-age Berlin.[68] Gundolf's rhymes on *–icht* recur in this radically changed context, but new re-translators rhyme on *nicht* ("not"): the mid-line negative of "no […] beauty" becomes newly prominent. The persistence of *–icht* rhymes might index Gundolf's influence. But nothing remains in this period of his ethereal tone and echoes of Romanticism and Schillerian Idealism. The force of negation is directed towards a really present, fully visible, physically 'black' 'other'. Max J. Wolff in 1920 is the first to offer the new, violently concrete diction, the sound of Weimar Republican dirty realism. Wolff explicitly mentions "colour" and "face", and bluntly contrasts "white" and "black", turning

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67 See Anderson, "Redressing Colonial Genocide".

68 A foundational text for black Germans' history is *Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte*, ed. Katharina Oguntoye, May Ayim, and Dagmar Schulz (Berlin: Orlanda, 1986; 3rd revd edn 2007).

the adjective "black" into the noun "black man". For the first time in this story, the categories of modern racism appear explicitly:

> Wolff: *Leiht Tugend ihre Farbe dem Gesicht, / Ist Euer Eidam weiß, ein Schwarzer nicht.*[69]

> If virtue lends its colour to the face / your son-in-law is white, not a black man.

"Delighted beauty", as Wolff reads it, is the colour of virtue: white. Wolff was a distinguished Shakespeare scholar whose translations were published in huge editions by Insel Verlag and others. They were marketed as redactions of Schlegel-Tieck, but were far more radical than this suggests. Wolff breaks entirely with all the poeticising, taboo-struck versions we have seen since Wieland and Eschenburg. The archaic *Eidam* for "son-in-law" creates a frisson, as otherwise modern, vernacular diction collides with this lexical token of the canonized Bard-of-yore. Jordan had broken with the taboo on "black" in the 1860s; now Wolff breaks with the taboo on expressing racist thought. From now on, all translators will recognise colour as a feature of Othello's physical appearance, and of his identity, and will present it in terms which reference contemporary, state-sanctioned racist discourses – reproducing those discourses, or resisting them, or something in between.

For the moment, all translators reproduce racist discourse: the Duke's voice of the state is a voice of white supremacy. Unsurprisingly, this is the case in all translations of the Nazi period. In 1939, on the eve of war, Erich Engel directed *Othello* in his own translation at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin. Engel had directed the original production of Brecht's *Dreigroschenoper* in 1928, among other productions by Brecht and other leftist writers. He later worked as a film director under the Nazis at UFA, and from 1949 in the GDR at DEFA. Engel's couplet is a little more subtle than Wolff's. He retains the rhyme on *-icht*, but uses *Licht* (light), depoeticizing Gundolf's fey adjective *licht*. In the story of this couplet, Engel has a double distinction. First, he initiated a strategy which is the opposite of the pre-national, idealising re-translations: those omitted "black" and elaborated "fair", but Engel omits "fair" and elaborates "black". This strategy is followed by two other

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69 *Shakespeares Werke übertragen nach Schlegel-Tieck*, trans. and ed. Max J. Wolff, vol. 14, *Hamlet, Othello* (Berlin: Volksverband der Bücherfreunde, Wegweiser-Verlag, [1926]); *BB* C1460. Wolff's texts first appeared in *BB* C1300 (Leipzig: Insel, 1920–1927), *Othello* in vol. 3, 1920.

mid-century translators (Zeynek and Rothe). Second, Engel introduced the term *dunkel* ("dark") into the couplet – a term for people with "dark" skin which was preferable in this context: within Nazi discourse, *schwarz* was an emblematic colour of the regime, particularly connoting the SS. This couplet is (aside from *Eidam*) vernacular, colloquial in its rhetoric, distinctly jokey in intent, and unmitigatedly racist:

> Engel: *Spricht man von Tugend, als von einem Licht, / Scheint Euer Eidam mir so dunkel nicht.*[70]

> If one speaks of virtue as of a light, / your son-in-law seems not so dark to me.

The implicit dramaturgy again completely excludes Othello as an interlocutory subject, while the first-person pronoun highlights the Duke's charismatic authority.

Such modernizing re-translations, using vernacular language, provoked fierce debate for rejecting the canonized poetry of Schlegel-Tieck. In particular Hans Rothe's Shakespeare scripts (which began to appear in print in 1922, although his *Othello* appeared only after the war) were the focus of controversy. In 1936 the Nazi Cultural Association published a special edition of its theatre magazine titled *The Battle Against Rothe*; Josef Goebbels announced in the SS magazine *Das Schwarze Korps* that Rothe's "liberalist efforts to corrupt the German stage" had been defeated; and Rothe hastily emigrated.[71] Under Nazi rule, new Shakespeare re-translations did appear – as witness Engel's version in production – despite the official promulgation of Schlegel-Tieck as

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70 *William Shakespeare Othello.* Weitgehend neu übersetzt und bearbeitet von Erich Engel (Unter Benutzung der Übersetzung von Baudissin). Unverkäufliches Manuskript. (Berlin: Felix Bloch Erben, n.d.; *TT*) This is a photocopy of early twentieth-century typescript of 131 pages, plus 18 stage design sketches (unsigned, presumably Caspar Neher). A note on p. 1 states that music for the adaptation is by Erwin Mausz. A programme brochure for the 1939 production was offered on the antiquarian books site ZVAB in October 2009: "Neubearbeitung nach Baudissin in 14 Bildern von Erich Engel. Regie: Erich Engel. Bühnenbilder: Caspar Neher. Bühnenmusik und Lieder: Erwin Mausz." This production is depicted in the opening scene of Oskar Roehler's *Jüd Süß: Film ohne Gewissen* (2010), but Othello and Iago speak Schlegel-Tieck lines.

71 See Ruth Freifrau von Ledebur, "'The Country that Gave Birth to you a Second Time': An Essay about the Political History of the German Shakespeare Society 1918–1945," in *German Shakespeare Studies at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Christa Jansohn (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006): 255–271.

standard. But in the case of *Othello*, at least, no such new translations were published.

Two re-translations of *Othello* were made during the Second World War, neither of which appears to have been produced; both are extant in typescript formats only; one was "published" in the 1960s, posthumously; the other was not published at all. The first was the work of a retired Austrian army general, Theodor von Zeynek, who reputedly translated 37 plays between retirement from the army and his death in 1948;[72] several were published in the general book trade in the 1950s and 1960s.[73] These do not include his *Othello*, which is extant only as a hand-bound typescript prepared in the early 1960s by a theatrical publisher.[74] Von Zeynek, like Engel, omits to translate "fair", and uses a bluntly prosaic, plainly racist formulation to introduce "black". Von Zeynek stands out for reading "virtue" as "courage", with philological acumen; with *Mannesmut* (male courage), he makes masculinity explicit as no translator had since Jordan. Von Zeynek's style is certainly officer-class. His suppression of Othello's kin-status, use of a third-person pronoun, and "even if" in place of a comparative, make the couplet dramaturgically no less than offensive:

> von Zeynek: *wenn Mannesmut nicht Reiz und Glanz entbehrt, / so ist er, wenn auch schwarz, höchst schätzenswert.*

> If manly courage is not without charm and radiance/glory / then he is, even if black, highly estimable.

More clearly than any version before, this couplet suggests a staging in which the Duke speaks to Brabantio as if Othello were not present. In militaristic fashion, it also amplifies a homo-erotic subtext in Shakespeare's couplet. There, male- and female-connoted terms alternate: "virtue" and "son-in-law", versus "delighted", "beauty" and "fair". Here, the

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72 Von Zeynek's memoir is in print: Ein Offizier im Generalstabskorps erinnert sich: Troppau – Wien – Russische Front – Armeeoberkommando 1916–1918 (Vienna: Böhlau, 2009). Biographical research notice: http://www.fwf.ac.at/de/abstracts/abstract.asp?L=D&PROJ=D3976, last accessed 4 June 2011.

73 Von Zeynek is not in mentioned in *BB*, but 26 Shakespeare plays translated by him are registered in *TT*, published by Ahn und Simrock. The catalogue of the Austrian National Library records eleven plays in his translations: Austrian editions published under the aegis of the New York Stifter Library in the 1950 s and 60 s; some of these editions also appear in ZVAB and Amazon.de listings.

74 *Shakespeare: Othello Der Mohr von Venedig.* In deutsche Sprache übertragen von Theodor v. Zeynek. Unverkäufliches Manuskript (München: Ahn und Simrock Bühnen und Musikverlag, n.d. [1962; date supplied by the publisher]; *TT*).

stress on masculinity given by *Mannesmut*, the pronoun *er*, and the term *Glanz* (radiance, splendour, sparkle, or – in a heroic, military context – glory) is countered by *Reiz* (charm, attractiveness) – a word which is rather out of place in the discourse of heroic, fascistic manliness. Zeynek's script might even be said to resist ideological racism: unlike the officially mandated Baudissin text, in which Othello is "ugly", Zeynek's Duke does at least admit the hero's blackness.

The very fact that writers re-translated *Othello* under the Nazi regime, when the Schlegel-Tieck Shakespeare was more than just culturally canonical, can be considered a sign of non-conformity. Certainly, the Shakespeare translations of the period will repay further scrutiny. If, as I suspect, Flatter and Rothe (discussed below) translated their *Othello*s during the war, in exile, then (with Engel and Zeynek) at least five German re-translations were completed between 1939 and 1945, making this (after the 2000s) the second most intense period of *Othello*-work in German history.

The fifth is the only woman translator in this story. Hedwig Schwarz's version of the couplet stands out for replacing Othello with Desdemona:

> Schwarz: *Wenn nie der Tugend lichte Schönheit fehlt, / ist Eure Tochter hell, nicht schwarz, vermählt.*[75]

> If virtue never lacks bright-lit beauty, / your daughter is brightly, not blackly, married.

Schwarz's translations of many of Shakespeare's plays, dating from the 1930s and 1940s, are available through theatre publishers, but not her *Othello*.[76] In terms of publishing history, the case is oddly like Zeynek's *Othello:* can it be that the play was peculiarly unwanted during and immediately after the war? Schwarz's translation, it seems, was never even taken on by a theatre publisher. Her version of the couplet recalls

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75   "Othello, der Maure von Venedig. Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen von William Shakespeare. Deutsch von Hedwig Schwarz," loose-leaf typescript, 84pp, in the Shakespeare-Bibliothek München (Sh Üz 25), dated on the folder cover: 1941.

76   Seven of her translations are currently available through *TT*; eleven are listed at www.WorldCat.org in theatre editions, dates including 1937, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1955 (and two audiobooks, 2006). Schwarz drew attention to her translations in "Neue Shakespeare-Übersetzungen in Selbstanzeigen," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 82–83 (1948): 199–206; and published "Arbeit für Shakespeare durch Shakespeare-Bearbeitungen," (criticising "adaptations") in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 92 (1956): 175–183.

Benda's, in the rhyme on "fehlt" and in the shift of attention to Desdemo-
na. Schwarz captures the sense of "fair" and "black" as "(in)auspicious"
well, and makes unique use of "schwarz" as an adverb. Her version shares
with others of the period a sense that Othello is excluded from the ex-
change, although the reason is quite different: like Benda's Duke,
Schwarz's Duke addresses Brabantio as a father. Her 'feminised' couplet
perhaps makes an exception to my overall argument: it is the least polit-
ically motivated version.

VI. Period 4: 1950s-1980s: Universal Humanist 'Beautiful Black'

Poet and essayist Rudolf Alexander Schröder was a member of the *Be-
kennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) which resisted the Nazification
of the Lutheran church. His Shakespeare translations appeared in 1963,
posthumously; his *Othello* was completed in 1962, in the last year of his
life.[77] In the Duke's couplet he translated "fair" as *blond*, repeating the
error of Eckert and Benda, but now the choice is over-determined by
'Aryan' racist ideology: Schröder's Duke voices Nazi discourse:

> Schröder: *Wo so viel Mut bei so viel Eifer wohnt, / Dünkt Euer Eidam mind-
> er schwarz denn blond.*[78]

> Where so much courage resides with so much zeal, / your son-in-law appears
> less black than blond.

The translation of "virtue" as "courage", the suppression of "beauty",
and the use of *Eifer* (zeal) in a positive sense, are all features of Nazi dis-
courses of masculinity.[79] In Schröder's translation, the intention is pre-
sumably critical: the Duke should be seen as representing a repugnant
throwback to authoritarian militarism and crude racism.

A similar strategy seems to underlie two other post-war re-transla-
tions, by Hans Rothe (1955) and Erich Fried (1970), which both repeat

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77 I am grateful to Balz Engler for this information. See his *Rudolf Alexander
    Schröders Übersetzungen von Shakespeares Dramen*, The Cooper Monographs,
    18 (Bern: Francke, 1974).

78 *Shakespeare*, trans. Rudolf Alexander Schröder (*Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 7; Ber-
    lin and Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1963); *BB* C2000.

79 As Victor Klemperer noted, 'fanatical' (*fanatisch*, a near-synonym of *eifrig*) was
    a positive term in the discourse of the Third Reich: chapter 9 in *The Language of
    the Third Reich: LTI, Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook*, trans.
    Martin Brady (London: Continuum, 2006), 52–56.

Engel's use of *dunkel* (dark) for "black". This may be considered an essentially racist choice – an option within Nazi discourse. We will come to Fried shortly: he uses *dunkel* with fairly evident critical intent. Rothe's case is more ambiguous. He was a prolific and – as we have seen – controversial Shakespeare re-translator, and precisely as a Shakespeare re-translator he was a victim of Nazi persecution. He not only claimed scholarly authority, but the authority of his own intuition of Shakespeare's authentic intentions, buried behind the chaotic collaborative 'melting-pot' which in his view produced the Quarto and Folio texts. His scripts cut and simplify to such an extent that they are almost as much adaptations as re-translations, and they notoriously misconstrue the main sense in places. But they are eminently playable, and were very widely used on German stages both before 1936 and after the Nazi period, into the late 1950s.[80] Typifying his bold approach, Rothe's *Othello* is subtitled *Der Maure von Venedig.* German has two terms for English "Moor": *Mohr* (black African, 'blackamoor', Negro) and *Maure.* The latter is specifically associated with Iberian Al-Andalus: a "tawny Moor", an "Orientalized, 'dignified' 'white Moor' ".[81] Rothe's is the only published *Othello* to make this fundamental choice in the title.[82] Most translators, until very recently, retain the German subtitle established by Wieland, with *Mohr.* As we will see shortly, recent translators see this term as problematic because it combines racist connotations with archaism. Frank Günther, in his 1995 re-translation, gives the play no subtitle at all, declaring that all the available terms for "Moor" have inappropriate racist connotations.[83] But Günther does not even consider *Maure* as a possible choice. Rothe caters to long-standing white public demand in establishing programmatically an Oriental or Maghrebi rather than black African hero.

In the Duke's couplet, Rothe uses *dunkel* in a comparative formulation, turning the syllogistic structure into a conditional, hypothetical statement, with a first-person plural pronoun. This innovative rhetoric in-

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80   See Hamburger, "Translating and Copyright", 163–164.
81   Eldred Jones, Othello's Countrymen: The African in English Renaissance Drama (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 49; Emily C. Bartels, "Making More of the Moor: Aaron, Othello, and Renaissance Refashionings of Race," in *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 (1990): 433–454, here: 434.
82   Hedwig Schwarz's typescript ("Othello, der Maure von Venedig," 1941) is the one other translation using *Maure* in the subtitle.
83   Frank Günther, "Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt: 'The Moor' – der Mohr – der Neger," in William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. and trans. Frank Günther (Munich: dtv, 1995): 271–274.

volves all the auditors, on- and off-stage – except, that is, for Othello, who is named, without specifying his relationship to Desdemona and Brabantio:

> Rothe: *Zählte bei Menschen nur der innre Schein, / würden wir dunkler als Othello sein.*[84]

> If people's inward appearance were all that counted, / we would be darker than Othello.

The rhyme-pair alludes to a favourite topic in German literature and criticism: *Schein*, outward appearance, versus *Sein*, inward reality, being, or essence. This is arguably a clever, philological translation of "virtue" in the sense of "essential nature". However, Rothe's phrase *der innre Schein* ("inward appearance") is strictly speaking nonsense. Setting that aside, his Duke is not actually making the same point here as Shakespeare's Duke. He is not so much commending Othello as condemning "us" – everybody else – as being essentially morally "dark" compared to him. Rothe's *dunkel*, and the omission of "fair" and "son-in-law", recall Engel and von Zeynek in the fascist period; but the effect is very different. The emphatic use of *Menschen* (people, humans) highlights humanist state ideology. The rhetoric overlays physical and moral meanings of "dark", and postulates a hypothetical metamorphosis ("we would be darker"): these features anticipate a moral anti-racist discourse of the 1990s. Rothe's Duke speaks for a state intent on uniting its subjects as commonly human, under a universalist view of what it means to be human. He does not address Brabantio in particular, but seeks to construct an all-human community of spectators and auditors. He wants us to minimise the significance attached to visible, racial difference. He speaks, then, for a liberal, post-fascist, humanistic state, which is implicitly struggling with the recognition – post-Holocaust – that "we" are "dark" indeed. At the same time, however, by opposing the pronoun "we" and the name "Othello", Rothe's couplet proclaims normative whiteness. Dramaturgically, the lines recall von Zeynek's (with the same suppression of "son-in-law", and the pronoun "he" where Rothe has "Othello"): Othello might as well not be present. So Rothe's couplet is as ambivalent as

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84   Hans Rothe, *Der Elisabethanische Shakespeare*. Das dramatische Werk übersetzt von Hans Rothe. [Vol. 4 of 9.] Othello, Komödie der Irrungen, König John (Baden-Baden: Holle Verlag, 1956) (1955–1959); *BB* C1800. The four-volume edition of Rothe's translations, *Shakespeare Dramen* (Langen/Müller: Munich and Vienna, 1963–1964, vol.3) (*BB* C2020) has a variant text of *Othello* – but identical in this couplet.

Shakespeare's, but differently. In its own context, it activates fascistic racist discourse, aiming to oppose it, only to remain caught in a post-fascist, universalist-humanist, normatively white, implicitly suprematist discourse. We will see similar mechanisms at work in recent, intentionally anti-racist re-translations.

Rothe's couplet is intriguingly original. Few other re-translators have been so willing to take creative translational liberties. A series of others, from the 1950s to the 1980s, established and varied a rather strict rule in the translation of the couplet, which more plainly articulates a post-fascist, humanist ideology of race. Richard Flatter and Rudolf Schaller, both returnees from exile, worked in the 1950s on complete plays editions in Austria and the GDR respectively. Schaller's was the state-sanctioned, communist German Shakespeare. Their re-translations of the couplet move towards the new norm in which "black" is equated or contrasted with "beautiful". They are remarkably similar, both doubling *schön* for "beauty" and "fair", and using the same rhyme-pair: *kann*, *Mann* (can, man). Possibly they were collaborating across the ideological divide of the Cold War, but certainly this reflects the prominence of gender – as under the Nazis – and above all, the importance of the humanist ideology which Shakespeare was now being enlisted to help disseminate, just as previously he had helped to disseminate 'Germanic' ideology.[85] Not only the content but the style of these couplets – simplifying and clarifying the syllogism – exemplifies the new, humanistic Shakespeare. Flatter becomes the first re-translator to use the standard modern term *Schwiegersohn* for "son-in-law". He reverts to the early nineteenth-century rule of suppressing all colour terms, and simplifies the syllogism to the point of banality. As in Baudissin's couplet, race is suppressed in favour of a term of aesthetic judgment, but there is none of the equivocation associated with *häßlich* here:

> Flatter: *Wenn edler Sinn für Schönheit gelten kann, / Ist Euer Schwiegersohn ein schöner Mann.*[86]
>
> If noble-mindedness can be considered as beauty, / your son-in-law is a beautiful man.

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85 Brunner's edition (Austria, 1947) is just such a project (*Othello, der Mohr von Venedig*, ed. Brunner).

86 *Othello der Mohr von Venedig.* Sonderabdruck für Bühnenzwecke (Vienna, Bad Bocklet, Zürich: Krieg, 1952; *TT*). This is an offprint from Flatter's six-volume *Shakespeare*, 1952–1955 (*BB* C1750).

Schaller uses an archaic term for "son-in-law", but (as Jordan first did in the 1860s) he uses the pair "beautiful/black", and this choice inaugurates a new era for the couplet:

> Schaller: *Wenn Tugend sich mit Schönheit messen kann, / Mehr schön als schwarz ist Euer Tochtermann.*[87]

> If virtue can be measured with beauty, / more beautiful than black is your daughter's husband.

Both these re-translations dramaturgically include Othello: emphasising his kinship with Brabantio, and concluding on *Mann* (or *Tochtermann*), they rhetorically stress his humanity, and the Duke who speaks them surely turns to face him.

There was a hiatus in re-translating activity in the 1960s: Shakespeare was too old hat for the radical decade, perhaps; and the three main German-speaking states each now had at least one post-war *Othello*.[88] In the 1970s, there was a general upsurge in Shakespeare re-translation in West Germany in particular, and several new *Othello*s were published and performed, responding to the new salience of race in view of the immigration of millions of 'guest-workers' from southern Europe, Turkey, and the Maghreb, as well as influxes of African and Middle Eastern asylum seekers. In the Duke's couplet, these re-translations are all remarkably similar, and similar to Flatter's and Schaller's; especially Schaller's, in that all use the pair *schön/schwarz* (beautiful/black). Again, this might be because the translators were conferring, but it is more likely that the general effort to balance fidelity with colloquial appropriateness, under the determining ideological conditions of this period, led all translators to approximately the same solution. As before, there are no significant distinctions between capitalist and communist German-speaking countries. The second line always ends on *Schwiegersohn* (deploying a syntactical inversion which is not archaic in German, as it is in English), in order to stress both

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87 *Othello, der Mohr von Venedig.* Deutsch von Rudolf Schaller (Berlin [GDR]: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft, Abteilung Bühnenvertrieb, n.d. [1959]); *TT* and *BB* C24090. This is the same text as Schaller's *Shakespeares Werke* for the Berlin Academy of Arts (*BB* C1940, 3rd edn 1964; many reprints). My own copy of the theatrical edition, an offprint, has numerous cuts and changes marked in pencil, marginal numbers 1–360, and a pencilled note on p.7 stating that these correspond to photographs of a Cottbus production.

88 Flatter, Rothe, Schaller. Reading my first draft, Michael Neill raised the question of Swiss versions, which should reflect a different political history. I have yet to locate any.

gender and the post-fascist, humanistic state's command to curb racist af-
fect and to recognize the marriage and Othello's kinship. Translators vary
in the rhyme words they find for the first line, often involving forced met-
aphors, and they concur in the implicit evocation of the Civil Rights slo-
gan "Black is Beautiful", which became familiar in Germany in the late
1960s. But that was some ten years after Schaller's couplet was published:
it is at least possible that German re-translators might have arrived at the
same *schön/schwarz* consensus without the added motivation provided by
the slogan.

Erich Selbmann, a prominent East German radio journalist, writer,
and politician, wrote and translated for the theatre in the 1960s and
1970s under the pseudonym E. S. Lauterbach (the name of his home
town).[89]

> Lauterbach: *Gilt Tugend als der Schönheit höchste Kron, / Mehr schön als
> schwarz ist Euer Schwiegersohn.*[90]
>
> If virtue is considered beauty's highest crown, / more beautiful than black is
> your son-in-law.

Wolfgang Swaczynna was a celebrated West German actor-translator in
the 1970s, and is still productive:[91]

> Swaczynna: *ist Tugend selber höchste Schönheit schon, / so ist mehr schön als
> schwarz dein Schwiegersohn.*[92]
>
> If virtue itself is highest beauty already, / then more beautiful than black is
> your son-in-law.

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89 Short biography at www.lauterbach-vogelsberg.de/persoenlichkeiten/erich_
selbmann.htm, accessed 20 December 2009.

90 E. S. Lauterbach (collaborating with Benita Gleisberg), *Othello, der Mohr von
Venedig*, manually typed script, n.d.. (Berlin [GDR]: Henschel Schauspiel Thea-
terverlag, n.d.; *TT*). The catalogue of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek dates this
translation to 1973, also listing four other Shakespeare plays translated by Lau-
terbach (Selbmann), with the same publisher, dated 1965–1973.

91 Volker Schulz, "A New German Shakespeare Translator: Wolfgang Swaczynna,"
in *Shakespeare translation* 4 (1977): 71–97.

92 William Shakespeare, *Die Tragödie von Othello, dem Mohren von Venedig.*
Deutsch von Wolfgang Swaczynna (Cologne: Jussenhoven & Fischer, n.d.;
TT). This is a copy of a typescript including a three-page introduction by the
translator. Another theatre edition (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1972) is annotated in
BB as premiered in Freiburg in 1972 (*BB* C24110).

Horst Laube's postmodernist, Marxist-psychoanalytical *Othello* pre-
miered in Frankfurt in 1979.[93] He gives a new sardonic twist to the couplet
by using a mercantile metaphor and introducing *aber* ("but") between
"black" and "beautiful":

> Laube: *Wenn Tugend schön ist, hast du jetzt zum Lohn / Nen schwarzen,
> aber schönen Schwiegersohn.*[94]

> If virtue is beautiful, you now have as your reward/wage / a black but beau-
> tiful son-in-law.

These "black/beautiful" translations all share the implication that the
Duke – the voice of the state – is chiding, even mocking Brabantio for
his racism, and so affirming a universalist humanism. In this post-fascist
period, racism is to be frowned upon, according to liberal consensus.
But a marked exoticisation and eroticisation of "black" can also be de-
tected here. "Beautiful/black" is arguably the most faithful translation
of the original's primary meanings, as currently understood, in concise
contemporary German. But this only becomes the most appropriate
translation in the period when African-Americans have successfully as-
serted civil rights in the USA, black Africans have emerged as political
leaders in decolonized countries, and "black music" has become the
soundtrack of youth culture. On the liberal and radical left, "black" has
become desirable. These translations accordingly foreground Othello's
body as a pleasingly exotic spectacle. Although their rhetoric commends
Othello and stresses his kinship with Brabantio, these Dukes objectify
him more subtly but no less than those of the fascist period.

In a sense 'obvious' re-translations, these "black/beautiful" couplets
lack the subtler (if not perhaps fully intended) equivocation of Rothe's.
Also diverging from the 'black/beautiful' norm in this period is the
work of Erich Fried. A committed left-wing poet and naturalized Briton,
Fried re-translated most of Shakespeare plays during the 1960s and 1970s.
His version of the couplet encapsulates his anti-fascism and anti-racism
and displays his liberty with verse form. Writing in alexandrines, he
adopts *dunkel* (dark) for "black", but renders "fair" as *Gold* – "gold",
not the adjective, but the noun.

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93   Dir. Peter Palitzsch. Programme in book format: *Othello*, ed. Karlheinz Braun et
     al. (Frankfurt: Schauspiel Frankfurt, n.d. [1979]). The book includes extracts
     from works by Auden, Caudwell, Freud, Marx and Engels, Reich, Szondi, Ba-
     taille, Foucault, Leiris, and Lyotard, among others.
94   William Shakespeare, *Othello Der Mohr von Venedig* übersetzt und bearbeitet
     von Horst Laube (Frankfurt a.M.: Verlag der Autoren, 2005; *TT*). Typescript.

Fried: *Wenn Ihr der Tugend nicht Schönheit absprechen wollt, / Ist Euer Schwiegersohn nicht dunkel, sondern Gold!*

If you do not wish to deny beauty to virtue, / your son-in-law is not dark but gold!

Fried was a prominent internationalist and anti-imperialist, a vocal supporter of Third World resistance struggles. His version places invisible quotation marks around *dunkel:* the Duke is distancing himself from the racial prejudice implicit in that word. More emphatically anti-racist than others of the period, Fried's translation posits a pedagogically inclined Duke, chiding Brabantio for his backward prejudice. But this couplet is not without ambivalence. Othello as *Gold* is an exotic-erotic, objectified figure. The idiom *ist Gold wert* ("worth [his] weight in gold") is suggested, but denaturalised. In this context *ist Gold* suggests – as does Laube's *Lohn* (reward or wage) and others' variations on *Preis* (prize or price) – that Othello relates to the senators as a commodity to its owners: as a slave. Fried's Duke can equally be played as a racist throwback, as a Venetian capitalist,[95] or as a moralising anti-racist.

A further three re-translations appeared in student textbooks in the 1970s. These prose versions designed neither for performance, nor for reading for pleasure, show that translators with the authority of critical editors are no less constrained by ideology than script-writers. The first two have remained permanently in print in Reclam's huge, cheap editions, the first recourse of school and university students. In 1971 Dietrich Klose annotated Baudissin's text with occasional clarifications. Here his footnote includes a variant gloss in parentheses, to highlight the ambiguity of "fair"; but *hell* is itself ambiguous ("bright" of light, or "pale/light" of colour). Klose's first line in fact gives an idiosyncratic reading, which seems to shift beauty and virtue onto the beholder:

Klose: *Wenn zur Tugend die Freude an der Schönheit gehört, dann ist Euer Schwiegersohn eher schön (hell) als schwarz.*[96]

If joy in beauty belongs to virtue, then your son-in-law is more beautiful (light/bright) than black.

The second and third prose translations offer no variants, underplaying the lines' intrinsic polysemy. Dieter Bolte and Hanno Hamblock edited a bilingual Reclam edition in 1976 with their prose translation facing

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95 Particular thanks to Balz Engler for this point.
96 *Othello*, trans. Wolf Graf Baudissin, ed. Dietrich Klose (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1971); *BB* C24120.

an English text. They translate 'delighted' semi-literally with *froh* (happy), and their opposition of 'white' and 'black' recalls the bluntness of the fascist period – as does their choice of *Tapferkeit* (courage), a synonym of *Mut*, for 'virtue':

> Bolte/Hamblock: *Wenn es der Tapferkeit nicht an froher Schönheit mangelt, ist Euer Schwiegersohn eher weiß als schwarz.*[97]
>
> If courage does not lack happy beauty, your son-in-law is more white than black.

Finally, the less widely disseminated but more authoritative *Studienausgabe*, edited by Balz Engler in 1977, here uses *licht* (like Benda and Gundolf) and *hell* (like Gildemeister and Klose) to distinctly poetic effect:

> Engler: *wenn der Tugend nicht die lichte Schönheit fehlt, dann ist Euer Schwiegersohn viel eher hell als schwarz.*[98]
>
> If virtue not lack bright-lit beauty, then your son-in-law is much more light/ bright than black.

Academic authority as represented by these three prose versions is predictably in disagreement. "Black" is certainly "black", but the only suggestion two of them share for "fair" is *hell*. Gildemeister used *hell* within a day/night metaphor. But Klose and Engler use *hell* as an adjective of bodily appearance, i.e. a substitute for the racial "white" of Bolte and Hamblock's version. Now, *hell* and *dunkel* are standard antonyms; applied to skin (*Haut*), standard compound adjectives are *hellhäutig* and *dunkelhäutig* (light-skinned, dark-skinned). We have seen *dunkel* appear in the couplet in the fascist period (Engel) and again in Rothe's and Fried's ambiguously anti-racist versions. The *hell* of the scholars who are more cautious than Bolte and Hamblock, then, seems to be *dunkel*'s contrastive proxy. This choice is motivated by the adjective's useful polysemy (skin-colour is primary, but brightness of light is also suggested), but also by its apparent lack of racial connotations. Read beside the 'dissenting' version of Bolte and Hamblock, the effort to avoid invoking the discourse of racism becomes clear.

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97 *Othello. Englisch/deutsch*, eds Dieter Bolte and Hanno Hamblock (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1976; *BB* C24130; revd edn 1985, C24190).

98 Engler, *Studienausgabe*, *BB* C2370. Engler points out that "this edition explicitly defines the text and the notes together as serving the understanding of the English text. The text is not meant to stand alone [and so] the purpose of the German wording is different from most translations discussed here." (Personal communication.)

Some subsequent translations intended for the stage derive from the scholars' prose versions, most clearly Reinhold Rüdiger's couplet of 1983. In lines of seven feet, expanding metrically even on Fried, he combines elements from the two Reclam versions, fusing translation and gloss. From Klose he takes the pair of adjectives offered for "fair", and repeats them for "beauty"; for "virtue", he takes nouns from both the Reclam editions:

> Rüdiger: *wenn Tapferkeit und Tugend, schön und hell, zusammengehn; / ist Euer Schwiegersohn mehr schön und hell als schwarz zu sehn.*[99]

> If courage and virtue, beautiful and bright, go together / your son-in-law is to be seen more beautiful and bright than black.

The diction is clumsily, artificially archaic; the construction *ist zu sehn* is more unnatural than the back-translation ("is to be seen") can suggest; the repetition of *schön und hell* recalls Flatter and Schaller in the 1950s, who similarly flattened the word-play on "beauty" and "fair". Rüdiger's translation is obscure, but it epitomises the rule of its period: *schön* and *schwarz* are stressed by every playwright-translator between the end of the war and the 1980s, except for Rothe and Fried, who are both consciously grappling with fascist racist discourse by using *dunkel* for "black", and by avoiding *schön*. Among the academic prose translators, only Klose agrees with the choice of *schön* – but his is also the most widely read of the three. This consensus on *schön* and *schwarz*, beautiful and black, collapses in the 1990s, when it becomes evident that universalist, liberal humanist ideology is inadequate to counter endemic racism in German society.

VII. Period 5: 1990s: Moral Anti-Racism

Frank Günther's *Othello* (1995) belongs to his ongoing complete-plays project mentioned earlier, published in a parallel text edition with some scholarly apparatus (but not footnotes), designed for general readers, and also widely used in stage productions. His is the first explicitly,

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99 *Othello, der Mohr von Venedig Tragödie.* In Anlehnung an die Übersetzung von Friedrich von Bodenstedt Nach dem Original neu übersetzt von Reinhold Rüdiger. Unverkäufliches Manuskript. (Berlin: Felix Bloch Erben, n.d.; *TT*). Photocopy of typescript. Dated on the last page: "Mariensee, den 23. Oktober 1983".

programmatically anti-racist translation. In an accompanying essay, Günther justifies refusing to translate "Moor" with *Mohr*, and refusing to translate Shakespeare's subtitle at all. As he says, *Mohr* is used in contemporary German only in compounds with comical, trivial, and archaic associations, which:

> for all their seeming eye-rolling innocence have more than a trace of racism about them. The word *Mohr* itself no longer stands for a reality and hence can no longer convey any reality. A formulation such as "Come on, let's go and beat up a *Mohr*" is surely little used in the relevant circles [of people] who are doing that sort of thing currently.[100]

Günther refers here to racist violence on the streets of Germany, which was particularly prevalent in the early and mid 1990s, claiming scores of lives in thousands of incidents, some of them globally televised, and provoking millions to attend anti-racist demonstrations, with the energetic support of the German state. In view of the established traditional subtitle, Günther states:

> it is not possible to translate with "*Der Schwarze von Venedig*" (the black man of Venice), "*Der Afrikaner von Venedig*" (the African of Venice), "*Der Neger von Venedig*" (the Negro of Venice), "*Venedigs schwarzer General*" (Venice's black General), etc. (that would be programmatic in another way), so the apparently so simple subtitle must be abandoned as untranslatable.[101]

Throughout his re-translation, Günther uses the relatively neutral term *Schwarzer* (black man), which, as he says, can convey a variety of attitudes in context, "from the Duke's commandingly unprejudiced attitude, to Iago's racist rabble-rousing."[102] Occasionally, Desdemona addresses *mein Afrikaner* (my African). Günther particularly avoids all terms which are used in contemporary hate-speech (e.g. *Neger*) – although Shakespeare's play does, of course, contain much hate-speech.

Günther's couplet, like Fried's, but far more directly, prompts the audience to infer that the sovereign is a liberal who sees through and wishes to overcome his society's endemic racism. He speaks directly of *Haut* (skin), using standard colour terms: *hell*, *schwarz*, and the sarcastically intensified *reinweiß* (pure white). The commodity trope noted in Fried

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100 Günther, "Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt," 273.
101 Günther, "Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt," 273 f.
102 '*von der souverän vorurteilslosen Haltung des Dogen bis hin zur rassistischen Hetze des Jago*': Günther, "Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt," 273. German *souverän* means "in command", "superbly confident", as well as "supremely powerful".

(*Gold*) and Laube (*Lohn:* reward, wage) recurs as *Preis* (price or prize). But the rhetoric is crucially re-invented: just like Rothe, Günther uses a conditional, hypothetical structure in place of a syllogism. More explicitly than Rothe, he postulates an imaginary metamorphosis of black into white. His couplet's satirical and morally pedagogical tone directs a lesson at Brabantio, but it is for all to hear:

> Günther: *Gäbs helle Haut für Edelmut als Preis, / Dann wär Ihr Schwieger-sohn statt schwarz reinweiß.*

> If bright skin were a prize for noble-mindedness, / then your son-in-law would be pure white instead of black.

The thrust is similar to Rothe's couplet, but Günther more successfully avoids allowing racist assumptions built into the language to undermine his point, which is his Duke's point, and his ideal state sovereign's point.

The newly urgent anti-racism of the 1990s, supported in a host of civil initiatives by agencies of the state in the newly expanded Federal Republic, also motivates Hermann Motschach's less well-known version, which predates Günther's *Othello* by a couple of years. Writing in 1992, when the racist violence ensuing upon re-unification was at its height, Motschach seems to take *Schein* and *innrer* from Rothe, and just like Günther he rhymes *Preis* and *weiß* and devises his couplet as a conditional, hypothetical structure, involving skin-colour metamorphosis – but in both directions:

> Motschach: *Wär äußrer Schein stets innrer Werte Preis, / schien mancher Weiße schwarz, manch Schwarzer weiß.*[103]

> If outward appearance were always the prize for [or: price of] inner values / many a white man would appear black, many a black man white.

Here too, the Duke is the spokesman for an enlightened, state-sanctioned, but essentially moralising anti-racism. The liberal, universalist, humanist ideology encapsulated in the notion of "beautiful black" (in re-translations of the 1950s to 1980s) had left the difference of power and status between "white" and "black" unexamined. Re-translators of the 1990s voice a desire for transformation, metamorphosis, calling the hierarchical relation into question. However, this impetus is restricted to the domain of the moral. Racism and anti-racism are construed as matters of

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103 *Othello*, trans. Hermann Motschach (Munich: Drei Masken, 2004; *TT*). Word-processed typescript; copyright notice 1992; Eva Dutz at Drei Masken informed me that the script was written in that year and premiered in Cottbus in 1993.

personal choice. And these re-translations lack the ambivalence of Shakespeare's Duke's words, which less unequivocally articulate "sovereign lack of prejudice" than Günther apparently wishes (or wishes his readers and audiences) to believe.[104]

VIII. Period 6: 2000s: Political Anti-Racism, or Back to 'Beautiful Black'

Most twenty-first-century German *Othello* scripts are adaptations which condense, recontextualise, and/or deconstruct the play, and the couplet in question is often deleted in these processes. Four scripts do include it. Three of them vary approaches we have already seen; only the tradaptation by Zaimoglu and Senkel is ideologically innovative. The most retrograde versions of the couplet are by Michael Wachsmann (a theatre translator from former West Germany) and Werner Buhss (a dramatist and translator from former East Germany). Wachsmann's is a conglomerate derived from earlier versions. He strains to be poetically archaic, and in doing so applies the exotic-erotic *schön/schwarz* rule of the 1970s, also echoing Laube's *Lohn* rhyming with *Schwiegersohn*, and adding a *hell* from academic sources:

> Wachsmann: *Kühnheit wirkt anziehnd, hell erstrahlt zum Lohn / Mehr schön als schwarz drum Euer Schwiegersohn.*[105]

> Boldness affects [us as] attractive, brightly shines as a reward / more beautiful than black therefore your son-in-law.

Werner Buhss's controversial re-translation is generally more ambitious, but not in this couplet. Titling the play *Othello, Venedigs Neger* (Othello, Venice's Nigger/Negro), Buhss alludes to the vernacular phrase "*den Neger machen*" ("do the donkey work", "be exploited"),[106] and in doing

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104 Günther, "Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt," 273.

105 *Die Tragödie von Othello, dem Mohr von Venedig*, trans. Michael Wachsmann (Berlin: Gustav Kiepenheuer Bühnenvertriebs-Gmbh, 2005; *TT*). Word-processed typescript; dated on the title page 26.09.2005. The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek holds several other Shakespeare translations by Wachsmann, dated 1987–1995, but not his *Othello*; see also *BB* C22530 and C36355. Michael Skasa in *Die Zeit* (October 2002) described Wachsmann's *Titus* translation as 'dreadfully old-fashioned and arhythmic', www.zeit.de/2002/45/200245_titus_andronicus.xml, last acessed 1 June 2011.

106 Particular thanks here again to Balz Engler.

so he adopts a strategy directly opposed to Günther's. Many German speakers still use *Neger* (Negro) as a standard way of referring to people of African heritage, with no offensive intent; but increasingly many regard the word as unacceptably freighted with racist ideology. As Günther points out, racist aggressors do not say: "Let's go and beat up a *Mohr*". What they do say is: "Let's go and beat up a *Neger*", or of course "*Nigger*", which has long been naturalized in German abusive slang. *Neger* retains some scientific-ethnographic relevance, but in colloquial parlance, among younger people in particular, there is now little to choose between *Neger* and *Nigger*. In the Shakespearian context, *Neger* is flagrantly provocative. Buhss's script features a great deal of such language, but not in the Duke's part. His couplet, like Wachsmann's, reverts to 1970s exotic-eroticism and the *schön/schwarz* rule. He takes *freuen* for the verb "delight" from Klose's academic version, but makes an idiosyncratic choice of rhyme:

> Buhss: *Wenn wir uns an der Tugend freun, der Schönheit Harz, / Dann ist Ihr Schwiegersohn mehr schön als schwarz.*[107]

> If we delight in virtue, beauty's resin / Then your son-in-law is more beautiful than black.

Very few words rhyme with *schwarz*. Buhss's *Harz* (resin) looks like a desperately forced choice, although he uses *Harz* once again, translating "med'cinable gum" (5.2.350), and so creates an intratextual echo of uncertain import.

Where Buhss uses *Neger*, the Austrian dramatist, director, and translator Oliver Karbus translates "Moor" in Iago's part (but not the subtitle) as the still more directly offensive *Nigger*. His Duke's couplet is another conglomerate, fusing Flatter's and Schaller's rhyme of *kann* and *Mann* with Bolte and Hamblock's *Tapferkeit* (courage) for "virtue" and *weiß* (white) for "fair". This formulation carries hints of satirical sarcasm, with a suggestion of 1990s moral anti-racism, although the crucial element of hypothetical metamorphosis is lacking:

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107 *Othello, Venedigs Neger*, trans. Werner Buhss (Berlin: Henschel Schauspiel Theaterverlag, n.d.; *TT*). Word-processed typescript; copyright statement dated 1996, but this is a standard insert; productions using the script include Düsseldorf 2006 and 2008–2009, and Freiberg 2007, where the production was reviewed as "a case of racism [which] does not merit theatre criticism, but reporting [to the police]": Dirk Pilz, "Die Negerseele ist ein Trommeln," in *Nachtkritik* (22 March 2008), at www.nachtkritik.de/index.php?option=com_ content&task=view&id=1180&Itemid=106, last accessed 1 June 2011.

> Karbus: *wenn Tapferkeit allein / so schön sein kann, / dann ist Ihr schwarzer Schwiegersohn / ein weißer Mann.*[108]

> If courage alone / can be so beautiful / then your black son-in-law is / a white man.

Karbus's version also recalls Voss's first attempt, a century earlier: "… be reckoned among the white men". Prominent earlier and mid-twentieth-century translators such as Flatter, Schaller, and Rothe promoted their work as "anti-Schlegel-Tieck".[109] Both Buhss and Karbus are evidently writing "anti-Günther" translations: instead of suppressing racist language, they put it on display, whether to be provocative, or because they believe this approach to be more true to Shakespeare's play, or to the Duke's attitudes, or because they hold racist views. Inasmuch as their Duke's couplets respond to Günther's, they imply a disenchanted view of the idea that liberal state authority might genuinely promote anti-racist ideology. Their Dukes voice the un-self-critically white-suprematist 'humanism' of the 1970s.

Zaimoglu and Senkel's tradaptation of *Othello* takes the general strategy of Buhss and Karbus further, using an artificially intensified version of contemporary offensive slang, particularly in Iago's and Roderigo's parts. But in the Duke's couplet, they do not merely imply disenchantment with state-sponsored, moralising anti-racism, by reverting from Günther's and Motschach's position to the post-fascist 'beautiful/ black' consensus, like their contemporaries. Instead, Zaimoglu and Senkel find a way of making apparent the intrinsic limitation of moralising anti-racism. Their tradaptation is for long stretches a fairly faithful translation, in poeticised prose, but they also make many cuts (above all, the entire play after 5.2.91), and add some original speeches: a long monologue, replacing 2.2, in which Othello hymns Desdemona; and neo-fascist political speeches by Brabantio, who comes to Cyprus in place of Lodovico.[110] Their script deploys much inventive invective, but the Duke stands above the abusive fray. Zaimoglu and Senkel's re-translation of his couplet combines philological precision with gender awareness in *männliche Tugend* (male virtue); has possible reminiscences of Voss and Rothe in using *zählen* (to count, to reckon); and makes telling use of contemporary

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108 *Othello*, trans. Oliver Karbus (Vienna: Thomas Sessler Verlag, 2006; *TT*). Word-processed typescript; dated by the author under dramatis personae: "im Januar 2006".

109 See *BB*, 13 f. (A190).

110 Zaimoglu and Senkel, *William Shakespeare: Othello*, 40 f., 90–94, etc.

jargon for "[…] beauty lack". The compound noun *Schönheitsfehler* (blemish, flaw; literally: beauty-error) carries a commodifying connotation: the word is commonly used in retail, of damaged or defective goods. The choice is especially apt in this context since the noun element *Fehler* (mistake, error) has the same root as *fehlen*, which is the standard translation of "to lack", so *Schönheitsfehler* is a clever calque on "beauty lack": almost an in-joke for translators. But what is most original about their translation is the choice of *edel* (noble) for "fair". The term *edel* has been used before in translating "virtue" (by Flatter and Günther), but never for "fair".

> Zaimoglu/Senkel: *Solange männliche Tugend mehr zählt als Schönheitsfehler, kann man sagen, Ihr Schwiegersohn ist eher edel als schwarz.*[111]

> So long as male virtue counts more than minor blemishes, one can say your son-in-law is more noble than black.

The choice of *edel* highlights class hierarchy as a corollary of race difference, assigning "black" to a socially subjugated class. In line with Zaimoglu's prolific, polemical writing on the significance of race and ethnicity in contemporary German society and culture,[112] this choice implies a politicised, Marxisant anti-racism, which challenges the moralising anti-racism of liberal consensus. In Günther's and Motschach's couplets, paternalistic state anti-racism appeals to spectators to recognise "blacks" as no different, "under the skin", from "whites", by imagining inter-racial metamorphosis. For Zaimoglu and Senkel, race cannot be elided or dematerialized in this way, not least because the state is itself racist: it exists to defend a class system, and it instrumentalizes race to that end. Their Duke reveals that political dynamic. He equivocally assimilates Othello to the political elite, urging Brabantio to overlook the racial "defect" in their "commodity". To critical spectators, his words suggest the need for a political analysis of racism, understood not as a moral defect in individual, insufficiently humanist racists, but as a structural aspect of social domination.

Class connotations may be incipient in Shakespeare's "fair" and "black" in this context. He often – notably in the Sonnets – uses "black" (of skin and complexion, and of eye and hair colouring) to

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111 Zaimoglu and Senkel, *William Shakespeare: Othello*, 26.

112 See Tom Cheesman, "Talking 'Kanak': Zaimoglu contra *Leitkultur*," in *New German Critique* 92 (2004): 82–99; Feridun Zaimoglu, "Preface to *Kanaki Speak*" (trans. TC), in *Germany in Transit: Nation and Migration, 1955–2005*, eds Deniz Göktürk, David Gramling, and Anton Kaes (Berkeley: California UP, 2006), 405–408.

mean "dark", with physical connotations which are not generally held to be racial,[113] with moral connotations ("evil", "impure", "foul", etc), and sometimes also connoting low social status. "Black" in the Sonnets is "used loosely to mean 'dark-coloured' or brownish", "a dark or swarthy complexion", as well as "brunette".[114] Such complexions were associated with persons of lower rank, especially those who worked outdoors. "White" or "fair" facial skin was an upper-class privilege. Sonnet 127 claims: "In the old age black was not counted fair", but "black" has nowadays seized the inheritance of "beauty"; therefore "my mistress", with her "raven black" eyes (and her "dun" breasts and "black wires" for hair,[115] Sonnet 130), disdains to wear the face-whitening cosmetics formerly restricted to the nobility, but now democratised: "each hand hath put on nature's power / Fairing the foul with art's false borrowed face". The theme of usurpation here involves not only the rights of the old ("fair", light-hued) ideal of beauty being appropriated by a new ("black", dark) one. The cosmetic arts used to be an elite preserve, but have latterly been popularised – hence the need for a new beauty ideal, to preserve social distinction. The old aristocratic ideal is now pitiably vulgar. The mistress's eyes "mourners seem / At such who not born fair no beauty lack, / Sland'ring creation with a false esteem". These are lines which the Duke's couplet plays upon (unless it is *vice versa*). The sonnet refers to people who are not naturally "fair" (blond[e]), but are beautiful, who seek to become artificially "fair", and so gain "esteem", at the price of demeaning nature. The Shakespearean Duke's statement of his esteem for Othello, similarly, is predicated on Othello's visible blackness being symbolically whitened. Zaimoglu and Senkel re-translate this process as an artificial ennobling, strategically performed by the state, and always liable to be rescinded.

Later, their Brabantio becomes the voice of an emergent neo-fascist state. After taking Lodovico's place to announce Othello's demotion, he tells Iago that a "clean-up" is underway in Venice. The newly appointed "nigger's lieutenant (*Negerleutnant*)" had better decide which side he's on, because the recent "democratic niggerfication (*demokratische Verniggerung*)" is being reversed. Brabantio tells Iago an anecdote about being in his "gentlemen's club" recently and seeing the "grandson of a captured barbarian" there, a black club member – but not for long:

113 See Schiffer, "*Othello* Among the Sonnets," 334–338.
114 *The Sonnets*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 243.
115 In Shakespeare's time not a racially coded usage; see Evans, *The Sonnets*, 248.

He actually has the affront to suggest a parley with me on the current turbulences in our state. 'In our state', he says, certain reforms are overdue. Do you know what response I made to him? [...] Empty the spittoon and wash it out thoroughly. You should have heard how they all laughed.[116]

The spittoon may be a token of U.S. culture (a reminiscence from Westerns), but Brabantio's discourse is that of resurgent European white racism, currently most prominently represented at European Union level by the Alliance of European National Movements, formed in 2009 by populist xenophobic parties from Belgium, Britain, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, and Sweden.

IX. Conclusion

The story told here has been necessarily compressed, and could be told differently. The periodisation is an artificial structuring device which possibly hinders analysis more than it helps. To gain a fuller understanding of re-translators' choices, in order to catch their implications, one needs to examine the whole of each *Othello* script,[117] and also look in many other places: in literature translated and not translated, in non-literary texts, in performances, images, and other kinds of evidence. Remaining only with *Othello*, the Duke's last couplet must be understood in terms of his entire part in the play, not least his earlier set of homiletic couplets urging "patience" on Brabantio (1.3.205–212). After those po-faced, sententious rhymes, his final punning couplet comes as a surprise. Responding to it, Brabantio warns Othello of Desdemona's propensity to deceive her menfolk, in a couplet which is cited much later by Iago (3.3.221). The Duke's last couplet does not resound like this later, but it does echo Brabantio's earlier phrase "to fear, not to delight" (1.2.71), and is echoed by Roderigo in his use of "virtue" (1.3.314), and by Iago in the quayside couplets playing on "black" and "fair" and "foul" and "white" and "wit". These jokes have often been found troublesome: two of the four are omitted in Bowdler's *The Family Shakespeare*; and as noted earlier, Schiller cut them all. They present translators with even more severe problems, forcing them to show their hand on entwined issues of gender, race, sexual attraction, and ascribed intelligence.

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116 Zaimoglu and Senkel, *William Shakespeare: Othello*, 93.
117 Baudissin, for instance, uses *häßlich* for both "black" and "foul" in Iago's couplets, but *schwarz* for "black" elsewhere.

In 1984, Werner Habicht, reviewing a recent upsurge in Shakespeare re-translations and innovative productions, in which *Othello* was conspicuously absent, commented that "a flexible approach to the plays via their retranslation can be an efficient way of interpreting them".[118] Indeed, there is no doubting the 'efficiency' of re-translation – from page to stage or screen, or from old to new pages – as an act of re-interpretation. Collecting, collating, and critically comparing re-translations is a far more inefficient procedure. It may not arrive at a new interpretation of the source, but it certainly alerts us to potentials we might otherwise overlook. "Over the four centuries," V. S. Naipaul writes of another "great chain" of texts about (among other things) race, "the vision constantly changes; it is a fair record of one side of a civilization."[119] *Othello* in German is not *Hamlet:* not a play with which German-speaking intellectuals have identified for generations as a national allegory. In fact, in German, *Othello* has so far been the least re-worked – re-translated, re-staged, re-adapted, re-edited, re-analysed, re-told, remembered – of Shakespeare's tragedies.[120] Intertextual references to the play in German literature are few and far between.[121] But as migration and globalization keep increas-

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118 Werner Habicht, "How German is Shakespeare in Germany? Recent Trends in Criticism and Performance in West Germany," *Shakespeare Survey* 37 (1984): 155–162, here: 160.

119 V. S. Naipaul, *A Way in the World: A Sequence* (1994; repr. London: Minerva, 1995), 102. Naipaul refers here to British accounts of travel in the Caribbean. An important character in Naipaul's book is a black Trinidadian civil servant of exemplary rectitude, named Blair. Blair (black/fair?) may belong to the series of postcolonial *Othello* intertexts. Naipaul is a teenager when he first encounters him (26 ff.); they meet again some fifteen years later in Uganda, where Blair is working for the UN (352–369). Blair rejects race politics, criticises the Ugandan government's persecution of Asians, and begins an investigation of corruption; he is murdered; Naipaul imagines a redemptive death. See Fawzia Mustafa, *V. S. Naipaul* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 217 f.

120 Dictionaries of quotations measure this, e. g. www.gutzitiert.de, accessed 1 June 2011: *Hamlet* 58, *Lear* 15, *Macbeth* 13, *Othello* 5.

121 There are just two significant examples; in neither is race significant. Wilhelm Hauff's story "Othello" (1825) refers to Rossini's opera, not Shakespeare, and the story's plot bears no relation to either. In Christina Brückner's feminist monologue for Desdemona, the title piece in a collection of monologues by women from Clytemnestra to Gudrun Ensslin, race difference serves only to underline Desdemona's own 'violence': *Wenn du geredet hättest, Desdemona* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1983); trans. Eleanor Bron, *Desdemona, If You Had Only Spoken! Eleven Uncensored Speeches of Eleven Incensed Women* (London: Virago, 1992).

ing the social salience of ethnic and cultural diversity, in German-speaking countries, as elsewhere, we can expect *Othello* to keep producing texts and performances in which the Duke speaks differently again, about difference, and crucially: for and/or against the contemporary state's way of conceiving race difference. That this is what is at stake in his words, and how variously they can be interpreted, only becomes clear when we examine how they have been translated. The translations discussed here, as interpretations, and as acts of cultural expression, in their sheer variety, as well as some particular versions, perhaps deserve to be called 'shocking';[122] but only if we are surprised to find that re-writings of Shakespeare in German reflect German political history.

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122 My thanks, finally, to the anonymous reader, who found the material, to my surprise,"shocking".