

IS *HAMLET* UNTRANSLATABLE?

RE-NEGOTIATING THE BOUNDARIES OF TRANSLATABILITY
IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY GERMAN *HAMLETS*

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS OF DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

10 JUNE 2002

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Joan and Mel Nicholas, in acknowledgement of their continuing moral and financial support, and I would like to express my gratitude to Heiner Dresen, my friend who has been a source of encouragement and optimism, and has opened many doors in the world of theatre, music and entertainment.

ABSTRACT

This thesis will focus on twentieth-century German translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Some of the pre-requisites of a work's translatability are that it must exist in a stable text, its meaning should be accessible to interpretation, and it should provide a unitary comment that can be re-constructed in a second language and culture. I do not believe that *Hamlet* satisfies any of these pre-requisites. There is no transcendent text, it seems to resist interpretation, and the lack of a unitary comment problematises the articulation of a response to the play that can be re-coded in the target text. Translators seek to stabilise and interpret, whereas *Hamlet* is semantically and formally in continuous motion and resists attempts at closure. The demands of translation and the nature of *Hamlet* seem to be in direct conflict, and I begin my investigation with a hypothesis that *Hamlet* is 'untranslatable'.

I have conducted a series of interviews with German translators of *Hamlet*, and I have used these discussions to construct a dialogue in this thesis. In Part 1 of the study I will focus on those translators of the play that have agreed that *Hamlet* is a flawed work, which must be repaired and improved before it can be translated. This dialogue explores the assumptions about Shakespeare's 'artistic failure' and how changes to the text are thought to facilitate its translatability. There will be an investigation of how translators and editors have continually rewritten *Hamlet* based on notions of 'correct' text. I will examine the validity of concepts such as the 'original' work and

‘fidelity’ to originals, as the premise on which translation is based, and I will question whether the work of these translators is phenomenologically flawed.

In Part 2 of this thesis I will proceed to consider whether *Hamlet* has been rejected as untranslatable because of metaphysical qualities that foreground our notions of the play. It seems to be the case that translators only experience the problem of untranslatability, or of *Hamlet* as a flawed work, when certain demands are made on the transcendent text in which *Hamlet* is believed to exist. The translators and adapters, whose work is the object of my analysis in the second part of this study, have been able to circumscribe the issue of translatability by changing the way they have understood the ontology of *Hamlet*. By deconstructing notions of the unitary work or the transcendent text, and conceiving of *Hamlet* as a series of enactments or a methodological field, it becomes possible to translate the material across the boundaries of language and culture. I will thus develop the argument that by moving away from traditional notions of a ‘work’ to understand *Hamlet* as a broader cultural text, we can re-think the interpretive possibilities of the play and push back the boundaries of what has been traditionally possible through the limited practice of translation.

I will be working towards the conclusion that translation theorists should re-think their conceptions of the ‘source text’ and the function of translation, working from a field of cultural material, rather than attempting to translate a non-existent transcendent text. The work of translators and adapters examined in the second part of my study presents a more productive approach to translation, and a more realistic

understanding of the ontology of literary works, compared with the attempts of other translators, who continue in their search for the play's lost *echt*.

My research methodology, which involved the construction of a dialogue between translators, is also an attempt to promote a method of analysing and evaluating translations that *includes* the translator. Analyses of translations too often treat the translation as if it had been written in a social, political, linguistic and cultural vacuum. In fact, there are many factors that decide how a text is going to be translated even before the translator reaches his text. There have been many forces that have shaped and conditioned the way *Hamlet* has been translated and appropriated in German, ranging from large-scale intervention from political regimes like the Nazi Party and the Socialist State in East Germany, to small-scale domestic quarrels with a spouse. My thesis combines textual analysis and detailed discussions with translators, in order to develop a fuller understanding of the pragmatics of translation, and the need for a new interpretative methodology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to those people who participated in the interviews on which my research for this thesis is based: Frank Günther, Michael Wachsmann, Ralf Fiedler, Elisabeth Plessen, Reinhard Palm, Wolfgang Swaczynna, Maik Hamburger, Andrew McKinnon, Sebastian Rudolph and Christoph Schlingensief. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Scandinavian Shakespeare translators, with whom I conducted interviews and discussions on translation issues that fell outside the scope of this thesis: Øyvind Berg, Morten Krogstad, Bjørn Alex Herrman and Torstein Bugge Høverstad.

For her provision of the unpublished translations that comprise the collection analysed in this thesis, for her supply of press reviews and for her assistance in all matters related to Shakespeare reception in Germany, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Ingeborg Boltz of the Shakespeare Bibliothek in Munich. I would also like to express my appreciation to Ralf Fiedler for allowing me access to the rehearsals of the *Hamlet* production at the Staatstheater in Kassel, to Wolfgang Swaczynna for providing me with his typescripts of unpublished translation work, and to Christoph Schlingensief for allowing me to interview his cast at the Schauspiel production of *Hamlet* in Zürich this year.

I gratefully acknowledge the support of Professor Nigel Wood, his valuable guidance in the field of Shakespeare Studies, and his help in navigating the sea of troubles.

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INTRODUCTION

Why a Study of *Hamlet*?

On the repertoire of any German theatre there will always be more Shakespeare than Goethe or Schiller. Through the canonisation of August Wilhelm Schlegel's translations of Shakespeare's plays in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Shakespeare became an established part of German literary and cultural history. Due to the growing popularity of Schlegel's translations, and their undoubted literary merit, Shakespeare's plays were also acculturated into nineteenth-century German social and political history. This was a slow and gradual process of spiritual identification with, and appropriation of, Shakespeare in Germany. The process of nostrification entered a new phase during the First World War, when Germany's cultural war with England over the rights to Shakespeare was mirrored in the territorial war being fought between the two nations. At the opening address of the Annual Shakespeare Conference in Weimar in 1915 Gerhart Hauptmann announced that:

There is no nation, not even the British, which is more entitled than Germany to call Shakespeare her own. Shakespeare's characters have become part of our world. his soul has become one with ours: and though he was born and buried in England, it is in Germany that he is truly alive.¹

Dramatist Ludwig Fulda, in an essay written during the First World War,² believed that present-day Germany was closer, culturally and spiritually, to Shakespeare than present-day England, and only the Germans had any legitimate right to think of Shakespeare as their own. Fulda wrote:

He is more frequently performed in Germany during a single year than during a whole decade in his native country. And what is more important, he is incomparably better performed than over there, incomparably better understood than over there. Our Shakespeare! Thus we may call him, even if he appeared to be born in England by mistake. Thus we may call him by right of spiritual conquest. And should we succeed in vanquishing England in the field, we should, I think, insert a clause into the peace treaty stipulating the formal surrender of William Shakespeare to Germany.³

In 1990 Heiner Müller made a claim that echoed Ludwig Fulda's, when he stated: '*Hamlet* is more German than English; it is performed more often in Germany than in England.'⁴ This sounds very much like the old notion of a German nostrification of *Hamlet*, although four years later Werner Habicht argued that 'our Shakespeare' had 'by now proved to be no more than a myth.'⁵ Habicht preferred to see Shakespeare as having conquered Germany, rather than the other way round. Wilhelm Hortmann, however, believes that the German nostrification of Shakespeare is a ghost that has still to be laid to rest:

¹ *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 51 (1915), xii. A recent article, which provides a catalogue of the most virulent attacks on England's 'shaming' of Shakespeare can be found in 'Shakespeare in the Trenches' by Balz Engler, *Shakespeare Survey*, 44 (1991), 105-111.

² Ludwig Fulda, 'Deutsche Kultur und Ausländerei', *Zwischen Krieg und Frieden*, 31 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1916), 3-32. The journal, *Zwischen Krieg und Frieden*, contains much anti-British propaganda, including Georg Irmer's 'Los vom englischen Weltjoch', 1 (1914), 1-43, and Jacob Reißer's 'England und Wir', 8 (1914), 3-89; the reader is also referred to Gerwin Strobl's study of anti-British propaganda in *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

³ Fulda (pp. 13-14).

⁴ Heiner Müller. "'Like Sleeping with Shakespeare'". A Conversation with Heiner Müller and Christa and B. K. Tragelehn'. in J. Lawrence Guntner and Andrew McLean (eds.), *Redefining Shakespeare. Literary Theory and Theatre Practice in the German Democratic Republic* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. 183-95, here p. 183.

It is unlikely to be resurrected, although the grim determination with which every German director hammers out his own version and the number of new translations that keep appearing seems to indicate that the ghost is far from quiet [...] Whatever the variations, the arguments point in one direction: possession and ownership.⁶

Given the centrality of *Hamlet* in German literature and culture, the appropriation of Shakespeare as ‘our Shakespeare’ also extends to the appropriation of *Hamlet* as ‘unser’ or ‘our’ *Hamlet*.⁷ *Hamlet* is a character with which Germany, the land of ‘Dichter und Denker’, has been most able to identify, and the play itself has been central to German literary culture and cultural politics for over two hundred years.⁸ In 1848 the poet Ferdinand Freiligrath wrote ‘Germany is Hamlet!’ Just as *Hamlet* fails to shake off the tyranny of Claudius’s reign, Freiligrath believed that Germany had failed to shake off Napoleon’s political domination of German territory.⁹ Through

⁵ Werner Habicht, ‘Shakespeare and the German Imagination’, *International Shakespeare Association Occasional Papers*, 5 (Hertford: Stephen Austin and Sons Ltd., 1994), 3-31, here p. 22.

⁶ Wilhelm Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage: The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 4.

⁷ On the German nostrification of *Hamlet*, Manfred Pfister writes: ‘It should be clear by now that from the late eighteenth century onwards *Hamlet* in Germany has not been a play like any other, but a screen on which to project the changing constructions of German national identity. Nor has Shakespeare been a foreign dramatist like any other. His ‘nostrification’ involved much more than mere translation, interpretation or idolization; in its fully-fledged form it meant the claim that Shakespeare is essentially ours, essentially German.’ See Manfred Pfister, ‘Hamlets made in Germany, East and West’, *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, ed. Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova and Derek Roper (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 76-91, here p. 79.

⁸ See Werner Habicht, ‘Romanticism, Antiromanticism, and the German Shakespeare Tradition’, *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions*, ed. T. Kishi, R. Pringle, and S. Wells (Newark, London and Toronto, 1994), pp. 243-52.

⁹ In 1806 Napoleon marched into Berlin, took control of Prussia and dissolved the 900-year-old German Empire. In the same year Friedrich Gentz wrote that Germans were allowing themselves to be dominated by France because of internal division: ‘Our inner division, the fragmentation of our greatest powers, the mutual jealousies of our princes, the alienation of their subjects, the abatement of any real feeling for the common interest in the nation, those are our fatal enemies and the enemies of Europe. When we unite, when we forget our family feuds, when, in our hour of danger, we can resolve to be Germans, we shall defy any storm that comes our way.’ The Germans’ *Hamlet*-like political procrastination lasted until the middle of the nineteenth century. King Friedrich Wilhelm IV was unresolved about the issue of creating a German constitution. He wanted to preserve the status quo of the principalities. Hoffmann von Fallersleben voiced the widespread desire for national unity, as in lines 1 and 2 of the third stanza of his 1841 poem *Das Lied der Deutschen*: ‘Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit / Für das deutsche Vaterland!’ After revolutionary activity in Berlin on 22 March

translations and adaptations *Hamlet* has operated on a number of levels of political and cultural life in Germany. The link between Hamlet and Germany suggested an obvious starting point for my own research.

The present study assesses the phenomenon of adjusting *Hamlet* in a series of cultural translations in the twentieth century. To extend the period beyond a hundred years would require a much lengthier survey than the present one can afford. It also seemed to make sense to begin my research with the advent of the twentieth century, because by this time Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet* had reached its canonical status in German literature. In 1974 Balz Engler wrote: 'The history of Shakespeare translation in Germany during the first half of the twentieth century might be described, in very few words, as an argument about the merits and defects of the Schlegel-Tieck version.'¹⁰ In his study of Rudolf Alexander Schröder's translations, published in the same year, Engler also stated that: 'The history of Shakespeare translation in Germany in the twentieth century is, in short, the history of a debate over the Schlegel-Tieck translations.'¹¹ Translators of the twentieth century were thus in a very different position from their predecessors in the previous century, who were not struggling to surpass any set precedent.

1848, Wilhelm IV declared Prussia a constitutional state in which every individual had the right to vote. But by July he had lost interest in this promise and Ferdinand Freiligrath expressed his disappointment at the failure of the revolution and the waste of life in his poem *Die Todten an die Lebenden*. On 18 March 1848 the object of the Berlin Revolution had been national unity, and the national assembly of 18 May in Frankfurt was the first step towards the realisation of a German constitutional nation. In the winter of 1848 the National Assembly in Frankfurt debated the geographic boundaries of Germany, excluding Austria, and on 28 March 1849 the Basic Law was formulated and formed the defining basis of the German imperial constitution. On this same day Friedrich Wilhelm IV was elected German Emperor. More details can be found in Manfred Görtemaker, *Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert*, vol. 274 (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1996), p. 53.

¹⁰ Balz Engler, 'Shakespeare into German Prose: a New Bilingual Edition'. *Shakespeare Translation*, 1 (1974), 15-18, here p. 15.

As we shall see, there are self-contained periods within the twentieth century, in which translations were affected by different socio-political shifts. These movements within the twentieth century as a whole provide case histories of the transmission of *Hamlet* in its various forms. This time span covered by my research is demarcated by the establishment of Schlegel's *Hamlet* as the canonical Shakespeare translation at the beginning of the twentieth century, and by the changing purpose of translation in an increasingly anglicised and digitalised world at the end of the century. I have thus chosen the twentieth century as the time scale against which to assess the transmutations that *Hamlet* underwent. As my thesis will illustrate, *Hamlet* was appropriated and transformed by cultural politicians of the Third Reich, by the Socialist State of the GDR, by the democratisation of East Germany, and by current attempts to re-integrate Neo-Nazis into present-day German society.¹²

This thesis examines a hundred years of cultural appropriation of Shakespeare's play in Germany, attempts to define what has been meant by 'our Hamlet', and examines the changes that have had to be made to the play before it could begin its journey across linguistic and cultural borders. Based on the phenomenological model of Romy Heylen's *Six French Hamlets*,¹³ I shall examine how cultural forces have determined the textual identity of *Hamlet* in Germany, but I plan to go further in my own study by suggesting that translatability is not an inherent quality of this work. I believe that the continuous re-shaping of *Hamlet* is a necessary result of the

¹¹ Balz Engler, 'Rudolf Alexander Schröders Übersetzungen von Shakespeares Dramen', *The Cooper Monographs*, 18 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1974), p. 9.

¹² For a recent discussion on the place of Shakespeare in Nazi culture see Gerwin Strobl, 'Shakespeare and the Nazis', in *History Today* (1997), and 'The Bard of Eugenics: Shakespeare and Racial Activism in the Third Reich', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34 (1999), 323-336.

¹³ Romy Heylen, *Translation, Poetics and the Stage. Six French Hamlets* (London: Routledge, 1993).

incompatibility between the nature of translation and the demands that this play makes on us.

Outline of Chapters

Alongside the historical connection between Germany and *Hamlet*, another reason for choosing *Hamlet* as the object of study was the special set of problems that the play generates as a source text for translation and adaptation. *Hamlet* provides a marked example of a work that is textually unsettled, and it offers a particularly good case study because of the variety of different ways in which translators have struggled to construct a textual identity in their translations.

Grace Ioppolo drew attention to the problematic nature of *Hamlet* when she wrote: 'The transmission of the text of *Hamlet* presents more varied and complex problems than that of any other Shakespearian play because it alone exists in three, rather than two, substantively variant editions.'¹⁴ Philip Edwards has also suggested that our inability to understand the meaning of *Hamlet* may be connected to its lack of a settled text: 'Both the Prince and his play come down to us in more shapes than one. If the Prince were not so mercurial the text would be more stable.'¹⁵ The difficulty of translating *Hamlet* is not so much the linguistic problem of transposing Shakespeare's English into modern German, but the problem of establishing a textual identity for

¹⁴ Grace Ioppolo, *Revising Shakespeare* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 134.

¹⁵ Philip Edwards (ed.), *Hamlet*, New Cambridge Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 8.

Hamlet, before the linguistic process of decoding and encoding the text can begin. What will become clear in the course of this thesis is that the absence of a unitary text has become part of the work's ontology and its symbolic and metaphysical status. Translation demands a unitary and stable source text but, in the case of *Hamlet*, translation is confronted with the absence of such a text.

In the first chapter of my thesis I will examine why translators have felt it necessary to 'improve' *Hamlet* in German by re-working and adjusting the textual material in order to create a source text that does not exist. Based on interviews conducted as part of my research I will build up a dialogue between translators in order to establish the extent to which translators and adapters believe that *Hamlet* is in need of repair and improvement in English, and what responsibilities the translators feel they have in 'correcting' the play in German. Observation has revealed that translators of the play in German are rarely able to transpose the work to the target language without modifying the text and adapting it. Having examined in Chapter 1 some of the claims that translators have made about the need to improve *Hamlet*, I will proceed in Chapter 2 to examine how translators have attempted to put their theories into practice. Based on the views of translators expressed in the first chapter, I will examine a number of German 'improvements' to *Hamlet*, assess the effectiveness of textual modifications and consider the ways in which rewriting *Hamlet* changed the nature of the play in Germany.

Hamlet has been continuously rewritten in English by editors and this has changed the structure and the dramatic texture of the play over time. In Chapter 3 I will examine how another group of rewriters, the editors, have rewritten *Hamlet*. why they

have felt the need to adapt the play, and how this has shaped the way German translators have understood the work and its texts. Readers and audiences have access to *Hamlet* through editions of the play, and these editions represent editors' attempts to make sense of the text. The selection of textual material and the clarification of textual and interpretive cruces amount to a rewriting of *Hamlet*, and translators rely heavily on these synthetic editorial constructions. There are lines of influence that can be traced through translations and editions of *Hamlet* in German, and the continuous rewriting of the text is an attempt to make it more comprehensible, and as I shall argue, more translatable.

Translation is now recognised as an act of cultural exchange and negotiation, as opposed to a purely philological and ahistorical activity. In Chapter 4 I will examine how political agencies have contributed to the re-invention of *Hamlet* and for this analysis I will focus attention on the politically motivated rewrites of the play in East Germany. I will compare a socialist translation of *Hamlet*, officially approved by the GDR's Ministry for Culture, with a subversive anti-socialist translation that was banned by the Ministry. I will also compare a faithful translation with a free adaptation of *Hamlet*, both written by Heiner Müller. Müller's adaptation was written in response to the untranslatability of *Hamlet*, as Müller understood it, given the political climate of the GDR in the late 1970s.

The translations and adaptations of *Hamlet* in East Germany provide a revealing case history of the transmutation of the play in translation. *Hamlet* acquired new interest in the context of socialist East Germany and displayed a willingness to lend itself to the cultural policies of this era. I will consider some of the reasons why *Hamlet* had to be

rewritten in the 1960s and 1970s in the GDR and the effects that this had on the understanding of the play. I will also use the statements made in the interview by East German Shakespeare translator Maik Hamburger to provide a retrospective, post-reunification look at Shakespeare in the GDR, and I will consider how German translations of *Hamlet* have changed since the democratisation of East Germany in 1989.

Hamlet has often been selected for translation into German because of the iconic status that it has in Western literature. In Chapter 5 I will assess the importance of the play as a political work that has been appropriated and rewritten in order to reinforce critical notions of society. I will look at how *Hamlet* was used as a platform for the criticism of West Germany's commitment to education in the 1970s. I will also examine the political context surrounding a new adaptation of *Hamlet* by Christoph Schlingensiefel that is currently being used to help Neo-Nazis to become re-integrated into society as part of the German government's programme for the re-socialisation of right-wing extremists. All of the rewrites considered in chapters 4 and 5, whether translation or adaptation, re-invented *Hamlet* for social and political reasons. These transmutations not only shaped Germany's understanding of the play, but also contributed to the development of *our* present understanding of the cultural transmission of *Hamlet* in Germany and the afterlife of this literary work.

The way translations and texts are identified, described, marketed, and eventually sold, gives a certain impression of the nature of the literary work, and the way its author created it. Theatres, cinemas, and publishers all make use of translations and editions. Their selection of texts, and their identification of a given translation with a

given text, reveals underlying interests that have more to do with profit-making and cultural materialism than with Shakespeare's plays and their translations. In the final chapter of my thesis I will consider how the various rewrites examined in the preceding chapters have been marketed for commercial purposes. I will assess the extent to which *Hamlet* is constantly being rewritten as a consumable object, and what this reveals about the public's real interest in Shakespeare and their level of awareness of the textual constitution of his plays.

A Rationale for the Present Study

In 1985 translation theorist André Lefevere raised the question, 'Why waste our time on rewrites?' He concluded that literature exists for the sole purpose of being rewritten and manipulated: 'Works of literature exist to be made use of in one way or another [...] Rewriting in all its forms can be seen as a weapon in the struggle for supremacy between various ideologies, various poetics. It should be analyzed and studied that way.'¹⁶ In 1992 Lefevere again stressed that the only access we have to literary works is through a series of rewritten forms and this must influence the way we talk and write about literature:

Since non-professional readers of literature are, at present, exposed to literature more often by means of rewritings than by means of writings, and since rewritings can be shown to have had a not negligible impact on the evolution of literatures in the past, the study of rewritings should no longer be neglected. Those engaged in that study

¹⁶ André Lefevere, 'Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites?' in Theo Hermans (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1985), pp. 215-43, here p. 234.

will have to ask themselves who rewrites, why, under what circumstances, for which audiences.¹⁷

As I shall examine in this thesis, *Hamlet* has been an operative force at many levels of cultural life in Germany. Creative rewrites of the play offer case studies in the transmutation of *Hamlet* as a cultural object and a European phenomenon. The ways in which the play has been re-invented at certain times, the reasons for these rewrites, and the ways in which they have changed *Hamlet*, develop our understanding of the cultural transmission of the work and its afterlife as a literary text. Rather than evaluating translations and adaptations by comparing them with the original work of art, it is more relevant to examine the uses to which *Hamlet* has been put, the purposes served by rewriting the play, and the impetus behind the transformation of *Hamlet* into a series of different cultural forms.

The approach taken in this study falls within the field of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS),¹⁸ in which I seek to describe methods of translation from a functional perspective, rather than the prescriptive approach, which seeks to evaluate translations in terms of artistic merit in comparison with the original work of art. Following James Holmes's analytical model of Translation Studies, my own research would be classed as Pure Descriptive Translation Studies. My approach is both product- and function-oriented, describing existing translations and the function of those translations in the recipient sociocultural context. It should also be borne in

¹⁷ André Lefevere, 'Prewrite', in *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 1-10, here p. 7.

¹⁸ 'Translation Studies' was a term first conceived by James Holmes in 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies' (Amsterdam: Translation Studies Section, Department of General Studies, 1972). Holmes has pointed out that Translation Studies must combine theoretical, descriptive and applied approaches: 'though the needs of a given moment may vary, attention to all three branches is required if the discipline is to grow and flourish'. See Holmes, 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies' (p. 78).

mind that DTS is dialectical, combining theoretical, descriptive and applied perspectives.

The further purpose of my study is to explore some of the reasons why I feel dissatisfied when I read analyses of literary translations. The traditional method of translation analysis has been to compare the translation with the source text, and often to compare several translations, in order to illustrate the strengths or weaknesses of the translation in question. A typical example of this is Christina Gullin's book, *Översättarens röst (The Translator's Voice)*,¹⁹ a study of six late twentieth-century English novels in Swedish translation by Caj Lundgren and Else Lundgren. This work, published in 1998, was originally Gullin's Ph.D. thesis. After two lengthy chapters on the history of translation theory, Gullin compares the different styles of the two translators to conclude that every translation resonates with the sound of the translator's own voice, which, in any case, is a given.²⁰

Gullin's study is predicated on the binary opposition between a faithful and a free translation, but there are more fundamental issues at stake that are not explored in Gullin's thesis. We are far from clear about what an 'original' is or about the relationship between the 'original' and its translations. The linguistic analysis of a translation is inadequate if it seeks to position the translation in a dialectical relationship with the original work and to make evaluative judgements about a

¹⁹ Christina Gullin, 'Översättarens röst. En studie i den skönlitterära översättarens roll med utgångspunkt i översättningar av Else Lundgren och Caj Lundgren' ['The Translator's Voice. A Study of the Role of the Translator Based on Translations of Else Lundgren and Caj Lundgren'] (Lund: University of Lund, 1998).

²⁰ The issue of how a translator's voice affects the translation, and of how this 'voice' may be used for political purposes, has been discussed in my interview with the Norwegian *Hamlet* translator, Øyvind Berg. See Simon Nicholas, 'Mer innhold, mindre kunst', in *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*, 2 (1999), 54-61.

translation. Something that has become clear during the course of my research is that translations of a text should not be compared with a view to establishing which is the 'better' of the two. The social and cultural climate in which translators work will always differ from those of their predecessors, and I would avoid juxtaposing, for example, Schlegel's translation of 1798 with Maik Hamburger's of 1964 and Elisabeth Plessen's of 1999, as if the translations were mirror images of the text. Translations never offer a perfect reflection of the original work and it is misleading to suggest that one can compare these refracted images with a view to establishing the superior.

Primary Sources

The present study is based on a corpus of nineteen German translations and four adaptations of *Hamlet*. The examination of translations offers a theoretical approach to translation that would be incomplete without the practical consideration of how *Hamlet* has been 'realised' in Germany. I therefore conducted a series of interviews to support the textual analysis of the present study. I interviewed German translators and adapters of *Hamlet*, directors, dramaturgs and actors in order to prevent the present study from becoming too rooted in theory without acknowledging the importance of practical factors in the generation of a translation and its development into a performance text.

The Corpus of Translations and Adaptations

My corpus is based on printed translations. In the case of the translations by Reinhard Palm, Wolfgang Swaczynna, and Elisabeth Plessen, I was given the unpublished translation by the translator. In the case of Maik Hamburger's translation, I was given a typescript of the unpublished play by Ingeborg Boltz of the Shakespeare Bibliothek in Munich. This library provided me with further unpublished translations by Frank Steckel and Norbert Kollakowsky. The translations and adaptations contained in this thesis are listed below and arranged chronologically according to the date on which the text was completed.

Translations

1. *Hamlet. Prinz von Dänemark. Tragödie*, trans. August Wilhelm Schlegel (1798), 3rd edition (1844), ed. Holger Klein (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999).
2. *Hamlet*, trans. Gustav Wolff (Munich: Ernst Reinhardt, 1914).
3. *Hamlet*, trans. Friedrich Gundolf, in *Shakespeare in deutscher Sprache*, vol. 9 (Berlin: Bondi, 1920).
4. *Hamlet. Prinz von Dänemark*, trans. Walter Josten (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1932).
This edition (Hamburg: Paul Hartung Verlag, 1937).

5. *Hamlet. Prinz von Dänemark*, trans. Theodor von Zeynek (1945). This edition (Salzburg; Munich: Stifterbibliothek, 1952).

6. *Hamlet*, trans. Richard Flatter, in *Shakespeare, neu übersetzt*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Bad Bocklet; Zürich: Walter Krieg Verlag, 1954).

7. *Hamlet*, trans. Hans Rothe, in *Der elisabethanische Shakespeare* (Baden-Baden: Holle Verlag, 1955). This edition, *William Shakespeares Dramen. In Übersetzungen und Neufassungen von Hans Rothe*, vol. 3 (Munich: Albert Langen and Georg Müller Verlag, 1963).

8. *Hamlet*, trans. Richard Schaller (1960). This edition, *Shakespeares Werke neu übersetzt und erläutert von Rudolf Schaller* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1968).

9. *Die Tragische Geschichte von Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark*, trans. Maik Hamburger and Adolf Dresen (1964), un-published.

10. *Hamlet*, trans. Erich Fried (1968), 3rd edition (Berlin: Wagenbach Verlag, 1999).

11. *Die Tragödie von Hamlet, Prinz von Dänemark*, trans. Wolfgang Swaczynna (Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe: Bärenreiter Verlag Karl Vötterle KG, 1971).

12. *Hamlet*, trans. Heiner Müller and Matthias Langhoff (1976). This edition, *Heiner Müller. Shakespeare Factory*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1989).

13. *Die Tragödie von Hamlet, dem Prinzen von Dänemark*, trans. Peter Zadek and Gottfried Greiffenhagen (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977).
14. *Hamlet*, trans. and ed. Holger Klein (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984).
15. *Hamlet*, trans. Frank Günther (Cologne: Theaterverlag Ute Nyssen & J. Bansemer, 1988). This edition (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997).
16. *Hamlet*, trans. Frank-Patrick Steckel, (1995). Printed in the programme to the production at the Schauspielhaus Bochum, Nr. 116 (1995).
17. *Hamlet*, trans. Reinhard Palm (Vienna: Thomas Sessler Verlag, 1996).
18. *Hamlet*, trans. Norbert Kollakowsky (1998). Printed manuscript available from Litag Theater- und Musikverlag (Bremen, 1998)
19. *Hamlet*, trans. Elisabeth Plessen (1999). Printed in the programme to Peter Zadek's production, Wiener Festwochen (May, 1999).

Adaptations

1. Bertolt Brecht, *Hamlet: Föhrenszene* (1948), in 'Der Messingkauf', reprinted in *Bertolt Brecht: Schriften*, vol. 23 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997), pp. 840-3.

2. *Hamlet. Prinz von Dänemark*, adapted by Rudolf Hochhuth, *Theater heute, Jahressonderheft* (1972), 58-62.
3. Heiner Müller, *Hamletmaschine* (1977), reprinted in *Heiner Müller. Texte und Kommentare*, ed. Frank Hörnigk (Göttingen: Steidl Verlag, 1989).
4. Christoph Schlingensiefel, *Hamlet: naziline.com* (Zürich, 2001), un-published.

There are countless other versions of *Hamlet* in German that could not be considered in this thesis. It is a common practice in German theatres to modernise and adapt the Schlegel translation, for which the theatre pays no royalties. Theatres have also tended to update Heiner Müller's translation, especially when the director was aiming to create a modern adaptation of the play. The many hundreds of adapted versions of old translations are not considered here. My analysis is limited to those translations and adaptations that were newly written in the twentieth century, rather than being updated versions of pre-existing translations.

What became clear during the course of my research was that directors and dramaturgs often work from fragments of a translation (or translations), rather than a complete text, and that the play text often develops out of rehearsals, rather than being written down beforehand to prescribe the performance. When I attended a rehearsal of Armin Petras' production of *Hamlet* at the Staatstheater in Kassel (June 2000), I observed that the play text was built up by the actors and director based on the translations of Heiner Müller and Schlegel, and the English text. The actors gradually memorised their roles, adapting them as they did, but at no stage was the

text ever written down, and it changed from one night to the next when the play was performed in September. Many of the translations examined in this thesis are post-performance texts that record only one of several potential versions of a production that changed in subtle ways from one performance to the next.

This also accounts for the reason why I was unable to locate the *Hamlet* translation written by Michael Jurgons and Patrick Li for their 1993 production at the Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater in Schwerin.²¹ Enquiries at the theatre revealed that not only had the theatre not preserved any printed copy of the translation, but that there had never been a coherent printed text. We know from press reviews that the play was re-translated by the directors, but the text itself was never recorded or preserved. Similarly, in Düsseldorf in 1977 Otomar Krejca produced a contemporary version of *Hamlet* using a translation by Ingo Waßerka.²² Again, there is no publicly available text because only actors' scripts were used, which ceased to exist as soon as the production came to an end. The only record we now have of the translation is in comments on, and citations from, the text in reviews of the production published in the press. This is why I feel that my own corpus of translations represents only a small fraction of the many hundreds of texts that are used in German theatres. What my corpus of texts reveals are the main junctures in the tradition of *Hamlet* translations when social and political conditions led *Hamlet* in new directions in translation.

²¹ Noted in the annual collection of translations and productions by Dr Ingeborg Boltz in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 129 (1993).

²² The translation and the production are discussed briefly in *Theater heute*, 7 (1977).

I made numerous visits to dramaturgy departments of theatres in Germany and to the Shakespeare Bibliothek in Munich in order to locate and collect translations of *Hamlet*. Of the eighteen German *Hamlet* translations that constitute the corpus of this study, only five are available to the German public: the translations of Schlegel (1798), Fried (1968), Müller (1976), Klein (1984), and Günther (1988). Since most of these translations are no longer in print, were published only privately, or exist only in the translator's manuscript, the samples gathered and printed in this thesis will contribute to the present bibliography of German Shakespeare Studies, and allow the reader to gain some insights into the style of the translations. Maik Hamburger, for example, was denied any publishing rights for his 1964 translation of *Hamlet*, because it was felt to subvert the classical idiom of the Schlegel-Tieck translations, and because Adolf Dresen's production in Greifswald, which used the translation, was felt to subvert the dominant ideology of the GDR. Appendix C provides a sample of this version taken from the manuscript of this unpublished translation.

The reader is advised to consult Appendix A of this thesis before reading the following chapters, since it contains a biographical survey of the translators, whose work is examined in this thesis. There are also background notes on the social and political conditions in which these translators were working. Appendix B contains the transcripts of the interviews with translators and directors of *Hamlet*, which inform the analysis in the six chapters of this thesis, and Appendix C provides a collection of representative samples from the translations considered in this study. This will help to support contentions I have made and illustrate the nature of the translations examined.

Interviews with Participants

I interviewed a number of German Shakespeare translators in order to discuss the practical issues of translating *Hamlet*. I felt that it was important to listen to translators' experiences of rendering Shakespeare into modern German, because few translation analyses extend beyond a purely theoretical examination of the target texts, and they reveal little awareness of the pragmatics of translating. I feel that it is important when assessing translations to *involve* the translators as much as possible, because they provide revealing information about the influences and pressures that come to bear on the creation of any translation. Practical issues underpin and authorise the theoretical component of this thesis. The participants who agreed to be interviewed were:

1. Frank Günther (translator: Munich).
2. Ralf Fiedler (dramaturg: Staatstheater Kassel).
3. Michael Wachsmann (translator/dramaturg: Münchner Kammerpiele).
4. Elisabeth Plessen (translator: Schauspielhaus Hamburg).
5. Wolfgang Swaczynna (translator: Berlin).
6. Reinhard Palm (translator/dramaturg: Schauspielhaus Zürich).
7. Maik Hamburger (translator/dramaturg: Deutsches Theater, Berlin).
8. Andrew McKinnon (director: Nottingham Playhouse)
9. Sebastian Rudolph (actor: Schauspielhaus Zürich)
10. Christoph Schlingensief (film-maker, director: Volksbühne, Berlin).

I have tried to keep my analysis within the practical realm of the theatre. My discussion with individuals who have worked towards translating and directing *Hamlet* has not only informed my view of the translatability of the play, but also changed some more subjective views that I held with regard to translation before talking to the participants who took part in this survey. The value of my thesis lies not only in the theoretical assessment of translations, but also in the methodology that I am trying to promote. Based on the approach of W. B. Worthen in the recent study, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*,²³ I have sought to bring together a range of practitioners and to listen to what they have to say about the functionality of the Shakespearean text in the foreign language medium.

Translation: The Stepchild of Shakespeare Studies?

In the last ten years there have been numerous studies of Shakespeare in a European context. Dennis Kennedy's study of 'Foreign Shakespeares'²⁴ examines how Shakespeare is transmitted in cultures and languages that are not beholden to the text in English, although the emphasis in his study is on the non-verbal representation of the dramas, the *mise-en-scène*. Wilhelm Hortmann's recent studies of Shakespeare on the German stage²⁵ present a comprehensive review of Shakespeare productions in Germany in the twentieth century, but rather disappointingly Hortmann focuses on

²³ W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

²⁴ *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

²⁵ Wilhelm Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. Vol 2. The Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); *Shakespeare und das deutsche Theater im 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 2001).

the mise-en-scène and pays scant attention to the issue of translation.²⁶ Other studies have likewise focussed on single aspects of the equation. *European Shakespeares*²⁷ and *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions*²⁸ focus on the acculturation of Shakespeare in Europe, and Norbert Hofmann's *Redundanz und Äquivalenz*²⁹ and Dirk Delabastita's *There's a Double Tongue*³⁰ concentrate exclusively on the linguistics of translating *Hamlet* into German, as if cultural influences were of no relevance.

As the above publications suggest, our ideas about what 'Shakespeare' is, or what *Hamlet* means, are becoming more diverse. The forms of appropriation and cultural exchange that occur within the foreign Shakespeare Industry un-fix traditional notions of British 'establishment' Shakespeare. The area of research and study often termed 'Shakespeare Abroad' or 'Foreign Shakespeares' has opened the works out as cultural texts, which means that we can no longer see the Shakespearean work as of use only to English audiences.

One argument that is becoming ever more forceful in the field of Shakespeare Studies is that Shakespeare is no longer the exclusive property of the British nation or of the English language:

²⁶ Hortmann refers briefly to German translators of the twentieth century on pages 78-93 and 247-8.

²⁷ Dirk Delabastita and Lieven d'Hulst, *European Shakespeares: Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age* (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1992)

²⁸ Tetsuo Kishi, Roger Pringle and Stanley Wells (eds.), *Shakespeare and Cultural Traditions* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994).

²⁹ Norbert Hofmann, *Redundanz und Äquivalenz in der literarischen Übersetzung dargestellt an fünf deutschen Übersetzungen des 'Hamlet'*, ed. Gerhard Müller-Schwefe and Friedrich Schubel (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1980).

³⁰ Dirk Delabastita, *There's a Double Tongue. An Investigation into the Translation of Shakespeare's Wordplay, with special reference to 'Hamlet'* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993).

One of the first truths of which we all became aware is that there is not a categorical difference between native-speaking Shakespeareans and those who work in non-English speaking cultures. The process of translation, we learned, need not create 'inauthenticity' but can give new life to a text and thus enable directors to harvest new sense from their productions.³¹

The dissemination of Shakespeare across the globe has made it increasingly difficult to locate his work nationally. 'Shakespeare' is not an enclosure or a national possession and cannot be contained in England. Crystal Bartolovich has argued that: 'Given the extravagant syncretism of the cultural matrix we call "Shakespeare" – and the language in which "he" wrote – perhaps we might rethink not only the ascription of authorial possession but also the coherence of the nation it helps underwrite.'³² 'Shakespeare Abroad', or 'Foreign Shakespeare', has become a vital and relevant area of Shakespeare scholarship at the beginning of the twenty-first century. My thesis is located in the middle ground between Wilhelm Hortmann's and Dennis Kennedy's studies of the *mise-en-scène* of Shakespeare on the German stage, and the purely linguistic studies of Shakespeare translations by Norbert Hofmann and Dirk Delabastita. I have aimed for a more integrated approach that treats the Shakespearean text as an editorial construction and a political object.

Translation theory has always been of central importance in German Shakespeare Studies, but I have observed a worrying depletion of debate on the subject of Shakespeare translations over the last ten years in Germany. This contrasts markedly with earlier decades. In the 1970s and 1980s there were numerous roundtable debates with translators assessing the problems of translating Shakespeare's texts. In July 1970 Heiner Müller, Klaus Tragelehn and Maik Hamburger discussed the issues of

³¹ *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, ed. Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova and Derek Roper (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), p. 18.

translating Shakespeare into modern German, and the debate was published in the East German theatre journal, *Theater der Zeit*. In July 1975 the same translators met to discuss similar issues and this debate was published in the West German theatre journal, *Theater heute*. Two roundtable debates on Shakespeare translation were held in 1988. One was held in Bremen and involved Chris Alexander, Rainer Iwersen and Thomas Metscher.³³ The other debate was held in Berlin and involved the translators Frank Günther, Michael Wachsmann and Wolfgang Swaczynna.³⁴ There was also a variety of articles published by translators in the theatre journals in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.³⁵

In 1998 a new journal was established by the Norwegian Shakespeare Society, called the *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*, edited by Therese Bjørneboe. This journal covers the main Shakespeare events across East and West Europe. It focuses on the fact that Shakespearean productions in Europe are always based on translations of the text, which is an important influence on the shape of the production. Often translations are also chosen according to the theatre's internal politics. Interviews with translators and analyses of translations, to which I have contributed in the *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*,³⁶ have re-vitalised a discussion of Shakespeare translations that

³² Crystal Bartolovich, 'Shakespeare's Globe?', *Marxist Shakespeares*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 178-205, here p. 200.

³³ The debate was published as part of the study, 'Shakespeare als Volkstheater – Bremer Shakespeare Company', ed. Dieter Herms and Thomas Metscher, in *Gulliver. Deutsch-Englische Jahrbücher*, 24 (1988), 33-53.

³⁴ Published in *Nachrichten der dramaturgischen Gesellschaft*, 2 (1988), 5-27.

³⁵ Alfred Günther, 'Wie übersetzt man Shakespeare?', *Theater heute*, 4 (1963); Maik Hamburger, 'Übersetzen fürs Theater', *Theater der Zeit*, 4 (1974); Frank Günther, 'Üb Ersetzen', *Theater heute*, 9 (1981); Michael Wachsmann, 'Übersetzen – Ein Verlustgeschäft mit Gewinn', *Theater heute*, 1 (1988).

³⁶ See Simon Nicholas, 'Mer innhold, mindre kunst', *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*, 2 (1999), 54-61; 'Frailty thy name is woman: Angela Winkler som Hamlet', *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*, 2 (2000), 62-65; 'I will survive: Hamlet synger Gloria Gaynor på Staatstheater i Kassel', *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*, 1 (2001), 26-28; 'Oversettelse. økonomi

is now denied any place in Germany's theatre journals. Again, I believe that interest in adaptation and the non-linguistic aspects of mise-en-scène have replaced more traditional text-focussed discussions.

Translations and adaptations provide vivid and creative forms that ensure the work's continuing cultural afterlife, and ensure Shakespeare's place in the global Shakespeare Industry. The continual re-invention of *Hamlet* affirms the work's modernity and reveals the ways we locate Shakespeare in the process of social and cultural history. I will be exploring some of the ways in which Shakespeare has been continually repositioned as contemporary cultures renegotiate Shakespeare as a site of authority within the framework of that nation's cultural development. My thesis examines the theoretical and practical issues surrounding the rewriting of *Hamlet* for contemporary audiences and the continual re-contextualisation of Shakespeare within the flux of shifting critical paradigms. I will re-examine both the shape of the play-text in translation and the shifting parameters of the work in line with changing poetics and politics. With this study I hope to make a further contribution to the current construction of the International Shakespeare and also re-establish discussion of translation theory and practice.

og ideologie', *Shakespeare Tidsskrift*, 1 (2001), 29-32; 'Schlingensief Entertainment og Neo-Nazis på Schauspielhaus i Zürich', projected for *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*, 2 (2001).

Part 1. On Untranslatability: *Hamlet* as Transcendent Text

1. THE PROBLEM WITH TRANSLATING ‘ORIGINALS’

By analysing the translations of *Hamlet* contained in my corpus, and by interviewing many of the translators responsible for those texts, my first observation was that translators seeking to recover the original work have detected flaws in the play’s structure, in its character portrayal, and in the amount of information given to the audience. Because *Hamlet* has only survived for us today as an editorial construction, it is impossible to say with any degree of accuracy whether apparent faults in the text are the result of textual corruption or problems of workmanship traceable to the author. It is also difficult to say whether cracks in the surface of *Hamlet* were inherent in the play itself, or whether it was the pressure of translation that fractured the work.

In the first section of this chapter I will examine what translators have said about the flaws that are felt to exist in *Hamlet*. This process of ‘improving’ *Hamlet* in a German translation has often been the motivating force behind attempts to appropriate the play for a foreign audience. ‘Our Hamlet’ has been understood by many translators as an improvement on the English text and thus a closer approximation to the original work than the text as it has reached us today in English. If Ludwig Fulda is to be believed and *Hamlet* really is ‘incomparably better’ in German, then the first thing to note is precisely the way translators have attempted to make Shakespeare’s play ‘better’ in the target language and what their observations reveal about the text as it stands in English.

1.1 Trying to Improve an ‘Artistic Failure’

Translating is a hermeneutic process that requires an understanding of the source text.

This is particularly difficult with a work like *Hamlet*, which seems to resist all attempts to interpret it. Hamlet warns Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

You would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops, you would pluck out the heart of my mystery, you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. (3.2.355-60)¹

If the play embodies Hamlet’s mystery, then perhaps Hamlet is addressing all his critics when he says: ‘Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me’ (3.2.334-5). This is not the first time that Shakespeare has spoken through a character to warn us not to penetrate too deeply into the meaning of a text. When Bottom awakens from his dream in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, he is perplexed by the curious nature of it. To attempt to interpret the dream would be foolish. ‘Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream,’ says Bottom (4.1.204-5), and in the play’s epilogue Puck suggests that the audience should also look on these events as nothing more than a ‘weak and idle theme, / No more yielding but a dream’ (5.1.414-15). Articulating a response to *Hamlet* is essential for the translator who has the responsibility of recreating the work in another language. But how should one go about translating something that is fundamentally incommunicable?² It is both

¹ All citations from *Hamlet* in this thesis are taken from Harold Jenkins’ Arden Edition of the play (London: Methuen, 1982).

² Inga-Stina Ewbank writes that there is something ‘inexpressible and incommunicable at the heart of the play’, which is at the same time the value of the work: ‘To me the final greatness of the play lies just there: in its power to express so much and yet also to call a halt on the edge of the inexpressible.’ See Inga-Stina Ewbank, ‘*Hamlet* and the Power of the Word’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 30 (1977), 85-102. here p. 102.

impossible to interpret Hamlet's mystery, and necessary, if it is to be translated. When impossibility and necessity collide, we begin to understand something of the translator's dilemma.

Although critics have tried to pluck out Hamlet's mystery, they have come to accept that this play does not offer a unified comment. Jan Kott wrote of *Hamlet*: 'It is the strangest play ever written; by its very imperfections,'³ and Maynard Mack wrote that there seems to be mystery 'written deep into its idiom.'⁴ John Dover Wilson suggested that unanswerable questions are part of the nature of the work,⁵ and André Gide described how he spent so much time trying to avoid the dense maze of traps and pitfalls in the text, that it took him longer to translate the first act of the play than it did the whole of *Antony and Cleopatra*.⁶ Anthony Dawson writes that the play is completely indeterminate: 'It seems always to tease us with the promise of meaning that in the event turns out to be just out of reach [...] speech curls around on itself; madness gnaws at the edges of meaning.'⁷ But in spite of the problematic nature of

³ Jan Kott, 'Hamlet of the Mid-Century', *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski (London: Methuen, 1965), pp. 47-60.

⁴ Maynard Mack, 'The Readiness is all', *Everybody's Shakespeare* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), p. 113.

⁵ John Dover Wilson writes: 'it is doubtful whether anyone, even in Shakespeare's day, ever got to the bottom of everything Hamlet says. And so too with other matters and with the play as a whole. *Hamlet* is a dramatic essay in mystery; that is to say it is constructed that the more it is examined the more there is to discover.' See *What Happens in Hamlet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 600.

⁶ 'The first act exhausted me; I devoted more effort to it than to the five acts of *Antony and Cleopatra*. You cannot imagine a text that is more contorted, more twisted, and full of ambiguities, traps and pitfalls.' See 'Lettre-Préface' to *Hamlet*, trans. André Gide (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1946), p. 7. Gide's *Hamlet* translation is in vol. 7 of *Théâtre complet d'André Gide* (Paris, 1947-49).

⁷ Anthony B. Dawson, *Hamlet. Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 71.

the play, *Hamlet* remains one of the most performed⁸ and ‘translated’ plays in Germany.

Dramaturg Ralf Fiedler has recently assisted director Armin Petras in a new production of *Hamlet* at the Staatstheater in Kassel. In my interview Fiedler argued that *Hamlet*, whether by accident or by design, has a structural void that can be exploited by producers: ‘*Hamlet* is fascinating because of what is missing from it. There is a hole or some kind of dark patch in it, and it is here where the story is centred. It is a quality of the work that we can really exploit.’⁹ The imperfection of the play’s form thus increases its potential and versatility in the theatre.

Reinhard Palm struggled to translate the play produced by Uwe Erich Laufenberg in Zürich in 1997, because of the effort required to force sense into a work that seemed resistant to interpretation. He commented that *Hamlet* is difficult to translate because we are so uncertain about how we are to respond to the work, rather than just the surface problem of ‘translating’ the language: ‘*Hamlet* is not the sort of play where you reach a point at which you can say you have understood it.’¹⁰ I believe that Palm has highlighted a very significant issue and one that I shall explore in detail in this thesis. The problem of translating *Hamlet* has less to do with the transposition of language and more to do with the difficulty of articulating a response to this play. Translators seem to agree that they are transposing a work to a foreign linguistic and

⁸ As Ron Engle has noted: ‘Shakespeare is a German tradition and no respectable theatre company in Germany would go more than a season without mounting a new Shakespeare production.’ See Ron Engle, ‘Audience, Style, and Language in the Shakespeare of Peter Zadek’, in Dennis Kennedy (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 93-105, here p. 93.

⁹ For statements from interviews see Appendix B, here, p. 298.

¹⁰ Appendix (p. 325).

cultural system without really understanding what the text is saying or what their translation is saying.

An alternative approach for some translators has been to take the view that *Hamlet* is just a straightforward thriller, and would have caused no problems of understanding for Shakespeare's own audiences. It has been argued that the problems we have with the play today are largely of our own making, the result of changes in language, or the result of textual corruption. Wolfgang Swaczynna, who translated the play in 1971, remarked:

The problems surrounding *Hamlet* have arisen because so many people have tried to interpret it. The play is actually a very simple and compelling thriller [...] The play is not at all unfathomable. Just because Shakespeare read Montaigne, people think *Hamlet* is bursting with philosophical truths.¹¹

Director Andrew McKinnon commented in the interview: 'In the end I don't think you can make a decision about *Hamlet*. I think you just have to allow it to exist for itself.'¹² But translators *do* have to tackle the text, negotiate the terms of the play, and forge an interpretation. Only by leaving the play unused do we allow it to 'exist for itself'. Decisions have to be made every time the play is translated or produced.

The problem for translators is that they must be able to articulate a response to *Hamlet* and this response must be re-coded in the target language. My argument is that the difficulty of knowing how to articulate a response to *Hamlet* compounds the more elementary linguistic problems of translating the play. As we have seen, Reinhard Palm expressed the view that the language of *Hamlet* was not as demanding

¹¹ Appendix (p. 335).

as other plays to translate. The most difficult task was knowing how to react to the characters and events, given the fact that there is no obvious overriding comment provided by Shakespeare to guide the translator.

Frank Günther has also commented on the ease with which the language of *Hamlet* can be translated, compared with a play like *Love's Labour's Lost*. He has noted: 'The translator requires a high degree of freedom for the translation of this untranslatable play, *Love's Labour's Lost*, compared with which *Hamlet* is a Sunday stroll.'¹³ I believe that, based on what translators have said in the interviews, there is a level at which *Hamlet* becomes untranslatable and this has to do with the form in which the work exists for us in English and a lack of internal cohesiveness that becomes apparent when the work is subjected to the translator's scrutiny.

When I interviewed Elisabeth Plessen, she commented that *Hamlet* had been more demanding than any of the other plays of Shakespeare she had translated: 'I have translated *Richard III*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Julius Caesar* and these were difficult enough, but translating *Hamlet* was like climbing the Himalayas.'¹⁴ It became clear from my interviews that translators are baffled by the composition of the play, rather than the language itself. In his English-French Glossary of 1530 John Palsgrave illustrated the use of the word 'translate' with the sentence: 'Whan this booke is parfyt it shalbe no mastrye to translate out of englysshe in to frenche'. In other words, a book that is complete and well composed

¹² Appendix (p. 356).

¹³ Frank Günther, 'Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt', in *Verlorene Liebesmüh*, trans. Frank Günther (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), pp. 238-57, here p. 249.

¹⁴ Appendix (p. 319).

will also be ready for translation.¹⁵ So what are we to make of *Hamlet* as a source text for translators? The measure of a work's translatability, according to Dryden, lay in the extent to which one could read the sense of the work out of the words, not in the ease with which the words themselves could be transposed. This would surely make *Hamlet* a very untranslatable text.¹⁶

If a work's composition is felt to be imperfectly conceived, does this mean that its transmission into another language will be problematic? What do translators struggling with *Hamlet* understand to be a 'perfect' text? Does the composition of a work have some bearing on its translatability? In 1919 T. S. Eliot famously noted of *Hamlet*: 'So far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, the play is most certainly an artistic failure.'¹⁷ The reason for this apparent failure was that: 'Both workmanship and thought are in an unstable position.'¹⁸ According to Eliot, Gertrude's actions are not an adequate 'objective correlative' for Hamlet's emotional reaction. This not only leaves Hamlet and the audience baffled, but it also apparently left the author himself baffled. Eliot suggested that Shakespeare was trying to 'drag to light' a feeling that

¹⁵ See John Palsgrave, *Lesclarissement de la langue francoyse*, printed by Johan Haukyns (London, 1530). In his glossary Palsgrave writes: 'Mays que ce liure soyt vne foys paracheu, ce ne sera pas forte chose a fayre de translater de angloys en francoys.' Palsgrave would seem to be suggesting that there are necessary stages in the composition of a work before that work can be translated.

¹⁶ Dryden writes: 'A translator that would write with any force or spirit of an original must never dwell on the words of the author. He ought to possess himself entirely and perfectly comprehend the genius and sense of the author, the nature of the subject, and the terms of the art or subject treated of. And then he will express himself as justly, and with as much life, as if he wrote an original'. From 'The Life of Lucian' (1711), in vol. 2 of John Dryden, *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, reprinted in Schulte and Biguenet, *Theories of Translation* (p. 31).

¹⁷ T. S. Eliot, 'Hamlet', *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), pp. 45-49, here p. 47.

¹⁸ Eliot, 'Hamlet' (p. 48). It has been argued that there is a distinction between the author's intentions and the accomplishment of those intentions in what he actually puts down on paper, and there may be a discrepancy between the intention and the achievement. This idea relates to an idea (that was ultimately discredited) by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley

was inexpressible with the cruder and intractable materials of the story. Because, it was argued, Shakespeare's feelings were unclear, and because the materials of the story were aesthetically unmanageable, the resulting play was felt to be artistically incomplete and psychologically unconvincing.¹⁹ Without changing the story and the characters of Hamlet and Gertrude, there was nothing Shakespeare could do to correlate Gertrude's actions with Hamlet's response.

This was Eliot's view of *Hamlet*, but he was not alone. In his New Cambridge Edition of the play (1985) Philip Edwards expressed a view similar to Eliot's. His idea was that what Shakespeare wanted to say was inexpressible in the conventional theatrical mode of the day:

It is Shakespeare's difficulty in containing Hamlet within the bounds of a play, and the theatre's difficulty in comprehending the working of Shakespeare's mind, that have led to the multiple and scarcely reconcilable variations in the play's language and structure.²⁰

George Steiner argued that Shakespeare's plays are problematised by the attempted fusion of a personal agenda and disparate, unmanageable, and resistant materials. Steiner believed that the complication for translators was due to this mixing of

as the 'intentional fallacy'. See *Sewanee Review*, 54 (1946), and William K. Wimsatt, Jr., *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, 1954).

¹⁹ Eliot argues: 'Hamlet is up against the difficulty that his disgust is occasioned by his mother, but that his mother is not an adequate equivalent for it; his disgust envelops and exceeds her. It is thus a feeling, which he cannot understand; he cannot objectify it, and it therefore remains to poison life and obstruct action. None of the possible actions can satisfy it; and nothing that Shakespeare can do with the plot can express Hamlet for him' (p. 48). Shakespeare could certainly have heightened Gertrude's complicity and guilt, but this would have created a different emotion in Hamlet and thus a different play.

²⁰ Philip Edwards, *Hamlet*, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 8.

personal experience and pre-existing cultural material.²¹ Steiner recognised that the way in which a work is written, its internal laws and patterns of coherence, will determine how translatable it is.

I have observed that the recurring problem for translators of *Hamlet* is not so much the difficulty of the language, but the general uncertainty of the work's textual identity and of any unified comment that the play is expected to make. I feel that *Hamlet* was a problem for Shakespeare because he was clearly processing a number of personal experiences and trying to make use of them in an integrated dramatic form. I would not go as far as Eliot in claiming that *Hamlet* is (or ever was) an artistic failure, but there are aesthetic problems with this work that are illuminated by translation.

Inga-Stina Ewbank has written that editors and critics usually only have to comment on words in the Shakespearean text, whereas the translator has the painfully acute experience of having to interpret every word. She writes: 'Probably in that sense no one, not even an editor, knows the workings of the language in a play so well as a translator who has had to confront every word in a peculiarly intense way and in its relation to every other sign in the verbal texture of the play.'²² With the level of intensity at which translators must work to make sense of *Hamlet*, aesthetic problems with this text inevitably arise. Structural flaws become evident as soon as one embarks on the process of decoding and encoding *Hamlet* in translation. Translation pressurises the structure of a text and over-determines the communicability of its

²¹ George Steiner, *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, 3rd edition 1998), p. 386.

²² Inga-Stina Ewbank, 'Shakespeare Translation as Cultural Exchange' (p. 5).

meaning. A work that is by its nature unstable will not stand up to the pressures of translating. This is borne out by the remarks made by all of the translators interviewed on the subject.

Translators seem to be particularly sensitive to structural problems in the play, and it is this, more than the words themselves, that has repeatedly been remarked on by translators as the root of an insoluble problem. In the 1870s the translator Friedrich Bodenstedt²³ noted that *Hamlet* had been a particularly difficult play for him to translate because so much of the old legend seemed to be clouding what Shakespeare wanted to say. More recently, Heiner Müller argued that *Hamlet* was a 'failed play' because the demands of the old-fashioned revenge drama had prevented the dramatist's ideas from developing organically.²⁴ Heiner Müller wrote that *Hamlet* was the play closest to himself and to all Germans, because Shakespeare was trying to formulate something that he could not get hold of, an experience he could not fathom. This was something that fascinated the German intellect, and was something to which Germany could relate.²⁵

²³ In the introduction to his translation of *Hamlet* in 1870 Friedrich Bodenstedt wrote: 'Notwithstanding the wonderful manner in which Shakespeare has sublimated the material, the stuff of the old legend, there yet remains something of its original rudeness and must always remain, because the fruit never can disown the soil out of which it has sprung.' Quoted in *Readings on the Character of Hamlet 1616-1947*, ed. Claude C. H. Williamson (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950), p. 118.

²⁴ Müller wrote: '*Hamlet* is an object of pleasure for interpreters. For Eliot it was the Mona Lisa of literature, a failed play. The remains of the revenge tradition, a marketable genre of the day like the horror film of today, forced themselves into the new construction and retarded the development of Shakespeare's own material.' See 'Shakespeare eine Differenz' (23 April, 1988), reprinted in *Heiner Müller. Material, Texte und Kommentare*, ed. Frank Hörnigk (Leipzig: Reclam, 1990), p. 106.

²⁵ 'But for us *Hamlet* is certainly interesting because Shakespeare attempted to formulate something that he could not grasp, an experience he could not get to grips with.' See Heiner Müller, *Krieg ohne Schlacht. Leben in zwei Diktaturen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1992), p. 266.

In Chapter 4 of this study I will examine how Müller's understanding of the fragmentary and dispersed provenance of *Hamlet* led to the conviction that the play could not be translated, and that an adaptation was the only way to communicate the experience with which Shakespeare was struggling. T. S. Eliot's belief in the failure of *Hamlet* has been echoed by generations of translators. The amount of work that has to be done to the text before it can be used in a stage production also suggests that the *Hamlet* as we find it between the covers of Harold Jenkins' edition is not a workable dramatic text.

It is the apparently unstable relationship between thought and workmanship, highlighted by Eliot, that has tempted so many translators to try and solve the 'problem' of *Hamlet* by rewriting the text. Reinhard Palm, engaged in reconstructing *Hamlet* in 1996, explained that the section he found most problematic to translate was the last act. Palm, as a translator, felt that the momentum of the play is thrown out of kilter by the long Gravedigger scene, which makes the play too long to be dramatically effective. Palm stated that most of the last act clearly shows the instability of Shakespeare's workmanship in *Hamlet*, and ideally he would have omitted it from his translation. It is, of course, possible that Palm was expecting of *Hamlet* a more calculated Aristotelian form, and that the meaning of the play may be contained in its very lack of stylistic unity.²⁶

²⁶ Nigel Wood has written that Shakespeare may have been questioning the Aristotelian blueprint for tragedy, breaking with decorum and sacrificing the universal comment in order to create an instantaneous effect on stage, daring to 'refer to transient, contemporary states of affairs as well as offer[ing] up treasures for posterity.' Wood concludes: 'With this in mind, *Hamlet* is difficult to characterize not so much as a comment on the human condition as a fully fledged and/or unified comment at all.' See *Hamlet. Theory in Practice*, ed. Peter J. Smith and Nigel Wood (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), p. 134.

André Gide noted in the preface to his translation of *Hamlet* that this work may appear to be full of artifice, such that the simplest ideas are expressed in the most complicated manner. Nevertheless, Gide had no doubt that, despite all its confusions, contortions and deviation from the classically fashioned dramas of Corneille and Racine, *Hamlet* is a genuine work of art.²⁷ Translators have regarded *Hamlet* as a challenge not because the language as such is difficult to translate, but because the play prevents us from forming any clear conceptions of the characters and their motivation. In this respect, *Hamlet* is perhaps difficult to translate in the same way that Shakespeare's sonnets are.²⁸

I was interested to know how a British director felt about the problem of the form of *Hamlet*. Andrew McKinnon, director of the First Quarto of *Hamlet* at the Nottingham Playhouse in 1982, agreed with T. S. Eliot that Shakespeare was unable to manage the materials of the story and the emotions he wanted to express with them. He commented: 'I entirely agree with Eliot. I think *Hamlet* is an artistic failure, because the material exceeded his capacity to shape it in a theatrical form.'²⁹ McKinnon shares the same view as Reinhard Palm that there is some structural flaw in the representation of the relationship between Hamlet and his mother:

Shakespeare needed Gertrude to behave the way she behaves in order to make the play work, but he couldn't fit it psychologically into the framework, and so there is a

²⁷ Gide's conclusion: ' – artifice? – or art... Yes, it is art, without any doubt'. See 'Lettre-Préface' in *Hamlet*, trans. André Gide (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1946), p. 8.

²⁸ Molly Mahood states that the modern theory of poetry that is most acceptable to us today, and which corresponds to the 17th-century Aristotelian view, is that poetry should communicate feelings that had been fully and finally comprehended: 'If this is our criterion, we shall look first in a sonnet, not for the kind of logic which could be reduced to a prose syllogism, but for a satisfying organisation of sound and sense that conveys the ordered movement of thought into which the emotion has been shaped.' Molly Maureen Mahood, *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London: Methuen, 1957), pp. 89-110, here p. 103.

²⁹ Appendix (p. 359).

gap. That's why the First Quarto is more satisfying, because Gertrude comes across as more human. She says, 'I didn't know about all this, but now everything is going to change and it will all be better again'. But what Shakespeare was trying to do was something infinitely more complicated and deeper, and I think it shows [...] With *Hamlet* Shakespeare did have a problem mastering his material, and *Lear* was the only time when Shakespeare seems to have been able to master his dramatic material. This is the only play of Shakespeare's with a really satisfying tragic resolution. [...] *Hamlet* is an *aesthetic* failure rather than an artistic failure. It is always produced in spite of itself.³⁰

I feel that *Hamlet* is also translated in spite of itself. It is possible that the processes by which the play has reached us have generated structural flaws that many translators have experienced in this work, as their statements testify. Of course, not all translators believe that Shakespeare was having problems of a creative nature when he wrote *Hamlet*. Maik Hamburger, for example, takes the view that any problems we face are the result of textual corruption rather than problems of workmanship. Hamburger commented:

I disagree with T. S. Eliot's thesis that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure. I think Shakespeare exerted his powers to the utmost in the creation of this work and he succeeded. Shakespeare knew exactly what he was doing and he finished the job. Problems of interpretation arise because of textual corruption. We do not know which texts were used or how they relate to each other.³¹

'Our *Hamlet*' in German is a play that does not possess an uneven tone or disjointed series of scenes that one finds in the English text. The Closet scene, the absence of *Hamlet* in the fourth act, the long Gravedigger scene, the characters of Fortinbras and Horatio, Laertes' return from Paris, and the overall length of the play have been identified by translators as problems in the English text that need to be resolved in German in order for the work to be grasped as a single artistic whole. When these inconsistencies have been ironed out, the resulting text is felt to be not only more

³⁰ Appendix (p. 359).

dramatically effective, but a more faithful representation of what Shakespeare must have wanted for this work.

The claim for 'our' Hamlet, a better and more accurate text, is based on the view that *Hamlet* is an aesthetic failure that cannot be translated as it stands, either because of problems in conception or in textual transmission. The improvements that translators make certainly merit attention, but the translator's view is determined by what he or she considers to be an effective dramatic form. Translators such as Wolfgang Swaczynna and Reinhard Palm, like many other translators before and after them, have pressurised a text of *Hamlet* and encountered problems of structure that have been attributed to design faults. Translation was not just the interlingual transmission of a text from source to target system, but a correction and improvement of the textual condition of *Hamlet*. Palm, Swaczynna, Plessen and Hamburger have attempted to deconstruct the socialised text that *Hamlet* has become, in order to draw the Prince out of the Play.

It is very difficult to say with any certainty whether the pressure of translation destabilises the work and fractures it, thus creating structural flaws, or whether translation is an illuminating process that highlights problems in the text that a surface reading would miss. Whilst the majority of readers stop short at the play as it begins to open up problems of a textual nature, translators have felt the need to go one stage further. Problems in this work's composition are encountered by every translator and they call for decisions to be made that we, as readers, are never required to make.

³¹ Appendix (p. 347).

1.2 Searching for the Lost *echt*

When translators have brought *Hamlet* across into German, it has been authenticated by claims that the translation has recovered or reconstructed something of the original text as it would have been performed in Shakespeare's day. 'Our Hamlet' is thus synonymous with the translator's sense of the original. What translators, and sometimes directors, have tried to do, has been to peel away the layers of meaning that have built up around *Hamlet* over time, in order to recover the lost archetype, the essence, or the *echt* contained somewhere in the play. I would argue that this process is phenomenologically flawed.

Hamlet does not exist beneath an accretion of critical attitudes and cultural values. These layers have not been grafted onto the play; they have *become* the play. There is a difference between what a text was and what it has become, and a work of literature should be thought of as a process in continual change rather than a product, fixed and immutable and hidden beneath layers of interpretation. I believe that translating *Hamlet* is problematic because the play has become so much more than it originally was, and translators have tried to get back to what the play originally meant or the form it took. *Hamlet* has been rewritten by translators who believe in the existence of a lost original that can be reconstructed in translation. My argument is that *Hamlet* becomes untranslatable as soon as one constructs a transcendent text from the dispersed materials that have survived. What makes *Hamlet* different from most other works is that it has a dynamic that is contrary to the stabilising processes of hermeneutics and translation.

A common mistake is to imagine a work to contain a fixed essence that must somehow be reproduced in translation. For example, with reference to the use of translations in British theatres, Andrew McKinnon remarked:

I don't think an actor would worry about the fact that he was doing Yeats' translation of *Oedipus* rather than Lattimer's, because in Yeats' version you are getting enough of the essential *Oedipus*.³²

But what is the 'essential' *Oedipus*? At first sight this remark seems to express a common view that the particular translation of a play is not so important if the translation contains the elements of the play with which audiences are familiar. But when McKinnon remarks that there is an 'essential' component of the play, is he talking about a specific number of lines or a recognised number of characters and events? Are those elements the ones that have most textual authority and seem to reflect the author's intention, or the elements that have become associated with the play and part of the popular text?³³ It is easy to imagine that the source text contains something 'essential' of the original work, but its mutation over time obviates any possibility of evaluating a translation based on what is claimed to be the essence of the work.

³² Appendix (p. 359).

³³ On the issue of how texts evolve, Fredson Bowers has written: 'how powerful is the pull of the familiar, of what one has read for years (though it be wrong) may be illustrated by the quite indefensible though invariable editorial procedure, whether old or modern, for the *Romeo and Juliet* bad-quarto reading *a rose by any other name* instead of the good second quarto's correct *a rose by any other word would smell as sweet*.' See Fredson Bowers, 'Today's Shakespeare Texts, and Tomorrow's', *Studies in Bibliography*, 19 (1966), 39-66, here p. 43; Stephen Orgel has pointed out that Desdemona's 'Willow Song' appears in a manuscript lute book of 1583, yet we like to believe that it was Shakespeare's: 'Quite simply, it is Shakespeare's because it appears in a Shakespeare play and, more important, because we like it.' Stephen Orgel also states: 'The question of authenticity, like the question of what constitutes evidence, is profoundly time bound, and different texts have sounded right or

What would constitute the ‘essential’ *Hamlet* text or the ‘essential’ *Hamlet* translation? Since the play is a work of dispersed textual provenance, there has always been disagreement over which textual materials belong to *Hamlet*, and which do not. We may regard it as ‘essential’ for Hamlet to describe Claudius as ‘murd’rous’ (5.2.330), even though this word does not occur in any of the quartos. It may have become part of the text for Hamlet to leap into Ophelia’s grave to fight with Laertes, but not for Hamlet to tell his mother in the Closet scene that Claudius murdered her husband, and yet both of these elements are present in the First Quarto. It may have *become* part of the received text for Hamlet to exclaim ‘O Vengeance!’ (2.2.577) in his second soliloquy, along with the memorable line: ‘What’s Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba’ (2.2.553).³⁴ What is ‘essential’ depends on what authority we invest in the Folio.

Would an ‘essential’ *Hamlet* contain, for example, Hamlet’s line describing man as ‘in action how like an angel’, or rather ‘like an angel in apprehension’, and would the essential *Hamlet* contain Hamlet’s ‘vicious mole of nature’ speech, Horatio’s speech on the assassination of Caesar, and Hamlet’s final soliloquy? Hamlet’s flesh may have *become* ‘sullied’, but it probably wasn’t originally. In fact, as a source text for translation, *Hamlet* has no agreed linguistic identity at all. This means that we sometimes find lines attributed to the ‘wrong’ characters in translation.

wrong at different periods, without much regard to evidence of any sort.’ See ‘The Authentic Shakespeare’, *Representations*, 21 (1988), 1-25, here p. 3.

³⁴ In the Arden 2 Edition Harold Jenkins notes that it is regrettable that he had to omit Hamlet’s ‘O Vengeance’ (2.2.577), which has become part of the familiar text, but has no textual authority. Jenkins criticises Dover Wilson, who recognised that the Folio contained actors’ interpolations, but felt them to be sufficiently Shakespearean to be included in an edition. See John Dover Wilson, *The Manuscript of Shakespeare’s Hamlet* (Cambridge.

In German translations the famous line, ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark,’ is sometimes given to Horatio, as in Gerhart Hauptmann’s 1928 translation. This is because Horatio is a more important and memorable character. It is not often realised, or remembered, that it is Marcellus who utters this line. This is an example of where a line has become more important than the character that utters it. After ‘To be or not to be’, the line ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’ is the most famous line in the play in Germany, and yet Marcellus is a low-key character. In his translation Hauptmann upgraded the line by transferring it to the more memorable character of Horatio. This is a clear example of the rewriting of a work, and this is possible in translation.

Although Tom Stoppard rearranged many lines of the play in his adaptation, *Dogg’s Hamlet*, it is the character playing Hamlet that is given the line ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’.³⁵ In an attempt to reduce the play to an ‘essential’ minimum, the line was retained because it was felt to belong to the ‘essence’ of the play, but the character that uttered it was not felt to be significant enough and was deleted. The same is true of Charles Marowitz’s collage adaptation of *Hamlet*.³⁶ Here too the essential lines of the play have been extracted, manipulated, rearranged and placed in the mouths of other characters. Again, it is Hamlet who utters the line about the rottenness of Denmark. It appears that the same motivation underlies Stoppard’s, Marowitz’s, and Hauptmann’s transposition of this memorable line to a more

1934), p. 245; See also Harold Jenkins ‘Playhouse Interpolations in the Folio Text of *Hamlet*’, *Studies in Bibliography*, 13 (1960), 31-48.

³⁵ Tom Stoppard, *Dogg’s Hamlet and Cahoot’s Macbeth* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), p. 41.

³⁶ See Marowitz’s adaptation of *Hamlet* in *The Marowitz Shakespeare* (London: Marion Boyars, 1978), pp. 28-69, here p. 66.

memorable character. Particularly in Germany, it has become Horatio, the character everyone remembers, who utters one of the few lines that everyone knows.

The exclamation ‘O horrible! O horrible! Most horrible!’ (1.5.80) is uttered by the Ghost in all three substantive texts of *Hamlet*, and yet Samuel Johnson felt that the line should be spoken by Hamlet, and it appeared as Hamlet’s line in Joseph Rann’s edition of the play in 1786.³⁷ Numerous translators also felt that this line sounded better, or was more dramatically effective, coming from Hamlet, and thus changed the texts, contrary to any evidence in the texts themselves.³⁸ Often translators are guided by Schlegel’s canonical translation (written in 1798), but here there was no influence, because Schlegel followed the text closely at this point and kept the line in the middle of the Ghost’s speech. This means that the translators came to the conclusion independently that the line should be given to Hamlet.

Audiences have always had an idea about what constitutes the ‘real’ *Hamlet*. In a discussion between Wilhelm and Aurelie in Goethe’s novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1796), Wilhelm describes how he imagines Hamlet’s appearance. He describes the Prince not only as blonde-haired and blue-eyed but also ‘wohlbehäglich’ and ‘wohlbeleibt’, both of which are euphemisms for ‘fat’. He explains that his view of Hamlet is based on the Queen’s line ‘He’s fat and scant of breath’ (5.2.290). Aurelie’s reaction is particularly interesting. She is disgusted by Wilhelm’s assertion that Hamlet is fat and she serves as a spokesperson for German audiences with her response:

³⁷ *The Dramatic Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Joseph Rann, vol. 6 (1786).

³⁸ These include the translations by Erich Fried: ‘O Grauen! Grauen! Grauen ohne Maß!'; Holger Klein: ‘O furchtbar, o furchtbar, o unsäglich furchtbar!'; Heiner Müller: ‘O

“You are spoiling my imagination,” cried Aurelia: “Away with your fat Hamlets! Do not set your well-fed Prince before us! Give us rather any succedaneum that will move us, will delight us. The intention of the author is of less importance to us than our own enjoyment, and we need a charm that is adapted for us.”³⁹

It seems significant that Aurelie should say: ‘The intention of the author is of less importance to us than our own enjoyment’. It is because of audience expectations that a discrepancy arises between what the text originally was and what it becomes. There have been numerous cases where *Hamlet* seems to have been rewritten by the audiences in Germany. For example, until 1776 the most popular version of *Hamlet* in Germany was in the stage adaptation by Franz Heufeld.⁴⁰ Friedrich Ludwig Schröder expanded this short prose adaptation for his production in 1776, restoring much of the fourth and fifth acts that had been deleted, including the Gravedigger scene. But the scene was cut again in 1778 because audiences were not familiar with the presence of this scene in the *Hamlet* they knew, and because it did not belong to the more classically fashioned version of the play as it was known in Germany in the late eighteenth century.⁴¹ What constituted *Hamlet* in the eighteenth century was a considerably shorter, non-tragic family drama. The translator is thus faced with the problem of whether to translate the *Hamlet* that Wilhelm Meister observes in the text, or the *Hamlet* that has become authoritative in the popular imagination.

grauenhaft! O grauenhaft! Höchst grauenhaft!'; Hans Rothe: ‘O höchster Schauder, Schauder und Entsetzen!’

³⁹ This is the translation of Thomas Carlyle, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1824), vol. 2, p. 175. The original passage can be found in Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Book 5, Chapter 6 (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991), p. 329. It is interesting that Carlyle uses the word ‘succedaneum’ to translate Goethe’s ‘quid pro quo’. A succedaneum is a medical term that refers to a substitute drug. The idea contained in Aurelie’s remark is that a substitute Hamlet is needed, perhaps because the original is not accessible.

⁴⁰ First performed at the Hapsburg Court Theatre in Vienna, January 1773.

Numerous commentators have discussed the difference between what a text was originally and what it becomes over time.⁴² As a work and a source text for translators, there is nothing either fixed or knowable about *Hamlet*. It is a moving target, an unstable compound, an unknown co-ordinate, and measurements of 'fidelity' can only be recorded with reference to any one existing arbitrary textual permutation of the play. In the interview with Maik Hamburger I raised the question of where one should look for *Hamlet*'s unchanging identity. Hamburger replied that the play's identity is not to be found in any material object such as a text or conflation of texts, and not in any specific lines, but rather in the continuing power of the work to provoke a set of reactions and in the 'continuity of experience' that the work represents. He commented:

I believe it [the identity of *Hamlet*] is the continuity of a specific feeling. The pleasure of art is the pleasure of discovery; it is not a stable, unchanging element of the object itself [...] It is similar to when Kepler discovered the motion of the planets. Suddenly he had an epiphany. When you hear, read, see or translate *Hamlet*, it is like a coming out of the dark. Giorgio Strehler once said that you produce a play because of one specific moment in it that speaks to you and offers you this opportunity for discovery. I would agree with this, but add that a play like *Hamlet* is produced because of the continuing discovery it affords. Rather than looking for a stable core in the object of the play, I would look for a continuity of experience, and this is dependent on both *Hamlet* and its audiences, not just on the play disconnected from society.⁴³

⁴¹ Friedrich Ludwig Schröder's three stage versions of *Hamlet* (1776, 1777 and 1778) are discussed in Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage. Volume 1: 1586-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 75-81.

⁴² Peter Robinson has commented that words may be felt to be part of a text that never actually occurred in any of the text versions, yet the belief is so strong that the word, phrase or scene becomes part of the text and must be edited into it. As Robinson writes: 'This opens the interesting possibility that a variant text may have a reality even though it has no authority.' See Peter Robinson, 'Is There a Text in These Variants?', *The Literary Text in the Digital Age*, ed. Richard J. Finneran (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 99-115, here, p. 102.

⁴³ Appendix (p. 348).

The play's value resides in its ability to provoke a series of changing responses and emotional reactions, and in the discoveries that one makes throughout the course of the play. Hamburger suggested that the *meaning* of *Hamlet* is lost to us, but that the play has the continuing power to *signify*.⁴⁴

In the interview with Andrew McKinnon the issue was raised of whether a *production* could generate a play's original meaning or only its changing significance. McKinnon believes that one should not be enthralled to the meaning and function that *Hamlet* originally had. He commented: 'There is no such thing as an archetype in the theatre. I think that the only meaning is that which has survived for us.'⁴⁵ This is something that McKinnon learned from his production of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*. Since the First Quarto text seems to reflect more closely what we know of Jacobean stage practice, McKinnon was under the impression that by working with this text, one could rediscover the way *Hamlet* had originally functioned on stage. It was only later that he realised the impossibility of re-capturing what *Hamlet* was then, or what it should be today.

In the afterlife of a literary work an accretion of critical attitudes builds up around the work and its characters. When a theatre-goer thinks about *Hamlet*, he or she is likely

⁴⁴ The reader is referred to E. D. Hirsch's discussion of the difference between a work's fixed and inviolable 'meaning' and its ever-changing 'significance', in *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 5. The meaning-significance dichotomy was first expounded by Gottlob Frege in his essay, 'Über Sinn und Bedeutung', *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, 100 (1892). This essay is reprinted in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, trans. H. Feigl and W. Sellars, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949); Wittgenstein has also written: 'Perhaps the most important thing in connection with aesthetics is what may be called aesthetic *reactions*'. The value and meaning of a work, according to Wittgenstein, is measured by the intensity and variety of reactions it provokes rather than in any 'essence' it contains. See *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief compiled from notes taken by Yorrick Smythies. Rush Rhees and James Taylor*, ed. Cyril Barret (Oxford, 1970), p. 13.

to have in mind much more than the work as it originally existed in the Globe.⁴⁶ The work of *Hamlet* as it exists today is a cultural collusion of textual material and ideologically motivated rewriting. The result is a mass of textual and cultural substrata like a pearl that develops around a piece of grit. McKinnon commented:

The First Quarto tells the story of Hamlet the character, so I think there is a kind of accretion that builds up around that like the pearl in the oyster. I was charmed by the idea that it was possible to break through that accretion. As I have become older, I have realised that this is not right, because there is no such thing as an *echt* of anything, and as soon as it exists in the world for more than one minute, it becomes part of that world and begins to accrete. If you smash a pearl, you don't actually find the grit in the centre; it has done its job and gone. I think it was a naïve view of the play to do it like that, but I wanted to get back to a simpler view of the play.⁴⁷

What we understand by 'Hamlet' is a body of ideas, not just the words on the page.⁴⁸

'Hamlet' is now indeed much more than itself. McKinnon has also suggested that the reason *Hamlet* is produced so often is that it seems to have become a cultural status symbol, the performance of which is of national importance. Producing *Hamlet* reinforces a nation's sense of its own identity:

⁴⁵ Appendix (p. 355).

⁴⁶ J. A. Waldock has also acknowledged that there is more attached to the work of *Hamlet* today than there was originally: 'The very word "Hamlet" now carries added connotations. The play has taken colour from every source, has been tinged by its passage through many minds. It is now very much more than itself.' See J. A. Waldock, *Hamlet. A Study in Critical Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), p. 2.

⁴⁷ Appendix (p. 355).

⁴⁸ An argument supported by R. A. Foakes, 'The Reception of Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Survey*, 45 (1992), 1-13; Jan Kott has written that: '[Hamlet] is one of the few literary heroes who live apart from the text, apart from the theatre. His name means something even to those who have never seen or read the play. In this respect he is rather like Leonardo's Mona Lisa. We know she is smiling even before we have seen the picture. Mona Lisa's smile has been separated from the picture, as it were. It contains not only what Leonardo expressed in it but also everything that has been written about it [...] It is not just Mona Lisa that is smiling at us now, but all those who have tried to analyse, or imitate, that smile.' See Kott (p. 47); Charles Marowitz has likewise argued that *Hamlet* is not just a text but an object embedded in our cultural consciousness: 'There is a kind of cultural smear of Hamlet in our collective unconscious and we grow up knowing *Hamlet* even if we have never read it, never seen the film or attended any stage performance. The "myth" of the play is older than the play itself, and the play's survival in the modern imagination draws on that myth.' See Charles Marowitz, *Recycling Shakespeare* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 19.

I don't really think of *Hamlet* as being like a play at all. I think of *Hamlet* as being much more like the Elgin Marbles or the Parthenon, or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It has gone beyond the bounds of its art form, and it has become a kind of icon in itself. Its fame and enduring nature are part of the reason why we do it. I don't know of many other works of art, which are really like that in the field of performing arts. I don't know many other plays that are like that, except, interestingly, *Oedipus* [...] I think that's one of the reasons why *Hamlet* gets done so often, and it is one of the reasons why *Hamlet* gets done so badly so often.⁴⁹

Hamlet is in a continuous process of change, both semantically and textually, and this may be understood as the work's 'afterlife'. Walter Benjamin expressed the view that literary works have an 'afterlife' and that they are in a state of continual evolution and growth.⁵⁰ A text is meant to survive its author, and its existence expands beyond the limits of the text. This means that a translator should not endeavour to imitate the original, since texts have to develop in order to survive. The translator is in a position to ensure the survival and growth of the original text by expanding and developing it in translation. Benjamin wrote:

For a translation comes later than the original, and since the important works of world literature never find their chosen translators at the time of their origin, their translation marks their stage of continued life. The idea of life and afterlife in works of art should be regarded with an entirely unmetaphorical objectivity.⁵¹

My view is that translators cannot be beholden to what *Hamlet* originally meant, and must focus on what the play can be used to mean to us today. Beneath the accretion of critical attitudes, cultural values and imputed meanings, we lose the meaning that a work originally had. German readers and audiences today have access not to the original, but only to the translator's *sense* of the original and to its ever-changing

⁴⁹ Appendix (p. 355).

⁵⁰ Walter Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 69-82, reprinted in *Theories of Translation. An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.71-82, here p. 73.

⁵¹ Benjamin (p. 73).

significance. A translation is one possible textual representation of a work's present relevance.

If a 'sliding scale' is said to exist on which free adaptations and faithful translations can be positioned,⁵² then a notion of the 'original' is presupposed that does not change with time and can be identified amidst the accretion of meanings that become part of that original. But it is my argument that fidelity cannot be measured when the point of origin is unknowable and unstable, as is the case with *Hamlet*. This is the flaw in the arguments of German translators that 'their' *Hamlet* is somehow 'closer' or more faithful to the original. In view of the tendency of works to change over time, my view is that the supposed 'fidelity' of a translation to a work is incommensurate with the epistemological certainty that works are never faithful to themselves in their own language.

1.3 'Our Schlegel'

As I have demonstrated so far in this chapter, the concept of 'our *Hamlet*' is a complex notion that incorporates a number of problematic assumptions and attitudes. Translators have based the claim to 'our *Hamlet*' on German translations that reach back to the original meaning and form of the lost theatrical archetype and in doing so resolve a series of structural flaws arising either from the author's own workmanship or from corruption in the process of textual transmission. In Germany the translation

⁵² I refer to André Lefevere's image of the sliding scale mentioned in his essay, 'Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites? The Trouble with Interpretation and the Role of Rewriting in an

of *Hamlet*, written by August Wilhelm Schlegel in 1798, has, since the beginning of the twentieth century, functioned as the standard version of the play. What Schlegel's translation appears to do is to interpret the play, to translate it and to stabilise it; in short, all of the things that I am arguing are impossible to do to *Hamlet*. However, Schlegel's version is not so much a translation or re-iteration of *Hamlet* as a refraction of the work in the mirror of eighteenth-century sensibility. From the interviews with German Shakespeare translators I have learned that Schlegel's *Hamlet* has become a literary work in its own right and thus more than a translation, but it still carries the title of 'translation'. Other translations are always measured against Schlegel's version and this has had a debilitating effect on the translator's artistic freedom.⁵³

Schlegel's *Hamlet* is used in theatres throughout Germany.⁵⁴ Wilhelm Hortmann has argued that using Schlegel's translation for a production is a 'self-conscious and quasi-archaeological celebration of a literary ritual.'⁵⁵ This is certainly true according to my observation. When Achim Freyer used Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet* for his 2000 production at the Berliner Ensemble, it was for the 'memorial' quality of the

Alternative Paradigm', Theo Hermans (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation* (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 215-43, here p. 234.

⁵³ In 1901 Ludwig Fulda wrote: 'And who would dare to change texts that have rung in the ears and souls of all Germans since childhood? It is possible that our German Shakespeare deviates from the English here and there, but we have grown familiar with it and have come to love it, and where we truly love, we also love the mistakes, when we have been persuaded that they are mistakes.' See *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 37 (1901), xliii.

⁵⁴ During the course of this study, *Hamlet* has been produced in Schlegel's translation throughout German-speaking Europe: Bad Gandersheim (24 June, 1999) directed by Barbara Kröger; Bamberg (27 March, 1999) directed by Wolfgang Bauschmid; Stadttheater Bern (9 May, 1999) directed by Irmgard Lange; Berliner Ensemble (19, February 2000) directed by Achim Freyer; Nationaltheater Weimar (30 June, 2001) directed by Alexander Lang.

⁵⁵ Wilhelm Hortmann writes that in the 1960s and 1970s the new translators and adapters dispossessed the educated classes of their cultural icon, the Schlegel-Tieck Shakespeare. The director became the sole authority for the text. The text no longer had its own authority, and this weakened 'one of the ligatures of bourgeois culture'. In the eighties there was a growing

translation and as a celebration of this literary archetype. Alexander Lang, currently producing *Hamlet* at the National Theatre in Weimar, could only have used Schlegel's translation because, as press agent Antje Klahn told me, people coming to see Shakespeare at the National 'expect a classic'.

There is a deep need to feel that a work is unassailable and will not disintegrate over time, if it embodies a certain truth. If a literary masterpiece like Schlegel's *Hamlet* breaks down over time, it raises unsettling doubts about the durability of any work of art. As Hamburger explained in the interview:

It is one of the problems of having a classical author in a foreign language, because there are hundreds of quotations, which become known, in a certain canonical translation. These quotations that have been known in English and repeated in English for four hundred years have remained the same and you can always count on them as a basis of communication. In another language [...] once you have got used to these quotations, you don't like to change them. They become set in your mind and are part of your spiritual makeup, and these quotations remain, such as 'Sein oder Nichtsein, das ist hier die Frage.'⁵⁶

There is a dialectic between the static nature of Schlegel's canonised translation and the cultural forces that come to bear on any literary work as society and language change. My argument is that Schlegel's 'Romantic' translations of Shakespeare contributed to the raising of the German language to the status of a literary language in the nineteenth century. However, audiences of the twentieth century have been largely misguided by these translations and have had difficulty accepting translations of Shakespeare that are not written with the stylistic uniformity of the nineteenth-

respect for Schlegel's classical idiom. See Wilhelm Hortmann, *Shakespeare on the German Stage* (p. 249).

⁵⁶ Appendix (p. 337).

century European Romantic idiom. This is borne out by the statements made by translators.

To many German readers and audiences Shakespeare ‘sounds’ like the eighteenth-century German used by Schlegel in his canonical translation of the plays. Audiences are not always able to distinguish between Shakespeare and Schlegel because the translation has faded into an original in Germany. We find the same thing with the Bible in English. The Biblical line ‘Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death’ (David, Psalm 23:4) is as much a part of the Anglo-American collective consciousness as Schlegel’s ‘Sein oder nicht Sein, das ist hier die Frage’ is part of Germany’s cultural identity.⁵⁷ The distinction between the original and the translation fades and people forget that Shakespeare never wrote in German or that King David never spoke English. What consequences does this have for translators attempting to re-translate a play that is known and loved in a certain translation, and considered to be authoritative?

Annette Leithner-Braun points out that the canonisation of Schlegel’s translations in the twentieth century has meant that modern translations are always compared unfavourably with the nineteenth-century versions.⁵⁸ On the pressure put on modern

⁵⁷ This line of David’s is also embedded in German cultural consciousness: ‘Und ob ich schon wanderte im finstern Tal, fürchte ich kein Unglück’. In Luther’s translation the line is less richly evocative and the mood lighter and less sombre. Luther’s David wanders ‘in the dark valley’ and fears no ‘misfortune’. The metaphor of the ‘valley of the shadow of death’ is preserved in the Scandinavian translations: ‘dødsskyggens dal’ (Norwegian), ‘dödsskuggans dal’ (Swedish), and ‘Dødsskyggens Dal’ (Danish), and also in the French and Spanish translations: ‘la vallée de l’ombre de la mort’ and ‘valle de sombra de muerte’, but the Italian translation loses the richness of the image with its rendering: ‘una valle oscura’.

⁵⁸ Annette Leithner-Braun, *Shakespeares Wortwiederholungen und Schlüsselwörter in deutschen Übersetzungen* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1994). Leithner-Braun writes: ‘With the canonisation of the Schlegel-Tieck translations in the twentieth century it has become clear

translators by the existence of the Schlegel translations, Leithner-Braun writes: 'Quite obviously, there is a special problem for translators caused by the vortex effect of their predecessors, in particular, the Schlegel-Tieck translations.'⁵⁹ In his article printed in the *Festschrift Rudolf Stamm* Ulrich Suerbaum listed some of the reasons why translators found it increasingly difficult to translate Shakespeare in the twentieth century:

The first obstruction is the Schlegel-Tieck translation itself [...] It has reached such a state of dominance that a modern translator will now have two source texts in front of him, a German and an English one. Even if he feels and behaves in an anti-Schlegel manner, he cannot prevent his version from dragging around with it a massive substrate of Schlegel-Tieck elements [...] It is difficult to say when the crisis in German Shakespeare translations will come to an end, when the variables in the translating process will form a constellation which will allow the Schlegel-Tieck translation, if not to be improved, then at least replaced by an equally imperfect one, but one with the weaknesses of a more modern age.⁶⁰

The proliferation of translations of Shakespeare in the twentieth century, and the fact that Shakespeare's works lack any linguistic identity in German, led Walter Jost to speak of a 'crisis' in German Shakespeare studies.⁶¹ Unlike in the nineteenth century, translators of the last century were caught in the crisis of establishing the right stylistic form for Shakespeare on the modern German stage. In the interview with

that there is a crisis in modern Shakespeare translations in the modern era, and it becomes a polemical activity to devalue modern translations by comparison' (p. 33).

⁵⁹ Leithner-Braun (p. 205).

⁶⁰ 'Der deutsche Shakespeare. Übersetzungsgeschichte und Übersetzungstheorie', *Festschrift Rudolf Stamm*, ed. Eduard Kolb and Jörg Hasler (Bern and Munich: Francke Verlag, 1969), 61-80, here pp. 78f.

⁶¹ Walter Jost, 'Stilkrise der deutschen Shakespeare-Übersetzung', *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift*, 35 (1961), 1-43. Josten writes: 'The situation of German Shakespeare translation is uncertain. The differences of opinion as to how far the Schlegel-Tieck translations meet our present demands or even replace these works, or whether a replacement will ever be found, have entered a new phase. Young translators are claiming to be better mediators of Shakespeare than the Romantics. The question thus arises: is the German spirit getting any closer to Shakespeare?' (p. 2).

Elisabeth Plessen, working at the end of the twentieth century, Plessen explained to me the pressure under which translators are working nowadays:

If you grow up in Germany Shakespeare has always been Schlegel and to a large extent still is. People often insult me when I attempt to change Schlegel's lines and adapt them to our modern language. It is as though Schlegel's lines are carved in marble. The Germans' feelings for Shakespeare in Germany are mixed up with an old love of Schlegel and I think people are often unable to distinguish the two.⁶²

Plessen has learned to play with audiences' expectations of what Hamlet is believed to say in German. She often begins a speech or a line with the famous wording of Schlegel's translation in order to reassure the audience that it is hearing the 'real' Shakespeare. Then she re-directs them into a new translation of the rest of the line in order to unsettle the audience and to start them thinking about what Hamlet is really saying. Plessen is able to do this, she explained, because audiences are not able to remember Schlegel's lines exactly:

[Critics] think they still know the classical translations by heart from their school days, but they don't. I try to forget that everyone in Germany takes Schlegel to be Shakespeare, and I try to use tricks. In my translation Hamlet's line ['O that this too too solid flesh...'] reads 'O schmelze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch, / Zergering' und löst in einen Tau sich auf'. This is the same as Schlegel's translation, and then I shoot off into another direction for the rest of the speech. I preferred *Selbstschlachtung* ('self-slaughter') to Schlegel's *Selbstmord* ('suicide') because the effect produced was closer than the traditional rendering. The audiences get their little bonbon and think that they are hearing Schlegel and then I take them in a new direction to make them think afresh about the lines. That is a trick that I have learned and found to be very effective [...] The language of my translation does not correspond with people's pre-judgements.⁶³

⁶² Appendix (p. 316).

⁶³ Appendix (p. 316). In this respect, little has changed since Schlegel first published his new translations of Shakespeare, and complained that critics were comparing his text with vague memories of what they had learned in school. This shows that the love and admiration of a translation or of the original text is often based on rather idealised yet imperfect memories of works read at an earlier time. Schlegel remarked in the literary journal that he was not hopeful of receiving a thorough evaluation of his translations. In fact there was little chance of ever receiving such an evaluation, since those who presumed to judge his work were content to compare his translations with a faint recollection of what they had read in English

Beginning a line with the Schlegel translation and then taking the audience in a new direction is an unusual translating strategy and it has been criticised by Frank Günther as a form of plagiarism. In the interview he commented:

Elizabeth Plessen's translation is a pell-mell of everything and nothing. She stole lines from other texts and even from other plays. Let us say that I have not been engendered with envy to read anything else she has written.⁶⁴

But Plessen's strategy is successful because it encourages audiences to rethink lines that have become so familiar that they have lost any resonance on stage. As Lothar Sträter of the *Saarbrücker Zeitung* (23 May, 1999) wrote: 'The slightly modernised text of Elisabeth Plessen aims at today's language in everyday use and also makes us think about the language in a new way without the usual familiar quotations rattled off parrot-fashion.' I have so far come across no other translator who incorporates the Schlegel-Tieck translations into new versions precisely in order to deconstruct the canonical status of the nineteenth-century translations.

Klaus Peter Steiger wrote that modern Shakespeare translators would never be completely independent of Schlegel's translations, because they act as an ever-present filter that only allows elements into new translations that accord with what Shakespeare is thought to 'sound' like as preconditioned by the familiar sound of Schlegel's translations.⁶⁵ Schlegel established the 'sound' of Shakespeare in German

long before. See Bernays, 'Der Schlegel-Tieck'sche Shakespeare', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1 (1865), 396-405, here p. 399.

⁶⁴ Appendix (p. 296).

⁶⁵ 'Even the new radicalists of Shakespeare translation must live with the dilemma of either being criticised for their ineluctable dependence on Schlegel as a kind of secret partnership, or for rejecting Schlegel merely on principle. No recent attempt, no matter how honest it has been, has led to a lasting alternative for the German Shakespeare. The 'Schlegel-filter' that only lets through what the recipients feel is appropriate still dominates the modern German translating scene in spite of editorial advances since Schlegel's day.' See Klaus Peter Steiger,

just as Luther established how the Bible should sound in German, though both translations are records of the language at an earlier stage in its development.

Translators, just like any other readers, are not always objective in what they think Shakespeare should sound like in German. This came out very clearly in the interview with Elisabeth Plessen. Plessen explained that she did not like Heiner Müller's translation of *Hamlet* (1976): 'I cannot reconcile the sound of Müller's harsh, brutal language with what I understand to be Shakespeare and the way I hear Shakespeare as spoken by Gielgud and Olivier.'⁶⁶ Although Plessen seeks to undermine the nineteenth-century poetic idiom of Schlegel's translation, what constitutes *Hamlet* for her are the performances she remembers from a past era in theatre history.

Reinhard Palm also explains that he found the sound of lines from Schlegel's translation 'deafening' when he tried to translate the plays in his own idiom:

When you work in the theatre you become very familiar with their [Schlegel and Tieck's] translations, especially the more central lines of the plays. Theatres continue to use the older translations because they do not have to pay any royalties and so there will always be lines from Schlegel-Tieck ringing in a translator's ears when he or she attempts to re-translate a line. When I began *Twelfth Night* all I could hear was the first line from Schlegel: 'Wenn die Musik die Liebe Nahrung ist' ['If music be the food of love...'] and I could not think of anything else and it prevented me from finding my own version.⁶⁷

Die Geschichte der Shakespeare-Rezeption (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), p. 95; In a lecture entitled 'Übersetzen oder Nachdichten' (1988) Erich Fried said: 'I do not want to erase every trace of Schlegel, which would not only be ungrateful, but would be ignoring the fact that in German the associations attached to Shakespeare have been formed by Schlegel and no poetic communication can simply bypass existing associations.' Quoted in Friedmar Appel. 'Begleitbuch zu den Shakespeare-Übersetzungen von Erich Fried' (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1989), pp. 7-37, here p. 28.

⁶⁶ Appendix (p. 321).

So embedded in the German consciousness is the language of Schlegel's translation that German audiences often get confused about what Shakespeare wrote and what Schlegel translated. Audiences have presuppositions about what *Hamlet* should 'sound' like. In a short article about her translations Elisabeth Plessen wrote that: 'German audiences are reared on the supple lines of the Schlegel-Tieck version just as on a mother's milk.'⁶⁸ This is an effective image because it suggests that the Schlegel-Tieck translations have had a nourishing effect on German audiences, but it also suggests the degree to which these translations have become part of the cultural make-up of the nation.

I found that those individuals working on the production of a play are also keenly aware of audience expectations, when it comes to the translation used. Ralf Fiedler said that although modern translations of *Hamlet* are often more accurate than Schlegel's, the nineteenth-century translation sounds more impressive on stage. Audiences sometimes feel cheated or disappointed if they do not hear the familiar lines, and if the language does not meet with the expectations they had of Shakespeare. Not hearing the lines with which one is familiar unsettles audiences, making them doubt whether they really knew the work at all, or whether what they are hearing on stage is a counterfeit and not the real work at all. Fiedler remarked:

Audiences unfortunately have certain expectations of what Shakespeare's language should sound like, what a play should look like on stage, and how the actors are supposed to be dressed. These conceptions developed from productions of the plays in the nineteenth century [...] Behind any production there exists a horizon of allusions that are contemporary at that time, and it makes no sense to try to reconstruct nineteenth-century notions of performance. There is a kind of phantasm

⁶⁷ Appendix (p. 324).

⁶⁸ Elisabeth Plessen, 'Die Suche nach dem Anfang oder die Schwierigkeit, Shakespeare zu übersetzen', printed for Peter Zadek's *Richard III* at the Münchner Kammerspiele, Heft 6 (Munich, 1997), pp. 73-78, here p. 76.

that drifts around, which convinces people that there is such a thing as a ‘faithful production’, which is absolutely ridiculous.⁶⁹

What also became clear from my research was that audiences differ in their expectations depending on the age of the spectators, and their geographical location. There are no demographics, and generalisations should be avoided, but the comments made by translators *are* revealing. According to Reinhard Palm, there is a strong bourgeois class in Zürich that claims familiarity with Shakespeare, though they know the plays only in the Schlegel-Tieck translations. As Palm explained, any production of *Hamlet* would have members of the Zürich audience sitting on the edge of their seats waiting to see if ‘To be or not to be’ was spoken ‘properly’. They would expect to hear Schlegel’s rendering of Hamlet’s (Schlegel’s) famous line: ‘Sein oder Nichtsein, das ist *hier* die Frage,’ and would expect the declamatory acting style of Will Quadflieg.⁷⁰

Palm commented: ‘I am very familiar with the audiences in Zürich and have always worked in cities where there is a strong educated class, and when they come to a Shakespeare production, they expect to hear classical language.’⁷¹ His translation, used by Uwe Laufenberg at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich in 1998, had to be manipulated so that Hamlet’s famous lines were uttered by almost every character repeatedly throughout the play in order to disarm the audience and remove pressure

⁶⁹ Appendix (p. 301).

⁷⁰ Appendix (p. 323). This remark of Palm’s, made during the interview in October 2000, has proven to be highly ironic. In May 2001 Christoph Schlingensiefel shocked Zürich by importing Neo-Nazis from Germany to perform in his *Hamlet* production at the Schauspielhaus. The significance of this production and the challenges it made to the more traditional, bourgeois productions of *Hamlet* in Germany is discussed in Chapter 5 of the present study.

⁷¹ Appendix (p. 328).

from the moment when the Hamlet actor began his central soliloquy.⁷² Palm explained that younger audiences in Zürich do have fewer expectations than older spectators about how Shakespeare is meant to sound:

Dirty jokes or coarse and sadistic humour are always risky with an older audience, where it is safer to give them the beautified language of Schlegel. But I don't believe this is a problem for younger audience members, as Shakespeare has been popularised in films and especially by Hollywood. *Shakespeare in Love* is a wonderful script by Tom Stoppard. I think it is a positive thing that Shakespeare as a myth has been popularised in this way.⁷³

Frank Günther made some very similar comments when he spoke about the reception of his translation of *Romeo and Juliet* in Augsburg. Günther re-inserted much of the bawdy element of the play that had been toned down by Schlegel.⁷⁴ This offended audiences in Augsburg, who preferred to believe that *Romeo and Juliet* was a romantic, lyrical play, not a story about teenage love at all. The types of audiences in Augsburg seem to reflect the audiences Palm has encountered in Zürich. I asked Günther whether it was only a small cross-section of the Augsburg audiences that reacted so negatively to the play's obscene elements. His response was:

⁷² Reviews of the production, which include comments on Palm's new translation, include: Therese Steffen, "'Hamlet' und wir? – Shakespeare in neuem Licht', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (1 February, 1997); Alfred Schlienger, 'Die Firma bunkert – Hamlet trotzt', *Basler Zeitung* (3 February, 1997); Peter Müller, 'O, o, o, o. Blabla, blabla, blabla', *Tages Anzeiger* (3 February, 1997); Reinhardt Stumm, 'Der Eintänzer trägt keinen Degen', *Die Weltwoche* (6 February, 1997); Barbara Villiger Heilig, 'Looking for "Hamlet"', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (3 February, 1997); Charles Linsmayer, 'Ist "Hamlet" nur noch als Parodie zu retten?', *Der Bund* (3 February, 1997).

⁷³ Appendix (p. 328).

⁷⁴ When Mercutio says: 'O that she were an open-arse and thou a poperin pear!' there is an obvious crudeness that is absent in Schlegel's translation, but is reproduced in Günther's version as 'wär sie ein Vögelbeerbaum doch und du ihr Specht und hacktest froh dein Loch!' The following articles written by Frank Günther develop theories about how translation and audience expectations often conflict: *William Shakespeare im dtv. Beiheft zur neuen Shakespeare-Ausgabe im dtv*, ed. Wolfram Göbel (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), esp. Günther's dialogue entitled 'Über die Shakespeare-Übersetzerei' (pp. 8-24); 'Shakespeare übersetzen – Shakespeare inszenieren', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 120 (1984), 13-31; 'Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt. Gereimtes und Ungereimtes zum *Sommernachtstraum*', in

No, they're all like that in Augsburg. It's a very bourgeois community. They're very conservative and still prefer Schlegel's old version. Having said that, my translation is almost twenty-five years old now, so I'm surprised that anyone can still be shocked by it, and it is a wonder that anyone can be scandalised now after the Clinton-Lewinski affair.⁷⁵

Elisabeth Plessen pointed out that Erich Fried's translations are always received well in Austrian theatres because of the cultural elitism that prevails there. She commented that: 'Fried does not have much authority nowadays in the theatres, perhaps only in Austria where this very pompous style is still very much alive.'⁷⁶ Erich Fried's lyrical translations are sometimes confused with Schlegel's because the language sounds old-fashioned.⁷⁷ Wolfgang Swaczynna believes that Fried's translations were so popular because they did not challenge the 'classical' tone that audiences expected of Shakespeare. Swaczynna remarked that: 'Older members of the audience were probably less disturbed by Fried's language, as it was not such a great leap from the romantic quality of Schlegel's translations with which most people were familiar.'⁷⁸ This reinforces the remark made by Klaus Steiger that the Schlegel-Tieck translations act as a 'filter' that often forces translators to translate in a form of German that is more archaic than their normal style of writing.

Elisabeth Plessen also noted that there is a tendency in German productions of Shakespeare to deliver the soliloquies as great set pieces, and to keep them apart stylistically from the rest of the play. The effect is jarring and there seems to be no

Ein Sommernachtstraum, trans. Frank Günther (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), pp. 167-170.

⁷⁵ Appendix (p. 293).

⁷⁶ Appendix (p. 322).

⁷⁷ Given the degree to which Schlegel's presence can be felt in Fried's translations, Rudolf Stamm described Fried's *Hamlet* as 'a radical adaptation of the Schlegel text.' See Rudolf Stamm, 'Erich Fried als Shakespeare-Übersetzer', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 107 (1971), 23-34, here p. 26.

⁷⁸ Appendix (p. 330).

connection between blocks of ‘literary’ German and more colloquial language. Plessen noted that people have complained that they cannot hear the difference between the soliloquies and the rest of the play in her translation of *Hamlet*. She aimed to erase those differences in her translation of the play and aimed to integrate the soliloquies into the main action.

Michael Wachsmann, who translates Shakespeare’s works for the Münchner Kammerspiele, rejects any positive value in striving for a single, standard translation:

Since every translation is also an interpretation (and we see different interpretations in the different translations of Maik Hamburger, Heiner Müller and Frank Günther), the co-existence of different translations possibly opens up ways of interpretation for the audience in German that are closed to the English audiences who only have a single text. It doesn’t really make any sense to talk about standards and about which translations are more authentic than others, because we do not have the original.⁷⁹

When Gerhart Hauptmann and Ludwig Fulda made their statements in 1915/1916 to the effect that Shakespeare should be spoken of as if he were German, Schlegel’s translation of *Hamlet* was respected and loved for the way it had made Shakespeare accessible to German audiences. It had provided Germans with a much ‘improved’ Shakespeare that was felt to reflect more closely the author’s original work than the English texts. By 1916 Friedrich Gundolf’s *Shakespeare and the German Spirit* had also established Schlegel’s translations as the vital cultural connection between the spirit of Shakespeare and the German ‘Geist’. In Germany ‘our’ Hamlet has always been connected with Schlegel’s translation, which became a work in its own right over the course of the nineteenth century. In 1911 it was Schlegel’s Shakespeare translations that were understood as the necessary channel between present-day

⁷⁹ Appendix (p. 311).

Germany and Shakespeare's world. As the twentieth century progressed, Schlegel's *Hamlet* continued to assert its authority on translators and audiences, but this has now reached a stage where, as Reinhard Palm remarked, one cannot translate anything of Shakespeare's without being 'deafened' by the lines from Schlegel's translations.

Schlegel's romantic translation was an important historical moment when a sense of Shakespeare was transmuted through another language and culture, and it is legitimate for Germany to claim this work as 'their' Hamlet, bearing in mind that this does not exclude other forms of Shakespearean transmission and appropriation. As I have illustrated in this chapter, German readers and audiences often do not make allowances for the fact that Shakespeare has to be *repeatedly* appropriated in German. If Shakespeare spoke through Schlegel's translation to audiences in the nineteenth century, the now dated language of Schlegel's translation no longer captures the vitality and the complexity of Shakespeare's language, even though it is deemed to be "Shakespearean" by audiences who flock to the National Theatre in Weimar to hear "Shakespeare".

1.4 Concluding Remarks

In my interview with Maik Hamburger, Hamburger told me the following anecdote. At the première of the 1998 production of *Love's Labour's Lost* in Bremen, Hamburger's wife was sitting in the audience and happened to mention to the woman next to her that her husband had translated the play they were about to see. The woman scoffed and said: 'What do you mean, he did the translation? I've had the

translation in my cupboard at home for years and years.’ Of course, the woman was most probably referring to the standard Schlegel-Tieck translation, but this attitude is widespread in Germany. There have always been new translations of Shakespeare’s plays appearing in print or in theatre productions, but it is only in the last hundred years that Schlegel’s translations have really been regarded as authoritative. In the bibliography of his recent Shakespeare monograph, Alan Posener writes: ‘As ever, the translations of Schlegel-Tieck remain *the* German Shakespeare.’⁸⁰ Contained within the remarks made by Posener and the woman in the audience at the Bremen production are many false assumptions about the nature of literary works and the function of translation.

There seems to be a common belief that once a play has been translated, then further acts of translation are superfluous. The original work exists in only one form, it is argued, and so the work can only exist in one translation. It surprised me just how firm these beliefs are, when playgoers at Peter Zadek’s *Hamlet* praised the new translation, but added that it wasn’t as good as the ‘real’ *Hamlet*, by which they meant Schlegel’s. When one discounts questions of style and accuracy between different translations, there is a strong feeling that Schlegel’s *Hamlet* constitutes the real work. As we have heard from translators in this chapter, the authority of the Schlegel-Tieck translations ‘deafens’ translators and makes them question the legitimacy of writing a new translation.

It is ironic that as new English editions of *Hamlet* are challenging the notion of a unitary text by highlighting the Quartos and Folio texts as discrete entities and

⁸⁰ Alan Posener, *Shakespeare* (Hamburg: Rowohl Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999), p. 146.

providing different textual shapes for the play at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the growing authority of Schlegel's *Hamlet* is actually reinforcing the notion of a unitary text in German. This creates the curious paradigm that if *Hamlet* is to be found anywhere, it will be in the German translation, because English editors have all but given up trying to find the play amidst the dispersed textual materials that we have in the source language.

In this first chapter I have presented the arguments of translators, who although struggling to disestablish the authority of Schlegel's *Hamlet*, were nevertheless trying to achieve the same thing: a faithful translation of an original work. By understanding translation as a process of re-iterating the original, and by understanding an original work as a unified entity, whose form and meaning are fixed and knowable, translators have struggled to recreate the original in the target language. But, as I argue, *Hamlet* is untranslatable, because it resists the premises on which translation is based. It was a highly contingent text, possibly designed to resist semantic closure, and incorporating what appear to be revisions in the characterisation, especially in the relationship between Hamlet and his mother. It lacks a transcendent text and a unifying comment, and at points in the textual material the notion of an artistic totality breaks down. In my view, the difficulty of articulating a response to the play, combined with the play's lack of any defining textual identity, is partly what makes *Hamlet* an untranslatable work, when translation is understood as a hermeneutic and re-iterative act.

Having stated my argument that *Hamlet* is 'untranslatable', I would now like to illustrate why this is the case. Translators have found themselves obliged to 'improve'

Hamlet in translation, in order to provide German readers and audiences with a work that functions more effectively than the text we have in English. This has involved selecting and suppressing lines from the three substantive texts of the play, rewriting scenes that were believed to have been lost or distorted, and re-arranging the order of scenes in certain acts. Changes were felt to be necessary because translators were looking for a text that transcended the material that has come down to us as *Hamlet*. I will develop my argument by suggesting that a rewrite of *Hamlet* is always inevitable when one attempts to recreate the lost textual archetype, and this indicates a phenomenological flaw in the translators' critical method.

2. NOTIONS OF ‘CORRECT’ TEXT AND THE RE-WRITING OF *HAMLET*’S TRAGIC NON-CONFORMITY

In the first chapter I argued that translators were on phenomenologically unsteady ground when seeking to improve *Hamlet* in translation in order to recover a lost archetype. By examining the translations in my corpus and talking to translators about their work, it has become clear that there are two main approaches to recovering this lost textual archetype. Some translators make few changes to the source text, preferring to translate a modern critical edition of the play, usually a conflation of the three substantive texts. Other translators, such as Wolfgang Swaczynna, Hans Rothe and Gerhart Hauptmann, have made extensive changes to *Hamlet* in German, effectively rewriting the play. The one thing that all translators have in common is their belief in the necessary existence of a ‘correct’ text that underlies the dispersed textual materials that have reached us. This belief in correct text translating has invariably pre-established a horizon of interpretation that has shaped and limited the emergent forms of *Hamlet* in German. In the present chapter I aim to question how the notion of a ‘correct’ text might constrain the play’s translatability.

Traduttore traditore is the traditional view that a translator is also a traitor, someone who distorts a work in conducting it across linguistic, cultural and temporal boundaries. The translators that I introduced in my first chapter attempted to re-read this tradition of the translator as traitor. They understood translation as a process of faithful re-iteration of the original work, and they believed that amidst the dispersed textual materials of *Hamlet* that have reached us, there must exist a correct and

transcendent text. In the present chapter I will be looking in more detail at the translatability of *Hamlet* as a source text for translation and at the type of changes that translators have felt necessary to make to *Hamlet* in order to render this source text ‘translatable’ and to prepare it for its journey into the target language. In short, notions of a ‘correct’ text demand that *Hamlet* be rewritten before it meets the requirements of translation. What needs to be questioned is the extent to which limitations are set on the translatability of *Hamlet*, derived from pre-conceived notions of what constitutes the ‘correct’ text. The case studies examined in this chapter will shed some light on the distortions that *Hamlet* has undergone in the name of authenticity in translation.

2.1 How Translations Change Originals

Jorge Luis Borges anatomised the translatability of originals in his short story, *Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote*.¹ Through his narrator, Borges makes the point that nothing is ever the same after a work has come into being, because an original changes time and time changes the original in a perpetual dialectic of original-translation-original. Translation cannot undo the existence of originals, and yet translators seem to believe in this possibility. In order to translate *Don Quixote* into French, Menard has to believe in a world that does not contain the original work, but he also realises the impossibility of this: ‘To compose *Don Quixote* at the beginning of the seventeenth century was a reasonable, necessary and perhaps inevitable undertaking; at the beginning of the twentieth century it is almost impossible. It is not

in vain that three hundred years have passed, charged with the most complex happenings – among them, to mention only one, that same *Don Quixote*’ (p. 48). The narrator concludes that Menard’s task is ultimately futile: ‘he undertook a task that was complex in the extreme and futile from the outset. He dedicated his conscience and nightly studies to the repetition of a pre-existing book in a foreign language’ (p. 50).

I believe that A. W. Schlegel has in some ways managed to achieve what Menard could not. His translation of *Hamlet* has taken the place of the original and has subsumed it. Goethe believed that it was the highest form of translation when the target text was able to take the place of the original, as he explained in his essay of 1819:

Because we cannot linger for very long in either a perfect or an imperfect state but must, after all, undergo one transformation after another, we experienced the third epoch of translation, which is the final and highest of the three. In such periods, the goal of the translation is to achieve perfect identity with the original, so that the one does not exist instead of the other but in the other’s place.²

The canonisation of Schlegel’s translations in the twentieth century, especially of his *Hamlet* translation, seemed to achieve ‘perfect identity’ with Shakespeare’s works, to the point where readers and audiences believed that they were hearing Shakespeare when they read or heard Schlegel’s translation. I believe that Schlegel was

¹ Jorge Luis Borges, ‘Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote’, *Fictions*, ed. Anthony Kerrigan (London: J. Calder, 1985), pp. 42-51.

² Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ‘Translations’, trans. Sharon Sloan, in *Theories of Translation*, ed. Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 60-63, here p. 61. This is a translation of Goethe’s ‘Übersetzungen’, first printed in his *Noten und Abhandlungen zum bessern Verständnis des west-östlichen Divans* (Stuttgart, 1819).

instrumental in convincing many translators that original Shakespearean works *could* be recreated as originals in German in the twentieth century.

But the ‘perfect identity’ of Schlegel’s *Hamlet* with Shakespeare’s is only apparent. As Borges made explicit in his narrative, time changes a literary work and that work changes time. For example, anti-Semitic productions of *The Merchant of Venice* in Germany in the 1930s shaped the official view of the Jew during the period of National Socialism.³ As Harold Bloom wrote: ‘it would have been better for the last four centuries of the Jewish people had Shakespeare never written this play.’⁴ The events in this period of history in turn shaped the way we look at the play today. The work has become part of history, both influencing it and influenced by it. We cannot un-imagine the past fifty years or the Holocaust when attempting to re-create the ‘original’ work in translation. We cannot imagine the play without history, and we cannot imagine a history without the play.

In a similar way, *Hamlet* can never be the same in German because of the class structure that was formalised under Frederick the Great. Elisabeth Plessen is a countess and a social product of the Second Reich, and when she translated *Hamlet* in 1999, she understood the word ‘edel’ (‘noble’) as having a range of highly culture-specific connotations. Plessen felt that she could not use this word ‘edel’ to translate Ophelia’s line ‘What a *noble* mind is here o’erthrown’ or Hamlet’s ‘Whether it is *nobler* in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune’. In the interview Plessen explained:

³ See Dietrich Schwanitz’s detailed account of the way Shakespeare’s play shaped the image of the Jew in twentieth-century Europe, *Das Shylock-Syndrom, oder die Dramaturgie der Barbarei* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1997).

[I]n my translation I prefer to use the new German word 'nobel' rather than the older form 'edel', since this older word has connotations of class and nobility in Germany. My mother is a countess and this word 'edel' is the sort of word that she would use. When Hamlet uses it, it should not carry these social connotations, and when Ophelia says 'what a noble mind is here overthrown', it is important to understand that she is referring to the greatness of his mind and not his social class. When Hamlet questions whether it is 'nobler in the mind' to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, I felt that both 'edel' and 'nobel' were wrong and so I opted for the more democratic 'sinnvoller' ('wiser'). You have to be careful with connotations.

Plessen is the only translator to recognise that 'edel', although a literal translation of 'noble', is not completely isomorphic, due to the specific semantic range of the German word, and also perhaps due to our own changes of what constitutes 'nobility'. German has now adopted from English the word 'nobel', but this often connotes wealth, style and high living. Former East Berliners are now beginning to describe some of their department stores as 'nobel'. Indeed, our own present sense of 'noble' is quite unlike the Renaissance virtue. So which word should the translator use? Reality is always shaping literary works and *Hamlet* is a particularly marked example of this phenomenon.

In the late 1970s the obsessiveness and explosive temperaments of the American murderess Susan Atkins and the German terrorist Ulrike Meinhof became consolidated in the character of Ophelia in Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine*. This has fundamentally altered the way Ophelia is understood in Germany today. Productions of *Hamlet* now invariably present Ophelia as a raving lunatic: aggressive, volatile and self-destructive. Gone are the days of beauty and elegance in madness. It has become impossible to look back to a time when the girl could be mad and still lyrical, and this I believe has a lot to do with the Ophelia in the lunatic asylum of

⁴ Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare. The Invention of the Human* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999), p. 190.

Müller's version of the play. The social and political events in German history have changed *Hamlet*, and it is a phenomenological impossibility to imagine a world in which the work becomes an original again. There is no history without the work, no work without the history. 'Fidelity to the original' is thus a wholly unreliable premise on which to base a translation of a literary work, especially a work as unstable as *Hamlet*. The development of a work in its afterlife as it changes history and is in turn changed by history relativises notions of 'correct' text.

2.2 Finding *Hamlet*'s 'Artistic Totality' in Translation

Translation theorist Patrice Pavis has argued that if a translator encounters what he or she feels to be design faults in the source text, then the translator must create a target text that incorporates 'a coherent reading of the plot', which means re-writing the source text to clarify the sense and strengthen the work's structure. In short, the translator is under an obligation to 'improve' the original work. Translation, states Pavis, is 'infiltrated by dramaturgical analysis.'⁵ This means that the translator functions as a kind of dramaturg and must 'reconstitute the plot according to the logic that appears to suit the action, and so reconstitute the artistic totality.'⁶ Translation will always rewrite a text and in doing so re-align it:

⁵ Patrice Pavis, 'Problems of translation for the stage: interculturalism and post-modern theatre', *The Play Out of Context. Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*, ed. Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 25-44, here p. 28.

⁶ Patrice Pavis, 'Toward Specifying Theatre Translation', *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 136-159, here p. 140.

This initial translation or dramaturgical concretization is fundamental, because it *molds* [...] and continues to constitute the text. Far from being an external 'expressive' formulation of an already known meaning, the translation breathes life into the text, constituting it as text and as fiction, by outlining its dramaturgy. The dramaturgical analysis and stage T2 of the translation process must incorporate a coherent reading of the plot as well as the spatiotemporal indications contained in the text...⁷

But reconstituting the 'artistic totality' of a work in translation implies a certain subjectivity of critical method. The changes that are made to a work in translation really depend on the translator's views on what constitutes the ideal artistic form and on notions of a 'coherent reading'. Most translators of *Hamlet* in German in the twentieth century employed a working methodology that reflected Pavis' argument that a translator must improve faults that he or she detects in the original. In my interview with director Andrew McKinnon, we discussed the function of translation as an opportunity to 'better' the original. McKinnon argued:

The problem with translation is that the translator is intentionally trying to make the translation more cogent and lucid than the original. When you do not speak the language of a translated text, you have no idea how close or how far away you are from the original. The original is important only because it is there. There is no authorial authority. We could improve the Elgin Marbles, but only in our minds, we should never try to improve the originals.⁸

The texts of *Hamlet* that have survived for us today probably reflect the adaptation of the work to different productions, and so although we have a notion of a unitary work, in reality it exists in a number of differently constituted texts. This makes it extremely difficult to talk about *Hamlet* as being an 'artistic failure'. T. S. Eliot possibly realised the limits of his evaluation of *Hamlet*, and the possibility of *Hamlet's* artistic failure must remain open to speculation and imagination. But all

⁷ Pavis, 'Toward Specifying Theatre Translation' (p. 140).

⁸ Appendix (p. 358).

German translators have faced problems of a structural nature when they have attempted to translate *Hamlet*. If *Hamlet* does represent a work in progress, a collection of revised texts based on an imperfect authorial conception, then the problems that translators have with the structure of the play may reveal something about the inner cohesion of the work. Interestingly, translators often seem to agree on the parts of the play that do not fit easily into the translation that is re-constituted in the target language. To some degree there is a consensus amongst translators as to how the ‘correct’ text of *Hamlet* should look.

In the following case studies I will examine the points in *Hamlet* at which translators felt that they had lost a sense of the work’s ‘artistic totality’, and where they rewrote the play in translation in order to provide target audiences with a text that was closer to the assumed ‘correct’ text as misrepresented by English editions of the play.

2.2.1 Act 3: The Closet Scene

Translation is a hermeneutic act and it is predicated on the interpretability of the source text. The very different version of the story that we find in the First Quarto of *Hamlet* cannot be reconciled with the events as we find them in the longer texts, and this has posed a problem for the interpretation of the scene in Gertrude’s closet in the third act. Reinhard Palm believes that the so-called Closet Scene is one of the main interpretive problems in *Hamlet*, as he discovered when he came to translating the play in 1998. In the interview he stated:

As far as I am concerned, the Closet Scene does not admit any kind of interpretation. The whole dialogue in it is a mystery and I have never seen it produced in a convincing way. It is always reduced to the simplistic oedipal situation, which I find extremely unsatisfactory.⁹

I asked Palm whether he thought that the Closet Scene was just a problem of interpretation for us, or whether it was also a problem for Shakespeare. He replied: 'I believe it is a deeper problem of Shakespeare's original creation, a problem even in the dramatic event as Shakespeare designed it.'¹⁰ The Closet Scene has proven to be one of the most problematic scenes for translators, because it is uncertain how explicit Hamlet is meant to be in this dialogue with his mother, how much the Queen is supposed to know, and the extent to which she becomes an ally of Hamlet's against the King. The 'untranslatability' of this scene has nothing to do with the problem of converting one language into another; it is the far greater problem of knowing which of the textual variants is correct and how this scene relates to the rest of the play. If Shakespeare's conception of Gertrude changed over the years, then the translator is faced with the further problem of deciding which Gertrude to represent and how to do this.

The Queen of the First Quarto, called Gertred, is what Steven Urkowitz described as only the 'symbol' of a Queen, without the psychological depth of the character as we find her in the longer texts.¹¹ G. B. Shand took a similar line of argument when he described Gertred as 'more a contained gesture than a negotiable subject.'¹²

⁹ Appendix (p. 325).

¹⁰ Appendix (p. 326).

¹¹ 'Five Women Eleven Ways: Changing Images of Shakespearean Characters in the Earliest Texts', *Images of Shakespeare*, ed. Werner Habicht (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988), p. 300.

¹² See G. B. Shand, 'Gertred, Captive Queen of the First Quarto', in Clayton (pp. 33-49), here p. 45.

Translators Hans Rothe and Wolfgang Swaczynna have been unable to follow the critical mainstream that has seen Gertrude as a psychologically complex and ambivalent character and Gertred as a simpler contained theatrical figure. These translators have argued that in the First Quarto the Closet Scene is dialogic. Hamlet condemns Claudius, Gertred demands to know the reason for Hamlet's charge against the King, Hamlet explains that his father was murdered by Claudius, begs his mother for help in his plot for revenge, and Gertred agrees. In the longer texts this scene is monologic. Gertrude is given no opportunity to ask why Hamlet is railing against her husband, Hamlet does not reveal that Claudius is a murderer, and yet the Queen agrees not to go to his bed. The structure of the dialogue appears to have become distorted in the longer printed texts. The scene as we find it in modern editions of the play should not be translated, because it is not the 'correct' text.

Rothe and Swaczynna have favoured the First Quarto at this point in the play, because it offers a dramatic exchange that functions effectively and moves the plot forward in a way that the Closet Scene of the longer texts does not. Any function that the Queen had in the text underlying the First Quarto has been reduced to a few expressions of shock at Hamlet's behaviour as we find in the Second Quarto. Hans Rothe, composing his translation in the 1950s, and Wolfgang Swaczynna, working in the early 1970s, believed that something had gone wrong in the transmission of this important scene in the play, and it was only by referring to the First Quarto that we could get a sense of the role that the Queen originally played. In looking for a transcendent and 'correct' text amidst the three versions of the play, however, translators have tended to combine the character of Hamlet from the longer texts with the Queen from the short text, and this has produced an uneasy mix of characters.

The Hamlet of the longer texts is also a very different character from his counterpart in the First Quarto. In the longer versions of the play Hamlet has much more to say and appears to procrastinate in a way that is less apparent in Q1, where we see Hamlet as the more traditional revenge figure. The effect of conflating the two different versions of the play is that the Hamlet of the longer texts remains reticent about the murder of his father, whilst Gertrude from Q1 promises to help Hamlet in a plot for revenge, although murder is never actually mentioned. The error that translators make is in assuming that there was one correct version of the story and that Shakespeare did not revise his play for different audiences, theatres or changes in political climate.

Hans Rothe believed that the First Quarto represented Shakespeare's final conception of the play, which contained the reconciliation between Hamlet and his mother in the Closet Scene. In the preface to his collection of Shakespeare translations Rothe suggests that audiences may have been familiar with something that reflects the Closet Scene of the longer texts, but that Shakespeare adapted the play to enhance the role of Gertrude and create a more active Queen.¹³ The Closet Scene of the First Quarto turns on Hamlet's open declaration that Claudius killed Hamlet's father: 'Ah! Have you eyes and can you look on him / That slew my father and your dear husband / To live in the incestuous pleasure of his bed?' (11.39-41). Rothe did not incorporate these lines into his translation, but he did include Hamlet's line: 'And mother, but assist me in revenge, / And in his death your infamy shall die' (11.93-4).¹⁴ In the First Quarto Gertrude then agrees to assist Hamlet in his revenge: 'I will conceal, consent,

¹³ 'But the reconciliation between mother and son is a great new motif [...] What Shakespeare created with *Hamlet* was just as difficult for his contemporaries to understand as the solutions offered by the old texts are for us.' See Introduction to Rothe's translation of *Hamlet*, in *Der elisabethanische Shakespeare* (Baden-Baden: Holle Verlag, 1955), p. 4.

and do my best, / What stratagem so'er thou shalt devise' (11. 97-98). Rothe also included these lines in his translation,¹⁵ but there was no point at which Hamlet justified his revenge by explaining that Claudius was a murderer. In short, what we find in Rothe's translation is a dialogue in which Hamlet and his mother discuss and agree on a plot for revenge, but there is no mention of murder.

We find this problem paralleled in Wolfgang Swaczynna's translation of 1971. Swaczynna took a similar eclectic approach to the translation of the Closet Scene. As he explains in his critical notes to the play:

Without doubt, the texts of the Folio and the Second Quarto are more exact and reliable, but since they have no definitive form, the form of the play must be sought in the First Quarto. This means that all of the gaps in the Second Quarto, and all of the unfinished lines, should be completed if possible with material from the First Quarto. Again and again it proves to be the case that the First Quarto offers far better solutions than the other texts. It would be foolish to ignore such good material.¹⁶

Like Rothe, Swaczynna tried to marry the two aspects of the mother-son relationship in one 'correct' text. In my interview Swaczynna expressed the following view:

I would say the Closet Scene is perhaps the most problematic in the whole of *Hamlet* because the three texts of the play interpret this moment differently. The First Quarto places more stress on the Queen, who admits that she made a mistake, but that she played no part in the murder of her husband, whereas the Folio treats the Queen very differently. It is only really in Q1 that Gertrude becomes a real character in her own right, but in the Folio and in the eclectic English editions she is always pale and incomplete, since so many important details are left out. That poses a very real problem for the translator.¹⁷

¹⁴ 'Mutter, stehe mir in der Rache bei, / Mit seinem Tod wird deine Schande sterben.'

¹⁵ 'was immer du zu deinem Schutz ersinnst: / ich schweige, billige und will dir helfen'.

¹⁶ See Introduction to *Hamlet*, trans. Wolfgang Swaczynna (Cologne: PROJEKT Theater und Medien Verlag, 1977), sheet c (from the author's typed manuscript). The translation and textual notes were also published privately for use in theatres by Bärenreiter-Verlag, Karl Vötterle KG, Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe (1971).

The problem for translators is that we really have two versions of the play and when characters and lines from the longer and shorter texts are conflated, this produces not a definitive text to transcend all versions, but a hodgepodge. Swaczynna went one stage further than Rothe, believing that it was important for Hamlet to explain to his mother that her new husband was a murderer. In the shorter text Hamlet describes Claudius with the lines: ‘Here is your husband, with a face like Vulcan, / *A look fit for a murder and a rape,* / A dull, dead, hanging look, and a hell-bred eye / To affright children and amaze the world’ (11.33-36 – my italics). Not only does Hamlet describe his uncle as a murderer, he also absolves his mother of guilt, by seeing her marriage as the result of a seduction and a rape.

Although Swaczynna’s Hamlet has hinted that Claudius is a murderer and a rapist, he does not follow this with the remaining lines from the First Quarto, in which Hamlet makes explicit that Claudius slew Gertrude’s husband in order to seduce her. Instead Swaczynna returned to the Second Quarto at this point with the vague lines: ‘Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight, / Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all’ (3.4.78-79). But by the end of the scene in Swaczynna’s translation we see Gertrude promising to help Hamlet in his plot against the King: ‘I will consent, conceal, and do my best, / What stratagem so’er thou shalt devise’ (11.98-99).¹⁸

Just as in Rothe’s translation, what we find in Swaczynna’s version is the openness of the First Quarto, in which the Queen promises to help Hamlet in his revenge, combined with the ambivalence of the Q2 dialogue, which hints at a murder but does

¹⁷ Appendix (p. 333).

¹⁸ Translated by Rothe as ‘ich will verstummen, will mein Bestes tun, / mich so verstellen, wie du es mir rätst.’

not make it explicit. The confusion in the translations of both Rothe and Swaczynna is caused by the fact that Hamlet has not asked his mother for any help in his plans, as he does in the First Quarto, and the Queen has no reason to help Hamlet, since she has not been told that her husband is the murderer. By selecting only certain lines from the First Quarto, the Queen in Swaczynna's and Rothe's translations is inconsistent and confusing and Hamlet makes vague assertions without substantiating them. There is an agreement at the end of the scene that is not preceded by any dialogue.

As we saw at the beginning of this section, the translator Reinhard Palm described in the interview how he felt unable to translate the Closet Scene satisfactorily because it seemed to resist interpretation. Palm did not feel, however, that it was his responsibility to reconstruct the play text in order to improve the structure or make the dialogue more lucid. Palm translated Jenkins' 1982 Arden Edition of the play, which reflects the text of the Second Quarto. By contrast, Rothe and Swaczynna believed that apart from being too long to perform, the Second Quarto had lost the dramatic exchange between Hamlet and his mother that they believed had survived in the First Quarto. They attempted to re-build the dramatic scene by conflating lines from all three texts.

The result is not satisfying dramatically, however, because the translators have combined in a single version two characters from different stages of the play's development, or indeed from two different plays. My argument is that these contradictions are to some extent inevitable when traditional notions of correct text translation are applied to a work that may have been in a state of perpetual progress.

It is a fault in the critical method of translators, who believe that the evolution of a work during an author's lifetime, and the afterlife of the work as it changes over time, can be contained within a single textual form. It is impossible to know whether Shakespeare was working towards a resolution in his conception of *Hamlet*, but the reality is that there is no transcendent text that represents a final authorial intention. As long as translators believe that this text does exist and can be translated, then we will continue to see strange hybrids of scenes that have no historical precedent.

2.2.2 Act 4: Hamlet's Departure for England

Translators have felt uncomfortable about translating the fourth act of the play for a number of reasons. The principal areas of contention are the inclusion or exclusion of Hamlet's final soliloquy 'How all occasions do inform against me...', and the disappearance of the Prince at such a late stage in the plot. Both of these aspects of the play's structure have been read as problematic by translators and have been rewritten in translation.

Wolfgang Swaczynna and Peter Zadek, translating *Hamlet* in the 1970s, felt that the action was too drawn out, if Hamlet is given a long soliloquy in the fourth act. This was also clearly the belief of the editors of the First Folio, who omitted the speech from their version of the play, based on a performance text, possibly derived from a production in which Shakespeare himself had deleted the speech. Elisabeth Plessen felt that the text of the Second Quarto was less appropriate for the stage than the First

Folio, but felt that there was a gap in the action if Hamlet's final soliloquy was not incorporated into a translation. As she explained in the interview:

I mostly used the Folio, because it seems to work better on stage. But on three occasions I used the Second Quarto, namely Horatio's speech on Caesar's assassination, Hamlet's speech about the vicious mole of nature, and Hamlet's last soliloquy describing how Fortinbras' soldiers are fighting in Poland. The last soliloquy has contemporary value, given its political implications. When Zadek was rehearsing the play it was during the UN air raids on Kosovo and the hostilities of war in the Balkans were in everyone's minds. I also love this soliloquy and so I insisted that Peter include this in the play, even though he wanted to leave it out.¹⁹

This relates to the idea discussed earlier in this chapter regarding the way history intervenes to change the way we understand literary works and what we consider to be essential to the 'correct' text. Regardless of Shakespeare's final intention for Hamlet's soliloquy on the honour of fighting in a war, in 1999 questions over the justification of violence made this speech a vital and relevant part of the play, and it makes little sense to think of translation as a means of recapturing what *Hamlet* must have been originally. Elisabeth Plessen's approach to translation, as with her sensitivity to the changes in the meaning of 'noble' and 'edel', reveal a process of regenerating a play out of the textual material that does not seek to restore what Shakespeare must have originally intended.

The dramatist Gerhart Hauptmann, like Hans Rothe and Wolfgang Swaczynna, also believed in the existence of a transcendent text and of correct text translation. In 1927 Hauptmann rewrote the fourth act of *Hamlet* in his translation, largely based on Schlegel's standard version.²⁰ He saw the task of the translator as being to improve on

¹⁹ Appendix (p. 315).

²⁰ In 1927 Hauptmann wrote a translation of the play, making numerous fundamental changes in plot and character, *Die Tragische Geschichte von Hamlet, Prinzen von Dänemark, in deutscher Sprache neu übersetzt und eingerichtet von Gerhart Hauptmann* (Weimar: Cranach Presse, 1928). This translation was first used in a performance in Dresden in 1927.

the source text and to correct structural irregularities in the dramatic form that had reached readers and audiences in English. In that way, German readers were better able to understand and appreciate the play, because they were in possession of a text that reflected more faithfully the 'correct' version that Shakespeare must have intended. It was, in particular, what Hauptmann felt to be the lack of dramatic economy in Act 4 that led him to rewrite this act, rendering the characters more consistent, and tightening the strands of the plot.²¹ What he was actually doing was the equivalent of eliminating the Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile with a few strategic brushstrokes.

Hauptmann argued that there was no legitimate reason why Laertes should be hailed King of Denmark by the rebels in Act 4. He thus fabricated a friendship between Hamlet and Fortinbras, and the two characters meet to discuss how the Norwegian Prince can help Hamlet to kill the murderer and usurper, and win back the crown. Hamlet is escorted off the stage at the end of 4.1, in order to be taken to England, but in Hauptmann's translation immediately appears again at the start of the following scene having already returned. The new scene, 4.2, is set on a Danish plain. Hamlet and Fortinbras meet and embrace, and Hamlet describes to the Norwegian Prince how Claudius killed his father, whored his mother and 'popped in' between the election and Hamlet's hopes. The two retire to discuss how Fortinbras can be of assistance to

²¹ See F. B. Wahr's article, 'The Hauptmann *Hamlet*', in *Philological Quarterly*, 16 (1937), 124-138. Wahr writes: 'In keeping with certain continental, perhaps classicistic, dramatic traditions he [Hauptmann] finds and deplores a lack of "symmetry" in the architecture of the drama and believes that Shakespeare's original work must have had a more consistent and artistic form. What we have [according to Hauptmann] is a mutilated text, filled with incongruities of character and construction, due in part to the playwright's carelessness with his manuscripts and to actors' and directors' frequent adaptations and alterations. A basic and reliable, definitive text, a *Grund-text*, is lacking. This Hauptmann sets out to provide' (p. 128).

Hamlet's cause. Hauptmann felt that the leading character's disappearance at a critical stage in Act 4 was evidence of a work of confused ideas and textual misrepresentation and that emphasis should be focussed on Hamlet at this point rather than diverted from him.

In Hauptmann's rewriting of the fourth act it is Hamlet, not Laertes, who storms in demanding to kill the King for murdering his father: 'O thou vile king, give me my father!' Outside is a mob of angry adherents who have been rounded up by Horatio and are demanding that Hamlet be made King. Hauptmann saw no clear reason why Laertes should believe that Claudius had killed his father, or why Shakespeare should allow the populace to proclaim him King. Laertes had no reason to suspect Claudius of killing his own councillor, and he had no claim to the Danish throne. Hauptmann felt that this scene was in need of dramatic improvement.

It seems to have been primarily the dramatic effectiveness of making Hamlet the rebel at this stage that made Hauptmann revise the action of the play. All of the lines that would normally be uttered by Laertes are given to Hamlet and sound strangely apposite coming from him. It enhances the similarity, and points up the contrast, between Hamlet and Laertes' situation, and creates a new dramatic moment when the mad Ophelia is able to give Hamlet the imaginary daisy as a token of his betrayal. Hamlet is killed by Laertes at the end of Hauptmann's version of the play. In Shakespeare's text Hamlet tells Horatio that Fortinbras has his 'dying voice' (5.2.361), and this was a dramatic moment that Hauptmann wished to exploit. In his version Hauptmann brings Fortinbras on in time for Hamlet to hail him King of Denmark and this reinforces the idea that the time has been set right again.

In reconstructing the drama Hauptmann thus attempted to introduce a greater symmetry of events, placing more emphasis on the political dimension of the play, elaborating minor characters, and writing in new scenes. His aim was to erase apparent contradictions and create a more integrated, symmetrical whole. Hauptmann began with Schlegel's translation and gradually redirected the story to fit his own view of the 'correct' form that Shakespeare must have intended for this play. What is considered authentic is not a literal translation of the text, but a selective and discrete re-organisation of existing materials to form what Shakespeare would have wanted had he been alive in Germany in 1927-28 and shared the same dramatic views as Hauptmann.

There is a more pronounced evenness of tone in Hauptmann's 'translation', and a greater sense of organic unity when the play closes with Horatio's proclamation of Fortinbras as Hamlet's rightful successor: 'Long live Denmark and her new King!' The way Hauptmann 'restored' *Hamlet* is not so different from the Restoration adaptations of the play. The changes reflect Hauptmann's understanding of the text as a dramatist, rather than as a bibliographer. Although his adaptation lacks any scholarly foundation, it represents the efforts of a dramatist to settle inconsistencies in the play that are transmitted through the three substantive texts that have reached us, but which Hauptmann felt should be resolved.²²

²² Discussions of Hauptmann's reworking of *Hamlet* can also be found in: A. Busse. 'The Case of Hauptmann's *Hamlet*', *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht*, 30 (1938); W. A. Reichart, 'Hauptmann's German "Hamlet"', *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Literature*, 16 (1931), 477-487; W. A. Reichart, 'A Modern German Hamlet', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 31 (1932); S. D. Stirk, 'Gerhart Hauptmann and "Hamlet"', *German Life and Letters*, 1 (1936-7), 125-29.

The fourth act, in which Hamlet disappears, creates a long hiatus before the pace of the action picks up again in the middle of the fifth act. Translators such as Peter Zadek and Gerhart Hauptmann believed that the original play as Shakespeare intended it, and as it was performed on the stage of the Globe, could not have included a series of scenes the length of act 4. Again, the ‘improvements’ made to *Hamlet* in German are dependent on more classical and symmetric plot structures and deny the possibility that Shakespeare was attempting to break through traditional modes of dramatic representation with *Hamlet*. The play may have been highly experimental and this is not taken into consideration by translators who attempt to use translation as a way of fitting a work into a preconceived pattern.

2.2.3 Act 5: The Gravedigger Scene

Reinhard Palm believes that there are structural flaws in *Hamlet*, such as in the Closet Scene and in the Gravedigger Scene. In the interview Palm commented that he would have liked to delete certain sections of the dialogue from Acts 3 and 5, but he felt that it was not his responsibility to make decisions about which lines should be included in a translation, and which should be deleted. His responsibility as a translator is to provide readers and directors with the ‘whole’ *Hamlet*, that is everything written in the texts, in order that others may make use of the material. Palm remarked:

I translate integrally. Any cuts must be made by the director. All my translations are complete. It is the same with the Gravedigger Scene, which I have never liked, because it seems to take away so much of the play’s impetus dramatically at the end. However, the resolution in *Hamlet* is also strangely connected with this long scene. It is the same in *Twelfth Night* with the exorcism scene in which the devil is driven out of Malvolio. This type of scene always seems to have a retarding effect on the finale.

and I always feel that the story could be brought to a close more expeditiously without it. But this moment of anarchy in the representation of events is also part of Shakespeare's genius, and so it has to be translated even if one thinks the scene serves no function dramatically. I always provide a complete translation based on the Arden Edition and do not get involved in the discussion about which lines belong in the Quarto and which in the Folio, and which edition uses which.²³

Reinhard Palm described how he felt uncomfortable translating the Gravedigger Scene, because it seemed to slow down the action at the end of the play, and destabilise the form as a whole. It would appear that scenes like the one that opens Act 5 prevent the translator from grasping *Hamlet* as a single artistic whole, experiencing it instead as an animal 'a thousand miles long'.²⁴ Wolfgang Swaczynna did not agree that the Gravedigger Scene posed any problems, but he did feel that the ordering of the dialogues within this scene had been transmitted incorrectly to us and needed to be changed by the translator. In the interview Swaczynna stated:

Palm as a man of the theatre should understand how important 'interruptions' are, such as Malvolio's exorcism scene in *Twelfth Night* and the Gravedigger Scene in *Hamlet*. It would be impossible to have three hours' uninterrupted tragedy. Some comic relief is necessary. Shakespeare's secret is in his timing, his arrangement of moods and the balancing of atmosphere, all of which have to be timed to perfection. The Gravedigger Scene is charming and does not interrupt the plot. I feel that the dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio is in the wrong place and I have moved it, but the Gravedigger Scene is calculated quite exactly to achieve maximum dramatic effect in the last scenes of the play.²⁵

In 5.2 of the play *Hamlet*'s description of his escape from the pirates comes between Hamlet's fight with Laertes in the graveyard and their final duel at the end of the

²³ Appendix (p. 326).

²⁴ In Chapter 6 of his *Poetics* Aristotle defines tragic drama as follows: 'Tragedy is a representation of an action, which is serious, complete in itself, and of a certain limited length.' Regarding the dimensions of the tragedy, Aristotle noted that the drama is obviously limited, because it must be long enough for the catastrophe to occur, and yet short enough to be grasped as a single artistic whole, and not 'like an animal a thousand miles long.' Cited in F. L. Lucas, *Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle's Poetics* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1946), p. 73.

²⁵ Appendix (p. 334).

play. Swaczynna rewrote this act because he felt that the scenes had been placed in the wrong order. Hamlet's dialogue with Horatio up to the line 'the interim is mine' is placed *before* Ophelia's funeral, and attached to Hamlet's dialogue with Horatio in the graveyard. In Swaczynna's translation Hamlet and Laertes return to the castle immediately after the fight and commence the duel without the intervening discussion. This was felt to be more dramatically effective by Swaczynna, because the quarrel in the graveyard leads directly on to the duel in the castle. Hamlet's 'But I am very sorry, good Horatio, / That to Laertes I forgot myself' now comes immediately after Hamlet's quarrel with Laertes. By rearranging the dialogues, Swaczynna argues that he has tightened up the dramatic structure, which was felt to be a fault in the play's design.

The translators, whose versions of *Hamlet* have been examined in this chapter, were working according to a specific notion of translation as the faithful re-iteration of the original work. Their working methodology was also predicated on an epistemological assumption that a literary work must exist in a textual form that transcends any material dispersion of that work across time. But *Hamlet* eschews the transcendent text and seems to reflect an evolving conception that never really reached a point of resolution. I believe that this is why translators such as Hans Rothe, Wolfgang Swaczynna and Gerhart Hauptmann have attempted to rewrite the play. There are profound implications for the authenticity and the value of a translator's work if he accepts the existence of a plurality of *Hamlets*, the absence of any 'correct' text that overreaches the material fragments that are all we know.

The contradictions that have sometimes resulted from extensive rewriting of the work resulted from the confrontation of a work in progress with the translator's demands to contain this work in a unitary and defining textual form. As long as eclectic editions of *Hamlet* continue to be used as the standard source text for translators, I do not believe that translators will be able to progress beyond the limited range of seeking to rewrite the original in the way that became the fixation of Borges' fictional study of untranslatability.

2.3 The Future for *Hamlet* as a Source Text for Translators

Anthony Dawson raised a question that I think is worth repeating: 'What exactly is this thing called *Hamlet*?' His reply: 'First and foremost, of course, it is a text; but even such a simple statement is misleading.'²⁶ Philip Edwards has also expressed the same uncertainty regarding the precise nature and shape of the work we call *Hamlet* with his question: 'But what do we mean when we speak of "Shakespeare's *Hamlet*"?'²⁷ and Grace Ioppolo argued that *Hamlet* is more problematic than any other play in the canon because of the existence of multiple texts.²⁸ The nature of the Shakespearean texts and the relationships between them became the subject of discussion in the 1980s, when the textual status of the Folio and the First Quarto of

²⁶ Dawson (p. 2); Randall McLeod also writes that the title of a play such as 'King Lear' may cover an extraordinary range of possible texts: 'the title covers a multitude of texts, and raises the embarrassing question of whether even our own use of "King Lear" has very precise meaning to us.' See Randall McLeod, 'Un-Editing Shakespeare', *Substance*, 33 (1982), 26-55, here p. 39.

²⁷ Edwards (p. 8).

²⁸ Grace Ioppolo, *Revising Shakespeare* (p. 134).

King Lear was re-examined²⁹ and the possibility of authorial revision was given serious consideration. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor argued that the Folio and Quarto texts of *King Lear* were evidence of different plays rather than just different versions of a single play. *King Lear* and *Hamlet* provide the most marked examples of possible authorial revision, although the phenomenon is not limited to these two plays. Grace Ioppolo noted that revisionism had forced 'an urgent and far-reaching crisis' in the way we understand the Shakespearean text and literature in general.³⁰ In the field of German Shakespeare translation, it is as though the last twenty years had never happened.

It is widely accepted now in Anglo-American circles that many of Shakespeare's plays *are* constituted by a number of discrete texts.³¹ It is another matter whether

²⁹ The debate centred on the following critical texts: Michael J. Warren, 'Quarto and Folio *King Lear*: the interpretation of Albany and Edgar', in David Bevington and Jay L. Halio (eds.), *Shakespeare Pattern of Excelling Nature* (Newark: Delaware, 1978), pp. 95-105; Gary Taylor, 'The war in *King Lear*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 33 (1980), 27-34; *The Division of the Kingdoms. Shakespeare's Two Versions of King Lear*, ed. Gary Taylor and Michael J. Warren (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983); *King Lear*, ed. Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford, 1986); Stephen Urkowitz, *Shakespeare's Revision of King Lear* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

³⁰ Ioppolo (p. 2); Graham Holderness also writes that the Quarto versions of many of Shakespeare's plays differ so markedly from the Folio versions: 'for them to be regarded not simply as variants of a single work, but as discrete textualizations independently framed within a complex and diversified project of cultural production; perhaps, even, in some senses, as separate plays.' See Graham Holderness and Bryan Loughrey (eds.), *Shakespearean Originals: First Editions* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), p. 2; Margreta de Grazia writes: 'Shakespeare studies will never be the same because something long taken for granted has been cast into doubt: the self-identity of the work. We are no longer agreed on the fundamental status of the textual object before us. Is it one or more?' See Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass, 'The Materiality of the Shakespearean Text', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 44 (1993), 255-83, here p. 255. De Grazia has also, like Ioppolo, argued that we need to re-think what we mean by a Shakespearean 'work': 'The possibility of multiple texts, then, constitutes a radical change indeed: not just an enlargement of Shakespeare's works but a need to reconceptualize the fundamental category of a *work* by Shakespeare' (p. 255).

³¹ Janette Dillon has written: 'It is, I think, crucial in any assessment of the early printed texts to recognize that plurality does exist and to allow definitions of "authenticity" to emerge only within the parameters of this awareness.' We must accept 'the undeniable existence of, in the case of *Hamlet*, at least three texts of the play so different from one another that their difference should be properly recognized by the printing of separate editions.' We should no longer think in terms of textual 'correctness': 'The term is emptied of meaning as soon as we

these texts constitute different plays or merely different stages in the development of a single play. Philip Edwards takes the view that *Hamlet* was in a continual state of development. The texts that have reached us are records of a single work in progress:

The study of the early texts of *Hamlet* is the study of a play in motion [...] We must be prepared for the possibility that the variations in the text of *Hamlet* are not alternative versions of a single original text but representations of different stages in the play's development. Then our task becomes to choose the moment at which we would try to arrest the movement of the play and say 'This is the *Hamlet* we want'; or even, if we dare, 'This is the *Hamlet* that Shakespeare most wanted.'³²

Having examined the German translations of Shakespeare's plays written in the twentieth century, especially translations of *Hamlet*, I have learned that important critical and editorial developments in our understanding of the Shakespearean text in the 1980s made little, if any, impact on translations of Shakespeare published in Germany in the late twentieth century. There is little awareness amongst German readers and audiences of the discrete texts that constitute *Hamlet*, because the industry of Shakespeare translation in Germany has so far remained unaffected by the recent shift in our understanding of the plurality of the Shakespearean text. In Anglo-American Shakespeare studies we can no longer think of the Shakespearean text without some sense of authorial revision and of the existence of multiple versions of certain texts, but translators still translate integrally from these conflated editions.³³

begin to recognize *Hamlets* rather than *Hamlet*'. See Janette Dillon, 'Is There a Performance in this Text?', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 45 (1994), 74-86, here pp. 75 and 85; On the instability of *Hamlet* see Barbara Mowatt, 'The Form of *Hamlet's* Fortunes', *Renaissance Drama*, 19 (1988), 97-126; Joseph F. Loewenstein, 'Plays Agonistic and Competitive: The Textual Approach to Elsinore', *Renaissance Drama*, 19 (1988), 63-96.

³² Edwards, (p. 8).

³³ Steven Urkowitz has criticised New Bibliographers (W. W. Greg, E. K. Chambers, J. Dover Wilson, Peter Alexander, Alice Walker) for refusing to accept that Shakespeare himself may have revised his texts and that theatrical adaptation was authorial and not a form of corruption. Urkowitz criticised modern editors for being too narrow-minded: 'When, for example, we compare the textual analyses offered in the New Variorum *Hamlet*, brought out by Horace Howard Furness in 1877, with the discussions of the same subject found in the

Whilst integral translation may have been appropriate in the early 1980s when Jenkins and Edwards were creating their conflated editions of *Hamlet*,³⁴ it is my argument that the continuing translation of these conflated editions in Germany points to a lack of currency in the editorial research of modern Shakespeare translators. As long as translators in Germany continue to translate integrally, following eclectic editions, I do not think that German readers will become aware of the textual constitution of *Hamlet*, and will remain unreceptive to theories of textual plurality and authorial revision. I have not witnessed any attempt to differentiate Folio and Quarto lines in translations with the aim of producing discrete rather than eclectic translations. Because Frank Günther's translations (based on Jenkins' Arden Edition) contain copious footnotes, it has been argued that it is irrelevant that the translation is eclectic. By reading the notes, the reader is said to become aware of the existence of discrete texts.³⁵ But regardless of the number of footnotes, I believe that if a translation is a collation of textual material, it will always give the impression of being a unitary text.

New Arden *Hamlet* edited by Harold Jenkins in 1982, we find the new bibliographer irresponsibly contentious, narrowly dogmatic, and theatrically naïve where the old one displays an even-handed appreciation of opposing views, a scientific willingness to explore apparent contradictions between theory and observation, and a fine theatrical sensibility.' See Steven Urkowitz, "Well-sayd olde Mole": Burying Three *Hamlets* in Modern Editions'. *Shakespeare Study Today*, ed. Georgianna Ziegler (New York: AMS Press, 1986), pp. 37-70, esp. p. 68.

³⁴ Jenkins writes: 'There has been too much irresponsible conjecture about Shakespeare's supposed revisions of supposed earlier attempts. My conception of Shakespeare is of a supremely inventive poet who had no call to rework his previous plays when he could always move on to a new one.' See *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 5; Philip Edwards has written: 'This ideal version of the play does not exist in either the two main authoritative texts, the Second Quarto and the Folio, but somewhere between them.' See Edwards (p. 32).

³⁵ Since the reader has access to a wealth of information in the annotations to this translation, it is not significant, states Wolfgang Wicht, that the translation itself is eclectic. See Wolfgang Wicht, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 132 (1996), 295-302. here p. 296.

The Oxford and Cambridge editions of Shakespeare have never been used to the same extent by translators as the Arden Edition has. German translators of *Hamlet* since the early 1980s have invariably used Harold Jenkins' text as a basis for their translations. In 2002 the third Arden Edition of *Hamlet* will be published by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor.³⁶ Like previous editions, this will be an eclectic text, based on the Second Quarto, with lines interpolated from the Folio. The innovation of this edition is that it will consist of two volumes, the second volume containing modernised editions of the First Quarto and the Folio. This will be the first time that Arden has recognised the independent status of the Folio of *Hamlet*.

The editors of the Arden Edition have not gone as far as to print the Folio *Hamlet* in isolation from the other texts, and in this respect the first volume of this new two-volume *Hamlet* will reflect the textual constitution of previous editions. However, the publication of the second part (First Folio and First Quarto) may be seen as a final acknowledgement of the existence of three discrete texts, and an indication of how future editors of the Arden Shakespeare will frame their modernised texts. As Thompson writes: '...we need to decide on what grounds we can – or cannot – justify the production of yet another conflated text of *Hamlet*. Is there an academic justification as well as the publisher's perfectly understandable commercial one?'³⁷

The strength of the Arden Edition is the density of its footnotes, which would have to be reduced if the play were printed in two volumes. Although Routledge is reluctant

³⁶ This new edition of the Arden *Hamlet* is discussed in Richard Proudfoot's *Shakespeare: Text, Stage and Canon* (London: Arden, 2001), p. 28; See also the discussion of the editorial problems surrounding the construction of the new Arden *Hamlet* in Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, "O that this too too xxx text would melt": *Hamlet* and the indecisions of modern editors and publishers', *Text*, 10 (1999), 221-236, here p. 223.

³⁷ Thompson and Taylor (p. 223).

to publish two volumes of the same play, Thompson stresses the difficulty now of publishing a textual ‘monster’ in conflated form. She argues that it is arrogant to: ‘graft and bolt sizeable sections of one text on to another, effectively creating a monster – a new play not by Shakespeare, which tells a new story, significantly different from the stories told by Q1, Q2 and F.’³⁸ It seems obvious that the translators’ standard edition of *Hamlet* will soon be superseded by the format that Oxford and Cambridge publishers have been using for almost twenty years now.

Since the Arden *Hamlet* appears to have more appeal for translators than either the Oxford or Cambridge editions, this new move towards discrete texts of the play is bound to have a direct effect on the translators who use this new bi-partite edition of *Hamlet* as a basis for translation. German *Hamlet* translators after 2002 that use Thompson’s edition will be working from a very different perspective on Shakespeare’s work, and the resulting translations will begin to reflect these changes in the ontology of the play. In fact, it is difficult to imagine how translators will be able to avoid the influence of the discrete texts of *Hamlet* if the three texts of the play continue to assert their independence.

Hamlet is not a source text with clearly defined textual margins. It is no longer recognised as a text or even a work, but has come to exist now as a methodological field. Any number of permutations may be generated out of the existing textual material. I feel that the changes in the way we perceive *Hamlet* will eventually influence the form of translations and also change the nature of translation. Shakespeare translations will increasingly become not the faithful reiteration of a

³⁸ Thompson and Taylor (p. 230).

source text but the creation of a new text. *Hamlet* is ‘untranslatable’ because our notion of what constitutes *Hamlet* has become so uncertain.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

In the present chapter I have focussed on just three moments in the play that exemplify *Hamlet*’s tragic non-conformity: the inconsistent characterisation in the Closet Scene, the lengthy disappearance of Hamlet in Act 4, and the un-economical ordering of scenes in the final act. What I think needs to be emphasised here is that the problem for the translators had nothing to do with the conversion of Shakespeare’s English into modern German. Rather, there was a feeling that the translator had lost the ‘artistic totality’ of the work at these points in the play, and that the translator’s task was to re-establish this lost totality.

This is not to say that all drama must follow the Aristotelian blueprint, but the fact remains that *Hamlet* falls apart as soon as translators subject it to the pressure of translation, which may suggest something about a weakness in the very composition of *Hamlet*, or in the *Hamlet* that we have constructed. There appears to be no conceptual unity in this work, and this is something that often serves as a lifeline for translators working their way through a difficult text. What may be referred to as ‘getting a handle’ on the play, proves to be impossible with *Hamlet*. In order to translate this play, I argue that translators need to re-think their notions of ‘correct’ text and the function of translation as a re-iteration of this text.

Furthermore, I believe that Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet* has made translators believe in the possibility of getting close to the original in another language. Translators have felt that it was possible to experience more of the original work through eclectic translations than through what have been regarded as somehow 'incomplete' texts of the play in English. Because of Schlegel, readers and audiences in Germany really begin to imagine that what they are hearing is something original archetypal and whole. The distinction between translation and original elides, and it is forgotten that Schlegel's translation is a product of its time, linguistically and artistically. The traditional view that the 'correct' *Hamlet* is accessible through the right combination of texts and the correct translation has been reinforced over the years by the canonisation of Schlegel's *Hamlet*.

However, if we look carefully at the way Schlegel's *Hamlet* was composed, it becomes clear that this translation, far from being the German transmutation of the Shakespearean original, is in fact a conglomeration of editorial rewrites, emendations and conjectures. In the following chapter I will 'unpack' Schlegel's *Hamlet* and I will demonstrate that the interposition of editors between Shakespeare and Schlegel has produced a translation that has absolutely no claim to be a faithful representation of the original work.

3. THE INTERPOSITION OF THE EDITOR BETWEEN SHAKESPEARE AND HIS TRANSLATORS

Hamlet exists for us today only as an imperfectly preserved collection of texts that have been continually rewritten by generations of editors. In every Shakespearean work, from the unstable texts of *King Lear* and *Hamlet* to the more settled text of *As You Like It*, there is a proportion of the text that is attributable to Shakespeare's editors rather than to the author. Whilst I do not dispute the value or the necessity of editorial attempts to complete and perfect *Hamlet*, what I think needs to be questioned is the way in which claims for a translation's fidelity to the original are based on lines in that original that have no authorial authority. When Ludwig Fulda claimed that Schlegel's translations were 'our' Shakespeare, he was attributing authority to a collection of translations whose source texts were themselves of dispersed authority.

The interposition of editors between Shakespeare and Schlegel has created an editorial and 'translatorial' construction of *Hamlet* that served as an authoritative translation for all subsequent Shakespeare translations in the twentieth century. Through Schlegel's translation and the English texts, editorial emendations have found their way into every new translation. Translation theorist Dirk Delabastita has argued that more attention needs to be paid to the ways in which translations are shaped by the editorial constructions of the source texts:

Translators usually prefer to start from the current critical editions of Shakespeare's texts rather than from the original quartos and folios. This means that many

translations somewhat belatedly reflect trends in English text editing [...] In fact, the dependence of translations on critical editions prompts certain fundamental questions about the identity and stability of the source texts insofar as the changing editorial and critical traditions continue to interpose themselves between the elusive Elizabethan Shakespeare and his translator.¹

Although translators claim that they do not translate editorial emendations and conjectures, the practice is somewhat different. For example, Elisabeth Plessen stated in her interview:

Interpretation is a personal activity of the translator and it should not become part of the translation. It is a tragedy of translations, such as those by Günther, that obscurities and riddles in the source text are explained, and this prevents the free rein of the audience's imagination.²

Maik Hamburger argued that interpretive cruxes couldn't be translated to incorporate all editorial conjectures of previous generations that have accreted around a word or phrase. He remarked that: '...you find that English philologists cannot decide what the text means and a translator certainly cannot translate all of the indecision of the philologists.'³ But in this chapter I shall focus on how a number of lines in *Hamlet* that contain the indecision of editors have been transmitted to translations of the play in German. I shall examine how translators such as Elisabeth Plessen and Maik Hamburger have been unable to avoid incorporating editorial indecisions into their translations, thus doing precisely what they claim not to.

¹ *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. Mona Baker (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 224.

² Appendix (p. 320).

³ Appendix (p. 347).

Translation Studies has tended to focus on loss in translation caused by interlingual non-equivalence.⁴ The problem of translating the Shakespearean text into a target language has been bound up with problems of a linguistic nature, that is to say ‘locutionary’ and ‘illocutionary’ non-equivalence.⁵ Translation theorists largely accept the source text as a given rather than questioning its composition, which is my intention in the present chapter. In the present chapter I will ‘unpack’ some recent *Hamlet* translations to reveal the separate strands of editorial traditions that have formed those new versions and link them with older translations and editions.

The *Hamlet* text that most German readers and audiences know is a conglomeration of rewrites by Warburton, Malone, Theobald, Dover Wilson, Jenkins, Wieland, Schlegel, Schlegel’s wife Karoline, and Heiner Müller. My argument that *Hamlet* is untranslatable is supported by the ways in which generations of editors have ‘translated’ *Hamlet* in English and the way editors have made *Hamlet* more ‘translatable’ for German translators by rewriting the text and constructing a source text that facilitates this transposition into the target language.

3.1 Translating Editorial Emendations

“O that this too too sullied flesh would melt” (1.2.129)

⁴ The translation process *between* languages, as opposed to *intralingual* translation, the translation processes that are going on all the time *within* a language every time we communicate. The concepts *were* developed and the terms defined by Roman Jakobson in his essay, ‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’, in R. A. Brower (ed.), *On Translation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), pp. 232-9, here p. 15.

⁵ Basically the difference between verbal and non-verbal equivalence. The terms are defined in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (pp. 77-80).

It sometimes occurs that an editor alters a word to improve the sense (as he understands it), even though the word is supported by textual authority in all three substantive texts. The editor will do this if he suspects that earlier editors and compositors misread the word in their copy-texts. By emending a word, the editor hopes to restore sense and logic to the corrupted line. Once an editorial emendation acquires authority by popular usage, it becomes rooted in the imagination and transferred to later translations.

At the start of Hamlet's first soliloquy we hear the Prince uttering the line: 'O that this too too solid flesh would melt' (1.2.129). Editors have offered numerous reasons for their choices of 'solid' (Folio), 'sallied' (First and Second Quartos), or 'sullied' (Dover Wilson).⁶ In the twentieth century this line was one of the most debated points of the text, and some have gone as far as to say that this crux will never be solved.⁷ It was suggested in Furness's *Variorum* (1877) that 'sallied' meant 'sullied', and this conjecture was defended by Dowden in 1899.⁸ However, this reading never captured

⁶ John Dover Wilson argues that 'sallied' resulted from an 'a:u' misreading, and that it could not be used transitively. See *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet and the Problems of Its Transmission* (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 307-8. Wilson also argues that the 'griev'd' of Q1 suggests that the word had to be a past participle (p. 309). 'Sallied' could have been the true reading based on the other use of 'sallies' at 2.1.39 and in *Love's Labour's Lost* at 5.2.352.

⁷ 'When the linguistic material or evidence points in more than one direction, the philologist should present every alternative interpretation that is historically and contextually feasible without, as a rule, committing himself further than to indicate a preference [...] The crux *solid-sallied* is an excellent case in point. It defies an unequivocal solution, because the phonological evidence is ambiguous, as is the context [...] It is either *solid* or *sullied* and will therefore probably remain a bone of contention among critics till the end of time.' Helge Kökeritz, 'The Sullied Solid Flesh', *Studia Neophilologica*, 30 (1958), 3-10, here p. 4.

⁸ *The Variorum Shakespeare. Hamlet* vol 1, ed. Horace Howard Furness (London & Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1879); Dover Wilson admits that he was 'unwittingly reviving a suggestion made by the novelist George Macdonald in 1885 and independently put forward by Dowden in his Arden Edition of 1899. See *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet*, vol. 2 (p. 307); Malcolm Ware draws attention to the fact that it was Tennyson, in a letter to F. J. Furnivall in 1883, who first suggested the emendation. Tennyson wrote that *sullied* would be a possible reading, i.e. 'sullied as it were thru the sin of the mother'. though he preferred *solid* because it corresponded better with 'melt' and 'resolve'. Tennyson

the imagination of readers of the play until John Dover Wilson renewed the argument in 1918. He suggested that Q2's 'sallied' meant 'sullied', which fits the context of the speech far more effectively, in which Hamlet laments the corruptibility of the soul by the polluted flesh.⁹ But why does any particular editorial emendation become established in the public imagination and what governs the duration of its popularity? The debate over 'solid-sullied-sallied' was at its most intense in the 1930s and although the debate has now moved to other points in the text, Dover Wilson's 'sullied' remains authoritative and was used by Harold Jenkins in his 1982 edition, although rejected more recently by Hibbard and Edwards.

John Dover Wilson's letters to the *Times Literary Supplement* on his defence of 'sullied' provoked a heated debate in 1918 and then again in 1935. On 16 May 1918 Dover Wilson wrote to the editor that *sally* was a misprint of *sully*. *Solid* makes sense in the context, but *sullied* is superior from a dramatic point of view.¹⁰ The debate was taken up again in the press in 1928, when Dover Wilson suggested that 'sullied flesh' was a reference to 'besmirched snow'.¹¹ There the debate rested until 27 December

concludes the letter with the comment: 'I may add that I have seen in my own unrevised proof sheets quite as uncouth misprints as 'sallied' for 'solid'.' See Malcolm Ware, 'Hamlet's Sullied/Solid Flesh', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 11 (1960), p. 490.

⁹ Dover Wilson, *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet*, vol 2 (pp. 307-15).

¹⁰ *Solid*, wrote Dover Wilson: 'is a piece of dirt which has got into the text and hidden the splendour of the original'. On 18 July 1918, W. D. Sargeant wrote that *sallied* was equivalent to 'sallied upon' as 'death-practis'd' (*King Lear*, 4.6.284) is to 'death-practis'd-upon'. When Hamlet says that his flesh is sallied, he means that it is 'sallied upon' by the 'thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to'. On 5 September of that year Dover Wilson wrote again to the editor, objecting to *sallied* because it suggested a military operation, and because the verb 'sally' could only be used intransitively.

¹¹ On 4 October 1928 J. W. Mackail described how it was possible that *sallied* was a variant of *solid* as a result of intermediate spelling variations, since *sallied* could be spelled *salid*, and *solid* could be spelled *sollide*. On 18 October Dover Wilson criticised Mackail, claiming that there was something incongruous about *solid flesh*, whereas 'sullied' flesh gives the impression of besmirched snow. On 25 October L. J. Potts argued that the image of sullied snow melting was too logical and perfect and that Shakespeare was not perfect. Shakespeare's metaphors were often confused and unstable, so the *solid flesh* image is less perfect but more appropriate to the way the dramatist thought. On 1 November 1928 Dover

1934, when G. M. Young wrote to the editor of the *TLS*, raising the question of whether Shakespeare could ever have told his landlady: 'Take this *too too* roasted duck away, and bring me something fit to eat'.¹² If so, then Hamlet could also have wished that his 'too too' sullied flesh would melt. What is interesting is that by 1934 the debate had taken a different turn and critics were now considering the *solid-sullied* crux within the context of the surrounding words.¹³

German translators of the nineteenth century had never considered the possibility that Hamlet could be referring to his flesh as 'sullied', and had followed Schlegel's translation of the Folio text and its reading of 'solid' flesh.¹⁴ However, after Dover Wilson's emendation to 'sullied' in the Cambridge Edition of 1935, this reading of

Wilson wrote that he agreed with Potts that Shakespeare's mind did not work logically, but that his imagery was also highly vivid, and that this was the case with 'sullied' flesh, but not with 'solid' flesh. On 15 November Mark Hunter argued that Hamlet must be referring to his *flesh's* being literally sullied and not to his soul, since his desire to commit suicide, itself a sin, would not be any solution to a sullied soul. On 22 November Wilhelm Marschall suggested that according to Joseph Wright's *Dialect Dictionary* *sally* meant to 'rock a boat from side to side', and this was what Hamlet meant: life has tossed him back and forth and now he has had enough and wants to get off. On 21 March 1929 Gavin Bone argued that *sallied* was a phonetic spelling of *solid*. Many words in English at this time were rhymed with an *a* and an *o* sound. What was likely, stated Bone, was that the actor heard *sallied* (*solid*) and spelled it phonetically, and that the compositor of Q1 then normalised the spelling, thinking it was *sallied*.

¹² On 3 January 1935 Dover Wilson wrote that he saw no reason why Shakespeare could not have asked Mistress Quickly to remove the 'too too' roasted duck, though she would have responded that he was probably speaking a little old-fashioned. On 10 January W. L. Renwick rejected Dover Wilson's assertion that 'too too' was archaic, and on 24 January Dover Wilson wrote for the last time to state that although archaic, 'too too' could also be used with a participle like 'sullied'.

¹³ What becomes evident from tracing this debate in the *Times Literary Supplement* is that the debate in 1935 was different from the one in 1918. Initially, those writing to the *TLS* had been concerned with the form 'sallied/solid' as a word in isolation from the rest of the text. When the debate was taken up again in 1935 it is clear that as much ground had been covered as possible. The debate had reached saturation point and no new ideas were developing to explain this crux. It was at this time that critics were beginning to look more at the words surrounding 'sallied/solid', such as 'too too', and to consider how this construction may have been used. During the course of this long debate, which lasted almost twenty years, the discussion abandoned 'sallied/solid' almost completely and focused instead on 'too too'. The letters of 1935 were generated by Dover Wilson's original statement in 1918, but they dealt less and less with this crux as thoughts on the matter ran dry and critical attention turned to a new problem.

the word began to find its way into translations. In the 1960s Hans Rothe and Rudolf Schaller used the words 'besudelt' and 'befleckt' to translate Dover Wilson's 'sullied', and in 1971 Wolfgang Swaczynna also translated the word as 'befleckt'. Swaczynna insisted that Hamlet could only have meant that his flesh was sullied.¹⁵ But as with others, who have argued that 'sullied' is the obvious reading, it was never obvious until Dover Wilson pointed it out.

In 1988 Frank Günther used the word 'beschmutzt' (sullied, befouled) in his translation,¹⁶ and in 1996 Reinhard Palm understood the importance of Hamlet's disgust at his sullied flesh and used the colloquial word 'angesaut', meaning 'filthy' or 'messy'.¹⁷ The majority of translators have adopted the Folio's 'solid' as the more authoritative reading, no doubt influenced by Schlegel's version. Although Richard Flatter accepted the greater authority of the Folio reading and translated 'solid' as 'fest' in his translation, he nevertheless questioned whether Dover Wilson might not in fact have been right.¹⁸ Although Dover Wilson's emendation of 'sallied/solid' to 'sullied' had begun to acquire support from 1934 in England, it was not until 1960 that this reading became established in Germany. The growing popularity that 'sullied' has in German today is, I believe, traceable to Hans Rothe's use of 'befleckt'

¹⁴ Schlegel: 'O schmelze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch.'

¹⁵ 'Hamlet could not have been talking about 'solid' flesh. It doesn't make any sense and, besides, solid flesh cannot melt. Hamlet was talking about his sullied flesh [...] I cannot interpret it any other way.' See Appendix (p. 334); Swaczynna states in his notes that 'sallied' is a misprint for 'sullied' and this is supported by Q1 where 'too much griev'd and solid flesh' would have been impossible. See Swaczynna, *Erläuterungen* (p. 28).

¹⁶ Günther: 'O daß dies all-allzu beschmutzte Fleisch / Doch scmolz.'

¹⁷ Palm: 'Schmilz weg, du angesautes Fleisch.'

¹⁸ Flatter also writes that when he was working on his *Hamlet* translation in 1936, he consulted Dover Wilson's *The Manuscript of Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'* carefully, but he felt obliged to surmount the obstacle of Wilson's authority that stood in his way. He believed that the Folio provided the greatest textual authority, and thus translated the crux with *solid*. But he also admits that 'I felt somewhat uncertain.' See Richard Flatter, "'Solid" or "Sullied", and another Query', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 11 (1960), 490-95, here p. 491.

in his translation of the early 1960s, and his support of the Cambridge Edition as an authoritative source text for translation.

“He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice” (1.1.66)

Looking back much earlier than the editorial emendations of John Dover Wilson, we find numerous cases of where emendations by Edmond Malone¹⁹ have found their way into translations of the twentieth century. Malone’s edition of *Hamlet* would have been the most authoritative text of the play in 1798, and we know that Schlegel would not translate Shakespeare unless he possessed the most up-to-date editions of the plays in English.²⁰ Although Schlegel relied on Malone to help him interpret many lines in the play, he was under no illusion that Malone, or indeed any editor, had solved all of the text’s problems and created the authentic Shakespearean text.²¹ Nevertheless, there are numerous points in Schlegel’s translation of *Hamlet*, which are transparent enough for us to see where a rendering of Schlegel’s corresponds more to Malone’s conjecture than to Schlegel’s own interpretation of that line. It is clear that Schlegel at these points was struggling to make sense of the text, and relied

¹⁹ *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, ed. Edmond Malone, vol. 9 (1790).

²⁰ In his letter to Heinrich Voß (2 October, 1807) we learn that Schlegel had spent the summer walking in Switzerland and was about to head for Germany to relax for the winter. In Germany he did not have the latest editions of Shakespeare and so was unable to continue with the translations. See *Briefe von und an A. W. Schlegel*, ed. Josef Körner (Zürich; Leipzig; Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1930), p. 209.

²¹ Schlegel wrote: ‘Of a hundred readers of the German Shakespeare, barely ten can understand some English; of the ten, there is scarcely one with a thorough understanding of Shakespeare. And so one cannot use the annotations without the English original for comparison, and not one of your compact travelling Shakespeares, but a multi-volume edition with many annotations. How many German readers are equipped with so much knowledge and means?’ Schlegel also notes: ‘Tieck declares all previous Shakespeare editions of the last century to be bad and states that it is at last time to resurrect the real text out of this corruption’. I would be curious to see this ‘real text.’ See Schlegel’s letter to his publisher, Georg Reimer (no date, probably 1830s), cited in *August Wilhelm Schlegel. Sprache und Poetik*, vol. 1, ‘Kritische Schriften und Briefe’, ed. Edgar Lohner (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1962), p. 266.

on the judgements of others. At these points the editor became interposed between Shakespeare and Schlegel.

Malone's conjectures reveal the editor's presence in his edition of the play, and subsequently the presence of Malone in Schlegel's translation. For example, we owe the word 'Polacks' ('He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice', 1.1.66) to Malone, who was not content with the spelling 'Pollax' of the Second Quarto and the Folio. Schlegel adopted Malone's emendation in his translation, and thus we find the word 'Polacken'. Malone's 'Polacks' can now be found as Wolff's 'Polacken', Josten's 'Polack' and Hauptmann and Palm's 'Polacken'. Interestingly, Friedrich Gundolf felt that Schlegel's line was in need of improvement. He understood 'Pollax' as a type of axe and imagined King Hamlet to be wielding some kind of instrument of war, and thus translated the line: 'So dräut' er einst, als in erzürnter Zwiesprach / Er auf das Eis die wuchtige Streitaxt warf'. But Gundolf's reading of the line did not become popular and translators remained divided over the spelling of the word, but agreed that it referred to Hamlet's battle against the Poles.

"Breathing like sanctified and pious bonds" (1.3.130)

When Ophelia reveals to her father that Hamlet has been expressing his affection for her, Polonius condemns the relationship, urging his daughter not to trust the Prince, who is more than likely to hurt her. Polonius describes Hamlet's vows of love as 'mere implorators of unholy suits, / Breathing like sanctified and pious *bonds* / The better to beguile' (1.3.129-31). Both the Second Quarto and the Folio texts contain the word 'bonds', which Theobald emended to 'bawds'. Theobald preferred 'bawds'

because he felt that it corresponded better to the sense of the overall passage, where Hamlet's vows are compared to brokers and implorators. He argued that it was difficult to imagine how 'bonds' could breathe,²² whereas 'bawds' was consistent thematically with 'brokers' and 'implorators' (1.3.127, 129).

Both Warburton and Malone had taken the view that Polonius was talking about 'bonds' as 'oaths',²³ which accounts for why Wieland and Schlegel both used the word 'Gelübde' in their translations. Many translators since Schlegel have followed this interpretation of 'bonds' as 'vows',²⁴ but Theobald's emendation found its way into many translations of the twentieth century. Wolff translated the 'vows' as 'hypocrites', Hauptmann and Palm as 'bawds', Günther as 'pimps' and Fried as 'scoundrels'.²⁵ Translators of the latter half of the twentieth century, such as Günther and Palm, transmitted Theobald's emendation through Harold Jenkins' text, but earlier translators, such as Wolff and Hauptmann, were writing at a time when Schlegel's translation was still regarded as authoritative, and converting 'pious bonds' to 'pious bawds' was a greater leap in translation at the time. What is clear is that the 'pious bonds' of the Folio and Second Quarto has lost authority over the last

²² Theobald wrote: 'what idea can we form of a "breathing *bond*", or of its being *sanctified* or *pious*. As amorous vows have just been called "brokers" and "implorators of unholy suits", the plain and natural sense suggests an easy emendation: *bawds*. And this correction is strengthened by the concluding phrase, "the better to beguile".' Quoted by Furness, *Variorum* (p. 74).

²³ Furness cites Warburton's paraphrase of these lines: 'Do not believe Hamlet's amorous vows made *to you*; which pretend religion in them (*the better to beguile*), like those sanctified and pious vows (or *bonds*) made *to heaven*' (Note 132, p. 75).

²⁴ Schlegel: 'frommen, heiligen Gelübden'; Schaller: 'fromm wie heilige Gelübde'; Josten: 'frommen, heiligen Gelübden'; Flatter: 'Tugendsam-fromme Reden'; Swaczynna: 'frommen heiligen Sprüchen'; Hamburger: 'fromm und gottesfürchtig Verse.'

²⁵ Wolff: 'Scheinheil'ge Heuchler, fromme Däfte hauchend'; Hauptmann: 'scheinheilige buhlerinnen'; Fried: 'Die hauchen wie scheinheilig fromme Schurken'; Günther: 'fromme heiligtuende Kuppler'; Palm: 'frömmlicherischer Buhler.'

fifty years in Germany, and it is now Theobald's rewriting of this line that constitutes the authoritative *Hamlet* for today's German audiences.

"Being a good kissing carrion" (2.2.182)

In his first conversation with Polonius Hamlet makes an oblique reference to Ophelia's chastity: 'For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good kissing carrion – Have you a daughter?' (2.2.181–82). The 'good kissing carrion' of the Second Quarto and Folio was emended by Warburton in 1747 to 'a *God* kissing carrion'. According to Warburton,²⁶ the sun was God, who shed his heat and light on everything alike, but when this fell on carrion, it caused maggots to breed.²⁷ Johnson praised this emendation, and it was also defended by later editors.²⁸ Malone also adopted Warburton's emendation of 'god', but he argued that it was the carrion kissing the sun, rather than the sun kissing the carrion.

A 'god kissing carrion' has gained a strong reputation and critical support in Germany. The first translator of *Hamlet* in German was Wieland, who produced his translation in 1766. He used the most current English edition, which was Warburton's (1747),²⁹ and thus translated Warburton's emendation literally. This emendation also found its way into Schlegel's 1798 translation as 'Denn wenn die Sonne Maden in

²⁶ *The Works of Shakespeare*, ed. William Warburton, vol. 8 (1747).

²⁷ See Furness' *Variorum* (p. 146).

²⁸ Hudson: 'God is probably right. A great deal of ink has been spent in trying to explain the passage; but the true explanation is, that it is not meant to be understood. Hamlet is merely bantering and tantalizing the old man.' Cited in Furness (p. 149).

²⁹ Annette Leithner-Braun writes: 'On account of the mistakes and emendations of his translation, which can be traced back to the unreliable Pope-Warburton Edition of 1747. Wieland's translations were not received with enthusiasm by critics and fellow writers at the time.' See *Shakespeares Wortwiederholungen und Schlüsselwörter in deutschen Übersetzungen* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 1994), p. 22.

einem toten Hund ausbrütet: eine *Gottheit*, die Aas küßt – habt Ihr eine Tochter?’ The transmission of this emendation followed two routes: Schlegel would have read Wieland’s translation, the most authoritative translation at the time, and he also used Malone’s edition (1790),³⁰ which likewise adopted Warburton’s emendation of this line.

Warburton’s emendation was transmitted through Wieland’s translation and Malone’s edition into Schlegel’s translation and from there to most subsequent translations. Fried, Palm, Müller, Klein and Plessen all understood the line as Warburton had rewritten it.³¹ Gustav Wolff, the first *Hamlet* translator of the twentieth century, rendered the line as ‘Denn wenn die Sonne Maden in einem toten Hund ausbrütet, wenn eine Gottheit sich herbeiläßt, ein Aas zu küssen – habt ihr eine Tochter?’ This translates back as ‘When the sun breeds maggots in a dead dog, when a god deigns to kiss a carrion – have you a daughter?’ We see here how an editor’s emendation *becomes* the received text, and how the translator’s task concerns not only the problem of translating what Shakespeare wrote but also what his editors wrote. The translator not only has to struggle with what Shakespeare wrote, but with everything that editors have written as well, and this is why, in my view, translators should

³⁰ Margaret Atkinson writes: ‘Any of the seventeen plays [by Shakespeare that Schlegel translated] could be taken as an illustration of the general accuracy and felicity of the rendering. There are no major deviations. Scene by scene, speech by speech, and often line by line, the text as he had it in Malone’s edition is reproduced with remarkable exactitude.’ See Margaret Edith Atkinson, *August Wilhelm Schlegel as a Translator of Shakespeare. A Comparison of Three Plays with the Original* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958), p. 7.

³¹ Fried: ‘Denn wenn die Sonne in einem toten Hund Maden ausbrütet, wo doch die Sonne ein Gott ist, der Aas küßt – Habt Ihr eine Tochter?’; Palm: ‘Denn wenn die Sonne Maden in einer toten Hündin ausbrütet, das heisst eine aasküssende Gottheit ist – Habt Ihr eine Tochter?’; Müller: ‘Denn wenn die Sonne Maden brütet in einem toten Hund, ein Gott, der Aas küßt...haben Sie eine Tochter?’; Klein: ‘Denn wenn die Sonne Maden hervorbrütet in einem toten Hunde, also ein Gott, der Aas küßt...Habt Ihr eine Tochter?’; Plessen: ‘Wenn die Sonne Maden in einem toten Hund ausbrütet, ein Gott, der Aas küßt - Haben Sie eine Tochter?’; Zadek: ‘Wenn die Sonne in einem toten Hund Maden ausbrütet, ein Gott, der eine

examine the constitution of the edition they are using as a source text, in order to identify where problems of translation have been created by editors.

There have been translators that have challenged Warburton's emendation on the grounds that it has no textual authority. Gundolf, Schaller, Swaczynna, Josten and Kollakowsky believed that the Folio and Second Quarto had most authority and translated the line with 'good kissing carrion'.³² However, in the majority of cases Warburton's conjecture reached modern translators through Schlegel's translation via Wieland and Malone. Because Schlegel's translation became canonised, Warburton's emendation influenced generations of translators in Germany, the last being Elisabeth Plessen in 1999.

We can see the power that canonisation has on future translations by comparing Warburton's emendation of 'god kissing carrion' with another of his emendations, which did not survive. When the distracted Ophelia appears in Act 4, singing her ballads, Laertes is distraught. In the Folio he says: 'Nature is *fine* in love, and where 'tis *fine* / It sends some precious instance of itself / After the thing it loves' (4.5.161-163). In his edition Warburton stated that what Shakespeare really wrote was that Nature is 'fallen' in love ('Nature is *fal'n* in love, and where 'tis *fal'n*...'). In a

Leiche küßt: - haben Sie eine Tochter?'; Hauptmann 'Denn wenn die Sonne Maden in einem toten Hund ausbrütet: eine Gottheit, die Aas küßt – habt Ihr eine Tochter?'

³² Gundolf: 'Denn wenn die Sonne Maden in einem toten Hunde erzeugt, der ein schön zu küssendes Aas ist – Habt Ihr eine Tochter?'; Schaller: 'Denn wenn die Sonne Maden in einem toten Hunde erzeugt, / einem zum Küssen guten Aase – habt Ihr eine Tochter?'; Swaczynna: 'Nun wenn die Sonne in einem toten Hund Maden ausbrütet, und so ein Fleisch läßt sich gut küssen'; Josten: 'Denn, wenn die Sonne Maden in einem toten Hund ausbrütet, der ein schön zu küssendes Aas ist...Habt Ihr eine Tochter?'; Kollakowsky: 'Denn wenn die Sonne Maden in einem toten Köter ausbrütet, ein Köder, der sich gerne küssen läßt – Habt Ihr eine Tochter?'; Günther: 'Denn wo ein Kuß der züchtigen Sonne ja schon Maden erzeugt in jedem toten Hund, der ja auch ein sehr küßbares Aas ist – apropos, haben Sie eine Tochter?'

footnote Warburton explained that 'Nature' meant 'natural affection', referring to the love Ophelia had for her father. This type of natural affection had been destroyed by Ophelia's sexual love for Hamlet, and thus her Nature was 'fallen'.

This emendation was carried over into Wieland's translation in the line: 'Die Natur ist in Liebe *verfallen*, und sendet dem geliebten Gegenstand das Kostbarste was sie hat zum Andenken nach' (4.7). By 1798 Schlegel had come to the conclusion that Wieland's emendation was probably wrong, and that Malone's defence of the Folio's 'fine' was more acceptable. Schlegel thus followed Malone in his literal rendering of 'fine' as 'fein': 'Natur ist *fein* im Lieben: wo sie *fein* ist...' Since it was Schlegel's translation that became canonised and not Wieland's, Warburton's emendation did not survive beyond the eighteenth century, and no subsequent translator has described Ophelia's nature as 'fallen'. However, Warbuton's emendation of 'God kissing carrion' *did* survive to become the established line in German translations of *Hamlet*, because this emendation was canonised in Schlegel's translation.

Many translators have been convinced of the authority of Polonius' 'bawds' and Hamlet's 'God kissing carrion' even though they have no textual authority, and there is complete concordance between the Folio and Second Quarto. What these examples show is that editorial emendations (such as those of Theobald and Warburton) can acquire more authority than the substantive texts, and that a translation (Schlegel's) can be invested with more authority by subsequent translators than the original texts in English. The rewriting of the text as 'our' Hamlet is based on a collusion of editors and translators.

3.2 Resolving Semantic Obscurities

*“The dram of eale / Doth all the noble substance of a doubt / To his own scandal”
(1.4.36-8)*

When the three substantive texts offer variant forms of a single line, this is often seen as a reason to fuse these alternatives together to force some sense into the line, generating the ideal form, which must have been Shakespeare’s intention. But it happens that in the process of transmission texts do disintegrate and words, or parts of words, are lost. Editors attempt to restore what must have been the word, but usually with unsatisfactory results. A clear example of this type of problem can be found at the end of Hamlet’s speech in which he describes how a ‘vicious mole of nature’ can detract from all the other noble qualities in a man (1.4.36-8). Jenkins has written that this is probably the most famous crux in the whole of Shakespeare’s works.³³

Shortly before Hamlet first sees the Ghost, he complains to Horatio about the drinking habits of the King and of the Danes generally. This leads him to an analogy by which he explains that a small flaw in a man’s character will devalue whatever else there is good in him. Hamlet’s speech about the ‘vicious mole of nature’, which only occurs in the Second Quarto, is concluded with the line: ‘The dram of eale / Doth all the noble substance of a doubt / To his own scandal’ (1.4.36-38). The sense of these lines is that the smallest drop of evil will obscure an otherwise flawless nature, and it continues the theme developed throughout this speech. Jenkins assures us that: ‘The one thing we can be certain of is that the printer did not understand what he set up. Yet the general sense is clear: the small amount of evil in some way gets

³³ Jenkins, *Hamlet* (p. 449).

the better of “the noble substance”³⁴ The sense is clear, provided that we do not get too close to the text and begin to pressurise it with questions and doubts. When we do, the sense breaks down completely and we lose all certainty of the words written. Unfortunately, this is the inevitable effect of translation.³⁵

Editors have remained undecided about the words ‘eale/evil’. In his 1773 edition Charles Jennens emended the Q2-‘eale’ to ‘evil’ and Malone, adhering to the sense of ‘evil’, but changing the word itself, emended ‘eale’ to ‘base’. This became the received version of the line in Schlegel’s translation of the words as ‘der Gran von Schlechtem’ (literally, the ‘grain of base’). German translators of the twentieth century all translated the Malone-Schlegel emendation, but with various synonyms: ‘Schlecht’ (Gundolf, Wolff, Josten), ‘Böse’ (Schaller, Fried, Günther), ‘Übel’ (Klein, Palm), ‘Schlimm’ (Hamburger). Both Flatter and Swaczynna believed that the lines were too corrupt and that it did not make any sense to force meaning into this corrupt passage, and so they omitted it from their translations.³⁶

Editors have struggled to establish the form of the word ‘dout’ and its intended sense, and the elucidation of editors has interposed itself between the original dramatic

³⁴ Jenkins, *Hamlet* (p. 451).

³⁵ There have been numerous explanations for the occurrence of this obscure line. James Nosworthy has suggested that Shakespeare may have submitted to his fellow actors an incomplete text to be developed in production, or as Nosworthy writes, ‘surrendered in the actual process of composition.’ Alternatively, Shakespeare’s surrender of an uncompleted text may have been more a sign of defeat than contentment. With regard to the ‘dram of eale’ speech, Nosworthy has written: ‘The simplest explanation of this crux is that the sentence is unfinished, the implication being that Shakespeare lapsed into incoherence and gave up the struggle.’ I would not support the notion that Shakespeare ever ‘lapsed into incoherence’, but he may have been equally attracted to alternative formulations and was unable to reach a point of resolution when deciding between alternative words. See James Nosworthy, *Shakespeare’s Occasional Plays* (p. 141).

moment and the written record of it by translators.³⁷ In Malone's edition of 1790 we find 'dout' defined in a footnote as 'put out' or 'extinguish', which follows the reasoning that the noble substance can be annihilated by a single flaw.³⁸ Malone's interpretation of 'dout' has been exaggerated by German translators, who have used verbs of destruction to translate the 'douting' of the noble substance.

Josten, Schaller and Palm understood evil as completely destroying the noble substance to its own shame,³⁹ and both Fried and Klein used synonyms of 'destroy' in their understanding of the lines.⁴⁰ Günther imagined the noble substance as being dragged down into a quagmire and thus translated the line as the speck of evil 'dragging down' the noble substance into its own 'mudhole'. Günther developed Schlegel's interpretation, which also suggested the dragging down of the noble substance, and which was adopted by Gundolf.⁴¹ Hamburger translated 'dout to his

³⁶ Swaczynna includes his translation of this crux in his notes. He renders it as a drop of evil poisoning man and causing the rot to set into man's noble strength: 'ein Tröpfchen Übel vergiftet schon die ganze edle Kraft und läßt sie faulen'. See *Erläuterungen* (p. 30).

³⁷ 'Of a doubt' has spawned a variety of editorial emendations: 'oft do out' (Steevens, 1773); 'often dout' (Steevens, 1793); 'of worth out' (Theobald, 1740), 'of worth dout' (Malone, 1790); 'of good out' (Jennens, 1773); 'of't corrupt' (Mason, 1785); 'oft debase' (Dyce, 1866).

³⁸ Jenkins also suggested that 'dout' ('extinguish') fits the context better, because Hamlet is not saying that man's essential goodness is *destroyed* by the dram of evil, merely that it is rendered *insignificant*. Dowden (1899) supported 'dout' as 'efface', 'obscure', or 'obliterate'.

³⁹ Schaller: 'das Quentchen Böses / Zerstört das ganze edle Wesen oft / Zur eigenen Schande'; Josten: 'Der Gran von Schlechtem / Verdirbt den ganzen edelen Gehalt / Zu seiner eignen Schmach'; Palm: 'des Übels / Kleinstes Korn zerstört des edle Wesen / Bis zur Schmach.'

⁴⁰ Fried: 'Denn jene eine Schuld, das Gran des Bösen, / Vertilgt oft all die edlere Substanz, / Sich selbst zur Schande'; In his edition of 1984 Holger Klein followed Dowden and Keightley's conjecture for 'dram of eale', but adopted Steevens' 1793 conjecture of 'often dout', by which he understood 'eale' as 'evil' and 'dout' as 'extinguish'. This is reflected in Klein's translation: 'Das Gran des Übels macht oft die ganze edle Substanz zunichte, zu ihrer eigenen Schande.' Holger Klein's translation was the base text for Elisabeth Plessen's translation, which also reveals how a translator's conflation of editions can be reconstructed in a translation and passed on to other translations.

⁴¹ Schlegel: 'Der Gran von Schlechtem zieht des edlen Wertes/ Gehalt herab in seine eigne Schmach'; Gundolf: 'der Gran / Von Schlechtem drückt die ganze edle Masse / In uns herab

own scandal' as 'extinguish to its own destruction'.⁴² It could be that 'dout' merely implied that the noble substance would be neutralised by the dram of evil, rather than completely destroyed, but Malone understood 'dout' as meaning 'to do out' or 'to extinguish', and this found its way into Schlegel's translation and established a tradition in Germany of using verbs of destruction and extinction. Hamlet's oblique image has been rendered transparent by German translators based on Malone's interpretation of the dram of 'base' that 'does out' the noble 'substance of worth'.

Translators have been so effective in their choice of which editor to follow, and how best to transpose the line into the target language, that German readers and audiences are unlikely ever to have pondered over this line as generations of English-speaking readers have. In an interview, published in *Theater heute* in 1975, Heiner Müller expressed the view that it was important when writing a drama that the work should contain some parts that 'malfunction'.⁴³ These parts serve a vital function in the work and stand in relation to those parts of the text that have a more transparent meaning. Müller made the interesting point that, as a dramatist, he often deliberately abandons parts of his plays that he feels are unfinished or conceptually undeveloped, because this forms a vital part of the work's texture. These 'malfunctioning' parts stand in a

zur Schmach'; Günther: 'Das Quentchen Böses / Zerrt alles noble Wesen oft herab / In seinen eignen Pfuhl.'

⁴² Hamburger: 'ein Gran Schlimmes / Löscht alle edlere Substanz oft aus / Zum eigenen Verderb'.

⁴³ In the November edition of *Theater heute* (1974) Dieter Schamp had maintained that the differences in the texts between various quartos and folios reflect stages of work that Shakespeare did on the play. This view was rejected by Hans Walter Gabler in the December issue. In July 1975 the discussion of Shakespeare in German was resumed by three translators/directors working in the GDR: author, Heiner Müller, director, B. K. Tragelehn, and dramaturg/translator, Maik Hamburger. Tragelehn pointed out that when faced with a crux, the translator must have all the variants before him. The translator, when deciding how to render a word in the target text, makes an 'artistic decision' and also an 'historic decision' that will differ depending on when it is made.

relation to those parts that work well and whose sense does not challenge the audience to reach for meaning. Müller did not mean that parts of a translation should fail, only that their effect on the text loses nothing, and in fact stands to gain, by being problematic. To over-determine these cruxes by a hermeneutic translation is to destroy part of the dramatic fabric of the text. The translator must consider whether he is justified in solving a crux, or whether the complexity of it and its function in supporting the convergence of other ideas in the text is indispensable to the operation of the work as a whole.

3.3 Incorporating the First Quarto

“he keeps them, like an ape, in the corner of his jaw” (4.2.16-17)

Although the First Quarto is sometimes discarded as the corrupt ‘Bad’ Quarto, there are nevertheless points in it, which have served to elucidate corrupt lines in the longer and more ‘authoritative’ texts. Again, there are clear points at which an editor has changed the text by rewriting lines in it, and these points have fed into the translations with the result that ‘our’ *Hamlet* in Germany becomes the *Hamlet* of the editors rather than the *Hamlet* of the author.

For example, after Hamlet has killed Polonius he is interrogated by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Hamlet accuses them of being tools to the King and he uses the image of an ape that holds food in its mouth until it is hungry and then swallows it (4.2.16-17). The confusion arises over whether Hamlet says that the King is an ‘ape’ (Folio), or that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are ‘apples’ that the King keeps in his mouth

until he is hungry (Second Quarto). In 1778 Richard Farmer combined the Folio and Second Quarto to create 'like an ape an apple'. When the First Quarto was discovered in 1823, the line 'like an Ape doth nuttes' that occurs in this text seemed to lend authority to Farmer's emendation.

Malone believed that the Folio had most authority and his use of 'ape' was carried over into Schlegel's translation.⁴⁴ Until the beginning of the 1980s most German translators followed Schlegel's rendering of the line, based on Malone's edition (Wolff, Josten, Flatter, Swaczynna, Hamburger).⁴⁵ In recent years, however, translators have returned to Farmer's emendation because of the way it clarifies the image and avoids ambiguity of reference.⁴⁶ In spite of the pressure of authority from the Folio, from Schlegel's translation, and from Jenkins' edition, which all contain the 'ape' reference, translators in Germany in the last twenty years have located greater authenticity in an editorial emendation than in the substantive texts.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Schlegel: 'Er hält sie wie ein Affe den Bissen im Winkel seines Kinnbackens.' Gundolf felt that he could not improve on this line and so adopted it in his own translation.

⁴⁵ Wolff: 'er hält sie wie ein Affe, in seiner Backetasche'; Josten: 'er hält sie, wie ein Affe, in seiner Backetasche'; Flatter: 'Er verwahrt sie wie ein Affe in der Backetasche'; Hamburger: 'er behält sie wie ein Affe in der Backe'.

⁴⁶ Klein: 'er hält sie wie der Affe einen Apfel im Winkel seines Kinnbackens'; Fried: 'Er hält sie im Mundwinkel wie ein Affe seinen Apfel'; Günther: 'er behält sie, wie ein Affe den Apfel, parat in der Backetasche'; Palm: 'er hält sie wie ein Affe einen Apfel im Winkel seines Mauls.'

⁴⁷ Frank Günther printed Jenkins' edition with the Folio line 'like an ape' in the DTV 'parallel' edition, but adopted Farmer's emendation 'like an ape the apple' in his translation on the facing page. The case of Jenkins' 'like an ape' being translated by Günther as 'like an ape an apple' reveals that Jenkins and Günther had different editorial conceptions at this point. It is a difference of opinion about the nature of the *Hamlet* texts, which has been buried in this edition. The same applies to Jenkins' 'lawless' and the translation 'landless' on the facing page (1.1.102) of the DTV edition. As much as a translator may express a sense of deference to the editor, a translation is always a translator's own work, and it can occasionally be seen to challenge even the most highly reputed texts. In his endnotes Günther

“That I shall live and tell him to his teeth, ‘Thus diest thou’” (4.7.55-56)

When the King has managed to pacify Laertes and convince him to kill Hamlet for the murder of Polonius, Laertes says that he will kill Hamlet the way that Hamlet killed Laertes’ father: ‘Thus didst thou’ (Second Quarto). The Folio has a similar expression: ‘Thus diddest thou’, but the First Quarto differs with its ‘Thus he dies’. The three texts were combined in Frank Marshall’s emendation ‘Thus diest thou’ in 1875 and adopted by John Dover Wilson.⁴⁸ By extracting the verb ‘dies’ from the First Quarto and inserting it into the line from the longer versions, editors have created a form, ‘Thus diest thou!’, that has no textual authority but is often regarded as the most authentic formulation.⁴⁹

Until the 1960s translators followed the Folio, through Schlegel, and translated Laertes’ words as ‘thus diddest thou’.⁵⁰ More recently, translators have begun to understand Marshall’s emendation as the more authentic form.⁵¹ From the 1960s translators abandoned the Folio and Schlegel and translated Marshall’s emendation, although the reason why this change came about is unclear. It has, I would argue, much to do with Jenkins’ use of Marshall’s reading after 1982. In the decades before the Arden 2 Edition of *Hamlet* Dover Wilson’s Cambridge Edition, reprinted in 1964 and used by most translators of the 1960s and 1970s, could have prompted this move

even writes that although the line is corrupt, the conjecture ‘like an ape and apple’ is probably right, and hence Jenkins wrong. See endnotes to Günther’s *Hamlet* (p. 352).

⁴⁸ Frank Marshall, *A Study of Hamlet* (1875), p. 83.

⁴⁹ Jenkins argues that Marshall’s emendation has not gained the popularity it deserves: ‘It is very strange that Marshall’s emendation has not been accepted, nor apparently much considered. One cannot tell whether Marshall himself would have adopted it in the text of his “Henry Irving” edition if he had not died before the last volume, containing *Hamlet*, was finished.’ See Harold Jenkins, ‘Two readings in *Hamlet*’, *Modern Language Review*, 54 (1959), 391-396, here pp. 394f.

⁵⁰ Wolff: ‘das hast du getan!’, Gundolf: ‘Das tatest du’, Hauptmann: ‘Das tatest du!’, Fried: ‘Du tatest das!’, Hamburger: ‘Das tatest du!’

away from the Folio. In any case, it can be seen that editors continually re-think the shape of the synthetic text that they have constructed, and this is reflected in the translations.

3.4 Filling in Textual Lacunae

“And either [...] the devil or throw him out / With wondrous potency” (3.4.171-2)

What should the translator do if a text contains a metrically incomplete line? The majority of editors fill in the lacuna with an editorial conjecture, and it is usually this that is carried over by translators. For example, in the ‘Closet scene’ Hamlet urges his mother not to sleep with Claudius, and although she may find it hard to break the habit, habits can be broken with enough determination. Hamlet compares habits or ‘custom’ to a devil, who has power over us, and we have the choice of whether to succumb to the devil’s power or cast the devil out. Hamlet’s line runs: ‘For use almost can change the stamp of nature, / And either [...] the devil or throw him out / With wondrous potency’ (3.4.163-172). The sense of the passage is that custom can blind us to the evil of our actions, but it can also teach us to recognise evil. There is an antithesis implied whereby we either *succumb* to the power of custom, or we *master* it. The mastering of the devil custom is expressed with the verb ‘throw out’, but there is a gap in the line where the antithesis should be. Few editors, and even fewer translators, have recognised that the gap should be filled by a verb suggesting the *opposite* of ‘throw out’.

⁵¹ Schaller, Swaczynna, Klein, Günther and Palm all transate the line as ‘So stirbst du’.

Malone also missed the antithesis, since he understood the line to be: ‘And either *curb* the devil or throw him out’. To ‘curb’ the devil is akin to throwing the devil out or mastering him, and this does not create the necessary dramatic antithesis. Malone’s emendation was transmuted in its passage into German and became Schlegel’s ‘tame’ the devil (‘zähmen’). This established the idea in Germany that the missing word denoted mastery over the devil, and all translators subsequently used verbs that implied mastery of the devil custom. I believe it is less striking for Hamlet to say that custom has the power to master the devil and throw him out. When Malone published his edition of *Hamlet* in 1790 he was publishing an editorial conjecture, which was translated literally into German, became canonised in Schlegel’s translation, and resulted in the perpetuation of a misinterpretation.

Walter Josten and Gerhart Hauptmann simply carried over literally Schlegel’s line ‘tame the devil’. Gustav Wolff seems to have translated Malone’s edition literally with his version ‘Sie bändigt oder wirft hinaus den Teufel’, where ‘bändigen’ means ‘bind’, ‘tie’ or ‘curb’. In Johnson and Pope’s edition the devil is ‘mastered’. Erich Fried was clearly influenced by Johnson and Pope when he adopted their word ‘master’ in his translation, ‘Den Teufel *meistern* oder ihn vertreiben’. In his 1984 edition of the play Holger Klein understood the missing word as ‘tame’ the devil, and he explained in a footnote that he was influenced by Ingleby’s edition.⁵² However, it seems just as likely that Klein was persuaded of the suitability of ‘tame’ by Schlegel’s translation. Gundolf certainly was influenced by Malone, indirectly through Schlegel in his use of ‘tame’: ‘Sie zähmt den Teufel oder stösst ihn aus’.

⁵² Klein (p. 354).

In the Clarendon edition of *Hamlet*, edited by W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright in 1872, the lacuna was filled with 'lodge'. Jenkins adopted the emendation, arguing that lodging the devil provided the obvious antithesis to throwing the devil out. This editorial rewrite of the line was subsequently adopted by Günther in his 1988 translation, 'den Teufel / Logieren entweder oder ihm verjagen'. Günther's translation offers an effective dramatic antithesis, albeit with the dated word 'logieren'. Other translators seeking to avoid Malone's emendation have achieved the stylistic balance only by inserting a new expression that has no textual authority.⁵³

In the text that German readers and audiences know as 'our Hamlet', it is Pope's 'master the devil' or Malone's 'curb the devil' that has shaped translations and become indistinguishable from the authorial lines of the text. Any claim for the authority of Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet* must be foregrounded with a clear distinction between the lines that Shakespeare is believed to have written and those that are known to have been written in by his editors.

"[So envious slander]...may miss our name / And hit the woundless air" (4.1.40)

In the first scene of Act 4 Claudius fears that rumours will be spreading because Hamlet has killed Polonius thinking it was the King (4.1.38-44) and the King fears recriminations. The words used to refer to these rumours have been lost in

⁵³ Reinhard Palm comes close to forming an antithesis, which is stylistically effective, but relies on a paraphrase of the English. In Palm's translation Hamlet says that we can either 'swallow the devil or spit him out' ('schluckt den Teufel oder speit ihn aus'). This conjecture is not entirely convincing, but it shows that Palm has departed from the editorial tradition to recreate the meaning of the lines. The alternative for translators is simply to omit the lines altogether, and this is what Elisabeth Plessen has done.

transmission. John Dover Wilson suggested that it was the result of Shakespeare's having deleted only half a line to indicate the intended deletion of the whole speech (which is not present in the Folio). The scribe took this partial deletion literally and deleted only half of one line, which has left a gap in Claudius' speech.⁵⁴

Although Malone's edition has had a powerful influence on twentieth-century German translations through Schlegel's canonical translation, there are some emendations that were short-circuited at Schlegel's translation and were not transmitted to later texts. In 1790 Malone filled in this textual lacuna in his edition with the words 'So viperous slander'. Malone's conjecture of 'viperous slander' was determined by Pisanio's anatomisation of slander in *Cymbeline* in which it is also described as 'viperous' (3.4.37). Because Schlegel translated Malone's edition faithfully, we naturally find that Malone's interpretation of this line has been interposed between Shakespeare's text and Schlegel's translation of it. Schlegel translated Malone's conjecture literally as 'schlangenart'ge Leumund'. Few English editors have defended Malone's conjecture, and although it found its way into Schlegel's canonical translation, no German translator has understood the line as a reference to the venomous nature of slander.

Whilst editors have agreed that 'slander' is one of the missing words, there has been disagreement over the words that qualified 'slander' and completed the line metrically. In his edition of 1733 Theobald filled in the textual lacuna with 'For, haply, Slander', and this was adopted by Edward Capell in his 1768 edition of *Hamlet*

⁵⁴ This view that the Q2 printer incompletely deleted the lines Shakespeare intended to be deleted, is represented by John Dover Wilson in *The Manuscript*, vol. 1 (p. 30).

but with the minor adjustment to ‘So, haply, slander’. Capell’s ‘haply’ became the established formulation for German translations of the twentieth century, such as the versions of Schaller, Fried, Klein and Palm. The translators Gundolf and Hamburger chose to omit any word qualifying ‘slander’, and Hauptmann, Swaczynna and Plessen omitted the line altogether. In the Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag parallel English-German edition of the play, the left page contains Jenkins’ ‘So envious slander’⁵⁵ and the right page contains Frank Günther’s omission of any qualifying word for ‘slander’, which, again, tells us something of the limitation of this so-called ‘parallel’ edition.

Translators are under pressure to make a personal mark on their translation. Although translators would not claim to incorporate conjectures just to be different from their predecessors, there is always the pressure to say something old in a new way.⁵⁶

Whilst a translator may be struggling to render a line accurately, based on the mistakes of his or her predecessors, he or she will also try to personalise the translation. There is a constant need amongst translators to demonstrate that they have improved the work of their predecessors, and this has resulted in a proliferation of differently constituted translations.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Defended by Jenkins on the grounds that Shakespeare had already used the collocation ‘envious slander’ in *Richard III* when Stanley warned Queen Elizabeth, ‘I do beseech you, either not believe / The envious slanders of her false accusers...’ (1.3.26)

⁵⁶ Stanley Cavell talks of the ‘tradition of transmission in which individuals fall to wanting to mark Shakespeare as theirs in their possessive editing of him’, which also seems to be one of the sins of the translator. See Stanley Cavell, ‘Skepticism as Iconoclasm: The Saturation of the Shakespearean Text’, *Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Los Angeles, 1996* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. 231-47, here p. 237.

⁵⁷ The nagging questions that afflict artists and stymie artistic creation are how to find new subjects and create a new idiom. Walter Jackson Bate has written: ‘whatever else enters into the situation, the principal explanation is the writer’s loss of self-confidence as he compares what he feels able to do with the rich heritage of past art and literature.’ It is in the twentieth century that the anxiety seems to have reached a peak: ‘... the weight of everything else that

Reading *Hamlet* in any German translation creates such a different impression on the reader from the English text because it is not punctuated by these problematic lines. This smoothing out of textual problems alters the texture of the drama, and perhaps also its dramatic effect on stage, leaving it less challenging for audiences and readers. The textual cruces dealt with in this chapter could be regarded as moments in the dramatic work when most of the inner action of the play is taking place, moving the plot forward. Winfred Nowotny has suggested that the contradictions of life are often unsusceptible to verbal reduction. She writes:

It may be even more important to observe that these crucial words – the ‘optical glass’ words – may serve as escape-hatches from conceptual terms, because of their power to refer us out of language to an object which in real life is a visible crisis-point or declaration-point in a complicated history of process, a natural symbol with all the advantages over language of being in itself a simultaneity of opposites.⁵⁸

The way we regard the dramatic structure as a whole will determine whether we believe that cruces like ‘solid-sullied-sallied flesh’ serve to challenge the audiences’ imagination or just confuse them. Whether translators have valued the mobility of the Shakespearean text will thus affect the way the texts are translated. It is very difficult to say whether German readers have an improved text, or a superior version to that which we have in English. If none of the lines discussed here caused Shakespeare’s audiences any problems, then I would say that the German translations are an improvement on what we have in English. But if audiences *were* made to ponder the coalescence of sound and meaning, and if they were made to work with the dramatist

has been done, said, or exemplified cannot, in conscience, be wholly denied, though on the other hand there is the natural desire of every human being to assert himself in such time as he has – to contribute in some respect, however small, or, if he cannot contribute, to leave his mark in some other way’. See Walter Jackson Bate, *The Burden of the Past* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971), pp. 7 and 11.

⁵⁸ Winfred Nowotny, ‘Metaphor and Poetic Structure’, in *The Language Poets Use*. (London: The Athlone Press, 1962), pp. 72-98, here p. 84.

to forge meaning from language, then I would have to say that German readers and audiences are receiving a much poorer *Hamlet*.

3.5 The Teleology of Translation

It is not only editors that have rewritten *Hamlet*, but also translators that have established readings of the text that have no textual authority. It is my observation that a text will pass through a series of interpretive trends in translation. This can be seen especially in the way certain words or lines from the text have taken on a different complexion at different times in the past. 'Our' *Hamlet* in 1950 was a very different text from 'our' *Hamlet* in 1970, or 1990. As critical theory readjusts the supposed meanings of Shakespeare's words, these adjustments are invariably reflected in translations, but there is always a time lag, as we shall see.

There has been considerable doubt as to whether Gertrude really meant 'obese' when she exclaimed that her son was 'fat and scant of breath' (5.2.290). The connection between sweat and the melting of fat was suggested by Tilley,⁵⁹ but the absence of recorded uses of 'fat' to mean 'sweaty' makes it less certain that sweat was the intended meaning. The word 'fat' also appears to have denoted 'strong'. It was used with this sense in George Peele's *The Battell of Alcazar* (1594), when the Moore says to his wife Calipolis: 'Feede and be fat that we may meete the foe/ With strength and terror to revenge our wrong' (2.1.617-18). David Daniell substantiated this meaning

⁵⁹ The word is discussed in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, XXIV (1925), 315-19.

when, in his lecture, 'The Language of *Hamlet*',⁶⁰ he referred to the use of 'fat' in William Tyndale's translation of the Bible, which also has the meaning of 'strong'. The men of the Moabites are described here as 'all fat, and men of might' (Judges 3:29). An examination of other Bibles reveals that 'strong' and 'robust' have been used where Tyndale used 'fat'.⁶¹ However, it seems to me unlikely that the Queen would mean 'He's strong and scant of breath' because it creates a contradiction.

As examined above (p. 48), Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* contains a discussion of Hamlet's physical appearance. Wilhelm is of the opinion that Hamlet is corpulent. Goethe's understanding seems to have had an influence on August Wilhelm Schlegel, who began translating *Hamlet* the same year that *Wilhelm Meister* was published.⁶² Edmond Malone also understood 'fat' as an original reference to the corpulence of Richard Burbage. Since Malone's edition was translated by Schlegel, the word 'fat' was transposed literally as 'fett': 'Er ist fett und kurz von Atem'. This translation influenced many of the translations of the nineteenth century, and it was

⁶⁰ Daniell's paper was delivered at the Hilda Hulme Memorial Lecture (29 November 1994), and published by the University of London (London, 1995), pp. 5-26. See esp. pp. 22-23 for a discussion of 'fat'.

⁶¹ The Israelites slaughtered ten thousand Moabites (Judges 3:29), who are variously described as 'lusty' in the King James Authorised Version (1611) and the American Standard (1901), as 'robust' in the New American Standard (1959) and Young's Literal Version (1898), as 'strong' in the Douay-Rheims version (1609), and as 'fat' in Tyndale's translation and in the Darby Version (1884). The Darby Version is an English translation of a collation created posthumously out of John Nelson Darby's earlier German translations, which themselves could have been influenced by Tyndale's translation. I feel that this could explain why the English translation of Darby's version contains the word 'fat'. Robert Young's 1898 version is an extremely literal translation of the original Greek and Hebrew, which lends support to the translation of 'robust'. Support for 'strong' can be found in most European translations of the Bible: German ('stark'), Norwegian ('sterk'), Danish ('stærk'), French ('fort') etc.

⁶² Schlegel discusses the influence of *Wilhelm Meister* on his conception of *Hamlet* in his essay, 'Etwas über William Shakespeare bey Gelegenheit. Wilhelm Meister (1796)', reprinted in *Shakespeare-Rezeption*, ed. Hansjürgen Blinn (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1988), pp. 92-106.

not until the middle of the twentieth century that the understanding of Gertrude's 'fat' changed.

In 1949 Richard Flatter challenged the established view in Germany that Hamlet was fat. He argued that in Shakespeare's time 'fat' could also mean 'sweaty' because the Elizabethans believed that sweat was liquid fat.⁶³ In his own translation Flatter translated the Queen's line as: 'Er ist erhitzt und außer Atem' ('He is heated and out of breath'). This reading continued to make sense to Flatter, who reaffirmed this interpretation in his *Hamlet* studies of 1956.⁶⁴ Since Flatter first translated 'fat' as 'heated', all translators of the second half of the century translated the word as either 'heated' or 'sweating'. Since 1949 Hamlet has ceased to be 'fat' in Germany.⁶⁵

In the January issue of *Theater heute* in 1989, three months after the death of Erich Fried, Peter von Becker published an account of Fried's life work as a Shakespeare translator.⁶⁶ Becker had attended a lecture given by Fried in 1965 at the University of Heidelberg, at which Fried had spoken about his understanding of *Hamlet*. Becker notes that translations of 'He's fat and scant of breath' had been translated in Germany with 'fett' ever since Schlegel, but that Fried brought an end to this tradition at his 1965 lecture by proving that melted fat and sweat were connected in the

⁶³ Richard Flatter, *Hamlet's Father* (London: Heinemann, 1949), pp. 185-91.

⁶⁴ See Flatter's *Triumph der Gnade. Shakespeare Essays* (Vienna; Munich; Basel: Kurt Desch Verlag, 1956), pp. 52-53, and 'Zum Problem der Shakespeare-Übersetzung', in *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 4 (1956), 472-83, here p. 482.

⁶⁵ P. M. Daly writes: 'Schlegel translated the line with "he is fat and short of breath", but today we know that "fat" could mean 'covered with sweat'. Accordingly, the line was translated in Schücking's edition of Schlegel's *Hamlet*-translation: "He is covered in sweat and out of breath". See P. M. Daly's article, 'Die Schlegel-Tieck-Übersetzung von *Hamlet*', in *Der deutsche Shakespeare* ed. Reinhold Grimm, Willy Jäggi and Hans Desch (Basel, Hamburg, Vienna: Basilius, 1965), pp. 75-93, here p. 93.

⁶⁶ *Theater heute*, 1 (1989), 22-23, here p. 22.

seventeenth century. Becker also wrote that Fried's interpretation was so accurate that Heiner Müller had adopted Fried's rendering of the line.

Contrary to the claims of the journalist in *Theater heute*, Erich Fried did not introduce 'hot' or 'sweaty' for 'fat' into the German tradition of *Hamlet* translations.⁶⁷ The common view of Hamlet changed from 'fat' to 'sweaty' as a result of Richard Flatter's translation that was popular in the 1950s. But neither was Richard Flatter the first to use 'sweaty' in the German translation. If we look back at Gustav Wolff's translation of 1914, we find that Professor Wolff used the word to interpret 'fat' as 'over-heated': 'Er ist erhitzt und ringt nach Atem'. My conclusion is that Gertrude's 'fat' was first translated as 'sweaty/hot' by Gustav Wolff in 1914, but because this translation remained obscure (Wolff being a professor of psychiatry at the university of Basel, rather than a translator or Shakespeare scholar), it was not until Richard Flatter's 1955 translation that there was a re-interpretation of Gertrude's line in the play, after which Hamlet was no longer fat, but hot or sweaty.

Readers of *Theater heute* might be led to believe that the German poet Fried was responsible for this re-interpretation, and readers of Flatter's studies of Shakespeare and translation may be led to believe that it was Flatter who put an end to Hamlet as the Fat Prince. In fact, it was Professor Wolff in his translation and lectures on psychiatry, who first suggested that Hamlet was hot rather than fat.

⁶⁷ It is unfortunate that this commemoration of Erich Fried's life and work contains so many inaccuracies and so much misinformation. It was not Fried who introduced the translation of 'sweating' into German translations, but Richard Flatter in 1949. Fried did not write his translation of *Hamlet* until 1968, by which time Richard Flatter (1954) and Rudolf Schaller (1960) had published their translations of the play using the word 'heated'. In 1964 Maik Hamburger had also translated *Hamlet* using the word 'sweating': 'Er schwitzt und atmet kurz'. Moreover, Heiner Müller, although using 'sweating', borrowed the word not from Fried, but from Hamburger's translation, which he plagiarised in 1976. Today we may doubt whether 'fat' does mean 'sweat', but this is how Gertrude's line is currently understood in Germany, and it has nothing to do with Erich Fried.

There has also been much disagreement between translators about the degree to which a translator should attempt to elucidate the meaning of Hamlet's 'Get thee to a nunnery' (3.1.121). Harold Jenkins has argued that the secondary sense of 'nunnery' as 'brothel' would not have been familiar enough to Shakespeare's audiences. Jenkins states: 'The nunnery she is to go to has its ordinary literal sense; and whatever ambiguity we may hear in it, this meaning dominates from first to last.' Jenkins accepts a possible undercurrent of meaning that occurred to Shakespeare, but stresses that: 'to insist on it at the expense of the literal meaning, itself so poignant in the context, is perverse.'⁶⁸

The meaning of 'brothel' is clearer in the *Bestrafte Brudermord*, where Hamlet says: 'Go to a nunnery, but not to a nunnery where two pairs of slippers lie at the bedside' (Act 2, scene 4 of Furness's translation). John Dover Wilson had supported the secondary sense of 'brothel' in *What Happens in Hamlet*⁶⁹ and this analysis of the play can be seen to have aided translators and shaped numerous translations at the time. Hans Rothe translated the phrase as 'Werde ein Freudennönnchen' and he later changed the wording, but kept the sense in the revision of his translation: 'Klostere dich – in die Lust!' Erich Fried was also influenced by Dover Wilson in his translation of the nunnery speech. He rendered the expression as 'zu den guten Jungfern!' ('Away to the good virgins!'). 'Jungfern' is a euphemism for prostitutes in German.⁷⁰ Translators since the 1970s have rejected the possibility that Hamlet is

⁶⁸ Jenkins, *Hamlet* (p. 282, and Longer Note, pp. 493-6).

⁶⁹ John Dover Wilson, *What Happens in Hamlet* (pp. 128-34).

⁷⁰ Erich Fried also expressed his conviction that 'nunnery' meant 'brothel' in a round-table debate on translation published in J. Elsom (ed.), *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 35-63. In the debate, entitled 'Does Shakespeare Translate?', Fried made the following statement: 'we know that a nunnery is a holy house of nuns and, at the same time, an expression for a brothel. That double meaning does not exist in German and so it cannot be translated. I interpolated there "Go to the good virgins," to the "guten

referring to a brothel. They understand ‘nunnery’ to mean a convent, and it is as ‘Kloster’ that the word is now translated.

One strategy for dealing with semantic obscurities is that if a word or phrase is resistant to interpretation in the English text, the translator should look for words in the target language, which resist translation in German. The translators Reinhard Palm, Michael Wachsmann and Elisabeth Plessen follow this rule. Palm noted that his translations are not easy to read because Shakespeare is not easy to read:

As a translator I can afford to translate a riddle as a riddle. Even when things are not clear in the original they can still be translated. There are levels of abstractness and imprecision in German that can be used when meaning is obscure in the English text. If a word tends to hover between meanings in English, then I must find a word that does the same in German.⁷¹

Wachsmann remarked that it is often legitimate to make Shakespeare’s language simpler in German, but not to cheapen it. There are places in every text where lucidity was clearly not Shakespeare’s intention:

[A] philologically correct translation will never be a good translation, as this will kill the work in the target language [...] Sometimes, if I am confronted with a word in the English text, I use a German expression that sounds strange. I do this if I have the feeling that Shakespeare specifically sought a word that sounded strange, or alternatively if there is a word in the text that was normal in Shakespeare’s time, but is no longer in common usage in modern English.⁷²

Jungfrauen,” because the “guten Jungfrauen” were always known to be prostitutes in Germany. And so you have something like the “nunnery” image realized by the insertion of three or four more words than the author used, which is a dubious practice, but acceptable perhaps in this case to save the double meaning that Schlegel lost entirely – “Geh in ein Kloster, Ophelia” (p. 40).

⁷¹ Appendix (p. 326).

⁷² Appendix (pp. 307-8). Patrice Pavis argued: ‘It is true that it is criminal to remove an ambiguity or resolve any mystery that the text has especially inscribed in it. Can any reading, any translation, avoid interpreting the text? This would be a difficult position to maintain [...] The very fact of leaving aside certain zones of indeterminacy or of not solving the mystery involves taking up a position with respect to the text, and leads to a certain kind of

By examining the way in which the understanding of words like ‘fat’ and ‘nunnery’ have changed in translation, and been translated differently as our understanding has evolved, it becomes clear that translation is a teleological process. As editors and translators rewrite the text, this serves as a model for future editions and translations. The history of a text in translation is a history of reactions. Translators follow traditions but they also react to traditions that have established false interpretations. The present chapter has focussed on the way editorial emendations have been carried over into translations, effectively rewriting the text. There remains one final agent in the rewriting of *Hamlet* in translation, and that is the editor who rewrote Schlegel’s *Hamlet*, namely his wife, Karoline. When it is claimed that Schlegel’s *Hamlet* translation is the closest approximation to Shakespeare’s text, it is not often realised that Schlegel’s version was altered by his wife without her husband’s consent.

3.6 Karoline Schelling-Schlegel’s Contribution to the Canon

As I have argued, translators should be informed about the processes that go into the construction of the Shakespearean text, because mistakes and misinterpretations made by editors tend to find their way into translations, and become perpetuated in subsequent translations. A good deal of authority is invested in Schlegel’s translation of *Hamlet* and this translation is used as a second source text alongside the English text when the play is translated into German. But what is not fully appreciated is the extent to which editors have shaped Schlegel’s *Hamlet*. It is rarely known by German

dramaturgical, theatrical and recipient concretization. Once uttered on stage, the text cannot avoid taking sides about its meaning possibilities.’ See Pavis, ‘Toward Specifying Theatre Translation’ (pp. 145-146).

audiences and readers, who love and value Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet*, that this text is a conglomeration of editorial conjectures and previous translations. The fact remains that Schlegel did *not* translate *Hamlet*; he translated Malone's *edition* of the play. The translation of *Hamlet* that many Germans know and love was altered before it went to print, and without Schlegel's authorisation. His wife, Karoline Schelling, transcribed Schlegel's rough manuscript copies of her husband's translations before submitting them to the publisher, Georg Reimer. The translations written by Schlegel between 1797 and 1801 were all altered extensively by Karoline, and largely without Schlegel's knowledge. The later translations, written by Schlegel after 1801, represent his own work, since by this stage he had divorced his wife.

Hermann Conrad drew attention to some of Karoline's alterations by comparing the printed edition with the surviving manuscripts of Schlegel's translation. Conrad also refers to the 'careless naivety of Karoline, which unfortunately found its way so often into the first edition of the dramas and from here on was passed on to every subsequent edition.'⁷³ Few German readers appreciate just how arduous and unpleasant the task of translating Shakespeare was for Schlegel. It is clear from Schlegel's letters to his publisher that after a momentary encounter with Shakespeare, Schlegel wanted nothing more to do with Shakespeare translations. Nevertheless, Schlegel was fiercely proud of the seventeen plays he did translate, and was obsessed with matters of copyright.

We know that Schlegel would not have approved of Karoline's tampering with his translations, and I think we can gauge his likely reaction to this unauthorised editing

from the way he reacted to the discovery that Ludwig Tieck had altered some of his translations. Schlegel was happy to allow his publisher to print Tieck's translations (written by Wolf Graf Baudissin and Dorothea Tieck) as an *extension* of his own translations,⁷⁴ but when Schlegel discovered that his translations had been *corrected* by Tieck, he threatened Reimer with legal action.⁷⁵ In a later letter Schlegel wrote to Reimer he declared: 'Anyone can write corrections in his [a translator's] margins or publish critiques, but no one has the right to insert corrections into his translations.'⁷⁶ Contrary to Schlegel's purist intention to bequeath to the world his unadulterated Shakespeare translations, his work has become a collaboration of translators, editors and publishers. Just as Jerome McGann drew attention to the way texts are 'socialised',⁷⁷ we see in the case of Schlegel's *Hamlet* an editorial construction that is in every sense a 'socialised' text.

⁷³ Hermann Conrad, *Unechtheiten in der ersten Ausgabe der Schlegelschen Shakespeare-Übersetzung (1797-1801)* (Berlin: Weidmansche Buchhandlung, 1912), p. 8.

⁷⁴ See Schlegel's letter to Reimer (Bonn, 24 November 1819), reprinted in Körner (p. 361).

⁷⁵ In a letter dated 15 March 1825 Schlegel wrote to his publisher: 'After the death of a writer, one may publish a scholarly book with annotations, reports, extensions etc. The man is in his grave and cannot do anything about it. But the work of an editor must always be kept apart from that of the writer. To interpolate alleged improvements into the text, to publish the book under his name so that it becomes compromised for posterity, no one has the right to do that. And during the lifetime of the author!' Schlegel stated that he was no friend of the law, but that he would have no other choice than to air the matter out in public. With a touch of sarcasm, Schlegel wrote that the title of the new edition should be, 'Shakespeare's works, translated by Schlegel and changed by Tieck without his knowledge', cited in Körner (p. 418).

⁷⁶ Cited in Lohner (p. 261). Also in this letter Schlegel complained with great sarcasm that Reimer had not made clear in his edition, which translations were written by him and which were written by Graf Baudissin (Gr. B.) and Dorothea Tieck (D.T.). He wrote to Reimer: 'If my incomplete Shakespeare is not published again, how should a future literary archivist recognise my share? But of course! It would be possible by subtraction [...] You just need to add a list of the 36 plays and next to them the letters Gr. B. or D. T. where they belong. The rest is Schlegel' (p. 262). Schlegel's feelings about leaving his translations unadulterated to posterity make it quite clear how he would have reacted to his wife's emendations, or to the generations of editors who emend his translation.

⁷⁷ In his chapter headed 'The Socialization of Texts', McGann wrote: 'literary work by its very nature sets in motion many kinds of creative intentionalities [...] The universe of literature is socially generated and does not exist in a steady state. Authors themselves do not have, *as authors*, singular identities; an author is a plural identity and more resembles what William James liked to call the human world at large, a multiverse.' See Jerome J. McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 75.

Translators of *Hamlet* in German have been influenced by Schlegel's translation for the past two hundred years. Translators have two source texts before them when they translate *Hamlet*: an edition of the text in English and a copy of Schlegel's translation. I believe that translators should undertake more editing of their source texts, but this does not mean simply editing the texts in English. Because Schlegel's translation is a second source text for translators, the translator must also know what lies behind Schlegel's *Hamlet* and know something of the nature of its production before adopting any of the lines from this text.

For example, when Hamlet first encounters his father's ghost, he wants to know why his father has returned to earth, and he describes his father's corpse as 'hearsed in death' (1.4.47). Schlegel had translated the expression as 'im Tode ruhend', or 'resting in death'. Karoline was not content with this rendering and changed it to 'verwahrt im Tode', or, 'kept safe in death'. It is difficult to imagine how a corpse can be 'verwahrt', or 'kept safe' in death, since the verb 'verwahren' is only applied to valuables or keepsakes. It was Karoline's interpretation of Old Hamlet's corpse as being 'kept safe in death' rather than Schlegel's 'resting in death' that found its way into the translations of Gerhart Hauptmann and Wolfgang Swaczynna. It is perhaps easier to understand how Hauptmann could make this mistake, given that his translation follows Schlegel's verbatim in many parts, whereas Swaczynna usually offers independent interpretations and renderings. Editorial emendations can find their way into even the most independent of translations.

Other emendations of Karoline's are erroneous. Horatio warns Hamlet that the Ghost may be a devil, tempting him to the 'dreadful summit of the cliff' (1.4.70). Schlegel

accurately rendered 'summit' as 'Gipfel', but Karoline copied the word as 'Wipfel' ('tree top') which makes no sense. It is difficult to imagine how any reader or spectator paying close enough attention to the text could have accepted the sense of a line that suggests that the Ghost may be a devil tempting Hamlet to the 'dreadful top of a tree'. Similarly, Karoline rewrote Schlegel's 'O *Heer* des Himmels' ('O all you host of heaven!' 1.5.92) as 'O *Herr* des Himmels!' ('O Lord of heaven!'), and this line is now canonised in Schlegel's translation.

Other changes made by Karoline also generate obscurities that do not exist in the English text. The Ghost says that it cannot describe the 'eternal blazon' or the wondrous truths of the afterlife to mortals like Hamlet (1.5.21). Schlegel was considering several renderings for 'eternal blazon', such as 'ewige Offenbarung' ('eternal revelation'), 'ewige Eingebungen' ('eternal confessions'), and 'Botschaft ewiger Dinge' ('embassy of eternal things'). He was not content with any individual expression because it did not seem powerful enough to convey the vividness of 'eternal blazon'. Karoline, however, was content to chose 'ewige Offenbarung', and this version, limited in its metaphorical impact, became the established translation, preserved, again, in the translations of Gerhart Hauptmann and Wolfgang Swaczynna.

In the last act Hamlet tells Horatio that a skull unearthed by the gravedigger could have belonged to a courtier, but now it has become the property of the worms: 'and now [it is] my Lady Worm's' (5.1.87). Schlegel translated the line as: 'und nun gehört er Junker Wurm', which he revised several times to 'und nun hat ihn Junker Wurm', then 'und nun ist er Junker Wurms', then 'und nun Junker Wurms'. Karoline adopted the last version, but failed to write the final 's' on 'Wurm', without which the

line makes no sense at all: 'Ja, ja, und nun Junker Wurm'. According to Karoline's version, it sounds as if Hamlet is saying that the skull has *become* the worm. Again, it was Karoline's emendation that became part of Schlegel's canonised translation. Karoline's vague re-translation of Schlegel's line to 'Ja, ja, und nun Junker Wurm' has been carried over into the translations of Hamburger ('und nun meine Lady Wurm') and Hauptmann ('Ja, ja, und nun Junker Wurm').

Karoline made numerous alterations to the style of the play, emending lines that now create a different impact from the English or from the way that Schlegel had intended the line. For example, Karoline did not like the coarseness of Ophelia's mad songs. In her *St Valentine's* song Ophelia sings that her beloved would have married her if she had not allowed him to sleep with her: 'An thou hadst not come to my bed' (4.5.66). Schlegel's line was closer to the coarser version of the original: 'Hättst du gemieden mein Bett'. Karoline paraphrased the line in order to tone down the explicitness: 'Wärest du nicht kommen herein' (If you had not come to me).

Her emendation 'Wärest du nicht kommen herein' also found its way into Hauptmann's translation, and into the more recent translations of Peter Zadek and Wolfgang Swaczynna. At the end of the play Horatio utters the line: 'Now cracks a noble heart' (5.2.364), as Hamlet dies. Schlegel rendered this accurately as '*Jetzt bricht ein edles Herz*', but Karoline felt that '*Da bricht ein edles Herz*' ('*There breaks a noble heart*') was more accurate. The moment of Hamlet's death, conveyed by Schlegel's 'now', is more dramatic than the *place* of his death conveyed by Karoline's translation. However, Karoline's less dramatically effective '*Da bricht ein edles Herz*' has been perpetuated by Hauptmann, Josten and Fried. Although '*Da*

bricht ein edles Herz' is not incorrect as a translation of the English, it strikes me as being somewhat more informal, and lacks the dramatic weight of Schlegel's 'Jetzt bricht ein edles Herz'.

The various emendations in Schlegel's translation that are based on the editorial and scribal errors of Schlegel's wife have led to the creation of a text that is widely accepted by German readers as Schlegel's German translation of *Hamlet*. Given the amount of text that Karoline changed, and the number of lines that correspond more with Malone's interpretation of *Hamlet*, Schlegel's translation should be regarded as a collaboration of readers, translators and editors of the play rather than as one man's unique insight into a play and its transmission in German. The function of Schlegel's *Hamlet* as a cultural status symbol and an iconic text in Germany is founded on a lack of awareness of the generation and composition of the translation. Schlegel and Tieck were not the perfect translating partnership, and had Schlegel been aware of the illegitimate interpolations in his translation of *Hamlet*, he may never have given his consent to its publication, let alone its canonisation.

Karoline's editing of Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet* reveals a series of errors of interpretation, a lack of understanding of the text, a degree of insensitivity to the expressive range of Shakespeare's metaphors, an inability to grasp the importance of stylistic diversity, and a concern for erasing indelicacies. The translation that German readers and audiences take to be Schlegel's constitutes an editorial construction and a collusion of successive attempts to edit and translate the play. My examination of a small collection of *Hamlet* translations reveals that translators such as Gerhart Hauptmann, Walter Josten, Maik Hamburger, Erich Fried, Wolfgang Swaczynna and

Peter Zadek used an edition of Schlegel's *Hamlet* without checking certain lines carefully against the English edition. They certainly did not go back to the facsimilies of Schlegel's manuscripts. The result is that inaccurate renderings have been transmitted through German translations of *Hamlet*. Unless a translator examines some of the differences between Schlegel's manuscripts and Karoline's edition of her husband's translation, there is no reason why future translations of *Hamlet* in German will not perpetuate semantic and stylistic inaccuracies that have marked translations of the play to date.

3.7 Concluding Remarks

I feel that I have reached a point in my argument where the case for *Hamlet's* untranslatability has been made. I have not evaluated translations based on a contrastive analysis, because I feel that translations are products of their time and should not be compared to establish superiority. I have examined the issues of how a work is framed by its texts, how these texts are invested with authority, and how a concept of originality develops over time. I have examined the habits of appropriation of twentieth-century translators, and have concluded that translators were trying to reach back to a time before the editorial constructions of the imagined theatrical and textual archetype. Translators failed to realise the irrevocable loss of a work's original form and meaning, the need for a work to evolve, and the extent to which editors have left their signature on everything we ever inherited from Shakespeare.

In the following section of my thesis I will consider whether translatability becomes possible when we see *Hamlet* as one moment in the on-going regeneration of cultural material, rather than as a work to be re-iterated in perpetuity. Those translations and adaptations of *Hamlet* that have inscribed new meaning into the work and have drawn on the play's iconicity in order to re-inforce cultural policy and articulate social criticism, position Shakespeare's *Hamlet* within a series of re-enactments that place a premium on the play's continuing relevance, rather than on original meaning. Translation then begins to look more like the original concept of *translatio* from Renaissance poetic theory, where translation was synonymous with transformation, a practice that was in any case closer to Shakespeare's own methods of composition. I will consider whether translatability becomes a more feasible aim, when translation is redefined as transformation, and when *Hamlet* is seen as a broader cultural text rather than the narrowly defined transcendent text.

Part 2. On Translatability: *Hamlet* as Cultural Text

4. HAMLET IS EAST GERMANY

Adapting and modernising a Shakespearean text has generated diametrically opposed discourses on the merits and demerits of revising Shakespeare's work. Kenneth Muir represents what is surely a hopelessly outdated view that it is sacrilegious to tamper with the texts. In 'The Pursuit of Relevance'¹ he argued that attempting to impose modern relevance on an old play would distort the play's meaning, insult the audience's intelligence and reduce a universal interpretation to a local and diminutive one. Muir suggested, somewhat patronisingly, that only audiences that are uneducated need Shakespeare in modern dress so that they can appreciate Shakespeare's work, whereas educated spectators who go to the National Theatre can appreciate Shakespeare 'pure':

[D]irectors at Stratford and the National Theatre have no need to temper the icy wind of pure Shakespeare to an audience of semi-literate Philistines [...] Such an educated audience is apt to resent both the distortion involved in the modish productions we have been describing and what is surely the arrogant assumption that they would not notice the relevance of *Coriolanus* or of *Troilus and Cressida* unless it is made so blatantly clear that only a moron could miss it.²

As Muir later writes in his attack on modernisation: 'By inventing a spurious relevance the director hides the genuine and more universal relevance of the play'. Attempts to bring the plays up to date are apparently 'desperate remedies', of which the theatre has no need. Muir, however, underestimates the immense value of the Shakespearean adaptations of Brecht in the 1940s, and Muir wrote his essay in the

¹ Kenneth Muir, 'The Pursuit of Relevance', *Essays and Studies*, 26 (1973), 20-34.

same year that Heiner Müller was provoking a storm of criticism over his modernisation of *Macbeth*. Writing almost a decade earlier, Jan Kott anticipated more accurately the growing need to adapt and update Shakespeare. Kott recognised that a modern rewrite of a Shakespearean text would be an interpretive reduction, but, he argued, there is no presenting Shakespeare ‘pure’:

One can only perform one of several *Hamlets* potentially existing in this arch-play. It will always be a poorer *Hamlet* than Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is; but it may also be a *Hamlet* enriched by being of our time [...] *Hamlet* cannot be played simply.³

The value that a Shakespearean production has depends on how much of ourselves we are able to read into the work, or as Kott explained: ‘we can only appraise any Shakespearian production by asking how much there is of Shakespeare in it, and how much of us’. Especially in the case of *Hamlet*, it has proved to be impossible to produce this play, or indeed translate it, without absorbing the social and political issues of the day, or as Kott wrote: ‘*Hamlet* is like a sponge. Unless produced in a stylized or antiquarian fashion, it immediately absorbs all the problems of our time.’⁴

Hamlet appeals to a society searching for its identity. It is within the political and ideological matrices of their society that translators and directors may turn to the text in search of new signifiers that can be activated to foreground the cultural codes and the dominant ideological discourse of their time. The insights that emerge from a socially constituted re-reading of the text must, however, be understood as a contained reading, framed by the society’s own search for its identity and the imprinting of that identity on the text of the play. Hamlet’s role has been both

² Muir (p. 29).

collusive and oppositional in the way it has informed views of social reality and been operative in the construction of national identity.⁵

An analysis of translation, such as the present one, would be incomplete, if it considered translation as an ahistorical and purely philological activity, undertaken in a cultural vacuum. Translating a literary work is underpinned by socio-cultural constraints that shape the target text. Translation theorist André Lefevere has argued that ‘nobody is ever able to escape from the ideology and/or the poetics prevalent in the literary system of his or her own time, to which his or her translation will be seen to belong.’⁶ Lawrence Venuti has written: ‘The study of translation is truly a form of historical scholarship because it forces the scholar to confront the issue of historical difference in the changing conception of a foreign text’,⁷ and according to Romy Heylen, translation is a ‘teleological activity of a profoundly transformative nature.’⁸ Translation theorists thus agree that translation involves more than carrying a text across purely linguistic barriers.⁹ Translation is a process of cultural negotiation that

³ Jan Kott, ‘Hamlet of the Mid-Century’, *Shakespeare our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski (London: Methuen, 1965; repr. 1967), pp. 47-60, here p. 47.

⁴ Kott (p. 52).

⁵ As Michael Hattaway writes: ‘The play about the Danish prince is almost “the set text” of the modern debate on identity, a focus for the changing socio-political and cultural constructs on the sharp turns of the historical destinies of Europe.’ See *Shakespeare in the New Europe*, ed. Michael Hattaway, Boika Sokolova and Derek Roper (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), p. 20.

⁶ ‘Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites?’, in Theo Hermans (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1985), pp. 215-43, here p. 239.

⁷ Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 46.

⁸ Romy Heylen, *Translation, Poetics, and the Stage: Six French Hamlets* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 5.

⁹ Ewbank writes: ‘In questions of translation, poetics readily slides into politics.’ See Inga-Stina Ewbank, ‘Shakespeare Translation as Cultural Exchange’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 48 (1995), p. 5; André Lefevere argues: ‘It is my contention that the process resulting in the acceptance or rejection, canonization or non-canonization of literary works is dominated not by vague, but by very concrete factors that are relatively easy to discern as soon as one decides to look for them, that is as soon as one eschews interpretation as the core of literary studies and begins to address issues such as power, ideology, institution, and manipulation.’

in some situations takes place under extreme social and political pressure. Translation has re-inscribed Shakespeare's works for various ideological purposes, although study of this cultural phenomenon is still a marginal area of Shakespeare studies.¹⁰

In the first part of this thesis I focussed on the issue of authenticity in translation, on the attempts of translators to reach back to an understanding of how Shakespeare's texts may have looked and how they may have been used on the stage of the Globe. I concluded that if a Shakespearean text is to be translated, then it must reflect the translator's own negotiation with the terms of the text, an encounter with the world of the author and a process of discovery as the text is reconstructed for another time and culture. I argued that when a translator *constructs* a source text from *Hamlet*, this reveals a greater artistic commitment to Shakespeare's work than the rendering of a critical edition into the target language. I also stressed that translators need to examine the constitution of the source texts because of the degree to which they have been rewritten by generations of editors and translators.

It is my argument in the second part of this study that the value of a translation or adaptation lies in the way it re-opens a channel of communication between the author's work and present audiences. The play is, as Kott said, 'enriched by being of our time', and in the second part of this thesis I will focus on a group of translations and adaptations of *Hamlet* that were not written in order to re-create what

See André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 2.

¹⁰ Dennis Salter writes 'There has been a noteworthy shortage of work on the postcolonial problematics of translating Shakespeare's texts. Apart from the ground-breaking studies undertaken by Annie Brisset, Carli Coetzee, Peter Mtuze, and Reingard Nethersole, hardly anyone seems eager to take advantage of the high-powered theorization occurring in other fields about how, why, and to what ends translation inevitably creates a new text with new

Shakespeare may have written, or treat the work as a failed text in need of improvement, but as a work that can be adapted to hold up a mirror to modern society to reflect the problems of the day.

In the present chapter I will spotlight four politicised *Hamlet* translations/adaptations, written in the German Democratic Republic. I will compare an acculturated ‘socialist’ translation of the play by Rudolf Schaller with a subversive translation by Maik Hamburger that was used to challenge the dominant political ideology and the legitimacy of Marxist socialism in the 1960s. I will then compare Heiner Müller’s *Hamlet* translation with his radical post-modern adaptation, *Hamletmaschine*, from the late 1970s. I believe that all four of these rewrites, although very different, have a legitimate claim to being ‘our’ Hamlet in Germany, because of the ways in which they re-invented *Hamlet* and extracted new sub-textual layers of meaning from the play. It was through these rewrites that *Hamlet* served as an operative factor in the self-definition of East Germany in the latter half of the twentieth century.¹¹

These rewrites served as a voice of social protest to express the concerns of East German citizens living in a repressive system.¹² What is relevant to our understanding of the continuing afterlife of *Hamlet* is not so much the literary merits of these

meanings within specific ideological and cultural contexts.’ See Dennis Salter, ‘Introduction: The End(s) of Shakespeare?’, in *Essays in Theatre*, 15:1 (1996), 3-14, here p. 8.

¹¹ Günther Klotz has written: ‘Adapting Shakespeare was never a playful end in itself in the GDR, but it always had something to do with personal life experience during a particular phase of our history.’ See Günther Klotz, ‘Shakespeare Contemporized: GDR Shakespeare Adaptations from Bertolt Brecht to Heiner Müller’, in J. Lawrence Guntner and Andrew McLean (eds.), *Redefining Shakespeare. Literary Theory and Theatre Practice in the German Democratic Republic* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. 84-97, here p. 97.

¹² For a discussion of productions of Shakespeare in East Germany, the reader is referred to Wilhelm Hortmann’s *Shakespeare on the German Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). This volume contains a section devoted to Shakespeare in the GDR, written by

rewrites but the utility of the source text, the ease with which *Hamlet* lends itself to appropriation and acculturation by writers seeking a mode of expression. In Germany ‘Hamlet’ refers not to a single translation or adaptation, but to a series of rewrites that constitute a ‘cultural text’. ‘Our’ Hamlet was the sum of permutations of this cultural text continually re-inscribed in the years 1945-1989.¹³ *Hamlet* in the GDR became a site for the Marxist-Leninist re-invention of the Renaissance, and the translations and adaptations examined in this chapter will explore this paradigm of cultural assimilation. By focussing on East German translations and adaptations of *Hamlet*, I will be addressing the issue of why ‘our’ Hamlet could only exist in a series of rewritten forms at this particular time, what political pressures were exerted on translators, and what measures were taken against subversive writers who failed to naturalise the play in line with the dominant ideology.

4.1 Rudolf Schaller’s ‘Socialist’ *Hamlet* (1960) and Maik Hamburger’s ‘Subversive’ *Hamlet* (1964)

Hamlet was translated by Professor Rudolf Schaller in the GDR in 1960. It was sponsored by the Berlin Academy of Arts and officially approved by the Ministry for Culture of the Socialist Unity Party (‘Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands’). Schaller’s translation was used in Hans-Dieter Mäde’s *Hamlet* production in Karl-

Maik Hamburger, ‘Shakespeare on the Stages of the German Democratic Republic’ (pp. 350-435).

¹³ As Robert Weimann has argued: ‘Here [in the GDR], as perhaps nowhere else in the cultural landscape of East European Socialism, was a unique space for the reception and (re)production of potentially the greatest cultural text of modern Western civilization.’ See Robert Weimann, ‘Shakespeare Redefined: A Personal Retrospect’, in Guntner and McLean (pp. 120-138), here p. 120.

Marx-Stadt (now Chemnitz) in 1964, which constituted the defining, and officially approved, interpretation of the play in East Germany.¹⁴ *Hamlet* became an instrument of cultural policy. It was part of SED-leader Walter Ulbricht's political campaign to reflect the benefits of life in a planned economy, and it was used to represent Marxist socialism as the culmination of Renaissance humanism.¹⁵ The GDR could claim 'our' Hamlet as its contemporary, but only as the communist re-invention of the Renaissance Prince.¹⁶ Schaller's translation was part of a much larger campaign that aimed at unifying and consolidating the new socialist state.¹⁷ The translation was

¹⁴ Mäde discusses his socialist concept behind the production in his essay, 'Hamlet und das Problem des Ideals', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 102 (1966), 7-22.

¹⁵ According to the Marxist 'reflection theory' drama in the GDR was given the official duty of reflecting the benefits of life in a socialist system and thus contributing to social progress. See Armin-Gerd Kuckhoff's description of 'Widerspiegelungstheorie' in 'National History and Theatre Performance: Shakespeare on the East German Stage, 1945-1990', *Redefining Shakespeare. Literary Theory and Theatre Practice in the German Democratic Republic* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. 61-72, here p. 64; Deputy Minister Alexander Abusch interpreted Hamlet's advice to the Players to hold a mirror up to Nature as an anticipation of the Marxist 'Widerspiegelungstheorie' and as a concession to Shakespeare as a realist artist. See Manfred Pfister, 'Hamlets made in Germany, East and West', in Hattaway, *Shakespeare in the New Europe* (pp. 76-91, here p. 82); Robert Weimann believed that the Marxist 'reflection theory' limited the Shakespearean text. See 'Text und Tätigkeit im *Hamlet*. Realismus als Spiegel und Ereignis', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 121 (1985), 30-43, here pp. 31 and 33.

¹⁶ As Thomas Sorge writes: 'Hamlet as the bearer of humanistic ideals is "our contemporary", but "our contemporary" is someone who, mind you, is essentially the builder of the Stalinist version of centrally administered socialism'. See 'The Sixties: Hamlet's Utopia Come True?', *Redefining Shakespeare* (pp. 101-102); Party leader Ulbricht demanded that the 'cultural needs of the masses be satisfied on a higher level, so that entertainment and culture become reunited and be placed in the service of establishing a socialist consciousness', *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des V. Parteitages der SED, 10-16 July 1958* (Berlin, 1959), cited by Thomas Sorge, *Redefining Shakespeare* (p. 108); Maik Hamburger observed: 'A vague but optimistic feeling that, after the dark ages of Nazi and capitalist rule a new Renaissance was possibly emerging with new values and new humanist objectives, led to an ahistoric fixation on the Renaissance as a social model [...] Theatre people felt they bore a responsibility to help evolve a humane socialist order'. See Maik Hamburger, "'Are you a party in this business?'" Consolidation and Subversion in East German Shakespeare Productions', *Shakespeare Survey*, 48 (1995), 171-84, here p. 177.

¹⁷ Minister for Culture, Alexander Abusch, gave a speech at the German Shakespeare Society's annual conference in Weimar in which he presented the humanism in Shakespeare's work as the precursor to socialism in the GDR. See Alexander Abusch, *Shakespeare: Realist und Humanist, Genius der Weltliteratur* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1964); At the second Bitterfeld Conference Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht encouraged theatre directors to emphasise the link between humanism and socialism, to avoid variant readings and to clarify how the application of Marxist principles would solve the problems

approved because it did not challenge the cultural heritage of the Schlegel-Tieck translations and because it could be used to glorify socialism.

However, I would like to remind the reader of the point I made in the previous chapter regarding the teleology of translation. German translations have changed as new thoughts and ideas about the words of the text and their meaning have changed. In Germany in the 1960s Hamlet did not describe his flesh as 'sullied' after John Dover Wilson's emendation of 'sallied/solid' flesh. The reading of 'sullied' only gained acceptance in German translations in the late 1970s. Had Hamlet been sullied a few decades earlier in Germany, it may have been more difficult for cultural politicians, translators and directors to make Hamlet the ideal model for Socialism in the GDR. I see a direct link between the teleology of translation and the horizon of interpretation open to those who seek to acculturate the play.

In 1964 Maik Hamburger translated *Hamlet* into German. He attempted to reflect the language of the play more accurately by modernising it and emphasising the colloquial idiolect of the gravediggers.¹⁸ Hamburger re-introduced the wordplay

that Shakespeare's characters face. See Walter Ulbricht, 'Über die Entwicklung einer volkverbundenen sozialistischen Nationalkultur', in *Neues Deutschland* (28 April, 1964), reprinted in *Zweite Bitterfelder Konferenz 1964* (Berlin, 1964); Thomas Sorge described the second Bitterfeld Conference as 'the most important political-cultural conference of the sixties'. See Sorge, *Redefining Shakespeare* (p. 98); The Bitterfeld Conference is also discussed in Lawrence Guntner, 'Brecht and beyond: Shakespeare on the East German Stage,' in *Foreign Shakespeare*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 109-139, here p. 114.

¹⁸ Reviews of the Greifswald production can be found in 'Hamlet heute hier. Ein Gespräch über fünf Inszenierungen', *Theater der Zeit* (1964), 4-7 and 8-10; See also Armin-Gerd Kuckhoff, 'Theaterschau', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 103 (1964), 206; Robert Weimann wrote: 'The Greifswald *Hamlet* (1964) refused to acknowledge unambiguous areas of identity between Renaissance ideas and contemporary "ideals" and, instead, disputed continuity between then and now. Shockingly, the Prince of Denmark in this production appeared to undermine the ideological construct of a premature tragic humanism that anticipated a future space for harmony in the relationship between society and the individual consciousness.' See Weimann, *Redefining Shakespeare* (p. 125).

(deleted by Schlegel and Schaller) as a social function of the text in line with the theories of Robert Weimann. Hamburger's translation was used in an attempt to demolish the memorial status of Schlegel's translation and the socialist reading of the play. This challenging new translation was used by Adolf Dresen in a production in Greifswald in the same year, but it subverted the manufactured socialist image of Hamlet and was banned after five evenings.¹⁹ The language was considered to be un-Shakespearean,²⁰ and the interpretation of Hamlet as a murderer was taken as a criticism of the socialist system. The suppression of the Greifswald translation has been well documented,²¹ but the linguistic distinction between Hamburger's subversive translation and Schaller's socialist version has not been examined. This will be the subject of the present section of my thesis.

¹⁹ In an interview with Lawrence Guntner, Dresen explains that the production was banned by the head of the municipal theatre, Georg Roth, from Stralsund. The reasons Roth gave for banning this production of *Hamlet* were the destruction of the classical heritage (by which he meant the de-centring of Schlegel's translation in German cultural life), the destruction of the humanistic view of man (which reflects the SED's official reading of the socialist Hamlet), and left-wing radicalism (Dresen was expelled from the 'Sozialistische Einheitspartei' for supporting Wolf Biermann). Dresen was sent off to an oil refinery in Greifswald to learn from the working classes. See 'Adolf Dresen: The Last Remains of the Public Sphere', *Redefining Shakespeare* (pp. 151-62); Guntner writes: 'It [the Greifswald production] was condemned as a denigration of the classical tradition, a false representation of humanity, and a misrepresentation of the view of history according to which Socialist culture was the legitimate heir of Renaissance humanism. Party functionaries were sent to disrupt performances, and official theatre journals published vindictive reviews. Dresen was removed from his position as director and sent to work in a nearby oil refinery', *Redefining Shakespeare* (p. 117).

²⁰ The issue is discussed in Thomas Sorge, 'Unsere Shakespeares – Nachdenken über einen Wegbegleiter', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 126 (1990), 24-40, esp. 25-8; Thomas Sorge writes: 'The gesturally informed translation by Hamburger and Dresen, its foregrounding of the colloquial dimension of Hamlet's language, and the representation of a partially deranged protagonist scandalously violated a supposedly "valid" reading of the play.' See *Redefining Shakespeare* (p. 101); Maik Hamburger explained that the translation was suppressed because of the anti-socialist staging, and because the translation itself challenged the 'classical' tone in which audiences understood Shakespeare from Schlegel's translations: 'The new translation of *Hamlet* was prohibited as part and parcel of an undesirable staging, also because its lower levels of vernacular subverted the sublimity of what was then taken to constitute a classical style. As officially no censorship existed, the banning was effected by simply not granting any publisher permission to duplicate the text, a legal requirement at the time.' See Hamburger, 'Are you a party in this business?' (p. 182).

²¹ The Greifswald production is discussed in Adolf Dresen, *Siegfrieds Vergessen* (Berlin, 1992), pp. 9-15.

In comparison with Schlegel's translation of *Hamlet*, Hamburger's is written in a style that is modern, colloquial and closer to the rhythms of spoken German than the nineteenth-century translation. This is reflected in Hamburger's replacement of archaic words with modern ones, and in his use of the kind of interjections heard in spoken German today. Hamburger's translation was clearly a challenge to the orthodox view of Shakespeare, as he was known in Schlegel's/Schaller's translations. However, if one places Hamburger's *Hamlet* translation next to a later one, such as Reinhard Palm's (1996), it becomes clear that Hamburger's version, though unorthodox for its time, is not nearly as linguistically subversive as more recent translations. A comparison of Schaller's SED-approved *Hamlet* translation with Hamburger's subversive version, and Palm's radically modernised translation, will reveal the extent to which Hamburger revolutionised Shakespeare translation in the early 1960s.

In the second act of the play, when the Prince is reunited with his school friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet puns on the 'secret parts of fortune', describing Fortune as a 'strumpet' (2.2.235-5). In Schlegel's translation we find 'strumpet' translated as 'Metze'. This word would have been fashionable in Schlegel's day, but it had long been obsolete by the 1960s, and thus Hamburger used a more contemporary word that we never find in Schlegel's translations, namely 'Hure' ('whore'). Similarly, in the dialogue with Ophelia, after the central soliloquy in Act 3, Hamlet assures Ophelia that: 'the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness' (3.1.111-14). The word 'bawd', archaic now in English, was rendered by Schlegel as 'Kupplerin', which had also become archaic in German by the 1960s.

Schaller also used 'Kupplerin' in 1961, but in 1964 Hamburger used the modern word 'Schlampe' ('slut'), although not an exact translation of 'bawd'. Reinhard Palm used today's word 'Zuhälter', which corresponds to our word 'pimp'.

In Hamburger's translation Hamlet often uses words that are colloquial and found more often in spoken than written German. For instance, looking at one of the skulls thrown up by the sexton, Hamlet remarks: 'This might be the pate of a politician' (5.1.76-8). The word 'pate' is used facetiously by Hamlet, but this effect was lost by Schlegel's use of the more common 'Kopf' ('head'). Hamburger used 'Schädel' ('skull'), which is a slight improvement, but still lacks the connotations of 'pate', whereas Palm creates the irreverent effect with his word 'Birne'. This is the word for 'pear' and 'light bulb', and when used of the head, has a humorous effect akin to 'sconce'.

Similarly, Hamlet cannot believe that a skull belonging to a lawyer could allow the sexton to knock him about the 'sconce' with a dirty shovel (5.1.98-100). Schlegel translated 'sconce' as 'Hirnkasten', which means nothing more than 'skull', and Schaller also adopted this word in his translation, whereas Hamburger used the more colloquial 'Dätz', a dialect word for head and closer to 'sconce'. Palm again used 'Birne' as an equivalent to the colloquial word used by the gravedigger in English. What is also significant about this line in Hamburger's translation is that Hamlet describes the sexton as a 'Rüpel' ('lout'), which is how the lower social classes in Shakespeare's plays had been traditionally known. In this scene Hamlet can be seen distancing himself from the lower social orders, and it offers a subtle form of critique

of Hamlet's character at a time in East Germany when the plebeians were becoming more important than the principal characters.

Other words in the Gravedigger scene of *Hamlet* are earthy and coarse and are the kind of words heard in a more informal context. Hamlet observes that a skull is being 'knocked about the mazard with a sexton's spade' (5.1.88). The 'mazard', an obsolete word for the head or skull, was translated by Schlegel using the neutral word 'Kinnbacken', which simply means 'jawbone'. Schaller uses the equally neutral and old-fashioned word 'Hirnkasten', which is a literary and dated word for 'skull'. Hamburger used the much more colloquial form 'Rübe' (literally 'root') that was also used by Palm and is equivalent to the English word 'nut' and thus more in keeping with the gravedigger's sociolect. Not only is Hamburger's word more colloquial than Schlegel's, it is also closer to the sense of the English word.

Especially in Hamburger's translation of the Gravedigger scene we find the language of social realism that had been introduced into East German drama by Brecht and developed by writers such as Volker Braun, Heiner Müller and Peter Hacks. The gravediggers in Hamburger's translation use a sociolect befitting their social status in the play.²² When the sexton is explaining how water accelerates the decomposition of

²² In West Germany, according to Hamburger, Shakespeare's plebeian characters had always been seen as comical figures without any social resonance. Scenes like the Gravedigger dialogue in *Hamlet* were referred to as 'Rüpelszenen' ('lout scenes') and provided amusing interludes to the more serious action of the main characters. The Ministry for Culture approved attempts to focus attention on the lower social strata in Shakespeare's plays, but objected to the use of plebeian language on stage. Hamburger noted: 'this revaluation of Shakespeare's plebeian lore, which of course concurred with official doctrine, did not lead to official acceptance of his plebeian dialogue. The very functionaries propagating a new social perspective balked at the colloquial utterances proffered by new translations, regarding them as an outrageous profanation of the classical heritage.' The characters were meant to be seen, but not heard. The Ministry for Culture approved the new emphasis on the plebeian

corpses, he tells Hamlet: ‘your water is a sore decayer for your whoreson dead body’ (5.1.165-6). Schlegel’s translation of this, ‘das Wasser richtet so ‘ne Blitzleiche verteufelt zugrunde’, is stylistically neutral, and does not reflect the cruder idiolect of the gravedigger. In 1960 Schaller also adopted the line from Schlegel, but replaced some of the words to create a highly literary expression that does not reflect the speech patterns or the rough humour of the sexton. In Schaller’s translation the gravedigger says: ‘das Wasser richtet Euch so eine verwünschte Leiche arg zugrunde’, which translates back as ‘the water seriously ruins such a cursed body’, and which clearly departs from the style of the gravedigger. Hamburger’s translation, by contrast, is highly colloquial and coarse. He renders the line as: ‘das Wasser macht euch so ne Scheißleiche mächtig kaputt’. The word ‘Scheiße’ and the adverbial use of ‘mächtig’ are unmistakable colloquialisms characteristic of spoken German at the end of the twentieth century, not the elevated diction one finds in Schlegel’s eighteenth-century version or the awkward literary prose found in Schaller’s ‘officially approved’ translation.

In the English text the sexton describes Yorick as a ‘whoreson mad fellow’, which Schlegel translated as an ‘unkluger Blitzkerl’ or ‘careless chap’. Schaller’s translation sounds even more archaic, in which the sexton curses Yorick as ‘hundsfüttischer Bursche’ or ‘dastardly fellow’. This is dated language used by Schaller in 1960 and is weak in comparison with Hamburger’s coarse and aggressive ‘verrückter Scheißkerl’ (‘mad bastard’). The word ‘whoreson’ (‘Hurensohn’) entered the German language through American influence and was first recorded in the Oxford Duden in 1990 as a

characters, but disapproved of hearing their language. See Maik Hamburger. ‘From Goethe to *Gestus*: Shakespeare into German’, *Redefining Shakespeare* (pp. 73-83, here p. 82).

literal translation of 'son-of-a-bitch'. This is the form that Reinhard Palm was able to use in 1996, whose gravedigger describes Yorick in German as a 'wahnsinniger Hurensohn' or 'crazy son-of-a-bitch'.

What we see clearly here is the way a certain type of translation only becomes possible with changes in the language. Schlegel's 'careless' and Schaller's 'dastardly' became Hamburger's 'mad' and finally Palm's 'crazy', and Schlegel's 'chap' and Schaller's 'fellow' became Hamburger's 'bastard' and Palm's 'son-of-a-bitch'. Hamburger has also commented on the way the evolution of languages opens up new possibilities in translation: 'The target language changes constantly in itself and in its relation to the original language. A translator of tomorrow may easily be able to say things that seem impossible today.'²³ What is significant, however, is that the German language had evolved enough to allow a modern colloquial translation of *Hamlet* in the 1960s, but Schaller's version, sponsored by the Berlin Academy of Arts and approved by the SED's Ministry for Culture, reflects the more literary and archaic style of the nineteenth century than the modern idiom of Hamburger's subversive translation, written only three years later. For political reasons Schaller's East German translation had to be linguistically outmoded in 1960.

As well as being more contemporary, the style of German used in Hamburger's translation was also closer to the English than Schlegel's and Schaller's more elevated style. Polonius is 'slain' by Hamlet, and FRG translators since Schlegel had glossed 'slay' ('erschlagen') with the less graphic word 'umbringen' ('kill'), and 'body' ('Leiche') was glossed with the nobler 'Leichnam'. Similarly, Hamlet's line

²³ Hamburger, 'From Goethe to Gestus' (p. 83).

'I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room' (3.4.214) were not translated literally but paraphrased as 'I'll drag the intestines into the neighbouring room' ('Ich schlepp die Eingeweide in den Nachbarraum'). The force of 'guts' is toned down in Schlegel's 'Eingeweide', which sounds curiously inappropriate, and even Schaller toned down the line with his use of 'Wanst', which means 'paunch' or 'belly'. Hamburger understood the need to create a distasteful effect and so used the word 'Kutteln' ('guts') in his translation: 'Ich schlepp die Kutteln in den Nebenraum'. Audiences familiar with the ennobled German of Schlegel's translation would have been less offended by the archaic and stilted German of Schaller's pseudo-Schlegelian rendering, but were hearing a poetic idiom of an age and sensibility long past.

In the Queen's closet Hamlet tells his mother that with Claudius she is living 'in the rank sweat of an enseamed bed' and that their bedroom is a 'nasty sty' (3.4.91-4). In Schlegel's translation, written at the end of the eighteenth century when the demands of decorum required the rewriting of certain lines, there is no 'rank sweat', only 'sweat', the bed is not 'enseamed' but merely 'vile', and the bedroom is a 'nest' rather than a 'sty'. Schaller's translation is bland and inoffensive, as Hamlet describes his mother living not in the 'rank sweat of an enseamed bed', but in the 'vapours of an incestuous bed'. She is not 'stewed' in corruption but merely 'steaming', and the bedroom is not a nasty 'sty', but a 'stable'. In Hamburger's translation the imagery has become more graphic and repulsive and thus closer to the English text. Now Gertrude and Claudius make love in the 'stinking sweat' of their 'greasy bed'. The imagery was further intensified by Reinhard Palm, in which the couple make love in the stinking sweat of a bed that is 'fettverschmiert' ('larded with fat') and the lovers are understood as mating like pigs.

In the graveyard the sexton tells his assistant to fetch him a 'stoup of liquor' (5.1.60). In Schlegel's translation the sexton asks for a 'measure of spirits' ('einen Schoppen Branntwein'), and this was adopted and modified by Schaller, whose sexton asks for a 'quart of brandy', which sounds too refined for the normally earthy gravediggers. This was improved slightly by Hamburger, who orders a 'Maß Schnaps', and this was taken to its extreme by Palm, whose sexton asks for an 'Eimer Schnaps' or a 'bucket of Schnaps'.

German dramatists have often attempted to bring the language of everyday onto the stage. Colloquial expressions and expletives are nothing new. Brecht's *Pantaleone* premiered on 22 November 1948 in Hamburg, and in scene 11 of the play we hear Mr. Pantaleone saying: 'Du Kerl natürlich immer dabei, das mußst du zugeben, es waren schöne Zeiten, aber meine Tochter werd ich dir nicht geben, du Saukerl, aber du bist kein Scheißkerl, das geb ich zu'(Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1965).²⁴ What was new was that colloquial language and expletives were used for the first time in German Shakespeare translations in the 1960s, and this had a lot to do with Brecht's plays and his adaptations of Shakespeare.

²⁴ Back in 1892 Gerhart Hauptmann wrote *Die Weber*, which attacked the exploitation of workers in Silesia and led to the 1844 uprising. The play was written in the Silesian dialect and contains the type of colloquial language that became one of the hallmarks of Naturalism. In the second act of *Die Weber* we hear Frau Heinrich saying: 'Meine armen Kinder derhungern m'r!... Ich weeß m'r keen'n Rat nimehr. Ma mag anstell'n, was ma will, ma mg rumlaufen, bis ma liegenbleibt. Ich bin mehr tot wie lebendig, und is doch und is kee Anderswerden. Neun hungliche Mäuler, die soll eens nu satt machen. Von was d'nn, hä? Nächten Abend hatt ich a Stickl Brot, 's langte noch nicht amal fier de zwee Kleenst'n. Wem sollt ich's d'nn geb'n, hä? Alle schrien sie in mich nein: Mutterle mir... Nee, nee! Und dad'rbei kann ich jetzt noch laufen. Was soll erscht wern, wenn ich zum Lieg'n komme? Die paar Kartoffeln hat uns 's Wasser mitgenommen. Mir hab'n nischt zu brechen und zu beißen'(Berlin: Aufbau, 1976).

The use of conversational tags, interjections and expletives in Shakespeare translations was the result of Brecht's innovations in dramatic language, and it facilitated the translation of Shakespeare into German. The second gravedigger tries to answer one of the sexton's riddles, but is unable to. 'Mass, I cannot tell', he says (5.1.55). This contains the interjection 'Mass', which was translated by Schlegel as 'Sapperment', a very archaic form unfamiliar to most Germans today. It is connected to 'Sapperlot' and 'Sackerment' and derived from 'sacrament'. It translates as 'stape me' or 'upon my soul' and was clearly in need of modernisation by 1960.

Schlegel's line, 'Sapperment, ich kann's doch nicht sagen' was copied verbatim by Schaller in 1960, which shows how out of touch this translation was, and why Maik Hamburger, and later Heiner Müller, felt the urgent need to modernise the language for contemporary audiences. Hamburger rendered the interjection 'Mass' as 'Herr Gott', which translates back as 'Lord God'. Although conservative, it is not archaic. Even more coarse and colloquial is the rendering in Palm's translation: 'Scheiss, ich kann's nicht sagen'. Reinhard Palm completely modernised the line with his interjection. The sexton's 'Faith' (5.1.159) also takes the archaic formulation 'Mein Treu' in Schlegel's translation, the more contemporary 'Gott' in Hamburger's version, and the highly colloquial 'Tja' in Palm's recent translation.

When the sexton says that Ophelia's death has been found to be accidental, the second gravedigger replies: 'Why, tis found so' (5.1.8). Schlegel's somewhat rigid rendering 'Nun, es ist so befunden' was copied by Schaller, but became progressively more informal in Hamburger's 'Na, es ist so erkannt'. The line adopted a relaxed, conversational tone with the epithet 'tja' in Palm's rendering, 'Tja, so wurde es

befunden'. Likewise, when the sexton, explaining that Hamlet became mad in Denmark, puns on 'grounds', his reply: 'Why, here in Denmark' (5.1.156) passes from formal literary German in Schlegel's 'Freilich, dänischer Grund und Boden', through Hamburger's more informal 'Ja, das gehört alles zu Dänemark', to Palm's colloquial 'Tja, hier in Dänemark.' Placing translations side by side mirrors the changes in the German language over two centuries and serves as a diachronic record of changing sensibilities to the connotative effect of words.

The style and language of Hamlet's first dialogue with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the German translations also reflects many of the changes that had occurred in the German language in the twentieth century. In the English text Hamlet uses the now archaic interjection 'Sblood' when he remarks on the strangeness of Claudius' new-found popularity: 'Sblood, there is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out' (2.2.363). 'Sblood', an abbreviation of 'God's blood', was translated by Schlegel with the word 'Wetter', long-since archaic in German. But in 1960 Rudolf Schaller used an equally dated word 'potztausend', which was derived from 'Gottes Teufel' ('God's devil'), a now obsolete interjection that corresponds to the English 'upon my soul'. Hamburger used the modern expression 'Mann', akin to the American interjection, which is still used by young Germans today. Palm also used the modern form 'verflucht' ('damn').

Similarly, in describing the controversy surrounding the child actors, Rosencrantz uses the archaic interjection 'Faith' (2.2.350). Schlegel's 'wahrhaftig' ('truly') is somewhat literary but is more contemporary than Schaller's 'Meiner Treu' ('By my faith'). Hamburger also adopted Schlegel's 'wahrhaftig' and Palm updated the

interjection with the simpler 'wahr' ('true'). Schaller's rendering thus stands out in this series of translations.

In Palm's translation of this scene we also see the German language opening up to include more English expressions. Rosencrantz assures Hamlet that the tragedians still have their old ambition, but now have to compete with the child actors. Only Palm in 1996 could translate ambition as 'Ambitionen'. Hamlet's reference to the players as 'gentlemen' (2.2.366) and Polonius' address to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as 'gentlemen' (2.2.376) could be rendered by the German 'Gentlemen' only in Palm's 1996 translation, whereas previous translators had been limited to the native expression 'meine Herren'.

The interjections of the gravedigger and his assistant reveal a lot about the sociolect of this social group in the English text. It is stylistically differentiated from the various idiolects and sociolects of the other characters of the play. It is important that social distinctions in dramatic language be preserved in the German translation, but it was only with Hamburger's translation in the 1960s that the language of the plebeian characters first began to sound like the natural spoken German of GDR peasants and workers. Audiences hearing the gravediggers in Rudolf Schaller's translation in 1960 were receiving nothing more than a slightly updated version of Schlegel's *Hamlet*, and in part the 1960 translation even seems to be more archaic than the late eighteenth-century translation.

What we see when we place these translations side by side is the natural evolution of the German language, the progressive opening up to the influences of British and

American English, and the enriching of its vocabulary. At the same time it became permissible to use the most informal and conversational epithets to translate Shakespeare, thus an interjection such as 'why' that had been rendered as 'nun' in Schlegel's translation, became the more relaxed 'na' in Hamburger's translation and eventually 'tja' in Palm's translation. Translators follow a text as it is carried along by an evolving language, but the political restrictions of the GDR interrupted that flow and sought to freeze the German language in the translation of an earlier time. This stands out very clearly against the translations both before and after Rudolf Schaller's officially approved version.

In 1967 the East German Marxist critic Robert Weimann published *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre*.²⁵ The theoretical contribution of this book is important to our understanding of the changes in Shakespeare translation in East Germany in the 1960s. Weimann argued that, far from being the result of any grammar school training in the art of rhetoric, the wordplay that is central to all of Shakespeare's plays was derived from the Morality plays, in which it served a social function. Tudor drama was a non-representational, non-mimetic form of theatre, which meant that wordplay was always for the benefit of the audience, rather than an integrated part of any dramatic illusion. Elizabethan drama became representational and the wordplay became part of the dramatic action, but, according to Weimann, it never lost its connection with the audience.

²⁵ Robert Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theatre: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1978). Translation from the German by Robert Schwartz, *Shakespeare und die Tradition des Volkstheaters* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1967).

Weimann described Elizabethan wordplay as a 'social action' that made the audience part of a dramatic action that fostered a symbiotic relationship between stage and world. For Weimann, wordplay in the Elizabethan drama was a 'highly significant medium of interaction between the mimetic form of dialogue and the communal expression of festive release, between role and actor, drama and audience.'²⁶ This has not always been recognised by German translators of Shakespeare.

Brecht had already demonstrated the social value of breaking down the 'fourth' wall between stage and auditorium in his epic theatre. It was this involvement of the audience in the dramatic action by means of wordplay directed at the audience by both Shakespeare's characters and Brecht's that new emphasis was placed on the social action of punning in the translations of the Shakespearean text. The paronomasia that was omitted from Wieland's and Schlegel's translations of the Gravedigger scene, for example, was re-instated in Hamburger's translation as a way of emphasising the importance of the plebeian characters, and their connection with the audiences of the GDR.

Modern translators of *Hamlet* in German, such as Frank Günther, have attempted to recreate the wordplay using German puns, which only started in the 1960s when Maik Hamburger sought to make the translations as witty on the German stage as the originals had been in English. Schlegel had either translated the wordplay literally, thus losing its sense and function, or he omitted the puns altogether. Schaller adopted the same policy. When the sexton says that Adam was the first who ever 'bore arms' (5.1.33-37), meaning both the body's upper limbs, and the coat of arms of a

²⁶ Weimann, *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* (p. 151).

nobleman, the pun is lost by Schaller's explanation of the joke: 'The scriptures say that Adam dug. Could he dig without a spade? And where did arms get their shape from if not from a spade?' Jokes are always lost when they are explained and this is one of the pitfalls of translation.

Looking at the skull of what might have been a lawyer, Hamlet comments: 'Is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt?' (5.1.104-6). Schlegel avoided this pun on the word 'fine', like so many of the other puns, whereas in Hamburger's Gravedigger-scene Hamlet is given a string of new puns: 'Ist das die Abtretung seiner Abtretungen, die Zession seiner Zessionen, daß jetzt sein schöner Kopf in den Abtritt getreten wird?' Here the pun is on the verb 'abtreten', which forms both 'Abtretung', the legal transfer of rights to property, and 'Abtritt', an old, colloquial word for toilet, akin to 'privy'. The line describes how the lawyer, once occupied with legal business, is now suffering a shame similar to being pushed down a toilet. At this point Schaller simply translated the lines literally and thus lost the point of the wordplay and its effect on the audience.

Reviving the wordplay in translations of Shakespeare's plays in the GDR was socially and politically informed by the new emphasis on the lower social orders in the play as theatrical representations of the citizens of the new Socialist State. The importance of translating wordplay was also underpinned by Weimann's theory of the popular tradition of Elizabethan drama and by Brecht's ideas about theatre.

In 1964, the same year that Prime Minister Ulbricht was tightening the SED's cultural policy on censorship of the arts and promoting the 'Erbeaneignung' or policy of

cultural appropriation, Maik Hamburger and Adolf Dresen produced their distinctly non-classical translation of *Hamlet*. Although banned as a subversive translation, the Greifswald translation, as my analysis has attempted to show, was still conservative by comparison with recent translations of the play. It was not until the late 1990s that Hamlet was able to say ‘What an arse I am!’ in his second soliloquy (Palm’s ‘Was für ein Arsch ich bin!’), and it was only in 1996 that the gravedigger was able to exclaim ‘Shit!’ when stumped by the sexton’s riddles.

Although Heiner Müller plagiarised Maik Hamburger’s translation in 1976, the social climate had become relaxed enough by the late seventies to accept a translation that reflected the language of the plebeian figures.²⁷ Heiner Müller’s *Hamlet* translation has also lived on to become one of the most popular translations in German theatres and a model for translations. Hamburger’s translation was not influential in the GDR in the 1960s because it was suppressed. However, through Heiner Müller’s imitation of this translation, Hamburger’s work became influential in the field of German Shakespeare translation when the political climate changed in the 1970s. In all translations of Shakespeare’s plays written today the plebeian characters are linguistically differentiated and times are now politically relaxed enough to allow this.

²⁷ Manfred Pfister writes: ‘This revision, or even deconstruction, of the canonical GDR-Hamlet was incisive in various ways. Where the Hamburger/Dresen translation had been promptly suppressed in the middle sixties, now Heiner Müller’s radically new translation of the middle seventies found immediate acceptance.’ See Pfister, ‘Hamlets made in Germany’ (p. 85). We can see how much the original socialist image of Hamlet had been destabilised by the 1980s when Heiner Müller addressed the Weimar Society in 1988. Müller spoke about his translation work, describing Hamlet as a ‘failure’, who committed a ‘crime’. See ‘Shakespeare eine Differenz’, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 125 (1989), 20-28, here 23.

'Our Hamlet' is more than a single act of rendering the play into German; it is a broader cultural canvas onto which various readings and perspectives are inscribed. It is important to extend Ludwig Fulda's notion that Schlegel's translation as a unitary act of appropriation has an overriding claim to the nostrification of *Hamlet*. Repeated rewrites of the play are necessary if the play is to survive. Schaller used the play text to generate a socialist Hamlet, which, in spite of certain linguistic and stylistic weaknesses, represented the way many Germans in the GDR saw Hamlet and saw themselves. But at the same time there were doubts about the effectiveness of a planned economy and about the fairness of stringent censorship laws. Paradoxically, 'our Hamlet' could be both a New Socialist and a new social revolutionary.

Robert Weimann was right to suggest that a work must be seen in terms of both its past significance and its present meaning and as a product of the past that is able to provide insights into experiences in the present.²⁸ Weimann writes:

[T]he Shakespearean text must be conceived as not merely a product of the past but also as a 'producer' of the future. In other words, the cultural text was seen as rooted in a capacity for 'production' that can transcend the very time and age that are the object of the mimesis [...] We can proceed from neither a genuine Elizabethan production (which in itself implies an interpretation of the text) nor from one that makes us believe that, say, *Hamlet* is a modern (or socialist) play. Therefore, any Shakespeare interpretation has to come to terms with the tension between historically used signs and a later code of their appropriation and re-signification.²⁹

Hamburger's *Hamlet* translation, although very different in form and language-use from Schaller's translation, was a legitimate part of the cultural text of 'our Hamlet'.

Ten years later this broad canvas of 'our Hamlet' was extended even further by a new

²⁸ See Weimann's 'Gegenwart und Vergangenheit in der Literaturgeschichte', in *Methoden der deutschen Literaturgeschichte. Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Viktor Zmegac (Frankfurt: Athenaeum, 1971), pp. 340-74; 'Past Significance and Present Meaning', *New Directions in Literary History*, ed. Ralph Cohen (London: Routledge, 1974), pp. 43-62.

translation and adaptation of the play by Heiner Müller. *Hamlet* was re-fashioned into a new cultural object, but one that reflected life more realistically in the German Democratic Republic in the 1970s.

4.2 Heiner Müller's *Hamlet*: An Encrypted Socialist Critique?

Heiner Müller wrote his translation of *Hamlet* in 1976 for Benno Besson's production at the Volksbühne in East Berlin.³⁰ Müller began with Maik Hamburger's translation from 1964, and revised the text. One can occasionally find intriguing instances of where Müller's social criticism has found its way into the translation. In his second soliloquy Hamlet describes himself as a 'peasant slave', which Müller translated as 'Bauernknecht'. As a socialist living in the GDR, Heiner Müller supported the rights and the interests of the workers and peasants of the 'Arbeiter-und Bauernstaat'. By giving this derogatory use of 'Bauer' to Hamlet, Müller may have been criticising Hamlet for distancing himself from the class of 'Arbeiter' and 'Bauer'.

In his second soliloquy Hamlet admires the actor's 'broken voice, and his whole function suiting with forms to his conceit' (2.2.550-551). The 'function' of the actor was interpreted by Müller as his purpose in society, and so he translated the word as the Player's 'Arbeit' or 'work'. Not only does this recognise the actor as a 'worker' with the connotations that 'Arbeiter' had in the Socialist State, but it incorporated a level of diction that was previously considered unpoetic. In an interview in *Theater*

²⁹ Weimann, 'Shakespeare Redefined' (p. 126).

der Zeit (1970) Müller explained that only in the GDR could a word like ‘worker’ be used in a translation of Shakespeare:

German blank verse has always been used for the so-called ‘higher’ objects and for relatively fine people. When you try to accommodate the word ‘worker’ into a line of blank verse, it does not fit. Because new objects and materials are now being used in drama, and will continue to be used, there is going to have to be a revolution in the type of metre used.³¹

During his attempt to pray, Claudius describes himself as a man ‘to double business bound’ in the line: ‘And, like a man to double business bound, / I stand in pause where I shall first begin, / And both neglect’ (3.3.41). In his translation of these lines Müller again rendered ‘business’ as ‘work’: ‘Und wie ein Mann zwei *Arbeiten* Verpflichtet, / Zögernd wo ich beginnen soll, steh ich / Und lasse beide’ (my italics). As well as words with socialist connotations that are included in Müller’s translation, there are significant words that have been left out, or perhaps suppressed.

In his soliloquy spoken over the praying King, Hamlet describes how his own father was murdered, ‘With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May’ (3.3.81). Müller’s translation of this speech closely follows the wording of his English source text, however, the line that links crime with the explosion of May has been either omitted or suppressed. There is no documentary evidence to explain this omission, but it is interesting to speculate whether the connotations of May rebellion and its association in the text with the flush of crime, may have been considered too socially subversive and thus deleted from the translation. What is obvious, however, is that through the

³⁰ Müller’s *Hamlet* was reviewed in ‘Theaterschau’, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 127 (1991). 155-68, here 161-8.

³¹ *Theater der Zeit*, 7 (1970).

inclusion of words bearing distinct socialist connotations, a political dimension has entered the translation due to the social context in which Müller was writing.

In my interview with Frank Günther, we discussed the socialist nature of Müller's translation, but Günther did not support the view that Heiner Müller had offered a genuine translation or a means of social criticism. Günther commented:

Müller never translated, he just took Schlegel's text and lazily changed a few of the words, and in doing so he broke the grammar and destabilized the syntax [...] The only reason he translated was to earn money, so he took the easy option and chose to re-shape the work already done by Schlegel. Likewise, when he attempted to translate Sophocles, Müller just used Hölderlin's version and replaced the word 'Tyrann' with 'Diktator'. Many people at the time felt that when Müller changed some of the words from an earlier translation, there must have been a deep significance motivating those changes, but that's just bullshit. There was nothing behind those changes, no real subtext, only laziness.³²

It is my view that Müller was attracted to the idea of using *Hamlet* as a means of social criticism in the GDR in the late 1970s, but that translating the text did not offer him enough freedom to enhance the play's subtext. This is why Müller had adapted *Macbeth* in 1972, rather than translating it. Adaptation allowed him to imply a subtext that could be used for political commentary. It was in reaction to the limitations of translating *Hamlet* in 1976 that Müller turned to adaptation the following year and produced his more subversive rewrite, *Hamletmaschine*.

4.3 Honecker's Germany and the *Hamletmaschine*

Walter Ulbricht was superseded as Prime Minister by Erich Honecker in May 1971, which ushered in a new period of greater tolerance towards artists.³³ Between 1972

³² Appendix (p. 296).

³³ Armin-Gerd Kuckhoff writes: 'The seventies marked a visible shift in the intellectual currents of the country. Whereas public media and scholarship had always been under the control of the censor, the arts (especially theatre) provided free space in which growing

and 1976 most of the plays that had been previously banned for offering social critiques such as Heiner Müller's *Macbeth* (1972), Peter Hacks' *Prexaspes* (1975) and Volker Braun's *Tinka* (1976) were finally given permission to be produced.³⁴ At the SED's eighth party conference in June 1971 Honecker outlined a new policy of liberalisation in literature and the arts. More importantly, Ulbricht's notion that the GDR was a complete and integral unit was replaced with the new understanding that socialism was still in a developmental stage on the way to communism.³⁵ For the first time, writers were able to criticise the GDR because the system was officially recognised as incomplete and thus imperfect. In December 1971 Honecker formulated a new policy of liberalism for the SED: 'In my view, if we remain firmly rooted in socialism, there can be no taboos in art and literature.'³⁶ With the change in cultural policy in 1971 came greater freedom in the theatres and opportunity for experimental forms.

Although Honecker's new policy of liberalism in the arts allowed previously banned plays to be staged, there was still heavy censorship. Müller's *Hamletmaschine* was first printed in the programme to a production of *Oedipus Tyrannos* at the Münchner

disaffection and dissatisfaction with the social and political situation could be articulated despite increasing ideological and political pressure.' See Kuckhoff (p. 66).

³⁴ Of Müller's works that were banned by the Ministry for Culture, *Die Umsiedlerin* (1960) was eventually produced at the Volksbühne in 1976, *Der Horatier* (1969) only reached the Deutsches Theater in 1988, *Mauser* (1970) remained banned until the fall of the Berlin Wall, *Germania Tod in Berlin* (1971) remained banned until 1988, *Der Bau* (1975) was produced in 1980, and *Prometheus* (1978) was not produced at the Volksbühne until 1994.

³⁵ The Heiner Müller biographer, Jan-Christoph Hauschild, writes: 'Müller's rehabilitation as a stage writer in the GDR became possible when Ulbricht was superseded by Honecker (May, 1971) and because of the controlled liberalisation announced at the eighth Party Conference of the SED in June, 1971. Ulbricht's phantom of a completed 'socialist human community' ['sozialistische Menschengemeinschaft'] was nullified and Socialism in the GDR was understood as the first phase of a Communist society rather than an integral and independent formation'. See Jan-Christoph Hauschild, *Heiner Müller Monographie* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), p. 92.

³⁶ Wolfram Buddecke and Helmut Fuhrmann, *Das deutschsprachige Drama seit 1945* (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1981), p. 297.

Kammerspiele. It was developed into a twenty-minute radio play and broadcast by the Süddeutscher Rundfunk in 1978, but the text was considered too subversive for the East German stage and was banned.³⁷ The growing liberalism in East Germany by the late 1970s can be seen in the way Maik Hamburger's previously banned translation of *Hamlet* was now used in theatres in East Berlin. Nevertheless, the time was still not right for the adaptation that Müller offered with his *Hamletmaschine*. There were numerous reasons why Müller felt that 'our' Hamlet, if it were to exist at all, could only take the shape of a fragmented, monologic and intertextual machine. I would like to offer an explanation of why *Hamlet* needed to be rewritten in this particular way.

4.3.1 The Fragmentation of German Life and Drama

Müller wrote *Hamletmaschine*³⁸ at a time when he had reached the conclusion that one could no longer write a 'literary work'. In a conversation in 1975³⁹ Müller expressed a liking for Brecht's *Fatzer* fragments and Büchner's fragmentary play, *Woyzek*, stating that the textual condition of these works says a lot about the subject material, the author, and the time in which the works were written. Fragments are more valuable and have more potential for use in theatres than rounded and complete

³⁷ A full account of the productions of *Hamletmaschine* that took place outside the GDR is given in Jan-Christoph Hauschild's new biography of Heiner Müller, *Heiner Müller, oder das Prinzip Zweifel* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2001), pp. 346-54, esp. pp. 353-4.

³⁸ All quotations are my own translations from *Heiner Müller. Texte und Kommentare*, ed. Frank Hörnigk (Göttingen: Steidl Verlag, 1989).

³⁹ 'Geschichte und Drama: Ein Gespräch mit Heiner Müller.' The conversation took place on 22 November, 1975 in Madison, in which Heiner Müller read out extracts from his play *Mausier* and discussed the role of history in contemporary German drama. The discussion is

works such as Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*. Brecht wrote this play whilst in exile in Hollywood where he completed it to perfection. Müller valued fragmentary texts because he felt that the world itself had become fragmentary and the notion of a complete and integral work was obsolete. It no longer seemed to reflect life in East Germany. In the discussion Müller remarked: 'It has to do with the difficulty of maintaining or preserving a consistent concept of what a "work" is. I no longer regard a work as a closed object that is passed on to the present or the next generation. That is now well and truly over.'⁴⁰

Fragmented literature was particularly appropriate, claimed Müller, for the representation of *German* history and society: 'No dramatic literature is as rich in fragments as German literature [...] and that has to do with the fragmentary character of our history.'⁴¹ Genia Schulz has argued that Müller did not consider Shakespeare's text to be a resting-place in which the consciousness can settle, but as a ruin or a site of destruction.⁴² What characterises *Hamlet* is that it does not allow the consciousness to rest, but creates the tension and pressure that Müller recreates, though by different means. This reflects a view that Müller was to affirm in his autobiography many years later.

Müller explains in his autobiography, *Krieg ohne Schlacht*,⁴³ that during his time in Bulgaria he had been planning to write a Hamlet play, which presented Hamlet as the son of an assassinated political activist in an Eastern bloc state. The adaptation of

printed in *Basis. Jahrbuch für deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur*, vol. 6, ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976), 48-64.

⁴⁰ 'Geschichte und Drama' (p. 49).

⁴¹ 'Geschichte und Drama' (p. 56).

⁴² Genia Schulz. *Heiner Müller* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980), p. 149.

Hamlet was to have been called *Hamlet in B.*, and would have consisted of long dialogues between Hamlet and the dead Horatio in the graveyard. Müller writes that he was having problems converting this idea into dialogic form:

What I had already noticed in Bulgaria was the impossibility of developing any dialogues out of the material and of transporting the material into the so-called real world of Socialism and Stalinism. There were no dialogues left. I kept trying to develop dialogues, but it didn't work; there were no dialogues, only monologic blocks, and the whole thing then shrank to this text.⁴⁴

The world as Müller knew it was in a state of 'stagnation'⁴⁵ and this meant that life could not be presented in a dramatic form that showed characters engaging in whole dialogues with one another. *Hamletmaschine* is monologic and the characters are trapped in solipsistic isolation where genuine communication is no longer possible. Since most of Müller's plays had been banned by the SED's Ministry for Culture, it is hardly surprising that by 1977 Müller was feeling that all communication with the world was impossible. Years later, Müller said in an interview: '*Hamletmaschine* was the end-point.'⁴⁶ For Müller, *Hamletmaschine* was the last point because it represented a shrinking of all his ideas and experiences into a concentrated intertextual form, after which Müller's significant dramatic work diminished.

Some of Müller's most explicit remarks about the *Hamletmaschine* were made in a speech entitled *Shakespeare eine Differenz*.⁴⁷ Drawing on imagery from industrial Eastern Europe, he described *Hamlet* as a machine: 'The myth [*Hamlet*] is an

⁴³ Heiner Müller, *Krieg ohne Schlacht. Leben in zwei Diktaturen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1992).

⁴⁴ *Krieg ohne Schlacht* (p. 294).

⁴⁵ *Krieg ohne Schlacht* (p. 295).

⁴⁶ '*Hamletmaschine* war der Endpunkt.' See *Berliner Zeitung* (17 April, 1980).

⁴⁷ Müller gave the speech on 23 April, 1988 at the Shakespeare conference in Weimar. The speech is published in *Heiner Müller Material, Texte und Kommentare*, ed. Frank Hörnigk (Göttingen: Steidl, 1989), pp. 105-08.

aggregate, a machine, to which new and different machines can be attached at any time.’⁴⁸ Even before Müller had written *Hamletmaschine* he had expressed the view that time could no longer be understood as a linear process, but as a composite of past, present and future. In the roundtable debate of 1972 Müller said:

One consequence of this pressing and urgent time is that one tends to concatenate epochs such that we see history in a kind of time-lapse [...] and I believe that it is now the case that one cannot describe history without the use of anachronisms. One must describe history with an orientation towards the future.⁴⁹

For Müller the process of translating *Hamlet* had meant accepting that time and history do not unfold in linear fashion and that there is no connection between past, present and future moments. It was by visualising *Hamlet* as a machine to which parts could be added, an intertextual and fragmentary conglomeration, that the past and present could be seen to be interminably linked.

A primary reason, I believe, why Müller needed to rewrite *Hamlet* in fragmentary form was related to his understanding of the inadequacy of translation as a means of re-inscribing a literary form that Müller had come to accept as obsolete.⁵⁰ *Hamletmaschine* depicts a world out of joint that cannot be represented meaningfully by any traditional dramatic form, and translation was another conservative means of preserving an outmoded dramatic form. Having written an integral and faithful translation of *Hamlet* in 1976, Müller seemed to have become disillusioned not only

⁴⁸ *Shakespeare eine Differenz*. This and subsequent citations are taken from p. 105.

⁴⁹ ‘Geschichte und Drama’ (p. 53).

⁵⁰ Günther Klotz has written: ‘When Müller speaks of reducing things to their skeleton, he means dispensing with plot and character as basic elements of the European drama, which are the fundamental structures that impart form and meaning to a play.’ See Günther Klotz, ‘Shakespeare Contemporized: GDR Shakespeare Adaptations from Bertolt Brecht to Heiner Müller’, in *Redefining Shakespeare* (p. 93). Klotz’s reference to Müller’s reduction of

by this type of dramatic form but also by translation as a process of perpetuating a form that was no longer relevant. The form of *Hamlet* as a drama comprising a structured series of dialogues did not appeal to Müller. The content was also felt to be somewhat optimistic and a little too idealised. Müller wanted to give expression to the growing sense of pessimism that seemed to be taking hold of the citizens of East Germany. For a German *Hamlet* to become ‘our’ Hamlet, it needed to reflect some of Müller’s own misery.

4.3.2 The German ‘Misery’

In Gustav von Wangenheim’s production at the Deutsches Theater in 1945 Horst Caspar played an idealistic and heroic Hamlet, who served to focus optimism for the newly created GDR. However, the optimism that existed in the 1940s regarding the planned society of East Germany was fading by the 1970s. The censorship of the work of poet and singer Wolf Biermann left German intellectuals with feelings of disappointment and resentment. There was a sense that the GDR would never be a pluralistic society and that artists and writers were stuck in an intellectual and spiritual rut.

In 1972 Heiner Müller said: ‘One cannot give a picture of the GDR without seeing it in the context of German history, which is also very much a German misery. It is only in this context of German misery that one gets a correct image of the GDR in

European drama to its skeleton is taken from Heiner Müller, *Gesammelte Irrtümer. Interviews und Gespräche* (Frankfurt/M: Verlag der Autoren, 1986), p. 102.

drama.’⁵¹ Nor could Müller present Hamlet as a heroic and optimistic figure: ‘I fear – and here I do not agree entirely with the official aesthetic – that in the present situation regarding the theatres of the GDR, not much can be achieved with a “positive hero”. I believe that much more can be learned from a negative example.’⁵² In 1986 Müller wrote: ‘Intelligence is now uncertain. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find the right perspective, to hold onto Utopia’.⁵³ *Hamletmaschine* thus reflects Müller’s growing sense of pessimism about the GDR. The traditional image of Hamlet as an optimistic and faithful socialist that had been manufactured by the SED had to be rewritten by the late 1970s.

Hamletmaschine begins with an image of a Europe in ruins and the sound of Stalin’s funeral in the background. Hamlet declares: ‘I was Hamlet. I stood on the shore and spoke BLAH BLAH to the breakers, behind me the ruins of Europe. The bell tolls in the state funeral.’ We see Hamlet at the beginning of *Hamletmaschine* with his ear to the ground listening to the world turning and slowly winding down and dissolving. Hamlet’s father and Stalin are dead, the socialist utopia has vanished and it has been replaced by a sense of disillusionment.

In Müller’s adaptation Hamlet is an intellectual who needs to rebel against the State, but is unable to. There is a schizophrenia that divided both Hamlet and Germany in the twentieth century and in the background was the failed Socialist system. Hamlet’s disillusionment after the death of Stalin causes the Marxist Hamlet to lay aside his role, symbolised by the laying aside of his mask and costume. He then becomes the

⁵¹ ‘Geschichte und Drama’ (p. 49).

⁵² ‘Geschichte und Drama’ (p. 54). For an assessment of Müller’s re-evaluation of the Hamlet material, see Doris Perl, “‘A Document in Madness?’ Zu Heiner Müllers Umdeutung in der klassischen Character in der *Hamletmaschine*’, *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 128 (1992), 157-70.

actor who had played the role of Hamlet. The play ends with Zbiginiew Herbert's *Fortinbras' Lament*, which leaves open the possibility that Fortinbras represents the final victory of capitalism over socialism. In this world the gods are popular culture and Coca-Cola. Hamlet lives in a world closed off by walls and barbed wire fencing, suggestive of the Berlin Wall.

After the dissolution of the GDR Müller wrote in his biography that it was difficult to imagine what Germany would do with Shakespeare now that there was no longer a socialist state: 'Germany was good material for drama up until reunification. I now fear that the end of the GDR will bring about the end of Shakespeare reception in Germany. I cannot think why one would produce Shakespeare in the FRG, unless it were the comedies.'⁵⁴ *Hamletmaschine* was written long before German reunification, but it echoed dissatisfaction with the socialist system and it rewrote *Hamlet* as an apocalyptic vision, which accounts for why the play was banned until 1990.

Another reason for Müller's rewriting of *Hamlet* has to do with events that were occurring in the world in the late 1970s, and which contributed to Müller's growing sense of pessimism. Müller explains in his autobiography⁵⁵ that two political events were making headlines in the late 1970s, which impressed themselves on his imagination. Andreas Baader was leading a terrorist group against the FRG, carrying out a series of abductions and assassinations. There was also an explosive incident when Ulrike Meinhof and Andreas Baader threw all of the furniture and possessions out of the window of the flat that Meinhof shared with Klaus Rainer Röhl in Berlin.

⁵³ Heiner Müller, 'Deutschland ist Hamlet', in *Die deutsche Bühne*, 7 (1986), 10.

⁵⁴ *Krieg ohne Schlacht* (p. 267).

⁵⁵ *Krieg ohne Schlacht* (p. 294).

This was a symbolic act of renunciation of bourgeois life, and of law and order. and was the beginning of the Baader-Meinhof campaign of terrorism.

Also making headlines at this time were the incidents surrounding the cult leader Charles Manson, who instigated an attack on Roman Polanski's house. Several people were murdered, including Polanski's pregnant girlfriend, Sharon Tate. One of the murderers of Tate, and a member of Manson's 'family', was Susan Atkins, who became notorious for her threatening phone calls. In Bulgaria Müller had read an issue of *Life* magazine, which contained a transcript of one of these conversations. One of the lines was: 'When she goes through your bedrooms with meat cleavers, then you will know the truth.' This line became incorporated into the text of the *Hamletmaschine*.

The violence and destructiveness of Ulrike Meinhof is clearly reflected in the Ophelia of *Hamletmaschine*, who tears up the room that is her prison. Her final Electra speech, in which she stands for hatred and renunciation, has dramatic links with Meinhof's renunciation of bourgeois life and legality. Ophelia says: 'I cast out all the seed that I received. I transform the milk of my breasts into deadly poison. I take the world back that I have borne. I suffocate the world between my thighs. I bury it in my shame. Down with oppression. Long live hatred, contempt, rebellion and death.' Ophelia then utters Susan Atkins' reference to the Manson murders. What is interesting is that Müller treats Ophelia with sympathy and yet her character was

inspired by two of the most notorious terrorists of the day.⁵⁶ Müller's attitude to violent reactions is highly ambivalent.

In the same year that Müller wrote his adaptation of *Hamlet*, Ingo Waßerka translated the play for Otomar Kreja's production in Düsseldorf.⁵⁷ In this translation the references to Denmark were replaced with 'this country' and 'our state' and the pirates were converted to 'terrorists'. It was stressed in the programme that Waßerka's translation was intended to hold a mirror up to the world as it looked in 1977. Terrorism in the world in 1977 thus contributed to the rewriting of *Hamlet* both in the translation of Waßerka and in the adaptation of Müller. *Hamlet* attracted new interest in 1977, because it seemed to reflect the mindless violence that was undermining any sense of security in the world at that time.

4.3.3 The Inter-relationship of Müller's *Hamlet* Translation and Adaptation

We find two rewrites of *Hamlet* in 1976/77 by the same author: a translation that contains a subtle hint of social criticism in some of its socialist vocabulary, and a spin-off that used *Hamlet* as a medium through which Müller was able to give a more convincing and realistic picture of life in a spiritually ruined Europe. The production that was planned by Müller and Besson to combine both translation and adaptation

⁵⁶ The magnificent portrayal of Ophelia as a raving lunatic with an Electra complex in the final scene of Müller's *Hamletmaschine* may also have been inspired by the parodical Ophelia in Bonaventura's novel, *Night Watches* (1800). Here, Ophelia, mad and locked up in an asylum, has all the energy and violence that we see in the Ophelia of *Hamletmaschine*.

⁵⁷ The production is discussed in *Theater heute*, 6 (1977).

did not materialise until after the democratisation of East Germany, but the nature of this planned production underlines the peculiar relationship that sometimes pertains to translation and adaptation.

It is my view that in 1977 translation became inadequate as a means of transmitting Shakespeare to the East German stage. For Müller, 'our' Hamlet, the Hamlet of and for the GDR, could not be a straightforward translation of the text into German. It had to be an interconnected system that, through intertextual references inserted into the translation, established a vital link between Shakespeare's world and the modern world as it was experienced in East Germany. From Coca-Cola to Charles Manson, from Marx to Baader-Meinhof, the contemporary world had to be linked up to the Renaissance world if *Hamlet* was to have any social relevance in the 1970s. 'Our' Hamlet could not exist as a text without the interpolation of 'our' world, and Müller achieved this by combining his own time with that of Shakespeare's.

In 1976 Benno Besson was planning to produce *Hamlet* at the Volksbühne in East Berlin. In the ten years since Hamburger's translation had been suppressed by the SED's Ministry for Culture, the political climate had relaxed to the extent that the translation could now be used in theatres. However, Besson experienced some difficulties with the Dresen-Hamburger translation and commissioned Heiner Müller to retranslate the play. Müller was taken to court by Hamburger in 1977 for plagiarising his translation,⁵⁸ but it was through *translating* the play that Müller

⁵⁸ Full details of the plagiarism case against Müller can be found in Jonathan Kalb, *The Theatre of Heiner Müller* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 16 and 210-211 (note 23). Müller explains the story rather differently in his autobiography, *Krieg ohne Schlacht* (p. 296), in which he states that he won the case, whereas Hamburger had claimed that the matter was settled out of court. The reader is referred to my interview with Hamburger, in which this amicable settlement is detailed. See Appendix (p. 346).

reached the conclusion that *Hamlet* could not exist in its present form in East Germany and still remain relevant to audiences. *Hamlet* needed to be *adapted*.

Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine* (1977) has been treated as a radical post-modern adaptation of *Hamlet* and analysed according to its status as an offshoot derived from Shakespeare's text. What is of interest to me is the connection that this adaptation has with Müller's translation of *Hamlet*, written in the previous year.⁵⁹ What Müller did with *Hamlet* in his *adaptation* reveals what he had been unable to do with the play in a more faithful *translation*. The need to adapt the play so soon after translating it, and Müller's attempt to conflate a translation and adaptation into a single production, provide a valuable comment on the nature of translation and adaptation, and the form in which *Hamlet* had to be rewritten in the late 1970s.

It may be argued that the best way to reflect an original work in a foreign language is through a translation.⁶⁰ *Hamletmaschine* is an offshoot but, as Müller understood it, it was only through this kind of adaptation that a line of communication could be established with contemporary audiences in the GDR.⁶¹ The Ministry of Culture, which banned *Hamletmaschine*, obviously felt that the play would connect with the

⁵⁹ *Hamlet*, trans. Heiner Müller, in *Shakespeare Factory*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1985/89). *Hamletmaschine* can be found in Theo Girshausen (ed.), *Hamletmaschine. Heiner Müllers Endspiel* (Cologne: Prometh, 1978). English translation: *Hamletmachine and Other Texts for the Stage*, ed. and trans. Carl Weber (New York: Performing Arts Journal, 1984).

⁶⁰ Romy Heylen: 'A text which functions as a translation today may not be called a "translation" tomorrow and may be named a version instead; a translation strategy (turning verse into prose) which was valid in the past may not be seen to be the most effective strategy of reflecting the original today. Historical changes and the socio-cultural context of the reception of translation determine a reader's expectations, and form part of his or her notion of what constitutes translation.' See Heylen (p. 4).

⁶¹ Müller once noted: 'The more you change a text, the more it is the same. The text has to find another body, and it is my body, so it is a sexual relationship. You cannot translate words; you have to translate a whole context.' See Heiner Müller, "Like Sleeping with

audiences more effectively than a literal translation that could be monitored by the Ministry. Translation allowed the party functionaries greater control over the messages being sent out to audiences, and this control was taken away in an adaptation. I believe that Müller began to understand the potential of *Hamlet* for the articulation of social criticism, but translating the text did not allow him sufficient freedom to express his views. The translation was thus instrumental in urging Müller to rewrite *Hamlet*. In 1986 Müller stressed the importance of his translation to the development of *Hamletmaschine*:

My translation was written for Benno Besson's production almost ten years ago at the Volksbühne in Berlin, but I had been thinking about doing something with this play for over twenty years. Working at the Volksbühne gave me the opportunity to work quickly on my own version. For years I had been making notes, drafts for my own 'Hamlet' play. When I had to translate Shakespeare's play for this particular theatre production, my own Hamlet play, which I had planned to be 200 pages long, shrank. My *Hamletmaschine* was only nine pages.⁶²

In the case of *Hamlet*, it was a conservative translation that provided the impetus for a more subversive adaptation.⁶³ Müller's copious notes and drafts for an adaptation of *Hamlet* would have produced a work of two hundred pages. It was only by distancing himself from the notion of the 'complete' work, the dialogue structure, and the process of translation, that Müller was able to focus his thoughts and experiences into nine pages in the *Hamletmaschine*.

Shakespeare." A Conversation with Heiner Müller and Christa and B. K. Tragelehn', in *Redefining Shakespeare* (pp. 183-95, here p. 190).

⁶² *Die deutsche Bühne* (p. 10).

⁶³ It had previously been the case that a literal translation of Müller's had served as the catalyst for the creation of a more liberal adaptation. Müller explains in his autobiography, *Krieg ohne Schlacht* (p. 261) that after writing a very accurate translation of *As You Like It* for Tragelehn in Babelsberg, he turned to *Macbeth* because the text is so badly transmitted that it offers a good opportunity to adapt Shakespeare. Müller stresses that he valued the

It is very rare for a writer both to translate and adapt the same play and in Müller's case *Hamlet* is a locus for both the acts of translation and adaptation, the one providing a revealing comment on the other.⁶⁴ In an interview in *Theater heute*⁶⁵ Müller suggested that it would be interesting to combine in one production both a translation and an adaptation of the same play so that the one text could comment on and illuminate the other. He commented: 'It would be interesting, for example, but not yet legitimate, to produce *Macbeth* both in the original and partly in adaptation. Alternatively, you could produce *Lear* interposed with Bond's *Lear*. That would certainly not be good for ticket sales, because audiences are not yet interested in the "how" of a play.' This was not something that Müller felt able to do with his *Macbeth* adaptation in 1972. The fusion of translation and adaptation in the same production reveals the inadequacy of either form in isolation. Adaptation seems to provide a necessary comment on the translation, and the translation provides a basis of authority for the adaptation.

Müller wanted to combine his translation of *Hamlet* and his adaptation, *Hamletmaschine*, in a single production. He had planned to integrate the adaptation into the production of Benno Besson's at the Volksbühne. Interposing lines from an adaptation into a translation had never been done before, and due to State censorship in the GDR, Müller had to wait until 1990 before his plan was realised. This reveals how Müller saw inadequacies in traditional, faithful translations of dramatic works. It is clear from Müller's speech, *Shakespeare eine Differenz* (1988), that adapting

opportunity to 'change' Shakespeare with an adaptation of *Macbeth*, and that this opportunity had not been open to him with a close translation of *As You Like It*.

⁶⁴ Hauschild describes Müller's translation-adaptation of *Hamlet* as a 'Doppelprojekt'. Benno Besson's first production of *Hamlet* in Müller's translation was on 14 April, 1977. See Hauschild (p. 87).

⁶⁵ *Theater heute*, 7 (1975).

Hamlet was a more rewarding activity than translating the text. Of *Hamlet*, Müller said: 'I had more inklings about the play than any real understanding, but it is in great leaps that we gain the best experiences, not in small steps.'

Hamletmaschine is a more demanding and insightful text than Müller's faithful translation of *Hamlet* and it is a more independent and creative act than translation, as Müller explains: 'We have not reached ourselves, as long as Shakespeare is still writing our plays for us.' Adapting *Hamlet* was considered by Müller to be a legitimate act of creation, whereas translation was the transmission of others' works, and this was denying German writers the chance to say something original about life in contemporary East Germany. Müller did not shy away from making bold interpretative leaps, since it was his view that the moments when we learn most from theatrical adaptations is when we make leaps of the imagination rather than cautious and logical steps.⁶⁶ *Hamletmaschine* is a complex textual machine that smashes up *Hamlet* and destroys history and literature. It is inherently subversive in its treatment of both socialism and literature.

We find faithful translations of *Hamlet* written in 1977 by Wolfgang Swaczynna, Peter Zadek, Ingo Waßerka and Heiner Müller, but it was only in Müller's case that translation was felt to be an inadequate representation of the world for audiences in the GDR in the late 1970s. Müller felt that Germany and the German spirit had been divided, that the world generally was out of joint, and that communication between individuals was no longer possible. The world could only be represented in the form

⁶⁶ Charles Marowitz also shares this view. He stressed that: 'One should not back away from an idea which could not possibly have existed in Shakespeare's time if that idea has been inspired by Shakespeare's material. The resolution of what appear to be antithetical elements

of shattered fragments, or a machine of many parts. Müller felt that the GDR was a failed experiment that had caused East Germans misery and disillusionment. He felt that the previously optimistic and humanistic image of a 'socialist' Hamlet had to be deconstructed with an awareness of the inevitable end of the Socialist State and the victory of capitalism.

Hamlet/Hamletmaschine illuminated a moment in history when translation and adaptation existed in a particular configuration that emphasised the necessity and mutual dependence of each process. Georges L. Bastin has written that adaptation is a 'type of creative process which seeks to restore the balance of communication that is often disrupted by traditional forms of translation.'⁶⁷ It is easier to appreciate the communicative value of *Hamletmaschine*, if we re-align our understanding of the relationship between translation and adaptation. This has also been observed by Susan Bassnett-McGuire, who writes:

It is time to free ourselves from the constraints that the term 'translation' has placed upon us and recognise that we have immense problems in pinning down a term that continues to elude us. For whether we acknowledge it or not, we have been colluding with alternative notions of translation all our lives.⁶⁸

The inseparability of Müller's translation and adaptation of *Hamlet* reinforces the mutual dependence of translating and adapting as different modes of communication and cultural mediation. Whilst translation offers a basis of authority for the representation of a play, it also perpetuates a dramatic form and a way of viewing the world that may have become obsolete. Adaptation, although needing translation as an

is often the first step towards the creation of a viable new form.' See *The Marowitz Shakespeare* (p. 24).

⁶⁷ See Baker, *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (p. 8).

authorising factor, offered Müller the opportunity to rewrite Shakespeare, to forge a new dramatic form that mirrored a more fragmented world. Müller's adaptation of *Hamlet* was not just a case of Shakespearean transmigration through the Marxist socialist filter of the German Democratic Republic, it was an attempt to establish a new dramatic form which communicated the experiences of Germans living in the GDR and which uniquely reflected their contribution to the development of social history. Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine* restored something of the symbolic value of producing *Hamlet*. Amidst the controversy and the censorship it acquired a social and political significance that *Hamlet* obviously had in 1601.

4.4 A Retrospect on GDR-Hamlets

Maik Hamburger described East Germany as 'a self-contained historical unit closed at both ends.'⁶⁹ Over a decade has now passed since the closure of this historical unit and this allows us to look back with a degree of objectivity on the translators of the GDR. When I spoke to Maik Hamburger in what was formerly the East Berlin district of Pankow, I asked him whether he still held the beliefs he had expressed in 1970 that Shakespeare could only be translated into the language of the factory workers of the GDR. He remarked:

I don't reject the feelings with regard to our approach to Shakespeare's text. It wasn't a question of Marxist terminology. We were talking about our feeling of the value of human beings and a possible future that one had in mind. Heiner Müller said at some point that he could write blank verse for East German workers because they were the

⁶⁸ Susan Bassnett-McGuire, 'When is a Translation Not a Translation?', in *Constructing Cultures* (pp. 25-40), p. 39.

⁶⁹ Hamburger, 'Are you a party in this business?' (p. 171).

subject of history, whereas in West Germany you couldn't because they were being used as a product of history and the facts bore us out [...] I think a feeling of the value of human endeavour and of a perspective that things were going to progress gave you a feeling of being able to do this.⁷⁰

Hamburger also explained that in the GDR translators had been able to spend more time working on translations, rather than in today's capitalist society where time means money:

The economic conditions in which we were working were very conducive to being able to delve as deeply as we could into the play to get at as many of the various depths as possible [...] I have always used a lot of time to do my translations because I wasn't pressed by dead-lines. I try to look into all the levels and make many attempts to reproduce them in the German language. That was possible under GDR conditions and not something that is possible under present day conditions if you are making a living out of it. I'm fortunate in that I am a pensioner now and I can take my time. I can still apply these old habits I have of taking my time and being as thorough as possible with my command of language and my sensitivity to Shakespeare to get as much as possible out of it. That is something that no present-day translator can afford to do.⁷¹

Hamburger also pointed out that criticism of translations written in the GDR tends to be largely focused on the limiting socialist readings given to the plays. In fact, writers and translators were also working under more favourable economic conditions in the GDR, which is sometimes forgotten today:

Günther, Brasch and Plessen have to do a translation in a certain amount of time, which means that they may not even become aware of certain levels because they are not going deep enough into it. But the economic situation is not very good for doing thorough translations of that kind, so that mixes up with the socialist ideology factor.⁷²

⁷⁰ Appendix (p. 343).

⁷¹ Appendix (p. 344).

⁷² Appendix (p. 344).

The changes in the social and political climate in Germany, the democratisation of East Germany and the dissolution of Socialism has meant not only changes in theatres, but in the way *Hamlet* is staged and interpreted. There is evidence of a change of ethos at the Berliner Ensemble (formerly in East Berlin), where Brecht worked. Hamburger explained that the new Intendant, Claus Peymann, is deliberately trying to erase all memories of Brecht at the Berliner Ensemble and of the actress, Helene Weigel, who became famous for her role as Mother Courage:

Then they got Peymann in, who is deliberately obscuring all remembrance of Brecht at the Berliner Ensemble. He's got a play about Brecht in the repertoire, but he has removed all of Brecht's furniture, he has removed all the furniture that Helene Weigel designed for the Green Room and he's chucked out all of the posters and pictures that were hanging around there. So he's obviously making a clean-cut with Brecht. That tradition is now dead at the Berliner Ensemble. Whether it is legitimate or not is a different matter. You could say that you shouldn't keep a person alive for so long when someone else needs to start. But the Brecht tradition that more or less evolved at the Berliner Ensemble came to an abrupt end when Peymann took over a year ago.⁷³

The changes at the Berliner Ensemble have led to new interpretations of *Hamlet* that, according to Hamburger, are not always valid. In 2000 Achim Freyer produced *Hamlet* at Peymann's new theatre. Freyer used Schlegel's translation and had the characters, including Hamlet, dress as clowns and engage in slapstick in order to form a contrast between the sublime poetry of Schlegel's translation and the circus clowns seen on stage. But the lack of *Gestus*, a quality of acting evolved by Brecht and particularly important at the Berliner Ensemble, along with the slapstick entertainment, was considered to be a disappointment by Hamburger, and not up to the standard of productions associated with the Berliner Ensemble. Hamburger commented:

⁷³ Appendix (p. 345).

The effect is that these people are talking terrific poetry and then they're stumbling over their feet all the time, so it gets the contrast. But I don't think that's what Shakespeare really meant when he wrote *Hamlet*. Freyer's production is very fine in its own terms, since it's a new interpretation. Shakespeare is amenable to everything, and as long as the effect at the end is a convincing one, then it's okay. But I wouldn't cite that as an example of Shakespeare's text being used in the most fruitful way.⁷⁴

The theatres of East Berlin, the Berliner Ensemble, the Deutsches Theater and the Volksbühne, are no longer subject to state censorship or run by 'Intendants' such as Ruth Berghaus and Matthias Langhoff, who had a commitment to socialist ideals. Audiences are mixing more between theatres of East and West Berlin and Western productions are increasingly being invited to the annual Berlin Theatertreffen, such as Peter Zadek's *Hamlet* with Angela Winkler in the title role, in the summer 2000 festival. The theatres of East Berlin are no longer under social and political pressure to produce ideologically motivated plays. This means that avant-garde productions like Freyer's *Hamlet* are now acceptable, whereas prior to 1989 they would have alerted the censors as a threat to the 'Erbeaneignung', the appropriation of the classics, that was part of the SED's cultural policy.

Maik Hamburger is still living in Pankow and translating Shakespeare's plays into German, his most recent being *Love's Labour's Lost* (1998) for the Bremer Shakespeare Company. Hamburger stated in my interview that if he were to translate *Hamlet* again, the text would appear very different from his subversive 1964 version. Another GDR translator, Thomas Brasch, who served a prison sentence for anti-socialist political activism in the 1970s, is also establishing a new and respectable reputation for himself in Berlin with his modern translations and adaptations of

⁷⁴ Appendix (p. 340).

Shakespeare's plays. Analysis of new Shakespeare translations by former GDR translators, and the growing changes in the theatres of the former East Berlin, will be the subject of future research.⁷⁵

4.5 Concluding Remarks

What comes out of this analysis of *Hamlet* rewrites is that the literary value of the play should be located not in any translation or adaptation of *Hamlet*, but in the function it serves as a channel of cultural mediation. Ivo Kamps has recently argued that the Shakespearean text is a conduit through which cultural material reaches successive generations.⁷⁶ It seems that in the case of *Hamlet*, literary value is not an inherent quality in the work, but the way the work demands to be continually rewritten and reinvented.

There were vast differences between the *Hamlet* rewrites of Schaller, Hamburger and Müller and yet they all presented an accurate picture of various perspectives of life in the GDR. All four translations/adaptations established a line of communication between Shakespeare's play and contemporary audiences, and all had legitimate claims to be 'our Hamlet', because it was through these creative rewrites that

⁷⁵ Manfred Pfister takes the view that *Hamletmaschine* is the most accurate representation of a 'unified' East-West German *Hamlet*: 'And what about the new All-German Hamlet? I am inclined to think that he already exists – in contrast to the new sense of national unity and identity, which exists only as a rhetorical commonplace bandied about by our politicians.' See Pfister, 'Hamlets made in Germany' (p. 90).

⁷⁶ 'Shakespeare is far more important to criticism as a conduit, as a uniquely powerful academic interface, as that part of the academic body through which the most theoretical innovation and theoretical energy course.' See Ivo Kamps, 'Alas, poor Shakespeare! I knew him well', *Shakespeare and Appropriation*, ed. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 15-31, here p. 24.

Shakespeare's text continued to affect people and to hold up a mirror to life in socialist East Germany. What is certain is that *Hamlet* will be used again, and rewritten again, whenever Shakespeare is used to legitimise cultural policy.

In the next chapter I will extend my discussion of culturally and politically motivated rewritings of *Hamlet* beyond the GDR to consider how the status of *Hamlet* in the Western canon has been exploited by translators and has been used to authorise translations that played a direct part in the formation of national culture.

5. TRANSLATING ICONICITY

I grouped the four *Hamlet* translations and adaptations of the preceding chapter together because they were conditioned by the socialist system of the German Democratic Republic. *Hamlet* possesses a remarkable facility for reflecting the most diverse aspects of social reality. The same play was used both to promote and to demolish Socialist ideals. *Hamlet* has operated at many levels of cultural life in Germany and has proved its suitability to a range of purposes. In the present chapter I shall extend my survey of transmutations of the play in German to look at the way *Hamlet* has been re-invented and transformed into a number of differentiated cultural objects. What connects the adaptations analysed in this chapter is the symbolic status of the play in the Western canon and the way this status has been used as a basis of authority. The question of translatability relates not only to the words on the page, but the translation of a cultural status symbol and the acculturation of iconicity.

In the present chapter I shall consider two adaptations that transformed *Hamlet* into a socio-political campaign. In 1972 Rolf Hochhuth published a sketch based on the play, which was set in a sheep shed that was being used as a schoolroom. The sketch was a dialogue between a pupil, Hamlet, and his teacher. In this spin-off Hochhuth took Hamlet's situation as a Renaissance scholar in Wittenberg as a point of comparison for the miserable conditions in West German schools in the 1970s. Hochhuth criticised the

Government's commitment to the arms race at the expense of social security, and he made the point that Germany would never produce literary classics like *Hamlet* as long as the German education system was below standard. This version of *Hamlet* in the sheep shed contained a full political manifesto, detailing the deficits of the West German economy in the 1970s and the need for greater commitment both to Germany and to other nations.

The second adaptation to be examined in this chapter will be Christoph Schlingensiefel's current production of *Hamlet* at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich and the Volksbühne in Berlin. Schlingensiefel is the head of a government-sponsored project to re-integrate Neo-Nazis into German society, his project being known as 'naziline.com'. Schlingensiefel recruited a number of Neo-Nazis to perform the parts of the travelling Players in his *Hamlet* production, which is causing a severe critical backlash in Switzerland and Germany. Schlingensiefel used the Neo-Nazis as a way of opening up the debate about a social problem that German politicians seem to be unwilling to address. It is also a way of forcing the public to recognise the reality that right-wing extremism is a part of German society. Schlingensiefel's political action was mirrored in the way the Players in *Hamlet* are used by Hamlet to force the court to recognise the presence of an evil that was being suppressed.

Schlingensiefel also draws attention to the fact that the version of *Hamlet* familiar to so many German and Swiss audiences, in which Gustav Gründgens played Hamlet, has its roots in the right-wing theatrical traditions established under National Socialism.

Schlingensiefel bases his adaptation on Gründgens' 1963 recording of the play, which focuses the minds of the audience on Gründgens the actor, who was implicated in the cultural politics of Nazi theatre of the 1930s. Again, it is the iconic status and cultural significance of *Hamlet* in Germany that Schlingensiefel questions with his adaptation of the play.

5.1 *Melancholia* or Foot-and-Mouth? 'Hamlet in the Sheep Shed' (1972)

In 1972 Karl Hoche wrote in the West German theatre journal *Theater heute* that one could no longer produce un-adapted versions of Shakespeare's plays for a progressive audience.¹ In 1972 *Theater heute*, the counterpart to the GDR's *Theater der Zeit*, gave writers of both East and West Germany the chance to rewrite a scene from *Hamlet* to express some aspect of social criticism that would be combined in a single text. What is revealing, though not surprising, about the resulting collage is that the sections of the adaptation written by East German dramatists focussed on the *social* problems of the GDR, whereas the poets and dramatists of the FRG were more concerned with the state of the West German economy.

Karl Hoche assembled pre-existing adaptations together with some newly written short sketches to form this new montage of *Hamlet*, which was published in *Theater heute*'s annual review at the end of 1972. Hoche stressed that rewriting Shakespeare's dramas

should ideally be a communal and collaborative activity, just as the original writing of the play texts must have been in Shakespeare's time. The first scene of 'Hamlet' was written by dramatist Rolf Hochhuth. Hochhuth also preceded his scene with a short description of the critical state of the West German economy. In 1964 only 1.4% of GNP was spent on education, compared with 3.4% in the USA and 2.3% in the UK. Between 1970 and 1975 the number of students studying arts and humanities in Germany looked set to fall from 35% to 28%. Fewer and fewer Germans were being provided with a sufficient education, and only 15% of the money set aside for research was actually reaching universities, the rest being invested into business.

Hochhuth wrote: 'There will be fewer and fewer Germans who have the adequate spiritual and mental resources to produce works of literature that equal the achievements of our great Goethe and Schiller'.² Hochhuth also commented that members of the government who plan investment in education are themselves a product of that planning and lack a sufficient education, thus increasing 'the size of the desert', in the author's words. Industrial pollution of Germany's drinking water provided, according to Hochhuth, a visual symbol of the Government's disastrous effect on education. In July 1971 over 100 000 fish died in the rivers north of Frankfurt, and these fish were like the pupils in West German schools. Hochhuth's scene was thus written to criticise the FRG's lack of commitment to cultural development and education. West Germans were more concerned about the deficiencies of their own government and school system than with Hamlet's education in Wittenberg, as Hochhuth writes: 'This is an adaptation of *Hamlet*.

¹ Karl Hoche, 'Hamlet. Prinz von Dänemark', translated by various German playwrights and edited by Karl Hoche, *Theater heute*, Jahressonderheft (1972), 58-62, here p. 58.

in which we are told in the first act that Hamlet has been at the university in Wittenberg. We are not interested at which school a feudal prince of the middle ages received his education, but in the type of school into which an average German pupil is being forced every day.’³

In Hochhuth’s satirical sketch Hamlet is a pupil at a school that is also a sheep shed full of dung, and the only school for 1500 pupils. This provides an instant comment on the conditions in West German schools. Plaster is falling off the walls of the school, indicating the urgent need of repair, and because of a lack of teaching resources Hamlet is sitting on a heap of dung, scribbling on a slate. Meanwhile thirty million marks are being spent every year on alcohol and tobacco. Hamlet is playing with the skull of his illiterate friend Osric, another victim of inadequate education. Hamlet is also ill and is suffering from foot and mouth, but there aren’t any qualified doctors to cure him.

The teacher is poor due to under-pay, and has only recently been able to buy a television. He tells Hamlet that 1960 would have been the year for Hamlet to become a professional since now only 10.8% of the population are receiving any professional training compared with 16.7% in the USA. Hamlet replies that the teacher cannot expect him to get any qualifications if the government invests only 1.4% of GNP in education. The teacher reminds Hamlet that education is the home of all homeless people: ‘Die Heimat aller Heimatlosen ist die Bildung’. Hamlet says that he is hungry and a caption explains that President Nixon has just invited the whole of the Peking government to dine in America,

² Hochhuth (p. 58).

³ Hochhuth (p. 59).

whilst 30% of the US population are starving. The teacher quotes Klaus Dohanyi, secretary of State for education, who, in an interview on 12 November 1969, said that more public money needed to be channelled into arms in West Germany.

Hochhuth's sketch formed part of what was described in *Theater heute* as a 'writers' collective'. The adaptation was never performed but remained as an experiment in the pages of *Theater heute*. Karl Hoche justified this experiment by claiming that *Hamlet* needed to be rewritten for contemporary German audiences because they would not be content with traditional theatrical forms of Shakespeare. Several of the texts included in this parody had already been written and performed. For example, one segment of the adaptation contains a short sketch by Brecht. The problem with this composite text was that the sketches were too short and stylistically disparate to provide a viable, integral dramatic rewrite of *Hamlet* for the stage.

Hoche's *Hamlet* is unlikely ever to be used in a performance now because the economic statistics are no longer relevant and because there are not the same vivid social and political contrasts between two German nations. In the year 1972 what was most relevant about *Hamlet* was the fact that Germany would never be able to write such a literary work because the basic standard of living and education was denying the population the necessary development. The purpose of collecting the texts and printing them was to question the social relevance of producing Shakespeare's plays in countries that faced more immediate problems than whether Hamlet should kill his uncle or not. Almost thirty years later another adaptation of *Hamlet* appeared. This time the text was used on

stage and became a talking point throughout Europe. Social and political problems were given a public airing through this new *Hamlet*, created by Christoph Schlingensiefel.

5.2 Escaping the Past: Schlingensiefel's Neo-Nazi Hamlet (2001)

One of the most fascinating ways in which *Hamlet* has been used in Germany has been as a form of therapy to help successive generations of Germans to come to terms with the lasting effects that National Socialism had on the nation's conscience. It was Brecht who first used *Hamlet* as a dramatic exercise to warn Germany of the possibility of descending once again into the madness that created the Third Reich. In 1940, when the war was still in its infancy, Brecht wrote: 'We see Hamlet's delay as Reason and the atrocity at the end of the play as a relapse. In any case, such relapses are threatening us today and their consequences have intensified.'⁴ As early as 1940 Brecht was warning Germany to learn from Hamlet's mistake and not to get caught up in the madness that leads to war.

In 1948 Brecht wrote: 'In view of the bloody and dark times in which I am writing this, in view of the criminal ruling classes and the wide-spread doubts about the future that is always being misused, I believe *Hamlet* is a fable about war [...] This reading of the play, which has more than one reading, could, I believe, be of use to our audiences.'⁵

After the devastation of the war, it was the avoidance of further violence that shaped

⁴ Bertolt Brecht, *Schriften, 1933-1942*, vol. 22.2 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997), p. 611.

Brecht's understanding of *Hamlet*. Also in 1948 Brecht wrote a short intermezzo to be inserted between 4.3 and 4.4 of *Hamlet*.⁶ He did not intend it to be incorporated into a production of the play, only to be performed in rehearsals in order to help the actors understand the warning implicit in *Hamlet*. Brecht's so-called 'Ferry Scene' was meant to serve as an antidote to the prevalent view that Hamlet had failed because he had been unable to kill Claudius. Brecht wanted to prevent German audiences from seeing Hamlet as a hero only when he kills the King. Brecht believed that modern bourgeois Germans tended to regard the butchery of the fifth act and Hamlet's completion of the deed in too positive a light, rather than as a descent into madness. Hamlet's murder of Claudius is not the satisfying resolution to the story but an atrocity and a relapse into violence, claimed Brecht.

The 'Ferry Scene' contains a dialogue between Hamlet and a ferryman at the port of Elsinore. The war with Norway has been terminated, Claudius has renounced his right to a stretch of Danish coastline and, in return, Norway has agreed to buy Denmark's fish. As the Ferryman says: 'The noise of war does not fill stomachs'. War has now been replaced with the fish trade. Hamlet comments: 'Blood no longer smells good, there's been a change in taste,' and for a brief moment he realises that there is more honour in honest trade than in war, but then he relapses into his former desire to kill the King. The fish-trade is thriving, but Hamlet cannot accept that the war is over, and swears that he will accomplish his bloody deed. Hamlet declares: 'O, if only he had delayed! If only!' If Claudius had hesitated before killing Hamlet's father then the chain of violence would

⁵ Bertolt Brecht, *Schriften 1942-1956*, vol. 23 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997), pp. 93-94.

⁶ *Schriften*, vol. 23 (pp. 840-2). Quotations from the scene are in my own translation.

not have started. The intermezzo ends with a news report describing how Hamlet's actions bring about the death of all concerned:

And so, carefully deploying the noise of the drums, and eagerly responding to the battle cry of unknown soldiers, he commits the slaughter. By circumstances he is at last freed from his human and reasonable inhibition in a single terrible frenzy: the King, his mother, and himself all dead. His successor justified the act by claiming: 'He was likely, had he been put on, to have prov'd most royal.'

The newsreader at the end of the adaptation was used by Brecht to transmit Fortinbras' reactions to the bloody scene at the royal court through the medium of the news report and thus reinforce the parallels between the bloodshed at the end of the play and the ruins of Germany after the war. Brecht rewrote *Hamlet* in order to warn German audiences that Hamlet only failed when he did finally resort to violence. After 1945 Brecht was in no doubt that war needs no justification to occur and that there need be no good reason why a similar war could not occur again. Brecht used *Hamlet* and wrote the 'Ferry Scene' in order to help Germans come to terms with their past, to understand what had happened, and to avoid making the same mistakes in future. Acting out this intermezzo was a form of therapy that helped actors to understand how violence must be avoided in future.

At the start of the twenty-first century *Hamlet* is again being used in Germany to help a very specific group of Germans to come to terms with their violent anti-social past and to escape from it: I am referring to the German Neo-Nazis. On 10 May 2001 Christoph Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* premiered at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich.⁷ His production was

⁷ Ten days after the premiere in Zürich, such a critical backlash had occurred that the five members of the jury that selects the year's most influential theatre productions invited Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* to the thirty-eighth 'Theatertreffen' festival in Berlin, even though the

based on Schlegel's translation, but with extensive modifications. What caused a scandal in Switzerland was that Schlingensiefel imported a group of Neo-Nazis from Germany to play the parts of the travelling Players in the Mousetrap.⁸

Schlingensiefel is the head of a project known as 'naziline.com', which aims to re-socialise Neo-Nazis and to increase public understanding and tolerance of right-wing extremists, who are trying to re-integrate themselves into social and professional life.⁹ Schlingensiefel's production and his social work with ex-Neo-Nazis have received largely negative reactions. It has been questioned whether the extremists are sincere in their attempts to reform, or whether this production is giving Neo-Nazis an ideal opportunity for self-profiling.¹⁰ The question is whether Schlingensiefel is playing with the Neo-Nazis, or whether they are playing with him.

required ten productions had already been selected and none of the jury had seen Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet*. According to Lilith Frey, ninety per cent of the audience at the Zürich premiere were from the press. See 'Hamlet missbraucht! Schlingensiefels Neonazis: Premiere im Schauspielhaus', *Blick* (17 April, 2001).

⁸ Hamlet actor Sebastian Rudolph describes the scene when the Neo-Nazis arrived at the station in Zürich. They were mobbed by journalists and a brass band was organised by Christoph Marthaler to welcome the Neo-Nazis with a military march, 'Front and Centre'. See Rudolph's 'Tagebuch', *Tages Anzeiger* (5 May, 2001).

⁹ Schlingensiefel believed it was not so much a matter of adapting the Neo-Nazis to society, but of adapting society to the Neo-Nazis: 'I consider the re-socialisation programme absurd. We need to re-socialise society.' Schlingensiefel got his idea for 'naziline' from Internal Minister Otto Schily's re-socialisation programme 'RAUS', which is sponsored by the Federal Office for Political Education and pays up to DM 150 000 to every reformed or re-socialised Neo-Nazi. The 'Bundesanstalt' paid DM 50 000 for Schlingensiefel's production to be taken to Berlin for the Theatertreffen. Although the government's re-socialisation project is in some respects the parent project of Schlingensiefel's 'naziline' venture, Schlingensiefel has expressed the belief that paying 150 000 marks reduces the Neo-Nazis to economic commodities that dehumanises them, and this destroys the human contact that Schlingensiefel is encouraging the public to feel. See Daniel Arnet and Judith Wyder, 'Mit den Skins zur SVP', *Der Spiegel* (18 April, 2001).

¹⁰ All mainstream political parties, CDU, SPD, FDP and Greens want to prevent Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* from coming to the Staatstheater in Düsseldorf. See Bodo Fuhrmann, 'Schlingensiefel droht: Wir kommen zu Euch!', *Express Düsseldorf* (23 May, 2001); Jean-Pierre Hoby, cultural administrator in Zürich, criticised the Schauspielhaus for lacking 'political sensitivity', when the

The *Hamlet* production is part of a much larger campaign that has the ultimate aim of helping right-wing extremists to readjust to society and of helping the public to discuss the issue of Neo-Nazism instead of suppressing it. Torsten Maß, leader of Berlin's annual theatre festival, the 'Theatertreffen', explained that the jury had invited Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* to Berlin because it was not an isolated production, but part of a cultural and political debate that extended beyond the theatre and into people's lives. The Neo-Nazis used in the performance connect this production with the government's re-socialisation project, RAUS, and with Schlingensiefel's parallel project, 'naziline'. Maß commented: 'In our eyes Schlingensiefel is the artist who has made the strongest political contribution. His theatre is pure politics'.¹¹ There is no disputing this.

In the run-up to his *Hamlet* production, Schlingensiefel set up info-stands around Zürich in order to gather petitions to ban Switzerland's SVP Party (Schweizer Völklerpartei), led by Euro-opponent and 'right-wing' populist Christoph Blocher. Schlingensiefel is trying to have the Party abolished because of its racist and right-wing policies.¹² Schlingensiefel has also challenged the SVP to discontinue its funding of the Schauspielhaus in order to allow the theatre more artistic freedom.¹³ Schlingensiefel's politics may be honourable but

theatre's director, Christoph Marthaler, claimed that stirring up the conservative city was an 'erotic' act. See Uwe Mattheiss, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (24 April, 2001).

¹¹ See Michael Fischer, 'Regisseur Christoph Schlingensiefel ist zum Theatertreffen eingeladen', *Südwestpresse* (18 April, 2001).

¹² Schlingensiefel stated: 'The SVP is a party that persecutes people and must be banned.' See Alexander Sautter, 'Schauspielhaus sammelt für SVP-Verbot', *Blick* (17 April, 2001).

¹³ In the centre of Zürich Schlingensiefel, just weeks before his *Hamlet* was about to be staged, declared (with the aid of a megaphone) that he had two requests: firstly he stated that a financially dependent theatre was not a free theatre, and all sponsorship should be terminated; secondly he declared that Adolf Hitler must be killed. Schlingensiefel chose Hitler's birthday to make this declaration. See Jakob Bächtold, 'Grosses Theater um Strassentheater in Zürich', *Der Landbote* (21 April, 2001).

without the funding from the SVP there would be no theatre in Zürich.¹⁴ Whilst the Schauspielhaus supports Schlingensief's artistic integrity and promotes the new production of *Hamlet*, it stands to lose its funding if the SVP withdraws its sponsorship.¹⁵ Demonstrations and petition-signing, the 'naziline.com' project, and the controversial *Hamlet* at the Schauspielhaus, are all inter-connected and part of one large controversial political 'happening'.

Schlingensief has taken the theatre out into the streets and brought the politics of the real world into the theatre and it is unclear where reality ends and art begins. The scandal of this production is that Schlingensief used real Neo-Nazis rather than actors, and that he imported them from Germany's industrial 'Ruhrgebiet' into the peaceful and cultured city of Zürich.¹⁶ In this production of *Hamlet* interactivity with the audience was also

¹⁴ This provocation comes at a bad time just before a decision is made about awarding further subsidies to the Schauspielhaus, on which the theatre depends for its survival, especially as the building of the new 'Schiffbau' theatre has cost more than anticipated. If Schlingensief is successful and the conservative SVP is suppressed, provision of credit to the theatre will be discontinued. Schlingensief told the SVP to terminate subsidies for the Schauspielhaus, so that people could see what the SVP was doing to Switzerland's culture. The city, as the theatre's largest sponsor, gives the Schauspielhaus 2.5 million Swiss francs a year. See Alexander Sautter, 'Schlingensief-Aktion, 2. Schauspielhaus will den ZSC verbieten!', *Blick* (18 April, 2001).

¹⁵ Bänz Friedli stressed that most of the Schauspielhaus funding is due to the goodwill of the SVP, but in order to continue receiving sponsorship the theatre is limited to productions that please the bourgeois majority. This 'humility' stifles true artistic expression: 'But what is theatre if not to aggravate the majority, needle those in power and place political relations in question? Whoever demands a form of art that cow-tows to the authorities is encouraging an absolutist regime that adversely affects artistic production.' Ursula Haller of the SVP stated that only when theatre directors use their own money instead of the public's can they afford to produce radical versions like Schlingensief's *Hamlet*. See Bänz Friedli, 'Sein oder nicht sein', *Der Spiegel* (27 April, 2001).

¹⁶ Originally Schlingensief had searched for Neo-Nazis with an advertisement on the Internet. Twenty-five Neo-Nazis applied to perform in Schlingensief's *Hamlet*, from Göttingen, the Ruhrgebiet, Munich, Hannover and Cottbus. Schlingensief wanted the more 'hard-core' Nazis from Berlin and Brandenburg, but he was provided with a group from Nordrhein Westfalen collected by Torsten Lemmer, a local of Düsseldorf, who owns 51% of the world's right-wing music industry, which provides music for most of Europe's Neo-Nazi sub-culture. Lemmer is producer of a Nazi rock band called 'Störkraft' and editor of *Rock Nord*, a music magazine for

encouraged. After the performance spectators were allowed to come up to the microphone and express their views. One woman called the Neo-Nazis 'arrogant bastards just looking for some publicity'. Many spectators doubted the sincerity of the Neo-Nazis in recanting their ideology. 'We don't believe a word of it', shouted one protestor.¹⁷

As an example of how the *Hamlet* production spilled over into the streets, after the premiere in Berlin a bus tour through the city was arranged by Schlingensiefel, which took the Neo-Nazis to synagogues and to the cemetery in Dorotheenstädtchen. The Neo-Nazis placed a wreath on Brecht's grave with the message: 'Dark thoughts, strong poison. For Brecht from Hamlet', based on the lines uttered by Lucianus in the *Mousetrap*. The *Hamlet* actor Sebastian Rudolph and the Neo-Nazis acted out a dialogue from the *Gravedigger* scene over Brecht's grave.¹⁸ The performance of Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* did not end in the theatre but spilled out into the city. In Christian Furrer's article '*Hamlet: First Act, Main Station*' it is clear that Schlingensiefel's production began not on the stage but at Zürich's main station with the arrival of the Neo-Nazis. The pronounced sense of voyeurism as the Neo-Nazis arrived in Zürich can be seen in the detailed description of the scene at the station. The Nazis arrived at precisely 4.27 pm on the Intercity Maria Theresia, and their appearance and mobbing by the press and crowds that had flocked to

Neo-Nazis. The Neo-Nazis selected to perform in *Hamlet* were Markus B., Melanie Dittmer, Jürgen Drenhaus, Tim H., Martin Kohlmann, Torsten Lemmer and Jan Zobel.

¹⁷ Recorded in Petra Kohse's article, 'Sein oder nicht sein: Wie nennt man die Nazis, wenn sie ihr Aussteigerprogramm angetreten haben?', *Frankfurter Rundschau* (23 May, 2001).

¹⁸ See Torsten Wahl, 'Keine Angst, die beißen nicht mehr', *Berliner Zeitung* (23 May, 2001); after working with the Neo-Nazis and touring the city with them, *Hamlet* actor Sebastian Rudolph spoke about how lonely Neo-Nazis are, what nice people they are, and how important it is to understand them. See Volker Weidemann, 'Stadtrundfahrt zur Synagoge', *Tages Anzeiger* (25 May, 2001).

see the spectacle revealed the extent to which Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* extended far beyond the parameters of the theatre.¹⁹

Eva Mackert has stressed the need to see Schlingensiefel's political campaign within a broader artistic and specifically theatrical context. The theatre spills over into politics and the politics is part of an artistic whole.²⁰ By bringing Neo-Nazis into the theatre and taking the theatre out into the streets Schlingensiefel has managed to obliterate any boundaries between the theatre and real life and the whole event becomes a form of life-theatre, where the two merge seamlessly.²¹ This begs the question: Where was the real theatre? Was it in the railway station in Zürich, in the hype over Schlingensiefel's advertisement on the Internet for Neo-Nazis to perform in his production, in the city tour

¹⁹ See Christian Furrer, 'Hamlet: Erster Akt am Haupt Bahnhof', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (4 May, 2001).

²⁰ 'His demand for the abolition of the SVP is part of his production. It can only be regarded within an artistic context [...] The manner in which Schlingensiefel presented his demand to the public (using actors and costumes and diffuse rhetoric) made it perfectly clear that this was primarily an artistic act. That it had a political message just gave the act an added attraction. For us art and politics are inseparably bound. Good art is always political, just as good politics is always artistic.' Eva Mackert, 'Es wird eng fürs Schauspielhaus', *Tages Anzeiger* (20 April, 2001).

²¹ Germans call this kind of event a 'Happening', as described in Charles Linsmayer's article 'Nicht das Theater, die Zeit ist aus den Fugen!', in *Der Bund* (12 May, 2001). There are of course differences between the German and the English concept of a happening. Both refer to a staged event that involves the audience in some way, but the German 'Happening' usually involves a greater degree of planning, whereas the English happening is a more spontaneous event. Consider how the term is defined in dictionaries. *Wahrig* defines the German concept as follows: 'künstlerische Veranstaltung, oft grotesker oder provozierender Art, unter Mitwirkung der Zuschauer.' *Brockhaus* defines the German concept as: 'eine Kunstrichtung, die den Menschen in ein Ereignis einzubeziehen sucht, das ihm ein schockierendes Erlebnis vermitteln soll.' The English term is explained in the *Cambridge International Dictionary* as follows: 'In the 1960s and early 1970s a happening was a performance or similar event that happened without preparation.' The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines the English term as: 'an improvised or spontaneous theatrical etc. performance.' The *Chambers Dictionary* defines the English term as: 'a performance consisting of discrete events, in which elements from everyday life are put together in a non-realistic way, usu demanding audience participation (*theat*).' The amount of preparation that went into Schlingensiefel's production clearly made it a 'Happening' in the German sense.

after the performance, or in the theatre building itself? There was a lot of uncertainty surrounding this production, and a degree of fear, because it was impossible to tell where reality ended and fiction began. This inability to tell what is real and what is fabricated is central to the artistic vision embodied in *Hamlet*.

Schlingensiefel has a reputation as a political activist with a tendency to create a furore, and he has been described as the theatre world's answer to Eminem in his use of shock tactics.²² There has been some uncertainty over whether his *Hamlet* production has a serious political message or is just another publicity stunt.²³ In Shakespeare's play Hamlet uses the Players as a political publicity stunt to force the court to confront the reality that an atrocity has been committed and hushed up, and this is paralleled in the way Schlingensiefel uses the Neo-Nazis in the Mousetrapp.

The spectators in the auditorium were also part of Schlingensiefel's trap. *Hamlet* was being used to bring to light the suppression of truth about the latent intolerance of the Swiss people and to activate the public conscience.²⁴ Schlingensiefel was pleased that audiences in Berlin had been caught by his Neo-Nazi Mousetrapp. He is recorded as having said:

²² See 'Der sich den Schlingensiefel selber legt', *Aargauer Zeitung* (23 May, 2001).

²³ In June 2000 Schlingensiefel set up a Big Brother container outside the State Opera House in Vienna and filled the container with asylum seekers. The container bore the slogan 'Ausländer raus!' ('Foreigners Out!'), and Austrian television viewers were encouraged to phone in and vote one of the foreigners out of the container. Every evening a different asylum seeker was elected to be sent out of the container and deported back to his or her home country. Schlingensiefel's aim with this stunt was to draw attention to Austria's xenophobia and unwillingness to accept asylum seekers. Schlingensiefel's Big Brother demonstration has been documented in his *Ausländer raus!* (Suhrkamp, 2001).

²⁴ Schlingensiefel commented: 'Shakespeare himself coined the phrase: "This time is out of joint", and "Something is rotten in the State" [...] Nobody is expecting art here and so it is unnecessary to remark that the Player's section of the play ends in political action.' See Rüdiger Schaper, 'Hamlet Führer der Antifaschisten', *Tagesspiegel* (23 May, 2001).

‘When the mousetrap snapped shut [i.e. when the audience was jolted awake by the Neo-Nazis], I had to stop myself from jumping onto the stage.’²⁵ Schlingensief was using the Neo-Nazis in the same way that Hamlet uses the Players, and the result in both cases was panic and a call for the ‘Lights’.

Schlingensief’s production of *Hamlet* was also a way of dismantling the right-wing bourgeois traditions of conservative theatres in Zürich. *Hamlet* was an effective work to use because it depicts the generation conflict between Hamlet’s world and that of his father, mother, uncle and Polonius. Schlingensief transferred this to a conflict of theatrical traditions: the State theatre of the 1950s, with its bourgeois roots in the National Socialist theatre of Goebbels and Goering, and the radical postmodern theatre of Schlingensief that is struggling against these conservative traditions.²⁶

Schlingensief’s production began as any other classical version with old-fashioned costumes, stilted rhymes and archaic vocabulary. This was designed to lull the audience before they were jolted awake by the appearance on stage of the combat-clad, swastika-wielding Neo-Nazis.²⁷ Throughout the performance a recording of the 1963 film version of *Hamlet* with Gustav Gründgens (Goebbels’ favourite actor) was played, and the characters on stage uttered their lines in synch to the old-fashioned enunciation of Marianne Hoppe (Gertrude) and Maximilian Schell (Hamlet). Hamlet, one of Germany’s

²⁵ See ‘Proteste in Berliner Theater und NRW-Landtag. Schlingensief will trotz Eklat nach Düsseldorf’, *Rheinische Post* (23 May, 2001).

²⁶ See Christian Gampert, *Der Freitag* (18 May, 2001).

²⁷ ‘After an uneventful journey through a Disneyland of Hamlet clichés [...] real life finally bursts forth into art. The Berlin public reacted not surprisingly like Pavlov’s dogs in this

main cultural icons, was demolished by Sebastian Rudolph's interpretation of the Prince as a vampiric, gin-ridden Marlene Dietrich with smudged lipstick and high heels.²⁸ Schlingensief's radical postmodern version of *Hamlet*, although controversial, has been praised by the Schauspielhaus for its artistic creativity and its challenge to stagnated theatrical tradition.²⁹

The stage was draped with banners of the swastika, artificial fog filled the theatre, and intermittent blasts from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* created the atmosphere of the Nazi films of the 1930s.³⁰ The Neo-Nazis played the part of the travelling Players, but it was the First Player, rather than Hamlet, who uttered the line about how theatre can be used to hold a mirror up to nature. When Hamlet reminded Polonius that the actors were the 'abstract and brief chronicles of the time', he was referring to the Neo-Nazis, and the

experiment. Many distanced themselves in childish indignation from this form of fascism.' See 'Nazi sein oder nicht sein' (dpa), *Die Welt* (23 May, 2001).

²⁸ Mathes Rehder has also drawn attention to the way Schlingensief's *Hamlet* demolishes the cultural icon that Germany has appropriated: 'The hesitant Prince is still, next to Faust, the favourite stage hero of German culture. In Christoph Schlingensief's production Sebastian Rudolph casts this hero in a dubious light with his alternately pathetic and lasciviously androgynous poses.' See Marthes Rehder, *Hamburger Abendblatt* (12 May, 2001).

²⁹ Schauspielhaus spokeswoman Ester Elices commented: 'We support Mr Schlingensief wholeheartedly.' See Alexander Sautter, 'Schauspielhaus sammelt für SVP-Verbot', *Blick* (17 April, 2001); Chief dramaturg Stefanie Carp commends in particular Schlingensief's attempt to break taboos and confront reality: 'Theatre must deal with the contradictions in society and give them new expression on the stage', in Christian Furrer, 'Hamlet: Erster Akt am Haupt Bahnhof', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (4 May, 2001); Carp has made the further comment regarding Schlingensief's 'confrontation with reality, which no other director has dared in this way, re-staging reality and releasing something very powerful.' See *Basler Zeitung* (5 May, 2001).

³⁰ Harriet Dreier described how the fog and Wagnerian music evoked an eerie image of Nazi Germany in the films of the 1930s, and the shovelling of the naked Ophelia into her grave gave the impression of the destruction of the Jews at the concentration camps. See Harriet Dreier, 'Schlingensief's *Hamlet*: Zwischen Glatzen, Glotzen und Strapsen', *Der Spiegel* (25 May, 2001).

emphasis was placed on the first part of this speech: 'Do you hear. let them be well used...' (2.2.519).³¹

Other lines from the text were given new emphasis by Schlingensief. The prologue to the Mousetrap contains the line, 'For us and for our tragedy, / Here stooping to your clemency, / We beg your hearing patiently' (3.2.144-46).³² Schlingensief used these lines to urge the audience to recognise the humility of the Neo-Nazis and their sincerity in trying to reform. As Schlingensief explained in my interview:

Something that I had heard in the recording of *Hamlet* and that really interested me was the line of the Player: 'Für uns und unsere Vorstellung mit untertäniger Huldigung ersuchen wir Genehmigung', and this was a theatrical concept that fascinated me. I was intrigued by the idea of using theatre in the way that Hamlet uses it, namely as a mousetrap in which to catch people, to make them react and to stir them up with the power of theatre [...] The Neo-Nazis came on stage and uttered this line that asks the audience for approval for their theatrical performance, and the audience really were stirred up by the power of the theatre. I managed to turn the world of the audiences upside down with my 'happening' or my 'mousetrap', just like I have been storming against the SVP here in Zürich and have been stirring everyone up by saying that Switzerland is full of Nazis. Three months ago this business with Nazism was not even an issue here, it had been completely swept under the table.³³

There was also a chilling effect in the play when one of the Neo-Nazis uttered the line: 'O, from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth' (4.4.66), before descending into the auditorium with a chain and a baseball bat to smash up the theatre

³¹ Schlingensief has manipulated these lines. Hamlet describes the Players as the 'abstract and brief chronicle' of the time, but this has been conflated with Hamlet's later remark that theatre holds a mirror up to nature. The line in Schlingensief's emended text reads 'sie sind der Spiegel und die abgekürzte Chronik des Zeitalters' ('they are the mirror and brief chronicle of the time').

³² In Schlegel's translation: 'Für uns und unsere Vorstellung / Mit untertäniger Huldigung / Ersuchen wir Genehmigung'.

³³ Appendix (p. 369).

furnishings. It became very difficult at this point to know how real or how fictional these Neo-Nazis were.

When the Neo-Nazis first appeared on stage a spotlight was shone into the faces of the audience, forcing them to raise a hand to their eyes in a Hitler salute. This was accompanied by deafening right-wing rock music. The Players sang a Neo-Nazi anthem³⁴ and printed versions of the song along with Nazi propaganda pamphlets fluttered down into the auditorium. The Neo-Nazis beat Claudius to death with baseball bats and descended into the auditorium where they smashed up the theatre's wall lighting. At the end of the play *Schlingensiefel*, in the role of Fortinbras, appeared in a fantasy Nazi uniform as Hitler and the Neo-Nazis bowed down to him. More than once in this production it did not appear as if the young people had any intention of renouncing their ideology and it seemed as if the audience were colluding with the Neo-Nazis.³⁵

After the Play scene, the leader of the Nazi pack, Torsten Lemmer, read out a letter he had written in which he officially declared his intention to abandon his ideology and

³⁴ The song, 'Our Germany' contained the lyrics: 'In den Welten dieser Erde/ Liegt irgendwo ein Land/ Lehrt Wissenschaft und Arbeit/ Als Deutschland ist's bekannt', and 'Ich singe unser Deutschlandlied/ Egal wohin ich geh/ Mit Stolze schwörte ich den Eid/ Dass ich zu Deutschland steh'. See Lilith Frey, 'Hamlet missbraucht! Schlingensiefels Neonazis: Premiere im Schauspielhaus', *Blick* (17 April, 2001).

³⁵ Neo-Nazi Martin Kohlmann shouted from the stage into the auditorium: 'Do you know what right-wing extremism means? Are we the right-wing extremists or are you?' See Lilith Frey, 'Hamlet missbraucht! Schlingensiefels Neonazis: Premiere im Schauspielhaus'; Nina Scheu has pointed out that audiences feel implicated in this spectacle, fearing to applaud in case they are seen as supporting the Neo-Nazis: 'The "Schlingensiefel-Syndrome": Should those spectators who boo the performance show themselves up to be intolerant trouble-makers? Or should one applaud a right-wing extremist simply because he has the courage to throw himself to the critics? Or are we all just being taken for a ride here?' See Nina Scheu 'Schlingensiefels Hamlet. Der Skandal blieb aus'. *Blick* (10 May, 2001).

adapt to conventional life.³⁶ The anti-fascists protested at the way the Neo-Nazis were presenting themselves as victims of an intolerant repressive system that would not allow them simply to be Nazis.³⁷ An important effect that the performance had was to dissolve the lines between right and wrong, and this seems to me an essential point in *Hamlet*. There are often no moral absolutes. It is reported that a woman in the audience remarked: 'My grandfather was also a nice man and he killed Jews'.³⁸ The purpose of using real Neo-Nazis on stage was to make audiences question whether these right-wing extremists were serious about wanting to be re-integrated, or whether the audience was in fact intolerant. Schlingensiefel informed me:

My aim was to generate discussion about the place that Neo-Nazis are denied in our society. It was my intention for audiences to be unsure about whether the Neo-Nazis are serious in wanting to leave their past, or whether it's just a bluff, whether we can believe them, or whether we must not believe them. I do think that I have opened up discussion, but I wouldn't say that I have transformed society.³⁹

³⁶ Lemma's letter, which he addressed to his 'former companions', reads as follows: 'I have finished! Finished with the intolerance, which we, even if unconsciously, have represented with our views. The internationally acclaimed *Hamlet* production and the re-integration programme 'naziline.com' are, in my view, the best possibility to achieve the exit [from right-wing extremism] as an entry back into society. The best participants have found a common goal in the unconditional rejection of racism, anti-Semitism and violence. This was the healthy foundation of the co-operation with the actors and the whole ensemble. The various situations that arose during rehearsals offered us challenges such as we have never before encountered. A few of us continually felt caught in the tension between play and reality, exit and re-entry into society. A few of us found our orientation in the direction of acting, whilst the majority generated their own strength from the re-socialisation programme. I hope that as many of my former comrades ['Mitstreiter'] as possible will be able to accept, understand and even follow the way I have chosen. It was an important decision that I do not regret. I wish the same for every one of you. Visit our website at www.naziline.com' (My translation).

³⁷ See Robin Detje, 'Lakonik des Zeitalters', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (23 May, 2001).

³⁸ 'Absolute chaos reigned. Everyone was right and wrong at the same time. Every sentence seemed to resonate as soon as it was uttered and paradoxically left behind the feeling that we were witnessing something extremely significant.' See Andreas Schäfer, 'Die Spannung aushalten. Christoph Schlingensiefels *Hamlet* in der Volksbühne', *Berliner Zeitung* (23 May, 2001).

In my interview with the Hamlet actor Sebastian Rudolph, Rudolph stressed that the power of *Hamlet* lies in the way it releases contradictory feelings in people and this is analogous to the issue of raising awareness of the reality of right-wing extremism:

And what has become apparent through *Hamlet* and through our conversations with the 'Aussteiger' is that there is no clear division between truth and falsehood, the thing that Hamlet is so desperate to find. He is also obsessed with the problem of not being able to say directly what he really wants to say. He can only express himself through different roles that he plays, or through a short theatre production that he stages, so that he can say the things that he otherwise could not say straight out. The fiction of the play and the reality of the problem that the 'Aussteiger' face are closely related.⁴⁰

The real value in Schlingensief's *Hamlet* is that it has forced the Swiss and Germans to address the problem of right-wing extremism instead of suppressing the issue out of fear and ignorance. Christoph Marthaler, director of the Zürcher Schauspielhaus, commented: 'Perhaps it [Schlingensief's *Hamlet*] has no enlightenment value, but it releases an essential discussion. A student told me recently that all the students at her university were talking about it, which means that in this town the debate has reached boiling point.'⁴¹ Claudia Banz has also recognised the power of Schlingensief's *Hamlet* to force people to confront a painful reality in the way Hamlet did with his Mousetrap.⁴²

³⁹ Appendix (p. 374).

⁴⁰ Appendix (p. 364).

⁴¹ In an interview Marthaler stated: 'Stirring up Zürich is erotic', *Tages Anzeiger* (23 April, 2001); Peter Michalzik wrote: 'Neo-Nazis and Nazi corruption, scandal and Hamlet: no one has brought Neo-Nazis and the public closer together than Schlingensief. They have become merged and have overlapped, the one gives birth to the other, such that Germany and the Neo-Nazis can scarcely be differentiated.' See Peter Michalzik, 'Heraus aus der Gruft und hinein ins Glück. Hamlet in Zürich: Schlingensief und seine Aussteiger machen richtig Theater', *Frankfurter Rundschau* (12 May, 2001).

⁴² 'The *Hamlet* that Schlingensief is staging emphasises the way Hamlet uses a theatrical performance to examine a common suspicion and to uncover a murder. The discussion over the

In an interview in *Der Bund*⁴³ Schlingensief remarked that he had explained *Hamlet* to the Neo-Nazis by stating that they were being made to perform a certain role by the SVP, by the government and by society, just as Hamlet was forced to play certain roles by his own society. For Schlingensief *Hamlet* is about a man who cannot act because he has been injured too much. Schlingensief uses the play as a way of illustrating that Neo-Nazis are trapped in their past because of the injuries, physical and emotional, which they have inflicted on themselves and because of the psychological injuries that society continues to inflict on them.⁴⁴ The function of Schlingensief's *Hamlet* was to bring Neo-Nazis closer to society and effect an act of integration and a point of communication. In my interview Schlingensief explained:

Theatre at its best was always a process of integration. When I read or hear something by Shakespeare, I feel that Shakespeare's society is a strong presence in those plays. It was an integrative organisation where people could identify with very different kinds of people by shouting out. It was a common process of thinking and everyone was involved. Today in the theatre audiences just sit there stupidly and stare at the stage and think 'O, how clever', and then go home and feel more important than before. I am not aiming for this kind of theatre. I believe that the theatre has fulfilled its original function when it has made the audience react, and this is not just something that characterises *Hamlet*.⁴⁵

Writing in 1965, Jan Kott expressed his enjoyment of a production of *Hamlet* that he had seen in Cracow in 1956. Kott wrote: 'This production, deprived of the great soliloquies

difference between theatre and reality has never been so vital.' See Claudia Banz, 'Da sagt sogar die SVP Ja', *Sonntagszeitung* (22 April, 2001).

⁴³ See Rudolf Burger and Alexander Sury, 'Die Schweiz baut sich ihr selbstgefälliges Grab'. *Der Bund* (27 April, 2001).

⁴⁴ 'In *Hamlet* there is a permanent fear. Naturally I look into the material for parallels with my own life and that's why the *Hamlet* material fascinates me. The fear that fills the play emanates from this indecisiveness. On the one hand Hamlet wants to punish someone, but on the other he cannot bring himself to do it. A lot of people have a bit of Hamlet in them. A lot of people can no longer act because they have been injured too much ['Viele können nicht mehr handeln, weil man sie zu sehr verletzt hat']. See Daniel Arnet and Judith Wyder, 'Mit den Skins zur SVP', *Der Spiegel* (18 April, 2001).

and of narrative quality, was marked by a violence typical of modern conflicts. Political, erotic and career motives intermingle, reactions are brutal, solutions are quickly effected.⁴⁶ Kott could almost be describing Schlingensiefel's highly politicised production of 2001. Kott's preference for a Hamlet that is 'the youth, deeply involved in politics, rid of illusions, sarcastic, passionate and brutal' also anticipates the politics and the brutality of the Zürich production. I think Kott would have responded very positively to Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* because it satisfies the fundamental criterion that, according to Kott, is essential in any Shakespearean production: 'What matters is that through Shakespeare's text we ought to get at our modern experience, anxiety and sensibility.' It is another matter whether Kott would have understood Schlingensiefel's project to re-socialise Neo-Nazis.

Schlingensiefel spoke of his *Hamlet* as an 'Uraufführung', or the world-premiere of the play, rather than just another production, and his adaptation of the text was intended to bring out the work's 'ancient tones' and 'original energies'. Schlingensiefel commented that as well as giving old works new meanings, he wanted older audiences to recognise their classics in these modern forms.⁴⁷ The text itself was reduced to a collection of 'The Best Of': a jumble of well-known quotations, which meant that the whole performance lasted only ninety minutes.⁴⁸ The success of Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* is partly due to the

⁴⁵ Appendix (p. 373).

⁴⁶ *Shakespeare our Contemporary* (p. 51).

⁴⁷ See 'Der sich den Schlingensiefel selber legt', *Argauer Zeitung* (23 May, 2001).

⁴⁸ What Nina Scheu has called the 'complete ridiculing of the established cultural industry.' See Nina Scheu, 'Schlingensiefels Hamlet. Der Skandal blieb aus', *Blick* (10 May, 2001).

reduction of the text, to the speed of delivery, and to the contemporary mode of the production.⁴⁹

Thomas Meyer tried to make a distinction when he described Schlingensiefel's treatment of *Hamlet* as a 'theatrical reality' rather than a 'faithfully realised theatre text.'⁵⁰ However, Schlingensiefel's theatrical and political campaign does not allow us to distinguish art from life in this socio-political meta-performance. I would agree that Schlingensiefel was more concerned with using theatre in real life than investing life into theatre, but the distinction between theatre and life has simply become too unmanageable in Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet*, and I think this is the most valuable contribution that Schlingensiefel has made. Ulrich Seidler has summed up most effectively how Schlingensiefel's production of *Hamlet*, for two weeks in Zürich, turned *Hamlet* once more into a work of immense symbolic and cultural importance in German-speaking Europe:

Everything that Schlingensiefel has done to this town in the last few weeks is the result of nothing more than an attempt to take Shakespeare's work, perhaps the most important theatrical text, and win back for it the significance that it originally had and that is perhaps most appropriate at the present time. This is why he unleashed a Hamlet mania. His protests against political parties and the theatre, and his work with the Neo-Nazis, were born of the despair contained in the pages of *Hamlet*, and which Schlingensiefel is seeking to capture, contain and surmount.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Mathes Rehder has written: 'He has stirred up the Swiss and for the moment awakened them from their complacent lethargy. Moreover, he has managed, within an hour and a half, to make Shakespeare's unfathomable tragedy so witty and meaningful that it has acquired a highly entertaining quality. Hamlet in fast motion. Very contemporary [...] Schlingensiefel has scattered Shakespeare's tragedy like pieces of a puzzle and put them back together in a way that is new, contradictory, surprising and contemporary.' See Mathes Rehder, *Hamburger Abendblatt* (12 May, 2001).

⁵⁰ See Thomas Meyer, 'Shakespeare heute. Christoph Schlingensiefel mischte in Zürich *Hamlet* auf', *Der Standard* (11 May, 2001).

What Seidler stresses here is not Schlingensief's attempt to convey the original 'meaning' of *Hamlet*, but its 'significance', the excitement that might have broken out when the work was originally performed, not to mention the political and cultural value of producing this play. Seidler also stresses that the social and political effect of *Hamlet* has never been as relevant as it is today ('die Bedeutung [...], die es einmal gehabt hat und die ihm vielleicht heute erst recht angemessen ist'). This is a clear example of the conviction that *Hamlet* is speaking to a society about its own peculiar set of problems and anxieties.

Ludwig Fulda was not necessarily right when he claimed that the Germans have understood Shakespeare better than the English or have produced the plays better. I believe, however, that Germany has often used Shakespeare and especially *Hamlet* better than it has been used in Britain. It is this use of *Hamlet*, the re-invention of the work to re-create something of the play's original significance, that legitimises Fulda's claim for 'our' Shakespeare in the case of Schlingensief's *Hamlet*. His production has sparked off intense debate over a current social and political problem in Europe; it has encouraged people to address the issue of fascism, rather than suppressing it through fear and ignorance. Schlingensief has broken down the barriers between drama in the theatre and drama in life by creating an artistic and political construction that has extended over the last six months.

⁵¹ See Ulrich Seidler, 'Echtes Wasser. Schlingensiefs sechs neue Freunde dürfen in Zürich *Hamlet* mitspielen', *Berliner Zeitung* (12 May, 2001).

Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* began not with Barnardo's 'Who's there?' but with Schlingensiefel's 'Who's there?' as he invited Neo-Nazis on the Internet to come and perform in his play. There was a curious mirroring of the arrival of the Players in the arrival of the Neo-Nazis at the station in Zürich, and Sebastian Rudolph's performance of Hamlet did not end with 'The rest is silence', but in the on-going arguments over the rights of Neo-Nazis. As such, the performance is still going on.

Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* has made so many contributions. It has abolished the framing of the dramatic event that is usually confined to the theatre, it has questioned the policies of political parties, it has illuminated right-wing tendencies in Germany's Staatstheater traditions, and it has restored the immense symbolic and cultural value that this play has in German-speaking Europe. *Hamlet* is operative at many levels of life in Germany, touching the social, political and cultural sphere of the nation. Through the abandonment of the 'faithfully realised text' Schlingensiefel has achieved a theatrical reality that has caught the public's conscience and started them thinking. 'Our Hamlet' in 2001 is a Neo-Nazi searching for social integration and the restoration of his maimed rights.

5.3 Concluding Remarks

The rewrites examined in the present chapter provide snap-shots of the transmutation of *Hamlet* through a series of different acculturated forms. The literary status that *Hamlet* has in the Western canon and its function as a cultural symbol have allowed writers,

directors and politicians to exploit that significance to a range of ends. Whether it is a soap-box for criticism of government spending or part of a larger political campaign to re-integrate Neo-Nazis, all of these translations and adaptations form part of the broad cultural text that I have been denoting as 'our Hamlet' in this thesis.

It should be clear by now that 'our Hamlet' is not a single act of appropriation, a single interpretation of the play, or a single translation. Shakespeare's play changes every time it is transmitted through the linguistic and cultural filters into a given community of recipients. Moreover, within a community there may be simultaneous but contradictory transmutations of the play. On the stage of the 1999 production of *Hamlet* by Peter Zadek, there was a large steel cargo container. At the start of every act the container was repositioned to give the impression that it had been dropped in a different location, and the characters burst out of it and launched straight into the next scene of the play. I think this is an effective metaphor for the way that *Hamlet* works. It acts like a container that is dropped at different times and places and the same characters always emerge, uttering the same lines and performing the same actions, but the audiences are always different. They always see new things in the container and wherever it lands, it becomes 'their' Hamlet for that moment.

In the final chapter of my thesis I would like to focus on those individuals who are responsible for dropping this container into a community. Once *Hamlet* has been translated or adapted it still has to be transmitted to the public and this is done by the theatre directors, film makers and book publishers. What has become apparent to me in

my research is the profound lack of awareness that German consumers have with regard to the transformations that *Hamlet* undergoes in its passage from text to commercial product. I will examine how the use of translations in theatres, the use of translations in the dubbing of films, and the publication of translations obscure the fact that *Hamlet* does not exist as a unitary text or a single translation in German. The ways in which differences between translations are suppressed and different translations sold as if there were a single play will be the focus of my final chapter. By illustrating the differences between translations, I will argue that in Germany there is no such work as *Hamlet*.

6. PRINT CULTURE AND THE FORCES OF CULTURAL MATERIALISM

Throughout my investigation of the terms on which *Hamlet* has been deemed translatable, the play has nearly always been translated into German as a theatrical script and designed for a specific performance. It must be stressed that translations of play texts tend to change throughout performance as actors process the translated script and make their own amendments. Although translators are sometimes reluctant to see their translations 'improved' on stage, they accept the need to develop a translation in order to enhance its performativity. Most feel that their translations need to be tested on the stage before they are accepted.¹ Erich Fried recognised the importance of working through a translation with the actors in order to test the translation's suitability to the stage:

One can still check through one's translation during rehearsal. Even if one believes that one has provided the most beautiful translation, one always realises that it is not finished, and that lines with which the actors and director encounter difficulties can rarely be regarded as a magnificent achievement. The translator is well advised not to treat the actors and director as incompetent outsiders, but to reconsider the translation and its problematic lines. But even after this correction in rehearsals, translations are not 'finished'. In reality they are never finished.²

¹ In her translations of Ibsen and Strindberg for the theatre, Inga-Stina Ewbank recognises the need for a collaborative input into the creation of a translation for the stage: 'In my work with Sir Peter Hall (on *John Gabriel Borkman*, *The Wild Duck* and *The Master Builder*) the text travelled back and forth between him and me, he re-writing for speakability and I re-writing his re-writing in the interest of the original's qualities, until we have arrived at a compromise satisfying both parties – a text which has then been fine-tuned through minor adjustments in rehearsal.' See Inga-Stina Ewbank, 'Strindberg in English', in *Moderna Språk*, 89 (1995), 129-139, here p. 134.

² Quoted in Friedmar Apel's 'Ein Shakespeare für alle'. See Preface to Erich Fried's translations (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 1989), p. 26.

This is reflected in the programme to Peter Zadek's 1977 translation of *Hamlet*, in which he warns the reader that the translation printed for the audience underwent changes in rehearsals for the performance.³ Elisabeth Plessen is also aware of the benefits to the translator and the translation if the text is tested on stage. In the interview Plessen made the following statement:

Normally I do not change my translation once it has been completed, but there are certain occasions when you have to. During the translating process, I always have at the back of my mind the actor who will have to say these lines and whether my renderings can be spoken by those actors. It depends on how much rhetorical training the actor has had and whether he or she is able to cope with these endlessly twisted lines. Ulrich Wildgruber, who played Polonius, was able to cope with any lines, no matter how contorted they were. Otto Sander, who plays Claudius, objected to my translation of his opening line: 'Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death / The memory be green', which is: 'Obwohl die Erinnerung an Hamlets...'. The line ends with the difficult 'ts' sound, which Sander did not find difficult to say but argued that it sounded clumsy coming from a king who has such perfect control over his words, and so I agreed with his suggestion to drop the final 's'. The next time I translate I will have to remember such a small detail. The actors are very important.⁴

Michael Wachsmann assumes a very democratic stance. As he explained to me, actors may sometimes be unable to understand why he has translated a line in a particular way, but he is always prepared to change his translation, if the actor can convince him that part of his translation is erroneous or ineffective on stage:

I always had contact with the director and the theatre, and, of course, I discussed my translations with the actors, whenever necessary, by which I mean that I explained my translations to the actors. This helped them to understand my intentions, or rather Shakespeare's intentions. But whenever an actor has a practical problem, and that did

³ As Zadek warns the audiences in his programme: 'Possible deviations in the play text from the text printed here are the result of the changes that occurred to the translation during the course of rehearsals after the programme was edited and printed.' See Programme note for Zadek's production (Bochum, 1977).

⁴ Appendix (p. 317).

happen from time to time, I do not get up on my high horse and say that my word is sacred [...] Translating is not a self-service store, where a director or actor can just say: 'I think it would be better like this'. I don't have any problem altering my translation, provided that we discuss the matter beforehand.⁵

Clearly, from what most translators say, there are benefits to be gained from taking a translation into the theatre to test it out with the actors. It has long been recognised by translation theorists, most notably Susan Bassnett-McGuire, that translating a play text in the study is only the beginning of a creative cycle that must include the theatricalisation of the translated play text.⁶ Taken to its extreme, translation can become a conveyor-belt process, by which the text passes through several hands before it reaches a state where it is ready to be used in a production.⁷ All translators regard their translations as a personal product rather than a forum for open debate, but this feeling is usually tempered with an understanding that a translation written in the study is a different medium from the translation developed in the theatre. The contingency of theatre means that a translation is never complete as long as the production is running, and performance continues to test the validity and the range of the translation.

⁵ Appendix (p. 306).

⁶ Susan Bassnett-McGuire discusses the importance of recognising that a translation written in the study is only the beginning of a process by which a play-text is 'translated' into a play for the stage. Her discussions of the problematic nature of translating for the theatre are contained in the following studies: *Translation Studies* (London: Methuen, 1980); 'Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts', in Theo Hermans (ed.), *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1985); 'The Problems of Translating Theatre Texts', *Theatre Quarterly*, X, 40 (1981) 37-49; 'Translating for the Theatre: Textual Complexities', *Essays in Poetics*, 15, 1 (1990), 71-84.

⁷ See Kristian Smidt, 'Some Provisional Views on the Ideal Translation of Shakespeare for use by and in the Theatre', *Shakespeare Translation*, 9 (1983). The mechanistic approach to translation adopted by Smidt comes through very clearly in this paper. Smidt suggests that an effective way to translate is to adopt the 'assembly-line method', which involves a translator undertaking the initial rendering of the text into the target language; this is then passed on to a 'scholar' who can provide the improvements that the poet-translator could not. The final stage is to pass the composition to the director who can suggest stylistic adjustments.

As soon as a translation, or one version of an on-going translation, is fixed in print, this alters the nature of the translation. Print culture, and the commercialisation of Shakespeare in popular editions, transforms a translation from a working method into a completed and stable text. The published translation reinforces the repeatability of the printed word and the wording of the stage directions becomes an inherent part of the translation. The audience's role in *constructing* the play's meaning based on what they hear, or think they hear, on stage becomes the reader's role in *discovering* the meaning that the author encoded into the text. A published translation is author-driven and contains a set of meanings to be intuited by the reader, with the implicit assumption that the meaning is stable. In the theatre, a translation is audience-driven and it is the audience that must construct their own meanings from both linguistic and non-linguistic signals they receive from the stage.

Translator Frank Günther has attempted to resist notions of a translation as a 'work in progress' in the theatre. He argues that the translation that he submits to the theatre for a production is complete and should not differ in any way from the version that he publishes. Günther is unusual in this respect, since he takes the view that his translations are complete when they leave his study, and that any manipulation of the translation destroys its integrity and its artistic completeness. As Günther explained to me in the interview, he would not consider allowing anyone to influence the way he writes his translations:

Adapt my translation for the actors? Certainly not! It is the actors who should adapt themselves to my translation! Actors have no idea about the effectiveness of a

translation. The changes they propose have invariably been simplistic and primitive. They are just lazy and want the language to be undemanding. I would only ever be interested in a challenging proposal. After all, the actors have a responsibility to learn the lines, however difficult they may be.⁸

A translation developed for publication, or indeed written exclusively for publication, such as Günther's 1999 translation of *Love's Labour's Lost* for DTV, has little in common with the 'living' translation that was part of the contingent process of a theatrical production. The difference between the amorphous, fluid state of the theatre script in translation, and the neatly printed and attractively bound and illustrated translation, is not fully appreciated by the consumers who purchase their Shakespeare translations. Moreover, at a commercial level, Shakespeare's name is used to underwrite and authorise a variety of literary products, including translations, and this has tended to freeze the once living texts in a state of suspended animation.

Ivo Kamps has written: 'Shakespeare has accrued so much cultural capital over the years that all sides have equal need of him – professionally, politically, and financially [...] Shakespeare is where the "money" is – sometimes quite literally.'⁹ By the time *Hamlet* reaches readers and audiences, it has had to pass through the commercialising filter that rewrites Shakespeare's work in order to fit into the market system that sells Shakespeare as a commodity. In true Marxist fashion, market forces determine the forms in which we receive literary works. We have already seen that Methuen has been reluctant to publish a double volume of *Hamlet*, offering discrete texts of the play, and this was for purely financial and commercial reasons. As I shall examine in the present chapter, translations

⁸ Appendix (p. 294).

that are marketed and sold to the German public subtly alter the way *Hamlet* has been received and understood.

In my final chapter I will explore some of the many differences between texts and translations that are always identified as the unitary work of 'Hamlet' in Germany. I will examine how profit-making and the forces of cultural materialism have led publishers to play down the differences between translations, and I will raise the question of whether theatres and publishers have an ethical obligation to inform readers and audiences about what it is they are purchasing. In Germany today 'our Shakespeare' is not a single collection of translations of the original works, but a wide variety of very differently constituted translations and adaptations that are marketed as if they constituted a uniform collection of texts. This also seems to be giving German readers and audiences the wrong impression about the constitution of Shakespeare's texts, about the author's possible methods of composition, and about the transformation of the work in the shift from developmental play text to stable printed form.

6.1 Publishing *Hamlet* as Commercial Product

Publishing translations in Germany is very difficult, if you are a modern translator. Elisabeth Plessen has only been able to publish her translations in special programmes

⁹ Ivo Kamps, 'Alas, poor Shakespeare! I knew him well', *Shakespeare and Appropriation*, ed. Christy Desmet and Robert Sawyer (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 15-31, here pp. 20-21.

that accompanied the productions. She laments not being able to make her translations more widely known:

Three of them [my translations] have been published by Rowohlt Verlag, but I have not been as lucky as Frank Günther, who has found a publisher with Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. I tried to talk Rowohlt into publishing my other translations, but at the moment the book market is in something of a crisis. Rowohlt is really at the head of this crisis and translations of plays are the last thing that they will publish. I'm very sad about that.¹⁰

The most widely available translations are those of Schlegel-Tieck-Baudissin, because they are no longer protected by copyright. Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag (Berlin) publishes Richard Schaller's translations (from the 1960s), and Klaus Wagenbach Verlag (Berlin) publishes Erich Fried's translations (from the 1970s and 1980s). Since the mid-1990s, Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag (Munich) has been publishing the translations of Frank Günther. The majority of translators rarely sign contracts with major publishing houses, and so their texts are only available within theatres, or from private publishers. I think that this situation also determines the picture that readers have of Shakespeare in German. The most widely available translation of *Hamlet* is Schlegel's translation, published in the cheap paperback Reclam edition. This reinforces the notion of a standard translation and modern versions remain unknown.

Wolfgang Swaczynna, more than any other translator, has attempted to make readers and audiences aware of the complex nature of the Shakespearean text. He tried to create the archetypal *Hamlet* text in German using elements from all three *Hamlet* texts, and his

translation offers German readers a very different view of the play. His translation lacks the first scene on the battlements, has the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy at the beginning of Act 2, and adopts numerous lines from the First Quarto in the Closet scene. However, Swaczynna's 'improved' *Hamlet* had little impact on the German public because it was not widely published. His texts were available only to an esoteric group of theatre directors.¹¹ As Swaczynna explained in the interview:

In 1964 I signed a contract with the publishing house Bärenreiter Verlag, the head of which was a man called Erich Spiess. This was a very profitable time in my translating career because I discussed with Spiess very intensively every line, if not every word, of my translations, and the debate was extremely rigorous and highly productive. It was certainly possible to order a copy, but there was really only contact between the publisher and the theatres. My translations were used so often in the 1970s that I was able to live off the profits [...] Erich Spiess of the Bärenreiterverlag sold my translations to theatres for a very low price, whereas my present publisher demands more money.¹²

When translations do not reach print, they tend to disappear into obscurity.¹³ There are two translations of *Hamlet* in German that I have been unable to read because they no

¹⁰ Appendix (p. 321).

¹¹ On the lack of publicity of Swaczynna's translations, Volker Schulz notes: 'This means that his texts have to be bought in sets by those theatres that wish to use them for a Shakespeare production, but they are not available in the book-shops and there is no advertising for them outside theatre circles. So the Shakespeare translations of Swaczynna, who is an actor and director by profession, have up to now been only known to theatre insiders.' See Volker Schulz, 'A New German Shakespeare Translator: Wolfgang Swaczynna', *Shakespeare Translation*, 4 (1977), 71-98, here p. 73.

¹² See Appendix (p. 331). Having ended his contract with Bärenreiterverlag in Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe, Wolfgang Swaczynna now publishes his translations with Dr Krista Jussenhoven's 'Projekt Theater- und Medienverlag' in Cologne.

¹³ This does not mean that every translation published will be readily available. The official statistics of UNESCO list the German translation of *Hamlet* by Manfred Vogel. This translation was published by the Österreichische Verlagsanstalt in Vienna in 1981, but I have been so far unable to trace this translation in any library catalogue, or on the central database used by German bookstores.

longer exist. Michael Jurgons and Patrick Li translated the play for their 1993 production at the Mecklenburgische Staatstheater in Schwerin. My enquiries at the theatre revealed that not only had the theatre not preserved any printed copy of the translation, but that there had never been a coherent printed text. Similarly, in Düsseldorf in 1977 Otomar Krejca produced a contemporary version of *Hamlet* using the translation by Ingo Waßerka.¹⁴ Again, there is no publicly available text, and one suspects that there never was a complete translation. What this tells us is that it is possible to produce a play in translation that is not dependent on a single written text. This reflects what may have been the common practice in Shakespeare's theatre. It is only by the efforts of later editors that we have any written record of productions.

Translations of *Hamlet* that have never reached the shelves of bookstores include the texts of Maik Hamburger, Norbert Kollakowsky, Frank-Patrick Steckel and Reinhard Palm.¹⁵ Other translators have been more successful and their translations have been made widely accessible through mainstream publishers. In the 1950s and 1960s the translations of Richard Flatter, Rudolf Schaller and Hans Rothe were widely available.¹⁶ When certain translations begin to gain in popularity in theatres, a mainstream publisher

¹⁴ The translation and the production are discussed briefly in *Theater heute*, 7 (1977).

¹⁵ Hamburger (Berlin: Henschelverlag Kunst und Gesellschaft. Abteilung Bühnenvertrieb, 1964), Kollakowsky (Bremen; Litag Theater- und Musilverlag, 1998), Steckel (Schauspielhaus Bochum, Nr. 116, 1994/95), Palm (Vienna: Thomas Sessler Verlag, 1996).

¹⁶ Flatter (Vienna: Walter Krieg, 1954), Schaller (Rütten and Loening, 1964), Rothe (Baden-Baden: Holle Verlag, 1955).

may seek to publish those translations. This was the case with Peter Zadek, Heiner Müller, Erich Fried and Frank Günther.¹⁷

I asked some translators if they felt that a translation, such as Frank Günther's *Hamlet*, which is now in its third edition with Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, could become a standard text by dint of its wide dissemination by the publishing house. Wolfgang Swaczynna believed that Günther's translations had not been available in bookshops long enough for them to be so well known. Maik Hamburger pointed out that scholarly essays written by well-known and respected academics accompany Günther's translations, and that this has helped to authorise the translations:

DTV commissioned a number of well-known German Shakespeare scholars to write the afterwords to each of Frank Günther's translations for a good fee, so Günther immediately had practically all of German Shakespeare prominence on his side. That is one reason why you would get such a solid backing for his translations amongst Shakespeareans, which you generally don't find. You generally find that Shakespeareans aren't so sure in their opinion about what a translation would be like; it's not their problem, really. If they are real Shakespeareans they work with the English text, of course. The German text is only a subsidiary interest for them.¹⁸

This reflects a similar observation made by André Lefevere in his essay, 'Why Waste Our Time On Rewrites?' Lefevere argued that rewrites work together, and by 'rewrites' he means both translations and critical texts about those translations. He writes: 'All different forms of rewriting tend to work together in a literary system. No translation, published as a book, is likely to give you just the translation. It is nearly always

¹⁷ Zadek (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), Müller (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1985), Fried (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach Verlag, 1970), Günther (Cologne: Theaterverlag Ute Nyssen and J. Bansaemer, 1988) and (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995, 1997, 2000).

¹⁸ Appendix (p. 339).

accompanied by an introduction, which is a form of criticism cum interpretation.¹⁹ If a translation has a formative influence on the canon, it will be as a collusion of editor's introduction, critical essay and translator's commentary, all of which we find in the translations published by Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

I asked Reinhard Palm whether he felt that the exposure to a wider section of the public of Frank Günther's translations in the DTV series²⁰ was establishing these translations as the modern standard for readers of Shakespeare in Germany. He commented:

The next generation has to deal with that, if this is the sort of impression they are getting of Shakespeare. For eighty years people thought that eating spinach was good for you because it contained a lot of iron. Generations of children were forced to eat spinach until they realised that it was an error in the nutritional calculation. It's always the same. If school children are really getting a lasting impression of Shakespeare through the translations of Frank Günther, then I think this is a sad state of affairs.²¹

Frank Günther's translations were originally published by Theaterverlag Ute Nyssen and J. Bansemer (Munich) as play scripts in the 1970s, and these were published as translations in the 1980s and 1990s by Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag after Günther had gained a reputation in German theatres. The DTV editions provide parallel English-German texts and detailed commentary, plus Günther's notes on the problems of translating each play.²² Wolfram Göbel of DTV notes in the supplement to this series of

¹⁹ Lefevere (p. 234).

²⁰ *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is now in its fourth edition and *Romeo and Juliet* in its sixth edition.

²¹ Appendix (p. 328).

²² Wolfgang Wicht remarks that German readers finally have an edition comparable to the scholarly editions of Arden, Oxford and Cambridge. The DTV translations are textually reliable, extensively annotated, reasonably priced, and bound in a seductively attractive cover (by Max Bartholl). Because of the chapters 'Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt' and 'Anmerkungen zum Text'.

translations²³ that the editors had decided to use Frank Günther's translations, because they represent 'our Shakespeare'.²⁴ Wicht wrote that DTV did not reprint Schlegel's translations, or those of Rothe, Schaller or Fried, because the publishing house did not believe in canonising translations.²⁵ It seems to me, however, that this is precisely what they are doing with Frank Günther's translations.

Günther translated the Arden Edition and used the material from this in his annotations. This has two implications. The sense in which DTV can claim to offer a 'new' series of translations has more to do with the processing of earlier research, not the provision of new material. Secondly, the decisions that Günther made, such as which textual variants to include and which to omit, are based on a translating policy rather than an editorial one.

Wicht states that this new edition will be of use to the general reader, the theatres, and especially welcome to students. See *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 132 (1996), 295-302.

²³ *Beiheft zur neuen Shakespeare-Ausgabe im dtv* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995). See also Günther's comments on his translations in 'Über die Shakespeare-Übersetzerei' (pp. 8-24); 'Was Sie schon immer über Shakespeare wissen wollten', *Basler Zeitung*, Nr. 99. (Tuesday 29 April, 1986), p. 37

²⁴ It is not clear from this whether he means the DTV's Shakespeare, Germany's Shakespeare or the Shakespeare for the German people at this moment in time. DTV claims to have 'found' Shakespeare in Günther's exact replication of the 'Orginalton' ('original tone') of Shakespeare's texts, which Göbel spells out as being comprised of the rhythm, sound, metre and neologisms. These remarks should not be taken too seriously, however, since they are designed to encourage the public to purchase the DTV's new collection of translations. What these comments do show, however, is that the public has a pre-conception of what Shakespeare should sound like and of what his 'original tone' is supposed to be. Just as readers expect there to be a definitive text waiting to be found, there is also the expectation that Shakespeare must have a specific sound and DTV has tapped into the need for this original sound and offered Günther's translations as the answer.

²⁵ 'He took into account the changes over time, distrust regarding canon-formation and theoretical discussion of translation, and chose the new translations of Frank Günther [...] Reaching back to the 'classical' German versions, themselves an adaptation, can at best be explained as nostalgic feelings for Germany's literary inheritance. But one can also rigorously maintain that they misrepresent Shakespeare. Modernisation of the original brings the reader closer to that original.' See Wolfgang Wicht's review in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 132 (1996), 295-302, p. 296.

Frank Günther's translations have been published by various publishing houses for almost thirty years and in that time they have been revised numerous times. If a translator makes changes to his translation before it is reprinted, it becomes uncertain whether this in fact constitutes a new translation or simply a revised version of the same translation.²⁶ The Cadolzburg publisher Neubert Treuheit has recently begun a project of re-publishing Frank Günther's Shakespeare translations. Treuheit's publishing house, Ars Vivendi, has already published *Komödie der Irrungen* (*Comedy of Errors*) and *Ein Sommernachtstraum* (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Treuheit plans to have published the complete canon by the year 2009, at a price of DM 49 per volume, or DM 1, 712 for the complete collection.²⁷ But I believe that Frank Günther's translations are achieving a high level of popularity for more material reasons, which have nothing to do with the quality of those translations, or the public's appreciation of them.

In my interview with Maik Hamburger, Hamburger commented that the reason the Schlegel-Tieck translations originally became so popular was not because of the quality of the translations (which remained in doubt for many years), but because they were the

²⁶ When Heiner Müller made alterations in 1976 to Maik Hamburger's 1964 translation of *Hamlet*, he claimed that the changes had transformed the text into a completely new translation, which justified Müller in attaching his name to the work: 'Out of it a new translation slowly began to emerge.' Müller maintained that his translation was 'conceptually' different from Hamburger's translation: 'At any rate, by the time I had finished the translation, I had completely changed my understanding of this text.' Heiner Müller, *Krieg ohne Schlacht* (p. 293, my translation); Hans Zeller stressed that there can be no quantitative difference between texts: 'One could not, for instance, decisively distinguish two versions by quantitative criteria, which might demand that the variants should exceed a certain number, or that a certain time must have elapsed before the revision.' See Hans Zeller, 'A New Approach to the Critical Constitution of Literary Texts', *Studies in Bibliography*, 28 (1975), 231-64, here p. 238.

²⁷ 'Komplizen gesucht. Cadolzburger Verlag plant neue Shakespeare-Gesamtausgabe', in *Nürnberger Nachrichten* (11 February, 2000).

first German translations of Shakespeare widely published and available in an attractive and completed format. As Hamburger explained:

I think Schlegel's canonisation also had to do with the industrialisation of the book market. You had to have the complete volumes in nicely leather-bound books and with the pages edged with gold, the sort of thing you would display on your bookshelf, something which is sacrosanct and which is legitimated as a monument of literature. It was the bourgeoisie in the *Gründerzeit* that wanted this, so the translations of Schlegel-Tieck were canonised also by the people who needed something to display on their bookshelves.²⁸

Hamburger stressed that people feel the need to possess knowledge and culture in material objects. Treuheit's statements about his publishing project²⁹ reveal very clearly that by appealing to a popular need to possess the 'complete Shakespeare' in an impressive format, Treuheit believes he will sell more copies. For only 49 marks the reader will get: 'not only a noble linen-bound edition with beautiful paper and two reading volumes in the colours of the insignia, but also a contemporary text'. It is with the linen-bound cover and the high quality paper that Treuheit catches the reader's attention. It is only incidental that these editions also contain a contemporary translation.

The value of the translations is equated with the external form of the edition, and the selling point is not the quality of the translation, but the 'luxurious decorations' of the paper. Treuheit also stresses that this 'beautiful series' is prefaced by an introductory volume entitled *Was wollt ihr mehr?* ('What more could you want?'). Other selling points are the inclusion of an essay by a 'respected German Shakespeare scholar'. The

²⁸ Appendix (p. 338).

²⁹ Hilmar Bahr, 'Ganzer Shakespeare. Erste Bände der Gesamtausgabe in diesem Monat'. in *Allgemeine Zeitung* (23 April, 2000).

Hamlet edition will contain the essay of Manfred Pfister, but this essay will be dated by the time Ars Vivendi publishes *Hamlet*, and it is not without errors already.³⁰

Treuheit strengthens his sales pitch by reminding us that Shakespeare has become popular again through films, and hence the importance of possessing a printed version of the text. When films are dubbed in German, it is always the Schlegel-Tieck translations that are used. The fact that Günther's translations are written in modern, colloquial and highly idiosyncratic German that is worlds apart from Schlegel's translations, has been obfuscated by Treuheit. Again, it is the public's lack of interest, or lack of knowledge, that allows publishers like Treuheit to identify translations of popular films with translations in printed editions, even though no correspondence exists.

The new series of translations is described by Treuheit as 'luxuriös ausgestattet' ('luxuriously decorated') in order to satisfy the appetites of those 'Shakespeare Lovers' hungry for the classics, which again suggests that it is a material desire for the possession of a cultural object that underlies this publishing project. Treuheit also reminds

³⁰ In his essay Manfred Pfister argues, for example, that there is no German translation of the First Quarto of *Hamlet* and that this text could be used for an exciting new production of the play. Manfred Pfister reminds German dramaturgs that the First Quarto of *Hamlet* is still waiting to be produced, just as soon as it is translated: 'Take note dramaturgs! – As far as I know, the First Quarto has not yet been translated into German and still awaits a premiere in Germany that would attract great attention from the public.' See *Hamlet*, trans. Frank Günther (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1997), p. 369. However, the First Quarto of *Hamlet* is not completely unknown in Germany, and there is, contrary to Pfister's assertion, a German translation of the First Quarto by Ludwig Berger (1967). There have also been numerous productions of this version: at the Stadttheater in Kiel (1967), the Thalia Theater in Hamburg (1968), the Stadttheater in Bremerhaven (1974) and at the Deutsches Theater in Göttingen (1984). The first translation of the First Quarto *Hamlet* in German can be found in Ludwig Berger (ed.), *Hamlet 1603* (Frankfurt am Main; Berlin: Ullstein Bücher, 1967). This edition also contains a copy of *Der bestrafte Brudermord* ('Fratricide Punished'). The Q1-production in Kiel was reviewed in *Theater heute*, 10 (1967).

prospective purchasers that he is offering them the ‘complete’ Shakespeare in translation. There is an aesthetic of completeness, which has a value in the eyes of the public. There is more appeal in possessing a ‘complete’ collection of translations, such as Günther’s, than an incomplete collection, such as Erich Fried’s.

In the preface to the latest series of Fried’s translations, published shortly after his death in 1989, it was felt necessary to remind the readers that although the collection is incomplete, value should not be placed on a collection of translations simply because it is complete.³¹ It is important that the editor justify why this series does not, for example, contain a translation of *Macbeth*. But as long as other publishers, such as Treuheit, continue to place a value only on ‘complete’ translations in ‘complete’ collections, translators will continue to translate integrally, and there will be no shift in the paradigm that forms the Shakespearean canon in Germany.

The main problem with the Ars Vivendi project is that it publishes translations, many of which will be almost twenty years old at the time they go to print. The project itself is also a ten-year venture, and translations written now will be dated by the time the project is completed. Maik Hamburger informed me that if a theatre were to use his 1964 translation of *Hamlet*, then Hamburger would have to revise and update the translation radically. Similarly, when Peter Zadek produced *Hamlet* in 2000 he was unable to use his

³¹ Friedmar Appel writes in the preface: ‘The reader may regret that he does not have a complete Shakespeare, but completeness is of no value to a poet [i.e. Fried], who, in memory of human suffering, saw hope in the continual struggle to find a complete form of expression.’ See ‘Ein Shakespeare für alle’: Begleitbuch zu den Shakespeare-Übersetzungen von Erich Fried (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1989), p. 22.

own translation from 1977, but had to have the play re-translated by Elisabeth Plessen. Wolfgang Swaczynna translated much of the canon in the 1970s and is now in the process of updating his plays before they can be used again in the theatre. I think that Neubert Treuheit's editions will be of little use to those interested in the translation of Shakespeare, and will prevent awareness of the fact that a comprehensive, conflated translation is historically inaccurate.

Frank Günther's translations have been continually changed and revised since he began them in the late 1970s. The question arises as to whether an edition in the Ars Vivendi series will incorporate and reflect those changes. Ingeborg Boltz of the Shakespeare Bibliothek in Munich suggested that Günther's translations should be updated before they are re-printed by Ars Vivendi, if this is to offer readers a legitimate reflection of Günther's work, and a current translation of the plays. She also commented on the complexity of the task of assimilating the years of revisions into a single edition.³²

I believe that few readers would notice textual differences in a revised translation, and few would be interested in why their 1988 edition of *Hamlet* differed from their 2001 edition, written by the same translator. It is perhaps more important that Frank Günther's name is conspicuously stated on the cover of the book in order to allay fears of a lack of authenticity and authority. Trust in Günther's name and reputation, and trust in the transmission of his work by the publisher, places the reader in a vulnerable position that is easily exploited.

6.2 Non-correspondence between Film Script and Synchronisation

In Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis I ‘unpacked’ a number of *Hamlet* translations and assessed the extent to which any translation is an editorial construction composed of previous translators’ and editors’ rewrites of the text. ‘Our’ *Hamlet* in Germany is an editorial conglomeration that has been successively pulled away from anything it was originally. Translations undergo a further process of rewriting before they reach the consumers as a result of the globalisation of Shakespeare as a commercial product. In Germany ‘our’ *Hamlet* is not a single translation that underwrites a unitary text, but a network of interconnected and highly differentiated textual enactments. The point is that most consumers appear not to be aware that there is no *Hamlet* amidst all of these various translations and adaptations, although publishers and film companies seem to want us to believe this.

6.2.1 Selling Translations in Germany.

A clear example of the commercial illusion of a unitary *Hamlet* can be seen in the interdependence of film versions of Shakespeare’s plays, their synchronisation in German cinemas and the printed translations available in German bookstores. As soon as one begins to think about the nature of a translation and about when it was written, some remarkable incongruities open up in the way that translations are used, sold and

³² In conversation with Dr Ingeborg Boltz (Munich, 25 October, 2000).

identified. Michael Almereyda reinvented *Hamlet* for the new millennium in a film version that emphasised the centrality of technology in modern life. The use of camcorders and webcams conveyed the extent to which human beings in the Western technocracy are unable to escape observation, and the love letters that Hamlet sends to Ophelia were, of course, sent by e-mail. When Hamlet rewrote the death warrant signed by Claudius, it involved hacking into the files on Claudius' lap-top. Everything about this film gave the impression of its being a play written in and for the twenty-first century. The language of the text was also modified to fit the film's modern New York setting. However, the translation of the play used in the dubbing of this film in German cinemas was Schlegel's antiquated version written in 1798.

To coincide with the release of Almereyda's film the publishing house Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag (ATV) re-printed their edition of *Hamlet* in German. The front cover showed a still picture of the New York skyline (suggestive of Almereyda's film, set in New York), and on the front and back covers were advertisements for the film.³³ Both the cover picture and the wording of the advertisement were designed specifically to give the impression that this edition offered a reader the printed version of the text heard in the film. In fact, the ATV edition contained the translation of Theodor Fontane from the year 1844. There is no correlation between Fontane's simplified prose translation and Schlegel's lyrically effusive verse translation, and there is no correlation between Schlegel's romantic translation and the twenty-first century life-style portrayed in Almereyda's film.

Theodor Fontane's translation of *Hamlet* was also published by Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag to coincide with Kenneth Branagh's 1996-film version of *Hamlet*. The front cover of this edition stated that it contained Fontane's translation, but also advertised the film as 'Filmed by Kenneth Branagh with Robin Williams and Billy Crystal'. The cover picture showed John Everett Millais' Renaissance painting of Ophelia and the layout and wording were cleverly suggestive of the film, thus giving the impression that the translation it offered provided a textual accompaniment to Branagh's film. Again, it was not Theodor Fontane's translation heard in German cinemas but Schlegel's translation. ATV is able to rely on the fact that most readers are unlikely to notice, at least initially, that the version of the play heard in the film is not the same as the translation printed in the edition.

On the rear cover of ATV's 1996 edition it is stated that Fontane's translation equals, and in many parts surpasses, the quality of the more familiar Schlegel version. This quotation was taken from an essay written by Hermann Conrad, which appeared in *The Literary Echo* in October 1899. In this article Conrad analysed Fontane's newly discovered translation and concluded that this badly written prose translation was so full of errors that it must have been written prior to 1844 when Fontane travelled to England to learn English.³⁴ Conrad's analysis reflected badly on Fontane's translation, so it is easy to

³³ Fontane's translation in the ATV edition bears the advertisement for the film: 'Jetzt neu verfilmt von Michael Almereyda, mit Ethan Hawke, Kyle MacLachlan, Sam Shepard, Diane Venora, Casey Affleck, Lier Schreiber, und Bill Murray'.

³⁴ Joachim Krueger writes: 'It was above all the lack of precision, the amount of errors, and the general absence of skill in this translation that led Conrad to this conclusion [that Fontane's translation was an immature work written in his youth]. The translator's knowledge of English was not up to the difficult task of translating this play. He has made mistakes, which, as Conrad explains, "a person would be unlikely to make, even if he had spent only a few months in

understand why Aufbau printed only a short citation from the essay. ATV avoided any reference to the inadequacy of Fontane's English, the inferior quality of the prose, or to the fact that Fontane wrote his translation when he was only twenty-four and had just finished his Abitur. There is also no mention of the fact that Fontane did not publish his translation for fear that the mistakes would show up when compared with the more competent translations of Schröder and Schlegel. Since Fontane translated *Hamlet* at such a young age with no plans for publishing it or submitting it to a theatre, and since he translated the text just a few months before moving to England, my own feeling is that Fontane may have translated *Hamlet* as a way of learning English before he went to England.

German readers are mainly offered the translations of Schlegel or Fontane in German bookstores.³⁵ Readers are not informed of the respective weaknesses of these translations, and the differences between translations are suppressed in popular editions. This is clearly a sales strategy on the part of Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag. The first edition of Fontane's translation, published by Aufbau in 1966, was reprinted in 1996 and again in 2000 to coincide with the release of Branagh's and Almereyda's films. Nor was *Hamlet* an isolated case. In 1999 ATV published their first edition of *A Midsummer*

England". The conclusion is that Fontane must have dared to translate *Hamlet* before he had set foot on English soil. Since Fontane's first trip to England occurred between the end of May and the start of June 1844, it is probable that the translation was written in the spring of 1844.' See Joachim Krueger's 'Vorwort' in *Hamlet. Prinz von Dänemark*, trans. Theodor Fontane (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 1966), pp. 5-11, here pp. 5-6.

³⁵ Wittwer, the largest bookstore in Stuttgart, offers readers *Hamlet* in the translations of Schlegel (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1969; repr. 1999), Fontane (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000) and Günther (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995; repr. 2000). Dussmann and Hugendubel, the largest bookstores in Berlin, offer only the translations of Schlegel, Fontane and Fried (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1970; repr. 1999).

Night's Dream. Again this edition advertised the release of Michael Hoffmann's new film version of this play, and the wording was convincing enough to suggest that the translation printed by ATV was the same as the one used in Hoffmann's film.³⁶ However, the translation used was that of Rudolf Schaller's from the 1960s. In 1996 ATV also published their first edition of *Twelfth Night*. Again, the covers advertised this play in the new film version with Helena Bonham Carter, Ben Kingsley and Imogen Stubbs. The film was dubbed in German using Schlegel's translation, but the translation published by ATV was Rudolf Schaller's 1960 version.

The Fischer publishing house released its edition of Erich Fried's 1963 translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1998 to coincide with Michael Hoffmann's film. This edition also contained a photograph of the characters from the film, including Michelle Pfeiffer, Kevin Kline and Calista Flockhart. In this case, Fischer used the photographs legitimately because Fox Films had agreed to use Erich Fried's translation for the dubbing of this film in German cinemas. On promotional material for this film it was duly advertised that this film was dubbed using the translation of Fried, as published by Fischer. Confusingly though, the promotional material also advertised the translation of the play published by the Reclam publishing house, although Reclam only ever publishes the Schlegel-Tieck-Baudissin translations. Similarly, in 1999 Witwer bookstore in Stuttgart was selling three very different translations of *Romeo and Juliet*, and yet all of them advertised the Baz Luhrmann film on the front covers. Luhrmann's film was also dubbed using Schlegel's translation.

³⁶ 'Jetzt aufwendig verfilmt von Michael Hoffmann mit Kevin Kline, Michelle Pfeiffer und Sophie Marceau.'

In 2000 ATV published their first edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* to coincide with the release of Kenneth Branagh's new film version. This time the cover page was not taken from the film, but did represent characters in 1940s-style costume. Both the front and back covers advertised the translation as: 'Shakespeare's charming comedy in the style of the 1940s, filmed by Kenneth Branagh with Alicia Silverstone, Nathan Lane, Mathew Lillard and Natasha McElhone'. Inside the covers is the translation of Wolf Graf Baudissin's from the early nineteenth century.

What has certainly gone unnoticed by German readers is that Baudissin translated the title *Love's Labour's Lost* as *Liebes Leid und Lust*. ATV printed Baudissin's translation to accompany the film, but changed the title to *Verlorene Liebesmüh*, which has become a recognisable title of the play in German. The subtle advertising of those films on the cover pages, and the coincidence of the dates of publication of the translation and release of the film, are powerful ways of convincing readers that there is no difference between the translation they will hear in the cinema and the translation they will read in the printed edition. It is also a dubious practice to change the title of a translation in order to sell more copies and to identify it with a more mainstream version of the play.

Other publishing houses adopt the same sales strategies when promoting their translations. When I interviewed the translator Frank Günther in Munich in October 1999, he was working on his translation of *Love's Labour's Lost*. He explained to me that he was working under pressure to complete the translation for the publisher Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. The translation was to coincide with the release of

Kenneth Branagh's film. The intention here was, of course, to sell more copies of this edition whilst the film was running in cinemas. Given the density of wordplay in Shakespeare's text and its untranslatability in literal terms, Frank Günther rewrote the play in the style of German nonsense verse. In the essay that accompanies his translation of *Love's Labour's Lost* Günther explains that the only way to translate Shakespeare is to rewrite him:

The strategy for my solution developed from a consideration of the fact that what we are dealing with is an Elizabethan nonsense text. We also have this tradition of nonsense texts in German literature, ranging from Morgenstern through Ringelnatz and Rühmkorf to Jandl. It was through my contact with these models that I discovered a series of ideas and inventions within the frame of the German language.³⁷

One only need examine Günther's translation of Holofernes' poem 'The preycling princess pierc'd and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket' (4.2.55-62) to realise that we are reading a completely different text. Günther has also acknowledged that he has created far more wordplay than exists in the original: 'My translation allows itself considerable liberties, and three times it commits the deadly sin of translation: incorporating more wordplay and more speakers than the original contains.'³⁸ Last year Branagh's film reached German cinema screens in Graf Baudissin's translation, whilst Günther's new translation lined the shelves of German bookstores, but there was no correspondence between these texts. It seems that the only way to sell translations is to publish them at the same time as the release of a new film version and to advertise the translation as the official companion to the film, regardless of the differences between the translations. This gives

³⁷ *Verlorene Liebesmüh*, trans. Frank Günther (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000), pp. 253-4.

³⁸ Günther, *Verlorene Liebesmüh* (pp. 256-7).

the misleading impression that there is a single Shakespearean text and that any film version and any printed translation will transmit this work to the target audience. My argument is that as soon as one begins to inspect these translations, one sees that there is no unitary work at the centre of them all. The representation of a unitary text in translation obscures the highly contingent nature of the Shakespearean play text and it suppresses the fact that every age needs its own translation; there can be no standard translation that speaks for all ages.

6.2.2 Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet* in German

What is produced and sold in Germany as *Hamlet*, and what is bought and consumed as *Hamlet*, reveals quite clearly that there is no unitary work called *Hamlet* (or indeed any Shakespearean work) in German. There is only a conglomeration of differently constituted texts, a cultural collusion that encourages a belief in the existence of a unitary work. Laurie Osborne takes the same view that I am expounding here.³⁹ He describes the film version of a Shakespearean play as one member of the 'global set of the play's enactments'. As Osborne writes, films and textual permutations of a single work reveal the play: 'not as a unitary object, but as a site of reproductions'. My argument is that *Hamlet* is also a site of reproductions, a global set of enactments, a methodological field. There is no transcendent text.

In 1993 Branagh released his film version of *Much Ado About Nothing*. To accompany the release of the film he published a book, the 'making of' *Much Ado*, in which he detailed the changes he had made to the original text. Branagh writes: 'The adaptation was at the service of our attempt to find the essence in the piece, to find the spirit of the play itself.'⁴⁰ Osborne commented:

The performance on film, which is obviously not identical to the text, belies this claim of a unitary spirit of the play. The very doubleness of these reproductions refutes the singularity assumed by 'the spirit of the play itself'.⁴¹

I believe that *Hamlet* is a much broader cultural and commercial text than is commonly understood in Germany, and that the title of the play and the name of its author have served as authorising factors for a wide range of acts of commercial rewriting of the play.⁴² Osborne has also suggested that commercial forces bind together texts that are fundamentally different, but sold as if a unitary object:

The filmed performance – in its film editing, its reproductions, and its marketing as a material product – binds together the supposedly ephemeral and historically grounded performance with the supposedly fixed, repeatable, and transcendent text. Far from securing the textual form as the performance edition, the similar marketing, sale, and

³⁹ Laurie E. Osborne, 'Rethinking the Performance Editions: Theatrical and Textual Productions of Shakespeare', in James Bulman, *Shakespeare, Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 168-85.

⁴⁰ Kenneth Branagh, *Much Ado About Nothing* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993). p. xvi.

⁴¹ Osborne (p. 182).

⁴² Authority, according to W. B. Worthen, is based on a 'network of discursive practices, legitimating strategies, and institutional pressures' (p. 12). "'Shakespeare'" is a necessary fiction that organizes and stabilizes this interpretive community, working not to provide access to privileged meaning, but to legitimate a series of interpretive relationships – between actor and text, between spectator and stage, between critic and performance' (p. 19). Recourse to 'Shakespeare' is also 'a way of turning away from the question of how our acts of representation are implicated in the dynamics of contemporary culture, a way of passing the responsibility for our theatrical and critical activities onto a higher authority' (p. 25). See W. B. Worthen, 'Staging "Shakespeare": acting, authority, and the rhetoric of performance', in Bulman (pp. 12-28).

treatment of the videotaped and textual reproductions locate both as performance editions: together they reveal their mutual participation in the work.⁴³

If we compare Kenneth Branagh's editing of the *Hamlet* texts for his 1996 film with the set of German translations that were identified with this film script, we will see some of the ways in which 'Hamlet' only exists as a broad canvas on which multiple forms and meanings are inscribed. In 1996 Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag reprinted Frank Günther's translation of *Hamlet* (first printed by DTV in 1995) in a parallel edition with Harold Jenkins' 1982 edition of the text in order to coincide with the new Kenneth Branagh film. The DTV edition advertised Branagh's film on the front and rear covers with images taken from the film.⁴⁴ Inside the book was a cast list and information about Branagh's film, and on the back cover DTV announced that this edition was 'The book accompanying the great new film of the tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark'. Everything pointed to the fact that this translation would offer a printed version of the text in English, alongside its German translation, as heard in German cinemas. However, there is often a striking lack of correspondence between these four different textual representations of *Hamlet*, sold to consumers as the same play.⁴⁵

⁴³ Osborne (p. 182).

⁴⁴ The practice of using stills from films has now been abandoned by DTV, as Günther explained in the interview. The translations now bear photographs of flowers by Robert Mapplethorpe. The idea to use a still photograph from a film had to be abandoned for financial reasons. The cost incurred by DTV in using shots from Branagh's *Hamlet* on the cover page of the 1997 edition fell somewhere in the region of 10 000 Deutsch Marks.

⁴⁵ Ivo Kamps draws attention to the same phenomenon. He writes: 'On the back of the [video cassette] box of Kenneth Branagh's production of *Hamlet*, the film is advertised as "Shakespeare's greatest creation in its entirety." The claim is, of course, false because Branagh's script is a conflation of the quarto and folio texts and is therefore not "Shakespeare's creation" as such. However, the need to have Shakespeare authorize the Hollywood film is powerful: it simply sounds much better to speak of "Shakespeare's greatest creation" than of Branagh's conflation.' See Ivo Kamps, 'Alas poor Shakespeare!' (p. 22).

In Branagh's film Hamlet spoke of his 'solid' flesh, and this was dubbed as 'fest' ('solid') in Schlegel's translation. In the DTV edition Jenkins adopted Dover Wilson's conjecture of 'sullied' (1.2.129) and Günther followed Jenkins in his translation, using the word 'beschmutzt' ('dirtied'). What we *hear* in the film in English and in the German synchronisation is 'solid' (Branagh/Schlegel), but what we *read* in the English and German texts of the DTV edition is 'sullied' (Jenkins/Günther). At this point I would like to remind the reader of the discussion in Chapter 3, where I argued that translation was a teleological process. There is no single correct way to translate a work. In Schlegel's day it was 'correct' to translate Hamlet's flesh as 'solid', and in Günther's day it is 'correct' to translate the word with 'sullied'. In time we may see more translations using the form 'sallied'. The different words that we find in translations reflect different stages in the translation's teleology, and yet a modern commercial construction such as the Branagh/Schlegel film and the accompanying Jenkins/Günther edition tends to elide the distinctions that four hundred years of teleological change have wrought on the original and its translations.

In the film, and in Schlegel's translation, Fortinbras and his men were 'landless'. In Jenkins' text Fortinbras, true to the Second Quarto, was 'lawless', yet in Günther's translation on the facing page, he was also 'landless'. Also in Branagh's film Hamlet, in his second soliloquy, exclaimed 'O Vengeance!' (2.2.577), but not in the translation of Schlegel. This exclamation was not contained in either Jenkins' or Günther's texts. The more rounded line 'What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?' (Folio) that we heard in

Branagh's film did *not* occur in Schlegel's translation, Jenkins' text, or Günther's translation.

Branagh did not always follow the Folio. In the film version Hamlet described man as 'how like an angel in apprehension, how like a god', but in Schlegel's translation, in Jenkins' text, and in Günther's translation, it was the Second Quarto version we received: 'in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a God' (2.2.305-6). Branagh also adopted Warburton's conjecture that the sun is a '*god* kissing carrion' rather than 'a *good* kissing carrion' of the substantive texts (2.2.182). This corresponded with the synchronisation using Schlegel's translation, but did not correspond with the 'good kissing carrion' of Jenkins' text and Günther's translation. Similarly, before the duel Branagh's Hamlet assured Horatio that 'no man *knows* aught of what he leaves'. Branagh adopted Johnson's emendation for the word order, and he adopted the 'knows' of the Second Quarto rather than the 'has' of the Folio. His 'Let be' also occurs only in the Second Quarto. Schlegel's and Günther's translations were closer to the Second Quarto in word order, whereas Jenkins offered his own conjecture at this point: 'since no man, of aught he leaves, knows aught' (5.2.218-20).

Branagh was not averse to offering his own conjectures, such as when his Hamlet referred to the 'dram of evil' that 'all the noble substance *over daub*[s] to his own scandal'. Schlegel, influenced by Malone here, used the word 'Wert', which reflects Malone's 'of *worth* doubt.' Jenkins, however, followed Farmer's emendation 'doth all the noble substance often dout' (1.4.36-38), which was re-phrased by Günther as

‘dragging down’ the noble substance. Later, in the Closet scene of Branagh’s film, Hamlet advised his mother that we have the power to ‘shame’ the devil, which was Branagh’s conjecture. In Schlegel’s translation Hamlet says that we may ‘tame’ the devil (‘zähmt’), which again shows the influence of Malone’s edition. Jenkins, however, adopted Clarendon’s ‘lodge’ the devil (3.4.171), and Günther provided a literal translation with the verb ‘logieren’.

There are too many differences between these texts to list here, but a few more may be offered to illustrate my point. In the film Hamlet told Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that the King held them ‘like an ape an apple’ in his mouth (4.2.16-17), thus adopting Farmer’s conjecture. This differed slightly in Schlegel’s translation, in which we hear the phrase ‘like an ape a mouthful’. Jenkins adopted the Folio’s ‘like an ape,’ but Günther adopted Farmer’s ‘like an ape an apple’. There was a similar lack of correspondence between Branagh’s Laertes’ ‘Thus diest thou!’ and Schlegel’s ‘Thus diddest thou!’ (‘Das tatest du!’) This time there *was* correspondence between Jenkins’ text and Günther’s translation, both of which followed Marshall’s conjecture of ‘Thus diest thou!’ (4.7.56). Branagh’s Hamlet also followed Jenkins’ conjecture ‘so envious slander’ (4.2.40), which was followed in Günther’s translation. However, the words we heard in the dubbed version were ‘schlangenart’ge Leumund’, which is the ‘viperous slander’ that Schlegel translated in Malone’s edition.

In Branagh’s film the gravedigger handed Hamlet the skull of Yorick *after* he had said ‘Ev’n that’ and Hamlet uttered the Folio-phrase ‘Let me see’. In the dubbed version

however, the gravedigger handed Hamlet the skull *before* his ‘Ev’n that’ and Hamlet did not say ‘Let me see’. There was correspondence between Schlegel’s translation and the texts of Jenkins and Günther, but no correspondence existed between the synchronised text of Schlegel’s translation and the text of the film sequence.

At least six versions of *Hamlet* played a part in this cultural conglomeration. There were the Folio and Second Quarto texts, the director’s adaptation of these texts, the synchronisation of the film with an archaic translation, the publication of an edited text claiming to be the accompaniment to the film, and finally a new translation of that edited text. My set of examples demonstrates that there was no correspondence between the individual texts that constituted this particular constellation. It demonstrates that no transcendent text exists and no unified work under the title of *Hamlet*, as much as the German reading and cinema-going public may like to believe. It also demonstrates that texts and translations can be offered for public consumption, which, at numerous points, bear no resemblance and offer contradictory information and mixed textual signals.

I offered these examples to show that by looking closely enough, we can detect a lack of correspondence between a film script and its dubbed version in a translation, between other editions of the text and the film script, and between the edited text and the ‘parallel’ translation printed in the same edition. Fortinbras may be ‘landless’ or ‘lawless’ and the King an ‘ape’ or an ‘apple’, depending on which page you happen to be looking at, or which language you happen to be hearing. It is very unlikely that many German readers would notice such subtleties in the texts, but I do not think that this can be used as an

argument to prove the unimportance of textual discrepancies.⁴⁶ I think it shows that publishers are able to sell books, and cinemas are able to attract audiences, to read or hear some permutation of something that calls itself *Hamlet*. The publisher has played on the lack of awareness of different translations in order to boost sales. It is my observation that German readers and cinema-goers have little idea about the multitude of translations and editions of *Hamlet* because of the extent to which these texts are misrepresented by publishers and film companies.

Theatre critic Bernd Sucher wrote that German cinema-goers were delighted with Branagh's *Hamlet*, because he did not modernise the language, and the Schlegel-Tieck translation allowed them to enjoy the archaic atmosphere of the play.⁴⁷ There are so many contradictions embedded in this kind of statement. There is no chronological connection between the language of Shakespeare's text and the nineteenth-century Arcadia of Branagh's film version, just as there is no connection between Branagh's *Hamlet* and the late eighteenth-century German of Schlegel's translation. Sucher also states that the public was fascinated by the text of Branagh's film in German, even though they would rarely buy a copy of the text in the popular Reclam edition. He writes: 'What people liked about Branagh's "Arcadia now" version was the text. Individuals, who had probably never read a play by Shakespeare, and not surprisingly do not purchase a copy of the text after seeing the film on screen, were fascinated by the story

⁴⁶ Subtleties aside, in the case of Günther's translations, the language varies so much from the original text that it is difficult to see how a reader could not appreciate the differences between the Schlegel translation used in Branagh's film and the one written by Frank Günther in the DTV edition. A specimen of Schlegel's and Günther's translations can be found in Appendix C, which reveals more of the substantial difference between the earlier and modern translations.

⁴⁷ *Theater heute*, 10 (1993), p. 56.

and by its language!’ If audiences were fascinated by the language, then it was by a 1798 translation that had little to do with either Shakespeare’s or Branagh’s worlds.

If a film company is able to convince cinema-goers that a *Hamlet* in the modern film version by Michael Almereyda (2001) is identical with Schlegel’s *Hamlet* translation (1798) that was used in the film’s synchronisation, then fundamental questions need to be raised about the use of translations by ‘producers’ and the lack of critical awareness amongst ‘consumers’. ‘Rewriting’ is not just about editing, translating or adapting a pre-existing work. It is a much larger process that involves publishing and selling those rewritten texts. When film companies, theatres or publishers choose a translation, the choice of translation and the way it is represented to the public effectively rewrite the work. It also rewrites the work in a broader sense, because it gives readers and audiences a particular view of the author and of the way he created the work.⁴⁸

The variety of translations and editions that exist in Germany offers a bewildering array of permutations of *Hamlet*, but publishers, through strategic advertising, discourage critical awareness of multiple translations and texts. I would argue that the fault lies mainly with the publishers who produce Shakespeare for consumption. More value is placed on sales figures than on informing readers about the true nature of the textual

⁴⁸ André Lefevere has written: ‘When non-professional readers of literature say they have “read” a book, what they mean is that they have a certain image, a certain construct of that book in their heads. That construct is often loosely based on some selected passages of the actual text of the book in question, supplemented by other texts that rewrite the actual text in one way or another, such as plot summaries in literary histories or reference works, reviews in newspapers, magazines, or journals, some critical articles, performances on stage or screen, and, last but not least, translations.’ See Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (pp. 1-10, here pp. 6-7).

constitution of Shakespeare's plays. Whatever remains of 'our' Hamlet after this analysis is a commercial product that is composed of a conglomeration of textual material with no stable point of origin or reliable means of authentication.

6.3 Translations in the Theatre

Consumers of Shakespeare in Germany lack awareness of the differences between existing translations of *Hamlet*. Producers exploit this lack of awareness in order to sell editions of the play, but I feel that more information should be made available regarding the nature of translations. The translations of *Hamlet* by Schlegel, Fontane and Günther are textually so different that they could be regarded as different plays. The cultural and political backgrounds to these translations are also very different and account for why these translations reflect *Hamlet* in diverse ways. In the first section of this chapter I outlined how translations in print and in the cinema tend to become obscured, as if there were a single play called 'Hamlet' and a transcendent version of it in German. This confusing use of translations in printed form and in the cinema also extends to the theatre.

6.3.1 How informed are theatre audiences?

No description of the textual condition of *Hamlet* or of the director's combination of Quarto and Folio texts was included in the programme to Peter Zadek's recent

production of *Hamlet* when it came to the Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh (August, 2000). During the performance I became aware that the German text we were hearing on stage was not the same as the English surtitles being projected above the stage. This was a clear indication that the English text used by Elisabeth Plessen as her source text for her translation for this production was not the same English text that was being projected in the surtitles. When Angela Winkler, playing Hamlet, said: ‘O schmölze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch’ (‘O that this too too *solid* flesh would melt’), the text above the stage read: ‘O that this too too *sullied* flesh would melt’. Both Plessen’s source text, edited by Holger Klein (Reclam Edition, 1984), and the version used in the surtitles, edited by Harold Jenkins (Arden Edition, 1982), were conflated forms of *Hamlet*, but in this significant line of Hamlet’s, we *heard* the Folio’s *solid* and *read* John Dover Wilson’s emendation *sullied*. In effect we were being exposed to two *Hamlets* simultaneously.

In the Lyceum that evening there was a mixed audience, consisting mostly of German speakers.⁴⁹ Given the number of people comparing this new translation with the surtitles, I suspect that a few other people noticed that the translation they were hearing on stage did not correspond with those surtitles. It is natural that members of the audience would have doubted the accuracy of the new translation, rather than the English text. This is ironic, given that Plessen’s translation of ‘solid’ was based on the textual authority of the Folio, whereas the English surtitles projected John Dover Wilson’s emendation of ‘sullied’.

One might argue that it was not important that the German and the English texts coincided, since the German speakers would have been concentrating more on the German they were hearing, and the English speakers would have been concentrating on the English lines they were reading. I noticed that numerous German speakers looked up to the English surtitles when the German translation appeared to make no sense. For example, the distracted Ophelia, when asked by the King how she was, replied: ‘Well, good dild you. They say the owl was a baker’s daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be. God be at your table’ (4.5.42-44). Numerous German speakers looked up to the English surtitles because they had clearly not understood the German translation, but there was no correspondence between these lines in the two texts. Had a member of the audience also looked to the surtitles to see if he or she understood ‘feste Fleisch’ better in English, they would have been guided by *sullied* flesh rather than the actual word uttered on stage.

In 1977 Peter Zadek’s translation of *Hamlet* was published in its entirety in the programme to the production in Bochum,⁵⁰ but Zadek warned the audience that the text they would hear on stage would vary in places from the printed translation in their programme. The reason for this was that Zadek’s translation had undergone changes during rehearsals.⁵¹ This is interesting for a number of reasons. It shows that a translation created on paper may require modification before it can be used on stage, and that a

⁴⁹ I have reviewed Zadek’s production and the suitability of Plessen’s translation for the stage in my article, ‘Frailly, thy name is woman: Angela Winkler som Hamlet’, *Norsk Shakespearetidsskrift*, 2 (2000), 62-65.

⁵⁰ The production is discussed in some detail in *Theater heute*, 11 (1977).

translation of a play may exist in multiple forms: the translator's manuscript copy (copies), the version(s) adapted for the actors, and a version tidied up for publishing.⁵² What this comment also indicates is that Peter Zadek believed that his audiences would follow the printed text as they were following the play. It is unlikely that any members of the audience ever noticed when the text being spoken on stage deviated from the one printed in the programme.

Elisabeth Plessen's 1999 re-translation of *Hamlet* for Zadek's production was also printed in its entirety in a supplementary programme. Plessen explains in the programme to Zadek's production that the full text can be found in the edition published by Rowohlt Theater Verlag. However, what the reader and audiences do not realise is that the translation published by Rowohlt is Zadek's own translation from 1977, not Elisabeth Plessen's new version. Audiences and readers are misled because Zadek translated the play himself and published it, and then had the play re-translated by Plessen, which was not published by Rowohlt. Plessen's claim that her translation is published in its entirety by Rowohlt is misleading and inaccurate. In the interview Plessen explained that Zadek had asked her to re-translate *Hamlet* because he felt that his own version was now out of date. A reader who is impressed by Plessen's translation in this new production is

⁵¹ The programme states in a footnote on the inside cover: 'Possible deviations in the stage version from the text printed in this programme result from the fact that the translation underwent changes which came after the programme had been printed.'

⁵² Similarly, when Heiner Müller was taken to court by Maik Hamburger for plagiarising his *Hamlet* translation in 1976, it was discovered that when an attempt was made to compare translations, there was no definitive version of *Hamlet* in Müller's translation. The version submitted for the court case, the one used by actors in Benno Besson's production at the Berliner Volksbühne, and the version eventually published by Rotbuch Verlag, were all different versions. See Jonathan Kalb (pp. 210-211).

encouraged to read the full version of it in the Rowohlt edition, but this is the very different translation of Peter Zadek's.

Aside from the deliberate obfuscation of translations and translators, Zadek and Plessen clearly feel that audiences have a right to know whose translation they are hearing, and that it may differ in parts from the printed version. Zadek believes that audiences should be made aware of the fact that they are hearing a new translation, which they may wish to read and compare with more familiar versions. If audiences did follow Zadek's advice and study the translation heard on stage, the version published in the programme and the version published by Rowohlt, they would soon learn that several different translations were being misrepresented as identical forms. With regard to his own translation of *Hamlet* Maik Hamburger has argued that more theatres should provide audiences with copies of the translation so that they will be in a better position to detect cases of plagiarism:

...the programme produced by theatres for their productions should make it quite clear that no translation can be one hundred per cent independent and that Müller's translation is dependent on the earlier version of Maik Hamburger and Adolf Dresen. Theatres should have acknowledged this and both Dresen and I should have received a proportion of the royalties. As Müller's text became more popular, our version became less so. We often do get royalties but seldom the acknowledgement, and there are so many theatres performing *Hamlet*, and many of them in Müller's translation, that it is impossible to keep track of whether those theatres are acting legitimately and indeed legally...⁵³

Perhaps one should not expect members of the public to be aware of multiple translations, but one would expect members of the production team and employees of the theatre to have a greater level of awareness, although this is also rarely the case. Before going to see Armin Petras' production of *Hamlet* at the Staatstheater in Kassel (October.

2000), I asked assistants of the artistic director which translation Petras had used. but even the artistic director of the theatre had no idea. It was only after interviewing the theatre's principal dramaturg, Ralf Fiedler, that I learned that Petras had used Heiner Müller's 1976 translation. Even in dramaturgy departments of theatres people are often surprised that they do not know which translation a director is using.

This is perhaps not so different from the situation in Britain. Robert David MacDonald has translated Schiller's plays for productions around Britain such as the Gate Theatre in London (*The Robbers*, 27 July 1995), the Edinburgh Festival (*Mary Stuart*, 18 January 1986; *Don Carlos*, 22 August 1995; *Passion and Politics*, 23 August 1998), and the Citizens' Theatre in Glasgow (*Joan of Arc*, 9 October 1987). MacDonald presented his translation of *Joan of Arc* to Glasgow's Citizens' Theatre only to have it rejected because the title was unfamiliar. MacDonald writes: 'The play's more accurately translated title *The Maid of Orleans* was rejected after discovery that no one employed by the theatre at the time knew who was meant by it – a fact that should have been a warning.'⁵⁴ Schiller's play, written in 1801, bears the title *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, but this, translated literally as *The Maid of Orleans*, was felt to be a different play from *Joan of Arc*. Translating Schiller's *Maria Stuart* to *Mary Stuart* was not felt to compromise the identity of the play, mainly because the change in translation was minimal, and because the heroine is known to British audiences as Mary Stuart.

⁵³ Appendix (p. 347).

⁵⁴ Schiller. *Five Plays*, trans. Robert David MacDonald (London: Oberon Books, 1998), pp. 65f.

One of the reasons so little information is given to audiences is, I believe, to obscure the fact that misrepresentation of translations is a common practice, as in the case of Heiner Müller's plagiarised version of Hamburger's translation, and Elisabeth Plessen's obfuscation of the differences between her own and Peter Zadek's *Hamlet* translations. Audiences in Germany seem to be largely unaware that Heiner Müller's *Hamlet* translation is in fact Maik Hamburger's and that the translation published in the programme to Peter Zadek's *Hamlet* is a different translation from the one he published in 1977 and used in his production in Bochum. The kind of lack of awareness that we observed in the first part of the present chapter clearly extends to the theatre in Germany.

6.3.2 How informed should theatre audiences be?

Translators of Shakespeare in German are concerned with recreating the nuances of Shakespeare's texts as accurately as possible and they are keenly aware that words have a range of subtle connotations that must be used carefully to avoid unwanted meaning. What surprised me in the interviews was that the translators all agreed that audiences need not take any interest in the translation being used in a particular production. It seems to be something of a paradox that the translation is recognised as being essential to the meaning of the play and the effect it has on the audience, and yet translators do not encourage audiences to think about the translation. Reinhard Palm feels it is natural for audiences not to have any interest in either the identity of the translator or the quality of the translation and Wolfgang Swaczynna also remarked that audiences are indifferent to

the translation of a play and do not analyse the language of the text when they go to the theatre:

Sometimes audiences do notice differences in modern translations, particularly in the famous lines, but normally they don't pay much attention to the translation that is used. They are more interested in what they see on stage. However, I did notice that a few lines from Thomas Brasch's *Richard II* sounded odd. I think this might leave audience members wondering if this is an accurate translation of what Shakespeare wrote in English. Generally though, audiences couldn't care less if it is a translation by Maik Hamburger or Heiner Müller. It is better not to over-emphasise this problem. Audiences do not analyse plays linguistically and are indifferent to how they have been translated.⁵⁵

Swaczynna is right to point out that most play-goers are not interested in the translation used for a production of a foreign-language play, but I cannot support Swaczynna's argument that this problem is unimportant and should be ignored. I have seen all of the major German productions of *Hamlet* over the past few years. Every one was different and reflected a different perspective on the original and this was directly related to whether the director was using an eighteenth-century translation, a translation from the GDR of the 1960s, or a modernised translation written in 1999.

Maik Hamburger also stated that German audiences have no interest at all in the translator of a Shakespeare play or in the quality of that translation. Hamburger commented: '...they're not interested. They don't even know that it has been translated [...] Most people think the translation is the original.' When I asked Hamburger who audiences think translated the play into German, he said that they generally do not consider that a second person has intervened between the original and the play as it is

⁵⁵ Appendix (p. 332).

heard on the German stage. There is a feeling that what audiences are hearing is an unmediated form through which they can hear Shakespeare:

They [audiences] don't think about it at all. The general impression is gradually changing of course with the growing opening towards the English language, but until about twenty years ago certainly everyone who read Schlegel-Tieck thought he was reading Shakespeare. They say for example that Shakespeare said: 'O schmelze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch' and for them that is Shakespeare. You even see it in literary articles where people quote subtle or controversial passages and their proof is 'Shakespeare said...' and then they quote Schlegel-Tieck. It has become so much part of German mentality to think of this as Shakespeare, or that Shakespeare was German, that the consciousness of a new translation has certainly become important in theatrical circles but in the general public I don't think it has become a vitally important issue.⁵⁶

Palm, Swaczynna and Hamburger are right to point out that audiences do *not* usually take an interest in the text of a play in terms of its being a translation. The more difficult question to answer is whether audiences *should* take an interest in the translator that brought Shakespeare to the German stage. Swaczynna, having stated that audiences are not interested in translations, still admits that audiences notice differences, especially between older and more recent versions.

To argue that theatre-goers should be concerned with the nature of the translation is to expect of the audience an analytical approach that is incompatible with the experience of a theatrical event. Hans Joachim Schaefer argued that only philologists compare translations with the critical English editions. A theatre-goer would rarely analyse a play-text linguistically during a performance, because he or she is not interested at that moment in philological issues or in the translation, only in a:

...moving artistic experience or a deeply human event which is only released by the poet or translator's text. This theatre-goer must, without criticism and with a desire for experience, leave it to the discretion of the theatre to choose a translation and to defend its choice. He must surrender himself to the theatrical impression of the evening.⁵⁷

Michael Wachsmann argued that a translation designed for the stage is a different form of language-use from a translation written to be read, and theatre audiences should not be encouraged to approach a theatre text as if it were a translation meant to be read and studied:

Shakespeare designed his texts to be spoken and heard and not to be pressurised by interpreters [...] My translations are not intended to be read. If you read them from the page you will inevitably be confronted with one difficulty after another, and you will end up asking 'What does that mean?' and 'What does it say in the original?' The questions that can only be answered when the lines on the page are fully understood, are not questions that audiences ask when they hear the language on stage. This does not mean that I have not taken the most extreme care in my philological study of the texts. Whether my translations work, can only be seen in the theatre, not under any philological scrutiny, which Shakespeare's texts naturally resist.⁵⁸

I believe that to argue that the choice of translation, and the nature of this text, are not integral to the dramatic experience, influencing and changing that experience by the nature of the translation chosen, is tantamount to arguing that the translation is irrelevant.

Wolfgang Clemen has demonstrated how every element of a text is connected in a network that spreads over the text as a whole and creates a cumulative emotional effect on the audience.⁵⁹ Translations likewise create different reactions in audiences, even

⁵⁶ Appendix (p. 337).

⁵⁷ Hans Joachim Schaefer, 'Theatergerechte Lebendigkeit', in *Der deutsche Shakespeare*, Theater unserer Zeit, 7 (Basel: Basilius, 1965), pp. 148-51.

⁵⁸ Appendix (p. 308).

⁵⁹ Wolfgang Clemen drew a distinction between the 'local' or momentary effect of an image or metaphor, and the cumulative or 'total effect' that strands of a text create in the minds of the audiences. Clemen wrote: 'In a truly great drama nothing is left disconnected, everything is

translations of the same play. The Hamlet in Frank Günther's translation is a wordsmith, who carries us along on waves of densely convoluted wordplay that forms part of the Prince's 'theatrical' nature. Heiner Müller's Hamlet is, by contrast, unremittingly laconic and morose, and his words, though simpler than in Günther's version, hint at social and political connotations latent in the language that Müller was using in 1977.

I have also observed that the amount of information given to audiences in theatre programmes regarding the nature of the text differs between German and British theatres. In German programmes very little information is provided, and sometimes even the translator's name is omitted. Little mention is made of the translator in theatre programmes in Germany, and if the translator is mentioned at all, then it is usually only the name that is given⁶⁰ and rarely any further details about the nature of the translation. Elisabeth Plessen lamented the fact that her name is often omitted from theatre programmes and press reviews of productions that have used her translations:

German critics write pages and pages in which they describe the play, but they always take an interest in the work of the director and completely forget about who provided the language bridge from English into German, which for me is the most interesting part. It

carried on. The dramatist is continuously spinning threads which run through the whole play and which he himself delivers into our hand in order that, by their aid, we may understand what follows, and accompany it with greater tension and keener participation. It is one of the artistic achievements of the greatest dramatist to prepare in the mind of the audience a whole net of expectations, intuitions and conjectures so that each new act, each new scene, is approached with a definite predisposition. This unobtrusive preparation of our mind for what is to come is one of the most important preliminary conditions necessary for a powerful dramatic effect. For the climax of the drama does not come suddenly; we ourselves have gone the whole way and have followed the separate threads, which led up to the climax.' See Wolfgang Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 6-7.

⁶⁰ This was the case with the two most prominent *Hamlet* productions of 2000: Martin Kusej's production for the Salzburger Festspiele (26 July, 2000), in the translation of Heiner Müller, and Peter Zadek's production for the Wiener Festwochen (21 May, 1999) in the translation of Elisabeth Plessen.

is just a pity that most reviewers of plays in translation forget that what they are hearing is precisely that: a play in translation, not the play itself.⁶¹

This contrasts with British theatres where it seems to be increasingly important for audiences to be informed about the text underlying a particular production. Programme notes are devoting more space to a description of the existence of Quarto and Folio texts and to a justification of the director's use of these texts. It is still unclear whether this new emphasis comes in response to a feeling that audiences are more aware of different versions of the plays and thus expect an explanation of the performance text, or whether theatres are consciously seeking to raise audiences' awareness by including more detailed notes about the text. The programme notes for two recent productions, Barry Kyle's *King Lear*, which is part of Shakespeare's Globe's 'Celtic Season 2001', and Steven Pimlott's *Hamlet*, at the RST's 2001 summer season in Stratford, both explained the constitution of the performance texts.

In the programme notes to the Globe's *King Lear* Kyle explained that he had used Stanley Wells' Oxford Edition of the Quarto, because 'this is probably closest to the one first used at the Globe'. But he also explained that in rehearsals lines from the Folio were inserted into the Quarto text. In Kyle's view the Folio reflects the changes Shakespeare made to the text based on his experiences of how the play was functioning at the Globe. Kyle stressed, however, that the Quarto underlies his production: 'The Quarto text is closest to how *King Lear* would have sounded at its first performance and remains the

⁶¹ Appendix (p. 322).

firm basis for the company's work'.⁶² In the programme to Pimlott's *Hamlet* Simon Reade went into even more detail about the nature and possible origins of the texts underlying the Quartos and the Folio versions of the play. Reade stressed that the texts are material from which the director has to construct his own 'script'. In the programme notes Reade explains Pimlott's eclectic approach to the construction of the performance text:

In rehearsals we were able to cross-refer to all three versions by using Bertram and Kliman's parallel edition *The Three-Text 'Hamlet'*. So there are nips and tucks, darting back and forth between Folio and Second Quarto, with the occasional good idea filched from the First Quarto in our pretty full version of a play which has no one definitive text, after all.⁶³

This cosmetic 'nip and tuck' approach is no different from previous productions of the play, but Kyle's and Pimlott's construction of their scripts from a range of texts is foregrounded by a growing sense that the plays do not have a transcendent text. It seems to form an important part of our experience of *Hamlet* that we understand the unsettled nature of the play and its ability to take on a variety of shapes. I feel that German theatres are behind British theatres in this relatively recent trend in informing the audience. I believe the reason for this can be found in the reference to the editions of Wells and Kliman. The British directors have been influenced by new English editions of the Shakespearean texts, which emphasise textual plurality and the lack of a unitary and definitive text for the plays. The three texts of *Hamlet* have been recognised as discrete entities, or forms of adaptation in the life of the literary work.

⁶² Barry Kyle, 'Master Piece', *Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. The Celtic Season 2001*, 13 May, 2001 (p. 11).

⁶³ Simon Reade, 'Hamlet – the script', in RST Programme to *Hamlet*, 31 March, 2001 (p. 19).

Editors such as Wells and Taylor, and the Cambridge First Quarto editors, are shaping the textual constitution of the plays in production. What also seems to be the case is that directors are becoming aware that audiences are more likely to question the existence of a definitive text. This perhaps encourages the director to acknowledge that his version of the play bears his signature and is a personal selection of textual material from several versions of the play, rather than the authoritative form. Because translations of Shakespeare, especially of *Hamlet*, have all been based on the conflated Arden Edition over the last twenty years, directors in Germany are still looking for the definitive textual state, and audiences are less aware of multiple versions. In Chapter 2 of my thesis I argued that German editions of *Shakespeare* in translation are behind recent developments in Anglo-American Shakespeare Studies, because of the source text (the Arden Shakespeare) that translators have been using. I believe that this is also affecting the form of the plays in German theatres.

Philip Edwards has expressed the view that all theatre-goers should be made aware of the processes that have gone into constructing a version of the text for the stage. He writes:

Everyone who wants to understand *Hamlet*, as reader, as actor, or director, needs to understand the nature of the play's textual problems, and needs to have his or her own view of them, however tentative. Ideally, every theatre-goer should be aware of the issues, so that he or she can appreciate whose *Hamlet* is being presented.⁶⁴

Detailing the nature of the translation of the play in a theatre programme is a peculiar gesture that interposes the translator more obtrusively into the theatrical event, adjusting the relationship between the play and the audience. An audience member, who has no

idea which translation he or she is going to hear, will be far less predisposed to question the authority of that translation, especially if it is a new version. I feel that the risk of forcing audiences to question a translation's authority is part of the reason why the translator's presence is usually suppressed in German theatre programmes.

It would seem that German audiences have very little interest in the nature of the translation they encounter at a Shakespeare production. This situation may be fostered by the reluctance of theatres to provide audiences with details about translations. I would not encourage audiences to become too involved with issues of translation during a performance, because the text is part of a semiotic system in the theatre, by which words alone do not convey meaning.⁶⁵ However, translations vary so much that they do affect the audiences differently. Hamlet may be understood as a cold, calculating and rather apocalyptic figure in the terse translation of Heiner Müller, or a poet and philosopher of the late eighteenth century in Schlegel's romanticised translation. What is certain is that audiences would be more aware of different directorial concepts if they knew more about the nature of the translation and the identity of the translator.

⁶⁴ Edwards, *Hamlet* (p. 8).

⁶⁵ Of particular relevance here is Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 126-30; See also Maria Corti, *An Introduction to Literary Semiotics* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 145; A. Ludskanov, 'A Semiotic Approach to the Theory of Translation,' *Language Sciences*, 35 (1975), 5-8.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have examined how German audiences and readers have developed an understanding of Shakespeare's work, based on the forms of the plays presented to them. I suggested that readers and audiences are unable to see behind the use of translations in cinemas, theatres, and in print, and I argued that directors and publishers take advantage of this. It is my observation that there is often no textual correspondence between the source text used in a film and the translation used for its synchronisation, or between these translations and the ones found in an edition of the play that claims to offer a printed version accompanying the film. Publishers like Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag are more interested in selling books than informing readers about important distinctions between texts, editions and translations. Other publishers like Ars Vivendi are also attracted more by the cultural materialism of book-buying than any genuine interest in Shakespeare, the constitution of his texts, or the quality and accuracy of translations.

In theatres there is a similar lack of knowledge about translations and translators, which accounts for why a theatre projects a different text in the surtitles from the one used on the stage, or why a theatre is unaware that *The Maid of Orleans* is the same play as *Joan of Arc*. There are spectators who feel that once a play has been translated, it does not need to be re-translated. It is difficult to know how much information to include in theatre programmes, given that the general opinion amongst translators is that audiences have no interest in translations anyway. There is a striking paradox, however, in the way some translators have demanded that audiences be more informed about translations, and

yet at the same time have obfuscated the true nature of translations and the identity of the translator. Peter Zadek might urge more awareness of different translations, but this would also reveal that he and Elisabeth Plessen had misrepresented their translations as one text, because Rowohlt published the 1977 translation of Zadek's but not Plessen's of 1999.

The Shakespeare Industry rewrites notions of textual instability, authorial indecision, editorial involvement, 'translatorial' diversity and human error, in order to create a marketable commodity that sells well internationally and reinforces the value of Britain's intellectual heritage. Shakespeare has also become a global cultural product, which accounts for why Germany is reluctant to de-stabilise the established notion of the unitary text. There is a paradox in the marketing of Shakespeare as a cultural status symbol. The misuse of texts and translations considered in this chapter creates an impression of *Hamlet* as an ideal work of art rather than as a product of human effort and limitation. However, it is also through this manipulation of a collection of imperfectly preserved texts that Shakespeare manages to impress and fascinate us four hundred years after the works were first released to the world.

CONCLUSION

I have reached the conclusion that translation, and more specifically translatability, is conditioned by the ways in which we rewrite and construct literary works, and the way we have constructed *Hamlet* provides a marked example of this. I believe that many of the problems of translation can be traced back to the way in which we conceive of works and texts.

Roland Barthes has written that the 'work' is the material object standing on the bookshelf and a 'text' is a realisation of the work, the process by which the work leaves abstraction and enters the realm of discourse:

The difference is as follows: the work is concrete, occupying a portion of book-space (in a library, for example); the Text, on the other hand, is a methodological field [...] the work can be seen in bookstores, in card catalogues, and on course lists, while the text reveals itself, articulates itself according to or against certain rules. While the work is held in the hand, the text is held in language: it exists only as discourse. The Text is not the decomposition of the work; rather it is the work that is the Text's imaginary tail. In other words, the Text is experienced only in an activity, a production.¹

A work is a field of potential meaning, some of which is materialised in a text. A text 'reveals' part of the work and must always be a reduction of that work, limited and subjective. The work, according to Barthes, is 'restored' to language from where it came, but the text 'practises the infinite deferral of the signified'. There is no closure, because a text is incomplete; it is an interpretation of the work. What this means is

that no one text is any closer to the work than any other. There is also no sense in which texts reveal a *progression* towards the work from which they came, because text and work are separate ontological categories:

The engendering of the perpetual signifier within the field of the text should not be identified with an organic process of maturation or a hermeneutic process of deepening, but rather with a serial movement of dislocations, overlappings, and variations.²

It is my argument that a translation has the same ontological status as Barthes' Text. The 'serial movement of dislocations, overlappings, and variations' describes the succession of translations of a literary work through time; it constitutes the 'imaginary tail' of a work, not the work itself. This means that translations cannot be combined to give us the whole work in the target language, nor should we try to visualise a process of evolution, by which translations successively come closer to the original work. A work can never be translated into a text, according to Roland Barthes and Frank Kermode,³ and this means that we can never translate a work into a translated text.

It is unlikely that Shakespeare ever thought of his plays as 'works' in the same way that Ben Jonson did of his own dramatic creations. Shakespeare positioned his plays

¹ 'From Work to Text' (1971), reprinted in *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josué V. Harari (London: Methuen, 1980), pp. 73-81, here pp. 74f.

² From Work to Text (p. 70); Roland Barthes had formulated his theories of the Text in the 1960s. See 'Théorie du texte', *Encyclopedia Universalis*, 15 (Paris, 1973). 1014. Barthes' contribution to the development of a theory of textuality is discussed by Louis Hay in 'Does "Text" Exist?', *Studies in Bibliography*, 4 (1988), 65-75.

³ Frank Kermode has argued that there is an 'ontological discrepancy' between a work and its text(s). A work will always contain more than can be said in one of its textual embodiments. This is the reason why we are able to say so much about a text: 'Commentaries or interpretations are generated out of an ontological lack in the text itself [...] a text can have no ultimate meaning [...] the process of interpretation is properly an infinite one'. See Frank Kermode, 'What is a Classic?', *The Classic* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 140.

in the historical continuum in which cultural material, namely legends, stories and histories, is continually regenerated. Translation, for Shakespeare, was a means of regenerating cultural material, although today we would call this 'adaptation'. because we have developed very precise notions about literary works and about an author's proprietary rights. Today 'translating' is a process of reproducing intellectual property without impinging on the author's rights. Translation has become a problem because of the way we have written Shakespeare's works and because of the artistic parameters in which we enclose the author's work. Barthes and Foucault deconstructed the work and spoke of phenomena such as the 'death of the author', and currently textual critics and bibliographers are exploding the myth of the unitary Shakespearean text. If translators were to take these theories seriously, they would have to rethink the nature of translation and renegotiate the boundaries of translatability.

In the first part of my thesis I looked at what happens when translators do identify a work with its text. Translators such as Wolfgang Swaczynna, Reinhard Palm, Elisabeth Plessen and Frank Günther have worked from the assumption that, somewhere amidst the textual material that has survived, there must be a transcendent text that can be called *Hamlet* and can be translated. For them, translation was about re-iterating what the author must have originally said, and only by reaching back to what Shakespeare is thought to have written, recapturing the lost 'echt', and recreating the theatrical archetype, could it be said that *Hamlet* had been translated. I believe that *Hamlet* is full of problems of a textual nature, and these become apparent to translators. However, the problems that translators in the first part of my thesis

encountered resulted because of the ways in which they had understood and constructed *Hamlet* as a literary work.

There is really no difference, I would argue, between the continuous shaping of the play by editors in English and the rewriting of the text in translation. Both are attempts to repair and construct a literary work, which has no essence that can be framed in a text. When we begin to move away from traditional notions of the work as a transcendent text to be recreated in the target language, the nature of translation itself begins to change. Things become possible to ‘translate’, because we are not attempting to make of the textual material something it is not.

Translation is now seen as a ‘faithful’ act and adaptation is seen as something ‘free’, and this has been conditioned by how closely the target text reflects our construction of the literary work in the source language. The image that translation theorists such as André Lefevere often use is the ‘sliding scale’, on which translations and adaptations are positioned in their relation to the original work. My own research has shown that the original work is of our own making and that this determines the scale against which target texts are measured. It is comforting to think that *Hamlet* exists as a work, and that it can be re-iterated in any language, but the limits of translatability are set by the ways in which we frame the literary work.

Untranslatability ceased to be a problem for Heiner Müller as soon as he moved away from the translation he had written in 1976, and conceived of *Hamlet* as a machine to which parts could be continually added or from which they could be taken away. The type of rounded dramatic form, into which Shakespeare’s material had been written

by subsequent generations, ceased to have any relevance or function for Müller. Translation became inadequate. This is not to say that Müller simply turned from translating Shakespeare to adapting him. This reveals too much our own understanding of translation and adaptation. I think Müller had re-imagined what it meant to 'translate' and I believe that rewriting literature and adding one's own contribution was, for Müller, a form of 'faithful' translation.

In a roundtable debate with Jacques Derrida, Eugene Vance suggested that the concept of translation needed to be re-thought. Just as today the word *hermeneutic* has to do with interpretation, though in Greek it implied not the return to the kernel of hidden meaning within a shell, but an act of *production*, so the concept of translation has become impoverished. *Interpretatio* replaced hermeneutics and reduced the meaning of the concept, and *translatio* was superseded by the more limited 'translation'. Humanism lost the notion that translation and hermeneutics involved the continuous *production* of meaning. Derrida agreed with Vance that a re-definition of the word 'translation' was necessary.⁴ Heiner Müller, by a process of *translatio*, recreated *Hamlet* in his remake, the *Hamletmaschine*. This was a political act that recognised the need to rewrite Shakespeare's tragedy in order to body forth more effectively an artistic creation that exceeded its textual parameters or the demands of the modern concept of translation.

The difficulty of articulating a response to *Hamlet* is connected to the lack of a unitary text, but the complexity of the work's meaning is certainly not limited to its

⁴ *The Ear of the Other. Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, ed. Christie McDonald (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), pp. 125 ff.

lack of clear textual margins. It may be possible to understand the untranslatability of *Hamlet* as one of the strengths of the work, indeed part of its operability. It has been appropriated more than any other foreign text in Germany and it has been through more revolutions of interpretation in the last two hundred years. In just the hundred years that define my present study, *Hamlet* has been used by the Nazis to promote Aryan ideals, and by anti-fascists to re-integrate Neo-Nazis into society. It is difficult to find any work that has been used to satisfy such diametrically opposed demands. The case studies in Part 2 of my thesis not only illustrate the variety of directions in which *Hamlet* has been taken, but they also support the idea that *Hamlet* was designed to resist a definitive interpretation and translation.

My examination of the rewrites of *Hamlet* in Germany over the last hundred years has convinced me that translation, as a form of re-iteration, is a highly conservative activity. By contrast, adaptation is something deeply subversive, and there is something aesthetically subversive about *Hamlet*. This play originally broke through traditional forms of representation and now seems to call for a more open treatment than the iterative process of translation. As we have seen, the politics of translation and adaptation are dependent on what one understands to be a translation, or an adaptation, and on how the source text is defined. In this thesis I have sought to renegotiate the political space that translation occupies and to redefine the boundaries of translatability.

Jacques Derrida conceived of a literary work as having an afterlife or what he called a work's 'living on'. He did not believe that a work could be kept in a state of

suspended animation, but that it had to be transformed in order for the original to remain alive:

A text lives only if it lives on, and it lives on only if it is at once translatable and untranslatable [...] Totally translatable, it disappears as a text, as writing, as a body of language. Totally untranslatable, even within what is believed to be one language, it dies immediately. Thus triumphant translation is neither the life nor the death of the text, only or already its living on, its life after life, its life after death.⁵

Hamlet has not 'lived on' because generations of translators have been able to reach back to Shakespeare's work and recapture the lost 'echt', but because the work has demanded to be continually rewritten. This is the work's mobility and it is contrary to the demobilising function of translation, as we have come to understand it. Translation needs to be reconsidered, so that it allows *Hamlet* the mobility that is obviously part of the play's meaning and purpose.

Talking about original works as if they existed in abstraction from time and space, and talking about translations as if they existed on a sliding scale in relation to those supposed originals, gets us nowhere. It is more relevant to talk of the translator's involvement with the text, his or her negotiation of its terms, the uses to which the work is put and the responses this provokes. This indicates the value of the forms of a work's afterlife and whether the work can really be said to be surviving or not. The real value of a rewrite is not its fidelity to the original, but the way it transforms the original, the way it allows the original to survive and the kind of afterlife the work has in another language and culture. If *Hamlet* was designed to 'live on' and to have a continuing afterlife, then it will live on in perennially changing bodies of meaning.

⁵ Jacques Derrida, 'Living On: Border Lines' (1979), in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).

FURTHER RESEARCH

I feel that insufficient critical attention has been devoted to the distinct functions of translation and adaptation as operative factors in processes of cultural self-determination. In the present study I have examined how *Hamlet* has lent itself to translation and adaptation at different times in social and political history, and I see a connection between a rewrite of *Hamlet* by a society and the way that society views itself. I feel that such a book should be written and my own thesis will serve as an initial study in the link between translation, adaptation, and the construction of national culture. I believe that there are times in a nation's history when re-iterating foreign works is required, and there are times when this is inadequate, and the material needs to be regenerated through adaptation.

In the second part of my thesis I attempted to generate a discussion of the role that translating and adapting have played in the formation of national culture. It was important for A. W. Schlegel to 'translate' Shakespeare as closely as he could, because this was a means of proving that the greatest literature could be expressed with the resources of the German language.

In 1940 a collection of samples of German *Hamlet* translations by Wieland, Schlegel, Bodenstedt and Josten was published.⁶ This anthology was designed for German school children between the ages of 11 and 14 to help them to appreciate the beauty and complexity of the German language and the importance of German as the new

⁶ *Shakespeares Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: Eine Auswahl mit Übersetzungen und sprachvergleichendem Kommentar*, ed. Wilhelm Poethen (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1940).

world-language. By learning to see the beauty of poetry and the power of rhetoric expressible in German, the children would develop a sense of pride in the German language and *Volk*. But K. Stegmann and K. F. Probst explain in the introduction that this anthology of German *Hamlet* translations was intended to engender an awareness of the untranslatability of Shakespeare's language and culture. In turn this would teach German children that their own language and culture, the so-called *völkische Lebensformen*, could not be translated or imitated by any foreign language or culture.

Adaptation was anathema to the Third Reich. Hans Rothe was an infamous Shakespeare adapter and his work was banned by Goebbels in 1936, but translation allowed the re-iteration of tenets of Romanticism that could be used to bolster Nazi ideology. In schools, translations of Shakespeare were politically safe and could be used to foreground notions of the untranslatability of culture and hence the purity of race.

It was equally important for East Germany in the early years of the formation of the GDR, when still known merely as the Soviet Occupied Zone, to *translate* rather than adapt Shakespeare. Translation was a means of self-determination in which Shakespeare operated as a site of authority in the process of cultural and political self-profiling. It is no co-incidence that politicians in the GDR began to look more critically at the East German Socialist system from 1971 when Honecker replaced Ulbricht and Heiner Müller began to write his Shakespeare adaptations.

As I have argued, adaptation becomes important when translation is felt to be inadequate. In the 1970s Heiner Müller believed that the GDR was failing to develop

its own independent cultural and linguistic identity as long as it was re-iterating (that is ‘translating’) works that had previously been written. His translations of *As You Like It* and *Hamlet* clarified for Müller the need to write new works, and if old works were to be used, then they should be adapted. *Hamletmaschine* is not just an off-shoot of *Hamlet*, it is a symbolic gesture that illuminates the function that translation and adaptation serve in the continuous processing of cultural material. In a sense *Hamletmaschine* is not an adaptation, because it does not build on and develop an older work, but it symbolises the collapse of the ‘work’. It symbolises the collapse of translation. I feel that more research needs to be done on the very different functions of translation and adaptation and the times when translating and adapting cultural material has contributed to the formation of national identities.

It is, of course, appealing to believe that, somewhere under all of the materials we have gathered, Hamlet lies waiting to be disinterred. Translators have imagined that they are in a position to find the Prince in the Play, because they have enjoyed the freedom to alter the text and its language. But we are moving ever closer to accepting *Hamlet* as a site of enactments, a global set of textual manifestations, rather than a transcendent textual form. If we accept that there is no unitary work, only a disparate collection of textual materials, a methodological field that serves as a site for the continuous regeneration of pre-existing cultural material, then untranslatability ceases to be a problem. If we re-think what *Hamlet* is, then I think translatability ceases to be an issue.

Appendix A: Biographical Background to Twentieth-Century *Hamlet* Translators

Friedrich Gundolf (*Hamlet*: 1908-18)

Friedrich Gundolf was concerned with demonstrating how the German 'Geist' had developed through contact with Shakespeare in Schlegel's translations. He thus worked on revising and improving Schlegel's translations, which he published between 1908 and 1918, and which contributed to the canonisation of the Schlegel-Tieck translations at the start of the twentieth century.¹ In the preface to volume 1 of his *Shakespeare in deutscher Sprache* Gundolf stated the belief that, except for *Romeo and Juliet*, Schlegel's translations could not be surpassed. Gundolf's *Hamlet* translation that appears in the ninth volume of the collection is essentially Schlegel's translation, but modified slightly and updated. The value of Gundolf's translation of *Hamlet* lies in the inclusion of many of the puns, which Schlegel had deleted and which Gundolf recognised as a vital component of the Shakespearean text, and thus re-translated.

Gustav Wolff (*Hamlet*: 1914)

Gustav Wolff was a professor of psychiatry at the University of Basel. His primary area of specialisation was in the field of vitalism and in 1902 he published *Mechanismus und Vitalismus* (Leipzig: G. Thieme, 1902). In 1914 Wolff published his translation of *Hamlet* (the only play he translated), which accompanied a lecture given at the university and entitled 'The Case of Hamlet'. Wolff's translation and accompanying lectures aimed at counteracting the popularisation of Freud's new theories about the psyche in the years preceding the First World War.² Wolff had already delivered a paper at the university entitled 'Psychiatrie und Dichtkunst' (1903), and his lecture in 1914 was a response to the recent publication of Ernest Jones' *The Problem with Hamlet and the Oedipus Complex*. Wolff rejected current theories that explained Hamlet's character in terms of the new Freudian concepts of the subconscious and repression. In spite of Wolff's academic standpoint, his translation is marked by terminology common in the field of psychopathology at the time.

¹ Friedrich Gundolf, *Shakespeare in deutscher Sprache* (Berlin: Bondi, 1920); *Shakespeare und der deutsche Geist* (Berlin: Bondi, 1914).

² Gustav Wolff's *Hamlet* translation was published together with his 1914 lecture on *Hamlet* and psychiatry (Munich: Ernst Reinhardt, 1914).

Walter Josten (*Hamlet*: 1937)

Walter Josten's new translation of *Hamlet* was written for Albert Fischer's production at the Stadttheater in Bonn in 1932.³ Josten modernised the language and style of Schlegel's translation. He used more masculine-end lines where Schlegel's text uses mostly feminine endings, which were favoured by Romantic German poets for their gentler sound. Josten inserted more punctuation marks into Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy, because it was supposed to be a spoken text, not as the lyrical poem of Schlegel's Romantic translation. Also, where Schlegel had smoothed out some of the metrical irregularities, Josten preserved them. It remains to be discovered precisely why Josten was able to become so popular with his translations around the same time that Hans Rothe's Shakespeare translations and adaptations were banned by Goebbels' Ministry for Propaganda, since both translators challenged the inherited form of the Schlegel-Tieck translations and had similar ideas about modernising the Schlegel translations.

Theodor von Zeynek (*Hamlet*: 1952)

Theodor von Zeynek was former *Generalstabschef* in Austria during the First World War. He privately translated the whole Shakespearean canon into German between the two World Wars, but prevented any theatre from using his translations, because he feared that the consistency of his work would be impaired if he had to begin justifying his translations and turning them into workable texts for the stage. His translations were published by the Stifterbibliothek in Salzburg and they represent a middle path between Schlegel-Tieck and the modern translations and follow the iambic pentameter of the English texts. For the first time in 110 years *Cymbeline* was heard in German in a production in Vienna in 1936 using Zeynek's translation.⁴

Richard Flatter (*Hamlet*: 1954)

After the Second World War Richard Flatter, a lawyer from Vienna, and later a member of the German Shakespeare Society, placed new emphasis on the Shakespearean text as a play script written for the stage, and translated *Hamlet* with close attention to the Folio and the use of stage directions.⁵ Flatter began translating

³ *Hamlet*, trans. Walter Josten (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1932). The translation was analysed in Walter Josten's article, 'Schwierigkeit der Shakespeare-Übersetzung', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 92 (1956), 168-74.

⁴ Reviews of Zeynek's translations and of the productions using those translations can be found in Karl Brinkmann's annual report in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 99 (1963), 232-247.

⁵ Richard Flatter, *Shakespeare's Producing Hand. A Study of his Marks of Expression to be found in the First Folio* (London, 1948); *Das Schauspielerische in der Diktion Shakespeares* (Vienna, Bad Bocklet, Zürich, 1954); 'Zum Problem der Shakespeare-Übersetzung', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 4 (1956), 472-83; *Triumph der Gnade. Shakespeare Essays* (Vienna, Munich, Basel: Kurt Desch Verlag, 1956), pp. 47-53, 70-83:

Shakespeare's work in 1930 and completed his six-volume collection of translations in 1955. Flatter objected to the way Schlegel had smoothed out Shakespeare's uneven verse and had deleted much of the punctuation of the texts, because he saw the punctuation as a set of dramatic instructions for the actors and director. Flatter updated all words that had become old fashioned or obsolete, and he simplified many of the syntactical and metaphorical complexities of Shakespeare's lines, including those which may have been legitimate and intended by the dramatist. Flatter's aim to create a more performable text thus suffered from stylistic reduction and simplification. He did, however, accurately mirror Shakespeare's handling of rhythm, metre and rhyme. In attempting to de-poeticise the texts, Flatter often rendered the language harsher and more mono-dimensional than the original. Because Flatter focused on the theatrical rather than the poetic values of the Shakespearean text, his translations can sound flat and formulaic and they have almost completely disappeared from theatres since the late 1970s.

Hans Rothe (*Hamlet*: 1955)

Rothe had been translating Shakespeare's plays since the 1920s and his versions were first published under the title *Shakespeare in neuer Übersetzung* in Leipzig between 1921 and 1936. These new versions had provided audiences with a modern German version at a time when the lyrical nineteenth-century translations of Schlegel-Tieck had been canonised as the German Shakespeare. The 'poetic' quality of the Romantic versions was thus superseded by Rothe's modern prosaic language typical of the coffee-houses of Berlin's Kurfürstendamm in the 1920s. The scenes were also rearranged and adapted to create more effective and realistic theatre than the more readable poetry of the Schlegel-Tieck translations. During the period of National Socialism in Germany these popular modern adaptations of Shakespeare's plays were felt to undermine the classical heritage of the Schlegel-Tieck translations and were officially banned by Goebbels' Ministry for Propaganda in 1936.⁶ Josef Goebbels, as leader of the *Reichskulturkammer*, believed that the translations of Hans Rothe were too subversive and undermined the ethos of National Socialism, which had anchored itself in the Romantic notions of the German *Geist*, and which informed Schlegel's translations of Shakespeare. In the same year that Goebbels declared the Schlegel-Tieck translation the standard German Shakespeare (1936), he also banned Rothe's translations from being printed and performed.

The official position of the German Shakespeare Society had been to approve Rothe's work until the translations were banned in 1936, after which the Society retracted its praise for Rothe's work. In Leipzig in 1933 Rothe published his translation of *A*

Hamlet's Father (London: Heinemann, 1949), pp. 185-91; *Shakespeare, Werke neu übersetzt*. (Vienna, Leipzig, Zürich, 1938); *Shakespeare, neu übersetzt* (Vienna, Bad Bocklet, Zürich: Krieg, 1952-55: *Hamlet* printed in vol 3, 1954); *Richard Flatter. Seine Bedeutung als Shakespeare-Übersetzer* (Bad Bocklet, Vienna, Zürich: Krieg, 1952).

⁶ Hans Rothe, *Kampf um Shakespeare* (Baden-Baden: Holle Verlag, 1956); *Shakespeare als Provokation* (Munich: Langen and Müller Verlag, 1961); *Gründe, die gegen eine Neuübersetzung Shakespeares sprechen* (Leipzig, 1927).

Comedy of Errors and in the German Shakespeare Society's *Jahrbuch* of that year Rothe's version was praised as a masterpiece of Shakespearean adaptation. Rothe made many cuts and introduced new characters and scenes and turned the play into a modern farce. Not long after, when the National Socialist Party was making its presence felt in every area of life, certain members of the Society are reported to have condemned Rothe in the popular press on account of his lack of support for the NS-Party. This was brought to the attention of the Ministry for Propaganda in 1936, which contacted the Shakespeare Society to question the value of Rothe's work. The Society replied to the Ministry's question by publishing a condemnation of Rothe on the first page of the 1936 Yearbook. Rothe felt that it was his popularity that caused the Shakespeare Society to 'close him down' prematurely. Rothe was very bitter at this reversal of opinion and in his autobiography he talks at length about this incident. He criticises the Society for betraying him, and the Nazi party for issuing the ban, which resulted in his being 'blown away from the stage' (1961: 432).

Hans Rothe published his radically altered translation of *Hamlet* in 1955, when there was no longer any political pressure, but at a time when he had lost the backing of the German Shakespeare Society. He based his translation on the First Quarto, rearranging the central soliloquy and deleting the first scene of the play.⁷ Rothe deleted the first scene when Horatio and the guards see the Ghost, because he wanted the audience to see the Ghost for the first time when Hamlet does, and this increased the audience's excitement and suspense. Rothe's use of the First Quarto developed certain ideas that he felt had been obscured by the Folio, thus he added to the beginning of Claudius' prayer a translation of the lines from Q1: 'O daß der Schweiß, der mein Gesicht beströmt, mir das Verbrechen wüsche aus dem Hirn!' Rothe's rearrangement of the episodes transformed the play from the heavy intellectual work that it had become in Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, to an exciting, fast-moving, political thriller. The translation is still occasionally used, such as in Friederike Vielstich's production in Augsburg in 1996 and in Alejandro Quintana's Rostock production in 1998.

Rudolf Schaller (*Hamlet*: 1962)

Rudolf Schaller created his translations in the 1960s in the German Democratic Republic.⁸ These new translations had the official support of the SED's Ministry for Culture. In 1970 Rudolf Schaller was described in *Theater der Zeit* (7/70) as the 'father' of modern German Shakespeare translations. Schaller's translations were published in Weimar in 1960 with the support of the German Academy of Arts in

⁷ 'Hans Rothe zu seinen Übersetzungen', *Shakespeare und seine Übersetzer*, ed. G. Müller-Schwefe (Cologne, 1966); Rudolf Frank, 'Geflügelte und beschwingte Worte. Zu den Übersetzungen von Hans Rothe', *Der deutsche Shakespeare* (Basel, 1965), pp. 109-19.

⁸ Schaller's translations were reviewed by Eva Walch. See 'Buchbesprechung: Shakespeares Werke übersetzt und herausgegeben von Rudolf Schaller', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 12 (1964), 323-328; See also Rudolf Schaller, 'Gedanken zur Übertragung Shakespeares in unsere Sprache', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 92 (1956), 157-167; 'Professor Rudolf Schaller über seine Arbeit', *Shakespeare und seine Übersetzer*, ed. Gerhard Müller-Schwefe (Cologne, 1966).

Berlin. Schaller was greatly indebted to the Schlegel-Tieck translations, using many of the solutions for his translation of Shakespeare's puns. Schaller lacked the imaginative power of Flatter, however. Whereas Schaller found himself explaining Hamlet's pun on 'kin' and 'kind' (1.2.65) with the illogical and banal: 'Mehrfach verwandt – und weniger als Freund', Flatter aimed for the equivalence of rhythm, stress and assonance: 'zu viel verwandt, zu wenig zugewandt'. Schaller's translations were used in theatres of both East and West Germany in the 1960s, but are no longer used today.

Maik Hamburger/Adolf Dresen (*Hamlet*: 1964)

East German translator Maik Hamburger believes that the secret to identifying the internal dynamic of Shakespeare's language and thus accessing the meaning of the plays lies in replicating the *Gestus* of the language. Like many translators of the 1960s and 70s he placed new emphasis on the 'speakable' quality of the lines in his translation. In 1964 Hamburger worked in conjunction with Adolf Dresen on a translation of *Hamlet* for a production in Greifswald. But the new translation of *Hamlet* was prohibited because its lower levels of vernacular were thought to subvert the sublimity of what was then taken to constitute Shakespeare's classical style.⁹ The 1964 production in Greifswald was considered especially subversive in the emphasis that was placed on lines such as 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark' and 'all Denmark's a prison', which were seen as an attack on the State. The new translation was rich in Brechtian *Gestus*, both in the Gravedigger Scene and in Hamlet's scene with Osric, but in spite of the lively, colloquial, and eminently performable language of this new translation, no publisher was allowed to print the text and this stymied its success in the theatres. In Greifswald it was taken off the stage after just five evenings. The translation was resurrected in 1973 by Anselm Schloesser, a member of the German Shakespeare Society, and continues to be used in theatres. Hamburger's translations are still popular in German theatres. His translation of *Hamlet* was used in Pit Holzwarth's production in Bremen in 1998 and in Peter Hathazy's production at the Staatstheater in Braunschweig in 2000.

⁹ Maik Hamburger, 'From Goethe to "Gestus": Shakespeare into German', in J. L. Guntner and M. McLean (eds), *Redefining Shakespeare* (Newark, 1998), pp. 73-83; 'Übersetzen fürs Theater', *Theater der Zeit*, 29 (1974), 30-31; 'Volksprache, Theatersprache, Übersetzung. Bemühungen um den originalen Shakespeare', *Theater der Zeit*, 37 (1982), 9-10; Christoph Müller, 'Man braucht zu verschiedenen Zeiten verschiedene Übersetzungen: Gespräch mit Maik Hamburger, Heiner Müller und B. K. Tragelehn', in Theo Girshausen (ed.), *B. K. Tragelehn. Theater Arbeiten* (Berlin, 1988), pp. 221-27; Eva Walch, 'Shakespeare in heutiger Übersetzung. Ein Gespräch mit Maik Hamburger, Heiner Müller und Klaus Tragelehn', *Theater der Zeit*, 7 (1970), 7-11.

Erich Fried (*Hamlet*: 1968)

Erich Fried, a Jewish poet born in Vienna, fled to London at the age of 17 to escape Nazi persecution, and spent most of his life working as a journalist. He translated twenty-six of Shakespeare's plays, all of which have been published in the Berlin paperback editions of Wagenbach Verlag. The last play he translated was *King Lear*, shortly before his death in 1989. In 1987 Fried won the Büchner Prize for his outstanding translations. In an article in *Theater heute* (4/63) he claimed that he never wanted to be lumbered with the title 'translator', which carried too much stigma for someone endeavouring to make his name as a writer. It was for Peter Zadek's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1963 in Bremen that Fried began his career as a Shakespeare translator. Erich Fried was a 'poetic' translator who sought to recreate Shakespeare's poetry in German by a process of 'Nachdichtung' (*imitatio*). Fried aimed to recreate in German the rhythm of the original, as in his version of Hamlet's famous line: 'Sein oder nicht sein dann, das ist die Frage'. His preference for form sometimes took priority over sense, as in Hamlet's 'Mehr gleiches Blut im Sinn als Sinn im Blut', which captures the chiasmatic effect of 'A little more than kin and less than kind', but is semantically obscure.¹⁰ Fried explained that he saw the essence of a Shakespeare text in the melody of the lines, the rhythm of the speech, and the overall density of the language. He attempted to reproduce in German the cadences of Shakespeare's lines, often at the expense of philological accuracy. He also aimed to create his own wordplay at places in the text where there is none in the original, in order to compensate for the wordplay that had to be omitted because it was untranslatable. Fried discovered Shakespeare through Schlegel, and his translations, whilst aiming for modernity, reflect something of the lyrical overtones of the early nineteenth-century translations. Fried's translations are used less nowadays in German theatres than in the 1960s and 1970s, the most recent production to use Fried's *Hamlet* translation being Ekkehard Dennewitz's version in Marburg in 1996.

Wolfgang Swaczynna (*Hamlet*: 1971)

In East Germany Wolfgang Swaczynna worked on his Shakespeare translations, which he published with notes and advice for actors.¹¹ Swaczynna's translations were intended more as theatre scripts than scholarly editions. Swaczynna had worked as an actor in the 1960s and had often played parts in productions that used Hans Rothe's translations. It was through contact with Rothe's more stage-oriented versions that Swaczynna became familiar with the performability of the First Quartos of Shakespeare's plays. Swaczynna translated Shakespeare throughout the 1970s and

¹⁰ Wolff Rudolf, *Erich Fried. Gespräche und Kritiken* (Bonn, 1986); Erich Fried, 'Übersetzen oder Nachdichten?' in Fritz Nies (ed.), *Ist Literaturübersetzen lehrbar?* (Tübingen, 1986), pp. 29-44; 'Epilegomena zu einigen Shakespeare-Übersetzungen', in *Ruperto-Carola* 16/35 (1964), 197-207; 'Möglichst nah am Original', *Theater heute*, 4 (1963), 30-31; John Elsom, 'Does Shakespeare Translate? With Alexander Ankist, Jean-Michel Déprats, Erich Fried and, in the chair, Carlos Tindemans', in *Is Shakespeare Still Our Contemporary?* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 35-63.

¹¹ Volker Schulz, 'A New German Shakespeare Translator: Wolfgang Swaczynna', *Shakespeare Translation*, 4 (1977), 71-98.

completed most of the canon. He was in favour of using the First Quarto as a starting-point for his translations, since they brought the dramatic values of the plays into sharper focus than in the longer Quarto, which was only intended for publication. Swaczynna's *Hamlet* translation was commissioned for a production in Würzburg in 1971, and was also used at the Salzburger Festspiele with Will Quadflieg in the title role. The translation has proven to be very popular and was used throughout the seventies and eighties and for productions in Regensburg in 1991 and in Esslingen in 1997.

Heiner Müller (*Hamlet*: 1976)

Heiner Müller translated *As You Like It* in 1967 and *Hamlet* in 1976. His versions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1969), *Macbeth* (1971) and *Titus Andronicus* (1984) have been adapted so much by Müller that they amount to new plays. One of the reasons Müller felt an affinity with Shakespeare was that Shakespeare himself was a great borrower and Müller saw in Shakespeare's plays a condensing of ideas from the various sources. Heiner Müller's translations and adaptations are collected in two volumes under the title *Shakespeare Factory* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1985). Müller's greatest success as a translator has proven to be his translation of *Hamlet*, though he had to wait until 1990 before his version of the play was performed at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin. The production was attached to a production of Müller's *Hamletmaschine* and lasted seven-and-a-half hours. In his autobiography Müller explained that his adaptation of the play was written after he had struggled with the translation and had come to the conclusion that *Hamlet* could not be translated. It is not widely known that Müller plagiarised the earlier translation by Hamburger and Dresen. Benno Besson had already signed a contract with Henschelverlag publishers to use Hamburger's translation for his 1977 production at the Volksbühne in Berlin.¹² When it was discovered that the translation was not working on stage, Müller was drafted in to make some changes to the text. Hamburger felt that the changes were not sufficient to warrant Müller's calling this his own translation, and he applied for a temporary injunction banning the use of the translation. Hamburger claims that the case reached court in Leipzig, but after a brief consideration it was dismissed by the presiding judge.

Müller's version of events is rather different. He claims that Hamburger had tried to argue that it was impossible to write a new translation in the four weeks' rehearsal time that Müller had. Müller claims that his lawyer, Gregor Gysi, won the case by arguing that it was indeed possible to write a translation in two months, if you were a genius like Heiner Müller. The translation itself is a modern German version of *Hamlet* with a good deal of the syntax of Hamburger's translation and certain lines from Schlegel. There are some lines in the text that Müller translated very accurately,

¹² Heiner Müller, *Krieg ohne Schlacht: Leben in zwei Diktaturen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1992); 'Shakespeare eine Differenz', in *Heiner Müller Material*, ed. Frank Hörnigk (Göttingen: Steidl, 1989), pp. 105-08; *Heiner Müllers Shakespeare-Rezeption*, ed. Roland Petersohn (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1993); Biographical studies of Müller include Jan-Christoph Hauschild, *Heiner Müller* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 2000) and *Heiner Müller, oder das Prinzip Zweifel* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2001).

and he adapted the German language well to Shakespeare's iambic rhythm. There are also lines that can be recognised instantly as Heiner Müller's. In his last soliloquy Hamlet asks: 'What is a man/ If his chief good and market of his time/ Be but to sleep and feed?' The tradition since Schlegel had been to translate this as 'Was ist der Mensch...?' whereas Heiner Müller rendered it as 'Was ist der Mann...?' which leaves the audience wondering whether Müller had a hidden agenda here. The Müller translation is one of the most authoritative in German theatres and was used in the recent productions by Armin Petras in Kassel, by Martin Kusej in Stuttgart, and by Mark Zurmühle in Göttingen.

Peter Zadek (*Hamlet*: 1977)

In the early 1960s Peter Zadek produced *Measure for Measure*, *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice* in Ulm, and *Cymbeline* in Hannover. He began by using the translations of Schlegel-Tieck, but in 1963 he produced *Dream* in Bremen in which he used the new translation of Erich Fried. In the May issue of *Theater heute* of that year, Zadek explained that modernising Schlegel's translations was producing an unfortunate mishmash of old and new language and was doing violence to Shakespeare's drama. The thoughtful, charming, lyrical scenes in *Dream* had degenerated into a 'sentimentaler Brei' in Schlegel's version, and thus Zadek commissioned Fried to re-translate the play into what he called 'knappe, kühle Sprache'. In 1976 Zadek was producing *Othello*, but this time found Fried's translation failing on the stage in certain parts. He thus created his own version that was composed of 80% Fried, 10% Baudissin, several lines from Eschenburg, and a couple of lines from Hans Rothe. In 1977 he worked with Gottfried Greiffenhagen to produce a new translation of *Hamlet* for his production in Bochum, in which Ulrich Wildgruber played the title role.¹³ Although Zadek is currently using the updated translation of *Hamlet* by Elisabeth Plessen, the 1977 translation is still used in theatres, as in Christopher Marcus's production in Dornach in 1996 and in Mario Andersen's production at the Stadttheater in Osnabrück in 2000.

Frank Günther (*Hamlet*: 1988)

What Frank Günther feels is the essence of Shakespeare is the mass of sociolects, idiolects and dialects that he hears in what he calls Shakespeare's 'Sprachpandämonium', and this can be seen in the many styles of language that Günther draws on in his translations.¹⁴ Wolfram Göbel of the *Deutscher Taschenbuch*

¹³ Volker Canaris, 'Peter Zadek and *Hamlet*', *The Drama Review* 24.1 (1980); Laszlo Kornitzer, 'Probleme der Übersetzung,' in *Peter Zadek: Das wilde Ufer* (Cologne: Verlag Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1990), pp. 250-51; *Theater heute*, 6 (1977), p. 13-16; *Theater heute*, 11 (1977), p. 7-10.

¹⁴ Frank Günther, 'Üb Ersetzen', in *Theater heute*, 9 (1981); 'Theater-Übersetzungen: Shakespeare beispielsweise.' A discussion with translators Frank Günther, Michael

Verlag remarked that their decision to use Frank Günther's translations of Shakespeare was based on the need to find what he called 'our Shakespeare'. The DTV claimed to have 'found' Shakespeare in the translations through Günther's exact replication of the 'Originalton' of Shakespeare's texts, which Göbel spelled out as being comprised of the rhythm, sound, metre and neologisms that are said to mirror the original. Günther has produced a set of translations that are linguistically more faithful than Rothe's versions, and also 'fresher' than Fried's, but Günther's translations often depart so far from the originals that they appear more like new plays or adaptations than translations of Shakespeare. Günther's translation of *Hamlet* is based on Harold Jenkins' 1982 Arden Edition of the play, but at numerous points is almost twice the length of the source text, especially in Hamlet's dialogues with Polonius and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and the dialogue with the gravediggers is heavy and verbose. In spite of this the translation is frequently used in German theatres, such as in Bad Hersfeld (1994), Eisleben (1995), Bonn (1996) and Luzern (1997).

Frank-Patrick Steckel (*Hamlet*: 1995)

Frank Steckel, formerly Intendant at the Schauspielhaus in Bochum, has also had considerable success recently with his productions at the Schauspielhaus in Cologne. In 1995 he wrote a modern translation of *Hamlet* for his new production and rephrased a number of familiar expressions. Hamlet's curse on woman's frailty, familiar from Schlegel as 'Schwachheit, dein Name ist Weib', was converted into a social comment in Steckel's rendering: 'Schwachheit, du trägst künftig den Namen einer Frau.' These changes are not always an improvement as can be seen from the Heideggerian associations attached to Steckel's translation of Hamlet's famous line: 'Dasein oder Nichtsein heißt die Frage.' Steckel's aim was to allow audiences to hear the clichéd lines as if for the first time, so he replaced Schlegel's dated lines with new formulations. This sometimes results in mixed metaphors, as in Hamlet's lines that end the first act: 'Die Zeit ist aus dem Leim. O Fluch zu denken,/daß ich geboren war, sie einzurenken.' In the last three years Steckel has been constructing a trilogy of plays in Cologne, which began with *King John* (1997), followed by *Love's Labour's Lost* (1998) and completed by *Edward III* (1999), all in his own translations. Steckel believes that the three plays share political themes, and that poetic associations link the language of the three dramas. In all of the productions the characters were highly stylised like the figures in a giant game of chess. Steckel's *Hamlet* is rarely used in theatres because of the royalties that would have to be paid. Steckel's current production is *Cymbeline* at the Beuel Halle in Bonn, also using his own translation.

Wachsmann and Wolfgang Swaczynna, in *Nachrichten der Dramaturgischen Gesellschaft*, 2 (1988), 5-27; 'Von Rede, Schreibe und Spreche. Über den formalen Ausdruck dramatischer Texte und die Schwierigkeit der Übersetzung', in *Theaterzeitschrift*, 13 (1985), 106-13; 'Über die Shakespeare-Übersetzerei', in *William Shakespeare im dtv* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995), pp. 8-25. See also the essays 'Aus der Übersetzerwerkstatt' that follow each of Günther's translations in the DTV series; 'Shakespeare übersetzen – Shakespeare inszenieren'. *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 120 (1984), 13-31.

Reinhard Palm (*Hamlet*: 1996)

Swiss translator Reinhard Palm began translating Shakespeare's plays into German in 1989. His first translation was *Twelfth Night*, which was finished in 1993. Palm also translated *Measure for Measure*, commissioned by Volker Schmalöer for his production in 1996, and he went on to translate *The Winter's Tale*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Macbeth*. Palm began translating *Hamlet* in 1989, but only completed it when commissioned by Uwe Erich Laufenberg to create a new translation for his production in Zürich in 1997. The translation was also used by Klaus Weise in Oberhausen in 1998. Palm was acting dramaturg at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich in the 1999/2000 season when Rüdiger Burbach adapted the history plays in a cycle called *Blutspuren* ('Blood Traces'), beginning with *Richard II*.

Elisabeth Plessen (*Hamlet*: 1999)

Countess Elisabeth Charlotte Marguerite Augusta Plessen became famous in 1976 for her novel *Mitteilung an den Adel*, a semi-autobiographical war-time story about the family conflicts between an authoritarian father and his rebellious left-wing daughter. As well as writing novels and short stories, Plessen has written a number of critical essays, especially on the female characters in the works of Alfred Andersch, on modern women poets in Germany, and on the works of the Romantic poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. Elisabeth Plessen is also one of the most well known female translators in Germany today. She has translated works by Webster, Chekhov and Ibsen, and numerous works of Shakespeare's, including *As You Like It* (Schauspielhaus Hamburg, 1986), *Julius Caesar* (Schauspielhaus Hamburg, 1987), *The Merchant of Venice* (Burgtheater Vienna, 1988), *Antony and Cleopatra* (Wiener Festwochen, 1994) and *Richard III* (Münchner Kammerspiele, Wiener Festwochen, 1997).¹⁵ In 1999 she translated *Hamlet* for Peter Zadek's production at the Wiener Festwochen. Her interest in women's poetry, her recurrent theme of the father-daughter relationship, and her class-consciousness as a member of the German 'aristocracy' have had a noticeable influence on her new translation of *Hamlet*.

Plessen's translation of the play offers a mixture of nineteenth-century German and modern idiom, such as Hamlet's 'O schmelze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch,/ Zerging' und löst' in einen Tau sich auf!' from Schlegel's translation, and the modern word 'superschön' in Hamlet's love letter. But the black comedy of the play is particularly well expressed in Plessen's version, as in Hamlet's retort to Claudius' question of where he has hidden Polonius' body: 'Nicht wo er *ist*, sondern wo man ihn *ißt*'. Although Plessen's translations are often criticised for being too modern and prosaic, there are passages, which demonstrate humour, subtlety and lyrical beauty. Elisabeth Plessen's *Hamlet* translation comes at a historically significant junction, coming at the end of the century and four hundred years after *Hamlet* was first composed. It remains to be seen how quickly this version will be superseded by the next generation of translators.

¹⁵ Elisabeth Plessen, 'Die Suche nach dem Anfang oder die Schwierigkeit, Shakespeare zu übersetzen', in the programme to *Richard III* (Münchner Kammerspiele, 1997), pp. 73-78.

Appendix B: Transcripts of Interviews

The following interviews are arranged according to the order in which they were conducted. The interviews with Frank Günther, Elisabeth Plessen, Maik Hamburger and Andrew McKinnon were conducted in English. I conducted the interviews with Ralf Fielder, Michael Wachsmann, Reinhard Palm, Wolfgang Swaczynna, Sebastian Rudolph and Christoph Schlingensiefel in German and then translated them into English.

Frank Günther (Munich: 12 October, 1999)

You are currently translating Love's Labour's Lost into German. How does this compare with Hamlet as a source text?

It's impossible. You just can't translate something like this. At least with *Hamlet* you have real people: characters that all have an inner condition that can be translated in some way. There is always something to fall back on. In *Love's Labour's Lost* you have nothing but talking machines. The play works purely at the level of the language and if you can't translate that, then you can't translate the play. And the more you try to think about 'preyful Princesses', 'soars' and 'sores', 'ships' and 'sheep', you just end up with a windmill in your head and words are repeated over and over and just lose any semblance of meaning. The problem with these word games is that they are never isolated in the text; every character picks up the last pun and spins it out into a new one and introduces another pun, and then another, and the effect is that of a chain of word games that cannot be broken. At the moment, working on the translation of *Love's Labour's Lost*, I am averaging around eight lines a day. It really is a labour of love.

Is it important to you that a modern German Shakespeare translation seek to eliminate the discrepancy between the nineteenth-century German of Schlegel's translations and the language spoken by Germans today?

Of course. Luther was also concerned that the Bible should represent the language of the people. He used a lot of very colloquial language in his translation of the Bible, such as *Rotzlöffel*, a picturesque word that he used to describe his opponents who remained faithful to the Pope, although this is rather offensive and highly colloquial in German. The spoken language was very important to Luther, as he wrote in one of his letters: 'Wenn das Herz voll ist, geht der Mund über' ('When the heart is full, the mouth overflows'). The Bible had a certain traditional sound associated with its language, and Luther also challenged this.

Do you aim to translate the meanings that Shakespeare's texts originally had or the meanings that they have acquired today?

My main object is to get back to the roots of the play, to imagine what the original impact must have been on the audience and to try to imitate that. Of course a lot of the meanings of Shakespeare's words have been lost now to English-speaking audiences, so it is only natural that I should attempt to recapture in German some of the multiple meanings of the text as it was originally received. Holofernes' line in the fourth act of *Love's Labour's Lost* provides a good example of an instance of wordplay that no longer has any relevance or meaning to a modern English speaker: 'Some say a sore, but not a sore till now made sore with shooting'. Though a modern speaker will possibly understand that one of the meanings of *sore* refers to the injury caused by shooting, the other meaning, which is that of a young male deer, has now been lost. Imagine the nightmare of having to translate this. And this wordplay just becomes more tangled in the later play on *sorel*: 'If sore be sore, then 'L' to sore makes fifty sores o' sorel.' But as I said before, you live in a different world now, and so do we, and a German version of Shakespeare cannot be a translation, only a completely new play. Just look at what Goebbels did to Shakespeare when he twisted it to suit the objectives of the Nazi Party. One of the best books I have ever read on Shakespeare, and one that has certainly had the greatest impact on me, is one called *Shakespeare Re-invented*. Shakespeare is re-invented every time he is read or heard, and as a translator you find that the more you read the text, the more you get sucked into it. You find yourself diving into a different world, but actually it is into yourself that you are diving, because the Shakespeare you read is always your own invention.

If you change the words of the translation and invent your own word games, can that still be regarded as Shakespeare, or have you in fact written a new play?

Of course, every translation is a new play. Do you think you have Shakespeare in English? There is no way that Shakespeare could understand those plays in English if he came back today.

Love's Labour's Lost is a comedy in which much of the humour is generated through language. Is this kind of humour translatable across languages and cultures?

One of the most insoluble problems of translating is the difficulty of rendering humour from culture to culture, especially when cultures have a different understanding of what is humorous. Tom Stoppard is proving to be a failure in Kassel at the moment because the comedy is lost. Stoppard once asked me why his plays were not successful in Germany. The English humour is completely alien to us here in Germany. In Shakespeare you have, for example, many moments when comedy and tragedy are so closely interwoven as to be inseparable. The comic and the serious play off each other and that is something we find difficult to relate to: we prefer to keep comedy and tragedy distinctly separate. Just before Romeo purchases the dram of poison from the apothecary with which to take his own life and be reunited with Juliet in death, he remarks: 'Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.' This is at once deeply tragic, but with comical overtones. Romeo realises that he will get to sleep with his beloved tonight, but not in the way he might have hoped. Romeo's tone at

this poignant moment is decidedly flippant, but he is using humour behind which to hide his pain. The tenderness of this line and the inseparable mix of humour in tragedy depend on the double meaning of *lie* and the sigh of resignation in *well*. I translated this tragi-comic note with the expletive *tja* in the line: 'Tja, Julia, ich will heute bei dir schlafen.' This use of *tja* has caused a great deal of protest by audiences who felt that I had introduced a comic element that was not there in the original. But in the original it is very clear that Romeo is using the lightness of language to conceal his deep emotions; he has no option but to surrender to the fate that has already overtaken him. The tone of resignation is captured very well in the flippant *tja* and I am very proud of this solution.

How did audiences react to the bawdy element that you re-introduced into the play?

What surprises me, is that my translation of *Romeo and Juliet* is still shocking people. The recent performances in Augsburg have appalled audiences because of the bawdy elements that are not present in the Schlegel version, but are there in the original. When Mercutio says: 'O that she were an open-arse and thou a poperin pear!', there is an obvious crudeness that is absent in Schlegel's translation, but is reproduced in my version as 'wär sie ein Vögelbeerbaum doch und du ihr Specht und hacktest froh dein Loch!' Schlegel was writing at a time when poets were attempting to elevate German language and culture; he did not want to appal people. The consequence was that *Romeo and Juliet* was understood only as a work of extremely subtle lyricism and Romantic 'Seelensprache' and was thus re-invented for Schlegel's day. But I replaced some of the lost bawdry and this caused protests.

Was the negative reaction to your play in Augsburg simply the reaction of a small number of people who happened to be in the theatre on that evening?

No, they're all like that in Augsburg. It's a very bourgeois community. They're very conservative and still prefer Schlegel's old version. Having said that, my translation is almost twenty-five years old now, so I'm surprised that anyone can still be shocked by it, and it is a wonder that anyone can be scandalised now after the Clinton-Lewinski affair.

Translations of a single play differ so greatly. Maik Hamburger's 1998 translation of Love's Labour's Lost sounds like a completely different play from Graf Baudissin's nineteenth-century version, and your translation will no doubt differ from Maik Hamburger's. Is there a single correct way to translate Shakespeare at any given time?

In a recent student workshop here at the university I had a group of eleven students who all produced new and very different translations of the Duke's opening monologue in *Twelfth Night*. And the discussions that came out of that workshop proved to be very revealing. But, you see, that is one of the most important reasons for translating. You should not translate simply in order to create a parallel text in another language. A discussion should arise out of the attempts to create a translation

and out of this social activity a new and hopefully deeper understanding of the play will arise.

Does this mean that your own translations are a collaboration with actors and directors? Would you adapt your translation to suit the actors?

Certainly not! It is the actors who should adapt themselves to my translation! Actors have no idea about the effectiveness of a translation. The changes they propose have invariably been simplistic and primitive. They are just lazy and want the language to be undemanding. I would only ever be interested in a challenging proposal. After all, the actors have a responsibility to learn the lines, however difficult they may be.

Can you give an example of lines that were intended to pose difficulties for the actors?

When, in the second scene of Act 2 in *Measure for Measure*, Isabella makes a plea to Angelo for her brother, her language must be as complex as possible. There is a great deal of dramatic effect in the convoluted syntax, which is tortured and strained and reflects Isabella's distress. Likewise, Juliet's apprehension that Romeo is dead is expressed in the complex interplay of the sounds *ay*, *I*, and *eye*. These are difficult lines to say for an actress, but I had to reproduce those sounds in the German, because I am sure there is a very deep level of meaning attached to these words that we have yet to uncover, and it is essential that they are there in the translation as well. In *Twelfth Night* Sir Andrew remarks: 'I would I had bestowed that time in the tongues that I have in fencing, dancing, and bear-bating', and Sir Toby, taking the word 'tongues' to mean curling-tongues, puns on the word in his retort: 'Then hadst thou had an excellent head of hair.' The pun on the word 'tongues' is built into a dramatic structure, with one character building on what the previous one has said. At the surface level it is permissible to replace the words of the pun, but the inner action of the dramatic process, the interchange between the characters, cannot be lost; it must be re-structured and re-shaped. If you can re-create this dramatic process, then it does not matter that the words are different, and so I translated Sir Toby's pun on 'tongues' with the German 'locken lassen', which means both to 'tempt' someone, and also to 'curl' a person's hair. Translation is the art of making 5 look like an even number!

How beneficial to your translation work were the years you spent working as a director?

Very beneficial. You know, I was the first translator to use the modern pronouns 'du' and 'Sie' ['tu/vous']. In all previous translations, the word 'Ihr' had been used as a mark of respect, and this was because Schlegel had used it and made it popular. He believed that if Shakespeare had written in German, this is the form he would have used. But actually, the 'Ihr/Euch' pronouns are a literary invention. Sure, they were used by Goethe and Schiller, but never in this way, and Shakespeare certainly would not have used this construction. You know that Schiller used the 'du/Sie' distinction

in *Don Carlos*, so there is no reason not to use it in a translation of Shakespeare. In fact, there is every reason not to use 'Ihr'.

What is the effect of using the antiquated pronouns 'Ihr' and 'Euch'?

Firstly, using this archaic, fictional pronoun sounds very old-fashioned and stilted. but more importantly, when actors use the old 'Ihr' form, they tend to drift off into the theatrical ether and simply deliver their speeches into the air. If the modern 'du/Sie' forms are used, the actors really begin to talk to each other and what you then have is a real dialogue. The language is focused and direct, and the actors can really attack one another with their words. In the theatre, if actors are declaring their lines in monologic form instead of engaging in a real human interchange, we say 'du bist nicht direkt' ['you are not being direct']. The old-fashioned nineteenth-century language of the Schlegel text, and all subsequent translations that use the 'Ihr/Euch' pronouns, are, likewise, not 'direkt'. It is an enormous change in the practice of translating Shakespeare, but it works so well that it is not conspicuous. It does not draw attention to itself, but it functions dramatically with enormous success.

Can you explain the literary influences that shaped your translation of A Midsummer Night's Dream, which seems to embody so many different poetic styles?

John Dover Wilson believed that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was one of Shakespeare's earliest plays because of the many conflicting styles of language of the fairies, the lovers, and the Mechanicals. This conflict of styles was regarded by Dover Wilson as proof of the repeated re-working of the play and Shakespeare's obvious dramatic inexperience, but this is bullshit. The different styles are actually evidence of Shakespeare's artistic maturity. The verse of the lovers, for instance, is very wooden, stiff and mechanical in its use of rhyming couplets. The language needs to sound artificial and contrived because the lovers are representatives of the rigid atmosphere of the court. They are just puppets in the hands of Puck and Oberon. I wanted to reproduce that mechanical feel, so I looked around in German poetry for an equivalent and realised that the poems of Wilhelm Busch are the exact counterpart of the type of verse uttered by the lovers: euphuistic, ironical and full of conceits. Then I thought about the fairies, who speak with a light, mellifluous quality, but are also quite cynical, and I realised that the nearest equivalent to that would be the poetry of Rilke or Trakl, so I tried to translate that poetic quality into the words of the fairies. Finally, I had to find an equivalent style for the Mechanicals, and for them I found the poems of Friederike Kempner a wonderful source for ideas. She wrote serious poems and her aim was always serious, but the effect was involuntarily comical, her language swinging precariously from the sublime to the absolutely ridiculous. Shakespeare's text is very heterogeneous and the worlds of the humans and the fairies need to be kept apart. Shakespeare achieves this through stylistic differences. The problem with Schlegel's translation of this play is that it is too homogeneous: he doesn't make any distinction between the styles of verse of the humans and fairies, but writes at one level of lyricism, so the characters of Hermia and Helena, for example, are completely interchangeable. The same is true of *Hamlet*: every one of Hamlet's soliloquies is stylistically different from the last and these differences naturally have to be reflected in a translation of the play.

Heiner Müller's translations in the 1970s created a new 'sound' for Shakespeare that was closer to the social realism of drama in the GDR at the time. How do you rate Müller's influence as a translator?

I don't like Müller's translations. Müller never translated, he just took Schlegel's text and lazily changed a few of the words, and in doing so he broke the grammar and destabilised the syntax. That's not translating. Brecht knew how to write realistic, 'real' German, and only he could mirror, to a certain extent, the *Gestus* of Shakespeare's language as it is spoken by the many characters in his plays. Heiner Müller had no idea about how to write *gestic* German. The only reason he translated was to earn money, so he took the easy option and chose to re-shape the work already done by Schlegel. Likewise, when he attempted to translate Sophocles, Müller just used Hölderlin's version and replaced the word 'Tyrann' with 'Diktator'. Many people at the time felt that when Müller changed some of the words from an earlier translation, there must have been a deep significance motivating those changes, but that's just bullshit. There was nothing behind those changes, no real subtext, only laziness.

Erich Fried produced some beautiful poetic translations in the 1960s and Elisabeth Plessen's translations for Peter Zadek's productions present Shakespeare's plays in an effective combination of familiar and new renderings.

The supposed poet, Erich Fried, did not know how to write blank verse. He was only interested in conveying the sense of the lines, so what he actually wrote were prose translations. His lines are not verse and they do not even sound like Shakespeare. Elisabeth Plessen's translation is a pell-mell of everything and nothing. She stole lines from other texts and even from other plays. Let us say that I have not been engendered with envy to read anything else she has written.

You mentioned at the start of this interview that in Hamlet we have real characters with inner conditions, unlike in Love's Labour's Lost, where the characters seem to represent linguistic and intellectual poses. How do you understand the 'inner condition' of Hamlet?

Some time ago it occurred to me that Hamlet is more concerned with amateur dramatics than with the real act of avenging his father, and this is no more apparent than in his soliloquies. In the soliloquies in *Macbeth*, for example, the characters of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are turned inside out; we see their inner world in all its painful reality. Hamlet's soliloquies, by contrast, are marked by a conspicuous sense of theatricality and of Hamlet's propensity for putting on a show. In this play Shakespeare has developed the soliloquy to do exactly the opposite of what it was traditionally designed to do. Hamlet in effect hides behind the soliloquy and uses his enormous amount of words to keep his inner-self private, even from the sympathetic spectators. Hamlet's central soliloquy is a clear example. Do you understand these lines? [*reads out Hamlet's central soliloquy*] The two alternatives are 'to be' or 'not to be'. What follows is the action of suffering the slings and arrows, which is a continuation of 'being', but 'opposing' them is not the same as 'not being'. Hamlet says: 'And by opposing end them'. What does 'them' refer to?

In the notes to his 1998 Hamlet translation Norbert Kollakowsky expressed the view that Hamlet was not a mystery or a 'weisser Fleck'.

Kollakowsky was attacking me. On the old maps you very often have an area of land, for example in parts of Africa, that had never been explored. They were left as a white patch on the map because nobody knew what was there, and this was referred to as a 'weisser Fleck'. I once wrote that Hamlet is a 'white patch', because he has still not been charted: we know almost nothing about who he really is, and so I think it is fair to say that Hamlet is a 'weisser Fleck'. Kollakowsky is directing his criticism at me with this reference.

Has the popularity of Schlegel's translations posed a problem for the modern translator?

You must remember that Schlegel's translations were not very popular in the beginning. His translation of *Hamlet* caused a great scandal at the Burgtheater and the actor who played the part of Polonius only agreed to perform his role if he was allowed to speak the lines from another translation. Moreover, the translations thrown out by the Tieck factory were often pretty deplorable. So there is no reason why we cannot challenge these so-called authorities. The actors in Augsburg thanked me for my version of *Romeo and Juliet*. They hated Schlegel's translation and felt that the characters in my version were better able to establish contact with one another, which goes back to what I said earlier about the dramatic necessity of the language's being 'direkt'. What I will say is that my translations will certainly never be as influential as Schlegel's. Those translations were a part of German literary and linguistic history. My translations will never achieve that.

Ralf Fiedler (Kassel: 29 June, 2000)

Why did you decide to produce 'Hamlet'?

There are many considerations when choosing plays to be produced at a large theatre like the Staatstheater in Kassel. For example, which plays will pull in a crowd? It is a fact that audiences do not come to plays, which they do not know, and that is a consideration that should not be underestimated! In every theatre's repertoire you will find Shakespeare's 'Top Twenty' and *Hamlet* is certainly one of them. But of course that's not the only reason why we are producing *Hamlet* at the moment, and it is not the primary reason why I would ever produce *Faust*. *Hamlet* is a play, about which I have particularly strong feelings, as does the director, Armin Petras. In the plays we have produced together, it has always been important to us that conflicts are presented that are relevant to the audience, along with stories with which members of the audience can identify. *Hamlet* is amazingly exciting, and that excitement is derived from more than just unravelling the curious conditions of the play's origin. What is interesting is why Shakespeare left out certain political issues, and of course there are endless psychological explanations for *Hamlet's* condition, which can seem both convincing and threadbare depending on how you look at the play. But *Hamlet* is fascinating because of what is missing from it. There is a hole or some kind of dark patch in it, and it is here where the story is centred. It is a quality of the work that we can really exploit.

Which elements of the play have you emphasised in your production?

The most interesting aspect for Petras and myself was this bizarre protracted family catastrophe, and the focal point seemed to be this peculiar wedding-funeral party. It is a strange situation where a man returns home for his father's funeral, because as soon as the party starts, everyone wants to leave again. What most affects Hamlet is the feeling that nothing can ever be the same as it was before. We have given prominence to the line at the end of Hamlet's first soliloquy: 'It is not, nor it cannot come to good', which, in Heiner Müller's translation, reads powerfully: 'Es wird nicht mehr gut'. This was really our starting point. What we then had to decide was how to configure the conflicts and where to transpose them. We didn't like the idea of setting the play in Denmark, because we wanted to stress the isolation in which the two families live. The sense of claustrophobia could be intensified if the characters were surrounded by water and so we designed a stage to suggest an island supported by an oil well. The story of *Hamlet* is based on an isolated sociotrope with very few people. On this island we have a situation where all of the characters have seen better times.

So would you say that this was a contemporary version with modern characters?

Not exactly. The costumes are partly modern, but not in any naturalistic sense. Polonius wears an old sailor's uniform, but he has long since been in retirement and is now someone who just fishes. Hamlet, on the other hand, has just returned from a very different life in the city to this small province and he is dressed like a modern musician and listens to rock music. We wanted the costumes to say something about

the people wearing them and not to be just like quotations from a certain period or fashion.

Is this a production of Hamlet 'von' or 'nach' Shakespeare?

That's always an interesting question. I always write 'nach' in the programme, because the director is a story-teller and likes to develop a play's subtext. In fact, at the start of rehearsals, we didn't use any Shakespeare text at all; we just improvised situations, trying to work out what was really happening to the characters and from this we developed an improvised text. After four weeks of rehearsals we asked the actors to incorporate their improvisations into Heiner Müller's translation of the play. Rehearsals were fascinating to watch, because the text became more concrete rather than just words that the actors mindlessly recited. For example, when I hear 'To be or not to be', it doesn't have any real significance for me. I listen to the words and I know them too well and nothing happens in me. The audience requires a long 'run up' before hearing Hamlet's soliloquy. A more concrete situation gives these famous lines some meaning and wakes the audience up so that suddenly they think 'A-ha! That's what Hamlet means.' And that is one of the principles that underlie Petras' production.

Where do you locate Shakespearean authenticity in this production?

Some critics would say that Petras does not care whether his plays are faithful to Shakespeare. He just wants to tell nice stories in the theatre and sell them by putting a famous author's name on the programme. In my opinion that is not the way he works, since Petras regards adaptation as a completely legitimate form of appropriation of a work that is four hundred years old. Even changing the smallest details of the story will have enormous validity for Petras, and not merely to propagate a new version or improve the old text. The alterations he makes to a text are the result of a lengthy and very precise process of working with the text and actors.

And Shakespeare's plays are themselves adaptations of Holinshed, Kyd and Boccaccio.

Yes exactly. Shakespeare's plays are part of a mythical structure and these myths cannot be tied down to an originating text. There is no original version of the Oedipus myth, for example, and, as a myth, *Hamlet* does not really have any definitive source. Shakespeare's stories have become disconnected from pre-existing myths and I do not believe that it harms these myths to release them even further from their textual state as Shakespeare's plays. It is ridiculous to treat the plays as fine porcelain and reproduce them merely as lyrical texts.

So where is the greatness in Shakespeare's handling of these myths?

In the changes that Shakespeare introduces into those well-known stories. In the new insights that become relevant. The same applies to Kleist. He adapted Molière's play

in his adaptation *Amphytrion*, in order to lend it contemporary relevance for Germans in the nineteenth century. There would have been no point in simply reproducing the myth without adapting it.

How do you resolve the problem of conflicting interpretations of Hamlet on the stage?

Many things are simply left out, such as the various political theories concerning the staging of a corrupt Danish royal family at a time when relations between England and Denmark were very strong. These historical realities are extremely exciting, but there is only so much that can be represented by a single production. It is impossible to incorporate the whole intellectual background of *Hamlet* into one stage version. For example, in Shakespeare's time there were various types of demonology, principally Catholic and Anglican: the former claiming that ghosts are works of the devil and the latter that they are sent from heaven. It is only when you are aware of the contemporary intellectual background that Hamlet's dilemma begins to make sense. You begin to see that Hamlet is trapped between believing that the Ghost is really the incarnation of his father, and fearing that the Ghost may be an ambassador of hell. Trying to reconstruct in the theatre some kind of answer to these theological debates is just nonsense. I'd prefer to leave these issues to scholars and let them argue amongst themselves, because all the various conflicting theories cannot be translated in practical terms to the stage. Alternatively, one can write a very impressive programme for those who are interested. In any case, the scholarly commentaries inform our production, and I have found Stephen Greenblatt's theories particularly useful. We did look at Bible translations, but there is a problem common to both Shakespeare translations and translations of the Bible. So much is lost when Shakespeare is translated, and the same applies to the Bible. I can understand why the Church reacted against Luther's translation. Likewise, in the Middle Ages, a Latin translation of the Bible was written and that was an absurdity.

Did you decide to use Heiner Müller's translation for artistic reasons?

I would have preferred not to use Heiner Müller's translation, precisely because of copyright laws. We have to be careful with the changes we make to the text, otherwise we could be in trouble with the Rotbuch publishing house. It's also difficult to know how strict the laws are and what degree of changes to a translator's text can be made in order to use it on stage. But changes do have to be made.

In his autobiography Krieg ohne Schlacht Müller explains that after translating Hamlet in 1976 he realised that the only effective way to convey Hamlet was through adaptation rather than translation, hence his writing of Hamletmaschine.

I do not necessarily think that Müller's translation should be praised to the heavens. I understand what he was trying to achieve with his text and his translation has a certain heterogeneity, just as you find in *Hamlet*. There are some lines in the text that Müller translates very accurately and he adapts the German language very well to Shakespeare's iambic rhythm. Then, of course, there are lines where you can tell

straight away that it is Heiner Müller. In his last soliloquy Hamlet asks: 'What is a man / If his chief good and market of his time / Be but to sleep and feed?' The tradition since Schlegel has been to translate this as 'Was ist der Mensch...', whereas Heiner Müller renders it as 'Was ist der Mann...', and there is an interesting question of whether Hamlet's *man* can be translated better with Schlegel's 'Mensch' or Müller's 'Mann' in this context. In Müller's text the reader comes up against one stumbling block after another and his syntax is often so complex that it is very easy to lose the thread. That is not a weakness in the Schlegel translations, which are syntactically much clearer.

Do you see it as a task of the director, to clarify Shakespeare's language on the German stage?

I don't think there is any alternative. When an actor speaks a text on stage, he naturally kills much of the ambivalence of the text that is written down. A lot of choices do have to be made by the director as to which meanings can stay and which have to be sacrificed.

But isn't Schlegel's language a little old-fashioned for modern productions?

Of course, but at the same time there are lines in Schlegel's translation that have proven very successful. Above all, his translation has the most beautiful melody, and in spite of the weaknesses of the translation, such as the imprecise sense of many expressions and the tendency to be overly lyrical, you have to admit that the translation as a whole sounds impressive on the stage. When I compare Heiner Müller's translation with Schlegel's, I frequently come across lines in the older version that are much richer and that I would like to incorporate in my production instead of Müller's.

But is there not a danger that German audiences will identify Schlegel too much with Shakespeare?

Schlegel has become a kind of standard. When we hear the famous line: 'Es ist die Nachtigall und nicht die Lerche' from *Romeo und Julia*, we immediately think of Schlegel-Tieck. Audiences unfortunately have certain expectations of what Shakespeare's language should sound like, what a play should look like on stage, and how the actors are supposed to be dressed. These conceptions developed from productions of the plays in the nineteenth century. Our version is definitely not a reconstruction of the supposed original productions. Behind any production there exists a horizon of allusions that are contemporary at that time, and it makes no sense to try and reconstruct nineteenth-century notions of performance. There is a kind of phantasm that drifts around, which convinces people that there is such a thing as a 'faithful production', which is absolutely ridiculous. There can never be a faithful production of Shakespeare, because this would mean denying the contemporary relevance of the play and the uses to which it can be put. Petras has no problems with disappointing people's expectations. The problems of conflicting translations are really of little concern to him.

Heiner Müller uses Schlegel's pun in 5.1, where the Gravedigger remarks: 'Er [Adam] war der erste, der je armiert war'. Few Germans understand Schlegel's coinage 'armieren', so how can you justify using it in a production?

I don't think you can justify it. In that case, I would tacitly change the word, and that's what most directors do. If there are no serious reasons why an obscure word should remain in the text, then it is better to replace it with one that audiences do understand. What does 'armieren' mean? 'To be armed'?

No. The Gravedigger means that Adam was the first who ever had arms and was able to dig.

I see. And I have similar problems with modern translations such as Peter Zadek's. If a translation, such as Schlegel's, was written two hundred years ago and some of the language has become difficult to understand or even obsolete, this is not a real problem on the stage, because audiences accept that the archaic language is authentic. But if a translation was written in recent times and the translator deliberately attempts to create an archaic patina, then I stop being able to trust the language and I can no longer respect it as poetry. Frank Günther, for instance, translates in a very colloquial and casual way, which I do not like at all. But at least Günther is consistent in the style in which he translates, which I respect. Sometimes he even produces quite successful formulations, such as his use of the German 'irre tun' when Hamlet talks of putting on his antic disposition. I think that's a great translation, but it has a lot to do with luck.

Frank Günther told me that when he finishes a translation, he submits it to the theatre and it is complete and cannot be altered by either director or actors. Would you be prepared to change the text according to suggestions from Petras or the actors?

You have to weigh up every situation. When I think a line is lacking in sense, or when a word seems strange to an actor, then I would certainly be prepared to follow the actor's suggestion, provided that I can understand his or her argument. I see myself as an attorney of literary work. Sometimes I have to say: 'No, please do it like this, because there was a reason why Shakespeare expressed himself in this way.' It really depends on the director, though. But as long as there is theatre, then actors will have their own ideas about what is right and wrong and you have to listen to the actors. When new plays are produced and the author is present at the premiere, you notice that he finds it painful if his text has been changed, even slightly. Then problems can arise, which can very quickly turn into legal problems. That is also one reason why I would rather use older translations. If Frank Günther is so sensitive to criticism, then I would never use his translations for my productions. The actor plays a central role in the life of the theatre, and the job of the director and dramaturg is to decide if the actor is having problems with a text caused by a bad translation, or by his own caprices and ignorance. You have to make certain compromises as director, because the actors often sense what is the most natural thing to say in a given situation, and what would never be said.

Is it true that some lines in the text will remain in English in your production?

Yes, that is what we have planned. We developed a script based partly on Müller's translation and partly on the English text. By comparing the German and the English, it struck me that many lines have a power and a charm in the original that is lost in German. The incredible power of Shakespeare's English can be felt even by a German who speaks only a moderate amount of English. It is a weakness in German translations that this power, or what we call *Direktheit*, is missing. Hamlet declares in his first soliloquy: 'O that the Everlasting had not fix'd / His canon 'gainst self-slaughter', and this expression 'self-slaughter' is amazing. You just cannot recreate that power in German and this *Direktheit* is precisely what directors like Petras are looking for in a stage language. Shakespeare's plays are also like music scores, and the language has a charm that equates with music, which is lost in translation.

Who has influenced you in recent years in your work with the theatre?

I have seen numerous productions in Belgium and Holland, such as *Antony and Cleopatra* produced by Richard Lord and the Real Company. The Belgians use a lot of dance theatre and are highly experimental. They use very few props on stage, usually just a few chairs, and they are very free with their use of the text. The production itself looked at first like a long and tedious rehearsal, but the alterations that the actors made as they played with the text turned into an exciting game. I sat there for four hours and thought: 'Fantastic! This is real, modern theatre!'

Did this freedom with the text also influence your production of Hamlet?

Yes. I mentioned earlier that we used a lot of improvisation. When the actors had developed their improvised situations, we had them pour Shakespeare's text into the improvised text. Or, to be exact, we wanted to use Shakespeare's text as a vessel into which the improvised scenes could be poured. This has produced some really exciting theatre with very concrete meaning. There is also a good deal of alienation created by these improvised scenes. Ordinary people acting and talking as they would normally, suddenly begin to use Shakespeare's language and this creates a dramatic *frisson*. In fact, I think the real meaning of Shakespeare's plays can only come through to us in this alienated form. Modern actors cannot speak to us purely as Elizabethans. Their sensibility can only permeate through to us in these beautiful alienated situations. When we use English, the alienation is doubled. What we have in our production are modern Germans, who use modern German in their improvised scenes, alienated by the intermittent use of Shakespeare's English in German translation. In turn this is alienated by the intermittent use of the original English. The levels of language that our actors use contribute to the complexity of reality that is part of the message of *Hamlet*.

Heiner Müller used a lot of English words in his translation and your production is using whole lines from the English. Is this the beginning of the end of Shakespeare in German?

I don't think so. In the institution of the theatre people will always want to hear their native language spoken, just as in opera. When opera is performed in a foreign language, the sympathy of the audience is soon lost. If you ask people whether they want to hear opera in their own language or in the original language, there are few admirers of opera in a language the audience does not understand.

Do you see this as a form of cultural appropriation?

Not really. In fact, as far as the musical quality of both opera and Shakespeare are concerned, the rewards of translating such texts are not all that high. Nevertheless, German theatre audiences are highly fixated on the text. We have noticed that we can do almost anything on the stage, even if it contradicts the text, because the audiences are so preoccupied with the text that they fail to see what is happening on the stage. In ten years' time when the current MTV generation reaches the age of thirty, they will have a very different way of apprehending events on the stage. They will be used to hearing texts read at an alarmingly rapid rate and often texts overlaid simultaneously. They will expect a very different rate of delivery of texts in the theatre. The present fixation of audiences for a text in German is so strong that performing the plays in English would not be of any interest to them.

Do you see it as an advantage or a disadvantage that in spite of the popularity of Schlegel's translation, Shakespeare has no stable linguistic identity on the German stage?

I see it as an advantage because it allows us great artistic freedom to be able to choose between a Schlegel and a Heiner Müller translation and thus to make of Shakespeare what we will. At the same time it is regrettable, because no text really compares with the original, and that is something you do have in English.

Do you think the difficulty of translating Love's Labour's Lost was partly the reason why Branagh's latest film was unsuccessful in German cinemas?

This play is actually successful in Germany, but only in the theatre. This shows you that theatre audiences are generally older than cinema audiences, which explains why Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* was such a hit. The humour in Branagh's film was generated by the fact that what we had were likeable figures to whom we could relate, and yet who spoke in these funny rhymed verses. This contradiction was highly effective and part of the fascination of the film. Had this play been translated into modern, prosaic German, à la Heiner Müller, the result would have been dreadful. In this case, the old language was more a crutch, which Branagh used to convey the comedy. This is exactly how Shakespeare parodied language forms in his play. You could not translate the message of *Love's Labour's Lost* other than through this ornate language.

Returning to the Hamlet production: is it by chance that Ophelia is older than Hamlet's mother in your version of the play?

No, it wasn't by chance. In the theatre you are often forced to accept the cast that you are given, even if they are not ideally what you want. But here we wanted Ophelia to look older. It was important for Petras to emphasise the distance that had grown between all of the characters, in particular between Hamlet and Ophelia. We wanted to present an Ophelia that really did look faded and aged. Hamlet returns to a woman with whom he was formerly in love and, as often happens in life, she now looks old and withered, and that has certain psychological premises in the play. In this constellation of characters we felt it was important that Hamlet's relationship with his mother should overreach his relationship with Ophelia. The suggestions that Hamlet sees his mother as a younger and more beautiful woman than Ophelia are implicit in our production, but we did not want to work them out fully. In addition to this, Gertrude is Chinese and this creates further questions: Can this young Asian woman really be Hamlet's mother? These changes are all designed to stress that the characters in this play are very remote from one another and have a hard time connecting. We particularly enjoyed working on the scene where Hamlet calls Polonius a fishmonger. Polonius' confusion over Hamlet's behaviour seemed to us typical of the play's overall atmosphere: no one knows where any of the other characters are really coming from, and that is something we wanted to exploit in our production.

And when is the premiere?

24 September. Parallel to it we are producing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* here at the Staatstheater, and that production is more likely to meet the tastes of the average theatre-goer. This is not, however, any comment on the quality of the production. I think we need a comedy, because it seems that at the moment comedies, or plays that are thought of as comedies, are more likely to meet with audiences' approval. On the other hand, the comedies are the most difficult to translate and it is impossible to use the classic Schlegel-Tieck version, because the wordplay grates on the nerves in German. *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* are intolerable in the older translations. But *a propos Hamlet*, I do not know how long the production will run. Petras is a very creative director and our production is rather daring.

Michael Wachsmann (Munich: 10 July, 2000)

Could you tell me which of Shakespeare's works you have translated so far?

For the Kammerspiele productions I have translated *King Lear*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Troilus and Cressida* and *Cymbeline*.

Do you as a translator work alone, or do you take your translation into the theatre and work on it with the actors and director?

I work completely alone at my desk with just my Arden Edition and a lovely old dictionary that I have, and nothing else. I know that translating Shakespeare is impossible, but I try nevertheless. It is impossible to render one language completely with another. It's a business with inevitable losses. But accepting these losses as unavoidable, one should aim for an objective translation, that is, one that is not determined by the translator's present conditions or oriented to any specific actors, productions or directors. A translation should try to make a deal with the English text, since the translation is a modern reading of an old text.

Did you really avoid all contact with the Kammerspiele when you were translating Shakespeare's plays for the stage?

No. I always had contact with the director and the theatre, and, of course, I discussed my translations with the actors, whenever necessary, by which I mean that I explained my translations to the actors. This helped them to understand my intentions, or rather Shakespeare's intentions. But whenever an actor has a practical problem, and that did happen from time to time, I do not get up on my high horse and say that my word is sacred. I tend to hang onto the horse's tail. Only Shakespeare has a right to sit in the saddle. I had meetings with the actors where we would discuss possible alterations to the translation, but there were very few changes that needed to be made and they were always marginal. The actors were only permitted to make changes to the text after consulting me, never alone. Translating is not a self-service store, where a director or actor can just say: 'I think it would be better like this'. I don't have any problem altering my translation, provided that we discuss the matter beforehand. It is not out of vanity or conceit that I insist on my version as the ultimate truth, but because in 99% of cases the actors have learned to understand my translation and have accepted it.

In his article, 'Some provisional views on the ideal translation of Shakespeare for use by and in the theatre' (Shakespeare Translation, September 1983), Kristian Smidt suggested that the most effective way to translate Shakespeare was to work collectively whereby a translator first renders the text into the target language. The translated text is then passed to a 'scholar' to make philological emendations that the poet-translator could not. The final stage is to pass the translation to the director to suggest stylistic improvements. Does the translating process allow this assembly-line approach in your view?

Firstly, a philologically correct translation will never be a good translation, as this will kill the work in the target language. Secondly, translation can only be done alone. Only one person can engage in a relationship with the text at any one time. The most varied translations of a play are possible, for example Frank Günther's *King Lear* and my own. They are both so different and yet they both exist in relation to the English text. There would be little profit in bringing together two or three translators with such radically different approaches. For me it is essential when translating Shakespeare to discover a character's attitude and to try and recreate this in German, since this attitude is what brings the character to life on stage. Since a character's personality may consist of contradictory facets, the translator must choose one of these facets and translate it. The translator has to take sides and he has to work alone on his interpretation, just as the director does, and the actor. I do not rate collective translations at all.

You said in an interview in Theater heute (January, 1988) that a translation is most successful when it is not recognised as a translation, and that if a translation obeys its own laws, it can never be a work in its own right. But does this not create a contradiction? If a text is not recognised as a translation, doesn't this mean that it has become a work in its own right?

Yes, you are right.

And if your translations and Frank Günther's are so different, isn't each, to some extent, an independent work?

Yes, but I think translators have to be modest and not reflect too much of their own situation. He or she is not creating an original work. It is independent in that it has been written in another language and has acquired a new form, but it is connected to something else. A translator's originality lies in finding not inventing the right thought, the plastic word, the necessary concept. A translator is not an original genius, even though his translation may be very different from all the others. The translation can only ever be a dependent work. Having said that, Shakespeare must be able to stand alone in German in the theatre. When the words are spoken on the stage, they can no longer refer to Shakespeare, but must transport as much of the meaning of the original as possible and strike the audience with the same force in German as the English did. At the moment when the words are heard, they are completely independent, and it is at these moments when you feel a translator's originality.

Do you understand Shakespeare's works as being principally for the stage?

Of course they can be read, but they were intended for acting. I am also convinced that much of the beauty of the poetry and the denseness of the texts are imperceptible to the English native speaker and hearer in their fullest dimension in the theatre. What one does perceive, however, is the specific weight of a passage. Shakespeare's meaning is not revealed completely to the audience. They hear the words only once in the theatre, but they are able to seize the meaning, though probably not of every word. That is why I think that Shakespeare's language is best suited to the stage.

Shakespeare designed his texts to be spoken and heard and not to be pressurised by interpreters. That was of no interest to him. His aim was to write scripts for the theatre and that is what a translator must do in German.

So you are translating for a theatre audience rather than a reader?

Exactly. My translations are not intended to be read. If you read them from the page you will inevitably be confronted with one difficulty after another, and you will end up asking 'What does that mean?' and 'What does it say in the original?' Questions that can only be answered when the lines on the page are fully understood are not questions that audiences ask when they hear the language on stage. This does not mean that I have not taken the most extreme care in my philological study of the texts. Whether my translations work, can only be seen in the theatre, not under any philological scrutiny, which Shakespeare's texts naturally resist.

Modern German translations of Shakespeare are, however, much easier to understand than the English text. What degree of lucidity do you aim for in your translations?

Simplifying the language is not a bad thing. It is not my intention, however, to make Shakespeare cheaper than he is in English. There can never be any justification for constructing a digest of the contents. The difficulty with Shakespeare is that he aims at several different levels of understanding at the same time: the mythical level, which appeals to an audience's education and cultural awareness, the simple emotional appeal of the play, and also those elements which merely drive the plot forward. In my experience a translator should try to retain all the levels of comprehensibility of Shakespeare's language for the various members of the audience, so that everyone can understand at least something. The translator naturally reaches limits at the mythological level, since Shakespeare's audiences were familiar with a different range of names than are modern audiences. But I would point out that even in Shakespeare's audiences there would have been people, who had no idea about the mythical characters and backgrounds, and yet had fun at the performances and came away satisfied. I see my responsibility quite clearly in transferring Shakespeare's complexity and wholeness, as I understand it, to a comparable language, which can be understood today.

Is it important to convey a wide range of linguistic registers in a translation?

Yes, but I do not use colloquial or everyday German in my translations. I am very careful, unlike Frank Günther, who treads a very different path in his translations. It is certainly not my ambition to take Shakespeare out onto the streets. I do not want to deny the fact that Shakespeare's language is 400 years old and I want to reflect this in the language of my translations. The language of my translations is modern, but it is not everyday German. Sometimes if I am confronted with a word in the English text. I use a German expression that sounds strange. I do this if I have the feeling that Shakespeare specifically sought a word that sounded strange, or alternatively if there is a word in the text that was normal in Shakespeare's time. but is no longer in

common usage in modern English. This ensures that a word or concept is alienated within its contextual setting in the text. This is also much more appealing to the imaginations of the audience and their ability to conceive of the imagistic and plastic quality of words. This is preferable to reducing the language and its demands on the audience. I am more for the big notes, rather than the small change.

But wasn't colloquial language and the use of specific sociolects an important indicator of class and character in Shakespeare's plays?

Translators will always attempt to use different variants of a language spoken today, but one should not forget that Shakespeare's dramas are also literature. even when he is creating his socially lower characters. Their language must be transported, literally 'trans-lated', but not in such a way that the characters disappear in the triteness of modern colloquialisms, and become part of a social group from which they do not originate. They come from a different time and place and I am not likely to meet them on the street today. Only by emphasising the distance of the characters' language from our own are we able to recognise representations of human nature in Shakespeare's plays and be affected and moved by this recognition. This happens because we have had to travel some distance in order to reach those real characters. The translator should not use language as a way of bringing the characters in Shakespeare's plays closer to us. He should distance them from us, so that we have to overcome that distance in order to experience something real in the theatre. Only from this distance do we recognise the issues, the stories, the characters and situations, and recognise the parallels between them and ourselves.

Joachim Kaiser has written that Shakespeare's plays have been translated so differently that German audiences have no idea, what Shakespeare is (Der Tagesspiegel, 5 February 2000). To what extent is Schlegel a 'standard Shakespeare' for the German stage?

Schlegel certainly remains a standard in Germany because his translations are used more than any others in the theatres. Also, Shakespeare's text in English is much more distant from modern English usage, whereas Schlegel's translation, being the first printed and widely available translation of Shakespeare's works, has become our standard because his language is only 200 years old and is still relatively easy to understand. Luther's translations of the Bible have to be interpreted in the church because his language is scarcely comprehensible nowadays, whereas the English feel obliged not to adapt Shakespeare's language of 1600.

Although we do adapt the seventeenth-century English of the King James' Bible precisely in order to aid understanding.

A propos standards, I have no serious objections to Schlegel's achievement as a translator, but all translations, even mine, are bound by the time in which they are written. Sooner or later new translations become old translations, and that is unavoidable. Schlegel's translation is bound by the language and the thoughts of the Romantic period of German history. Although I admire Schlegel's translations very

much, the language he uses is polished and homogeneous and Shakespeare had far less interest in unified language than Schlegel assumed. I am against the levelling out of the differences contained within Shakespeare's language and of the various registers, when these are audible in English. The spectators should be given the opportunity to hear the different levels of language in the play and to think about what these differences are telling them. I have little time for translations that attempt to render Shakespearean sociolects with modern German slang, as in Elisabeth Plessen's translation.

I had the impression that Plessen's translations were written in normal, standard German.

That is precisely the problem. It is normal standard German and that is my objection: the German, in which they are written, is too normal, whereas Shakespeare's English is never normal. Shakespeare's sentences are often convoluted and involved and this is made possible because English is more paratactic than German. This is a problem for German translators, who are working with a much more rigid system of syntax. Shakespeare tends to place the predicate at the beginning of the sentence and the subject at the end, where it carries more weight. If the German translator attempts to follow all of the ramifications of the English sentence structure, he will soon get into troubled waters and end up making Shakespeare much more difficult than he already is. For example, in *Troilus and Cressida* there are passages of Ulysses where his sentences extend over 20 or 30 lines and develop the most complicated images. They have to be recreated in full and not just delivered up in little morsels that are easier for the actors to say or for the audience in the stalls to understand. I try to understand a passage and then reproduce its rhetorical complexity. It is important to retain the rhetorical form, because rhetoric reproduces, and indeed produces, an actor's attitude.

Michael Skasa criticised your translation of Cymbeline (Theater heute, July 1998) as confusing in syntax and muddled in thought, and he compared it unfavourably with Schlegel's translation. Schlegel's 'Der Liebe Grund sei grundlos' (4.2) is more accurate and successful in conveying the double meaning of the original 'Love reasons without reason' than your version 'Der Liebe Sinn ist sinnlos'. Do you regard your own translation as an improvement on the classical Schlegel-Tieck version?

We are entering a very difficult realm here. What is a 'good' translation? And what is 'good' being compared to? I do think that Skasa is in a minority, because my translation was a success and it was not without good reason that we performed *Cymbeline* many times before a full house. People are not forced to go to the theatre. They go in spite of critics like Skasa, not because of him. Many people have enjoyed the production and understood the language. Had it not been the success it was, the television companies would not have shown an interest and would not have televised it. The desire to force modern translations into the Schlegel mould says a lot about the desire to reduce Shakespeare to something more manageable and simplistic, and in short, something cheaper. Schlegel in fact omitted many problematic lines from his translations because he felt that they could not be solved in the translated text. He also stuck rigidly to the iambic pentameter, even in cases where Shakespeare is more

relaxed. Many complex formulations and constructions are sacrificed for the sake of regularity of meter. Normally I tend to follow the meter of the original lines, but if it proves impossible to fit the words into five feet, I sometimes create lines of six or even seven feet in order to confront the audience with the full weight of Shakespeare's text. Michael Skasa seems to be more interested in Shakespeare as a commercial product, and Schlegel's translations are more commercialised, although they contain less than Shakespeare offers in English.

In his book Shakespeare on the German Stage Wilhelm Hortmann maintains that Shakespeare has no stable linguistic identity on the German stage. Do you see it as an advantage or a disadvantage that textually there is no fixed identity for Shakespeare in German?

I see it as an advantage. Since every translation is also an interpretation (and we see different interpretations in the different translations of Maik Hamburger, Heiner Müller and Frank Günther), the co-existence of different translations possibly opens up ways of interpretation for the audience in German that are closed to the English audiences, who only have a single text. It doesn't really make any sense to talk about standards and about which translations are more authentic than others, because we do not have the original. My aim has always been to keep my translation open to interpretation, both for the director and for the actors, and to salvage as much of the original's interpretability, shades of meaning, and the shimmering, constantly shifting crescent that exists around all words. I object to translations that focus too much on one interpretation at the exclusion of all other possibilities.

Are you aiming to translate only the meanings that words had for Shakespeare's audiences, or do you take account of changes in meaning since the seventeenth century?

Ideally all together. I consider in what direction a word may have been intended by Shakespeare and whether it was a word that was in vogue when the play was written. But I also aim to reflect in my translation the history of Shakespeare's words, and by that I do not mean to suggest that I juxtapose old and new meanings simply for the sake or irony. I have to consider the function of the word in its context and try to transpose this. One cannot pretend that one is living in 1600, either in Germany or in England.

Maik Hamburger wrote that the German language has to be stretched to its utmost, that is, to the limits, which the natural development of the language will allow, before Shakespeare can be translated into German. Do you share his view?

In my translation of *Troilus and Cressida* there are the lines: 'Der Bienerich solange fröhlich brommt, / Bis er um Honig und den Stachel kommt'. The problem is that 'bumble bee' in English is a masculine image and Shakespeare plays on the phallic implication of 'sting', but the word 'bee' in German is feminine. Thus I had to invent new words that would allow the transposition of this image. I have created other neologisms in my version of *King Lear*, for example, when I had the impression that

Shakespeare invented a word rather than using a word in common currency. So, yes, I would agree entirely with Hamburger.

Do you think that a translator also has the responsibilities of an editor in the particular choices he makes in determining the text that he will translate?

The translator has to use a text as his foundation. It doesn't really matter whether it is the New Cambridge or the Arden Edition. These are used because they are the most up-to-date editions philologically and are re-edited every fifty or so years. I have also consulted other editions, depending on what was available at the time. I like the Arden Edition, because the controversial words are discussed in detail and numerous conflicting interpretations are given. As a translator I can choose which variants are most useful to me. It also saves me an endless amount of time having to consult specialist lexicons and secondary literature. It is simply more economical. As far as questions of which version of the texts to use, Folio or Quartos, Harold Jenkins gives a full account of why he omits or includes in his edition certain passages, according to the consensus on their presumed authority. I do not consider myself to be an editor, but I do have to make decisions with almost every word that I use, and my decisions do not always accord with Harold Jenkins. Editors also vary in their approach to the text. Some emend liberally, whereas others tend to be more circumspect. I would always try to extract as much sense as possible from the early printed versions before I decided to make any serious emendations.

Frank Günther has translated Harold Jenkins' edition of Hamlet and does not translate the repeated pun on 'rights' and 'rites', because Jenkins considered this to be an inconsistency in the printing of the Folio. Is there not a danger that using a subjective edition can miss potential meaning in the early printed versions?

The advantage of the Arden Edition is that emendations are always explained in the footnotes at the bottom of the page. I also study the original printed editions scrupulously and then I simply have to make subjective decisions based on my readings of other subjective interpretations. It is a question of choosing the meanings that I trust. I refer to these modern editions, because they lay all their philological cards on the table and I can then pick from them what suits me. What I do not do is follow editors blindly, but look carefully at the changes they make. I have often refused to accept an editorial decision as the final word. My methodological principles are subjective and do not involve the objective, scientific, critical decisions of editors, second editors and senior editors.

Turning now to the Kammerspiele Shakespeare productions, I notice that you have not produced the mainstream plays such as Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet or Macbeth, but the lesser-known dramas Troilus and Cressida and Cymbeline. Why did you decide to stage the marginal works of the canon?

There are several reasons. Firstly, it is more attractive to produce not just the Shakespearean standards. Intendant Dieter Dorn and I did not want to add the hundred and first interpretation of *Hamlet* to the other hundred. We have of course

produced *King Lear* and some plays you just cannot get around. Some day we are going to have to produce *Hamlet*. At the moment I feel that everything has been said about *Hamlet* that needs saying. What can I say about the play that would be new? A big attraction is to do something that no one has ever seen before, and nobody that I knew had ever seen *Cymbeline*, myself included. The wonderful thing about producing a play like *Cymbeline* is that it frees the audience from the restrictions of the established canon and liberates them from certain enforced expectations. The same applies to the style of production. *Troilus and Cressida* had not been seen for decades and so Dorn and I decided that it was high time this play got an airing. Nobody in Germany had ever seen these plays and our productions confronted the audience and the actors with something fresh and unknown and gave them a chance to form a new relationship, not just to the plays, but also to Shakespeare.

Do you think that translators have a responsibility to restructure the canon in Germany, so that Hamlet is not always at number one in the theatre top ten?

That is the least of my interests. Which plays of Shakespeare to produce has always been determined partly by considerations of what fits into our scheme of work and how the productions relate to one another and to our situation here at the Kammerspiele. It is also a question of which plays can be translated at any given time. We would only produce *Hamlet* when we could translate it effectively. It is a pragmatic reason, and yet one that plays a major role in determining a theatre's repertoire.

Christine Dössel commented in the Süddeutsche Zeitung (11 January 2000) that recent performances at the Kammerspiele were revealing an increased 'aesthetic paralysis' and that the theatre has not been able to regenerate and rejuvenate itself. Does the Kammerspiele perhaps lay too much emphasis on translation instead of more radical adaptations?

I am not a critic's critic, though I would disagree with Dössel. Our theatre must have regenerated itself successfully otherwise people would not have been coming for the last twenty-five years and filling the theatre at our productions. The number of young people coming to see our productions is also increasing. However, we have no interest in surprising the critics. It is the audience that we aim to please and it is for the people of Munich that we make our theatre and not for the travelling critics.

If the Kammerspiele is mainly text-oriented, is there not a danger that your productions will remain conservative?

It is really a question of what 'conservative' means. I do not maintain that there is only one form of theatre that has the ultimate authority. There are many different forms of theatre and all are equally valid. One can use the texts as the starting point from which to work, one can realise a text fully, or one can execute the text altogether, but we follow a different line at the Kammerspiele. We have no commands and no prohibitions. Dorn and I consider which Shakespeare play we could produce next and we develop a concept together, but there has never been a

case where Dorn's concept for a particular production has determined or restricted the way I was able to translate the text. I translate according to my own experiences, my knowledge of the English language and my understanding of the text.

Can we expect a new style of theatre at the Kammerspiele when Frank Baumbauer takes over from Dieter Dorn as Intendant next year?

Yes, a very different kind of theatre. Baumbauer will be producing *Schlachten!*, the reworking of Shakespeare's *Rosé War* plays, written by the Belgians Tom Lanoye and Luk Perceval. This is currently being produced at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg, where Baumbauer is Intendant. He will bring the production with him to Munich when he takes up the new post as Intendant here at the Kammerspiele. This is the kind of production that we have never seen before at the Kammerspiele, and we are likely to see a lot more of this in the future. So yes, I anticipate great changes.

Elisabeth Plessen (Edinburgh: 12 September, 2000)

Why did Peter Zadek use a new translation of Hamlet instead of the one he himself wrote for his Bochum production in 1977?

Translations are always dated because language is always in a state of change. At that time Zadek produced a very wild translation that was marked by the German language of the late seventies, and the language he used was a mixture of Schlegel, Eschenburg, Greiffenhagen and his own renderings. He did not follow the blank verse and the language was very over-the-top.

So you aimed for a more neutral translation this time?

Not really neutral, but I did want a translation that was more to the point. I haven't seen Zadek's *King Lear*, or his *Hamlet*, only the *Othello* production of 1976. Zadek was never very concerned about the language of his plays, but now that he is a bit older, he is more into the depth of the language and of the play and especially of the character of Hamlet. For example, at the end of Hamlet's last soliloquy he cries: 'O from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth', and Zadek simply used Schlegel's line: 'Oh von dieser Stunde an trachtet / Nach Blut, Gedanken, oder seid veractet!' and the word 'trachten' is now very dated and is not wild and emotional enough. The word that carries most weight in Hamlet's couplet is 'blood' and this had to be given due emphasis, so I rearranged the words to give: 'O seid voll Blut, / Ab jetzt, Gedanken, oder zu nichts gut'. Hamlet is talking to his own feelings and he demands that they be bloody.

Zadek translated a conflated version of Hamlet, but you stick to the Folio. Why was that?

I mostly used the Folio, because it seems to work better on stage. But on three occasions I used the Second Quarto, namely Horatio's speech on Caesar's assassination, Hamlet's speech about the vicious mole of nature, and Hamlet's last soliloquy describing how Fortinbras' soldiers are fighting in Poland. The last soliloquy has contemporary value, given its political implications. When Zadek was rehearsing the play it was during the UN air raids on Kosovo and the hostilities of war in the Balkans were in everyone's minds. I also love this soliloquy and so I insisted that Peter include this in the play, even though he wanted to leave it out.

But doesn't this make the play rather long? Zadek's version runs for four and a half hours?

It is long, but Zadek has cut a fifth of the play and the action is quite speedy, and of course there are two intervals, one at the end of the second act, and another in the middle of the fourth after Hamlet's last soliloquy. When we were doing rehearsals in Strasbourg they wanted to have only one interval, but by the end of the play Angela Winkler was too tired and needed energy at the end for the fight scene. Having two

intervals did admittedly lose some of the crescendo in the scene in Gertrude's closet, but on the whole we felt that the two intervals balanced the action well.

In your essay about the difficulty of translating Shakespeare, 'The Search for the Beginning', you wrote: 'German audiences are reared on the supple lines of the Schlegel-Tieck version just as on a mother's milk.' Did you mean this in a positive or a negative sense?

Mostly negative. If you grow up in Germany Shakespeare has always been Schlegel and to a large extent still is. People often insult me, when I attempt to change Schlegel's lines and adapt them to our modern language. It is as though Schlegel's lines are carved in marble. The Germans' feelings for Shakespeare in Germany are mixed up with an old love of Schlegel and I think people are often unable to distinguish the two.

One criticism of your translation is that the language is too modern and colloquial compared with Schlegel's. Roland Koberg (Berliner Zeitung, 23.5.99) commented that your German sounds slangy compared with the 'great and noble' words of Schlegel. How would you respond to this charge?

Koberg is quite a young man, who is very intelligent and a very good writer and critic, but critics do not do their homework. They never check things. Critics do not take Schlegel's translation and compare it, for example, with mine. They think they still know the classical translations by heart from their school days, but they don't. I try to forget that everyone in Germany takes Schlegel to be Shakespeare, and I try to use tricks. In my translation Hamlet's line reads 'O schmelze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch, / Zergering' und löst in einen Tau sich auf' ('O that this too too solid flesh would melt, / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew'). This is the same as Schlegel's translation and then I shoot off into another direction for the rest of the speech. I preferred 'Selbstschlachtung' ('self-slaughter') to the usual 'Selbstmord' ('suicide'), because the effect produced was closer than the traditional rendering. The audiences get their little bonbon and think that they are hearing Schlegel and then I take them in a new direction to make them think afresh about the lines. That is a trick that I have learned and found to be very effective. I would not say that the language of my translation is predominantly modern. My translations are always criticised. Koberg says that they are too modern and somebody else says it's not modern enough. It is always controversial, but this is good, because it shows that people are thinking about the language. The language of my translation does not correspond with people's pre-judgements.

In a recent interview at the Münchner Kammerspiele, Michael Wachsmann criticised your translation for being too normal. The language does not reflect the stylistic variety of Shakespeare's text.

I did not use any colloquial language in Hamlet's soliloquies, but there is very idiomatic language in the dialogues, because this is when people are talking and communicating in a natural way. Again, critics react against the use of colloquialisms

in German translations, because they only know Schlegel, whose language is very elegant, but lacks any stylistic variation. The plays are meant to provide language that people could say on stage naturally. The mistake that many translators make is that they forget about the liveliness of the play, and if the words are too stiff, then the action also becomes boring and stiff. It is important to keep the text alive in translation.

When Hamlet is explaining to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in 2.2. that he has lost all his mirth and neglected his exercises, Zadek's translation refers to Hamlet's having given up all 'Sport' and in your translation Hamlet has lost all interest in 'Körpertraining'. The modern associations of these words make Hamlet sound as if he has stopped going down to the gym to do his daily work-out. Are the connotations here perhaps too modern, in comparison with the slightly older, more unusual 'Hofmannstreiben' of Frank Günther's version?

'Hofmannstreiben' is such an old-fashioned and stuffy word. Hamlet is in fact talking about training and this is how we refer to exercises today. It is so important to use modern German, and modern German is a beautiful language. Germans today understand what the word 'Körpertraining' refers to, and, I am sorry Mr Günther, but no one will understand what 'Hofmannstreiben' means. It is very dated and it never really existed in everyday use. I am all for invention, but it has to fit the tone of the passage and the context, but Günther's translations are not worth the paper they are written on.

Frank Günther frequently copies the style of German writers like Wilhelm Busch, Friederike Kempner, and the nonsense verse of Morgenstern, Ringelnatz, Rühmkorf and Jandl in an attempt to create the same effect on the audience as Shakespeare's texts. Does the use of equivalents from the target culture produce a more authentic rendering of Shakespeare?

I doubt it. I'm very much against this practice. Often you do have to replace metaphors that are untranslatable, but I can't subscribe to this view that copying the style of other writers brings us somehow closer to Shakespeare. There is too much of Frank Günther in his translations and not enough of Shakespeare. I try to stick to the lines rather than departing from them.

To what extent do the actors determine your translation in the theatre during rehearsals?

Normally I do not change my translation once it has been completed, but there are certain occasions when you have to. During the translating process, I always have at the back of my mind the actor who will have to say these lines and whether my renderings can be spoken by those actors. It depends on how much rhetorical training the actor has had and whether he or she is able to cope with these endlessly twisted lines. Ulrich Wildgruber, who played Polonius, was able to cope with any lines, no matter how contorted they were. Otto Sander, who plays Claudius, objected to my translation of his opening line: 'Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death / The

memory be green', which begins: 'Obwohl die Erinnerung an Hamlets...'. because the line ends with the difficult 'ts' sound, which Sander did not find difficult to say, but argued that it sounded clumsy coming from a king, who has such perfect control over his words, and so I agree with his suggestion to drop the final 's'. The next time I translate, I will have to remember such a small detail. The actors are very important.

But if the actor is lazy and is not prepared to learn how to master the lines, should he or she still be permitted to alter the lines?

You usually find that lines that prove very difficult to say have no life in them. When Angela Winkler speaks her soliloquies, it is as though the lines are emerging spontaneously, and she does not have to think about them; the words are born of the moment and appear perfectly natural, and this has to be kept in mind when translating for the stage.

I notice that you are one of the first translators to use 'Frau' rather than the form 'Weib' for 'woman' in Hamlet's line: 'Frailty, thy name is woman'. Was this determined also by the fact that Hamlet was played by a woman?

I did feel that I was translating for a woman as I was rendering the lines into German. For example, towards the end of the play, as Hamlet is fighting Laertes, he says: 'I am afraid you make a wanton of me'. This word 'wanton' set a light in my mind, and I started to think about the feminine side of Hamlet. However, my thoughts about a clash between a daughter and her father go back much earlier. The first novel I wrote, *Mitteilung an den Adel*, describes the conflict between a young daughter, who has turned left-wing in Berlin, and her conservative father, who had to fight in Italy during the war. He wasn't a Nazi, but he had the conservative language of the nobility, so he had no means of fighting against the forms of Nazism. His affinity with the language of the Nazis was too close. The conflict of the father and son is traditional as you know from Goethe and Turgenev, but my novel was one of the first to present a woman's side of the story, as she protests against her father's generation. I was still thinking about my novel when I translated Hamlet, and I could see how a woman might react to the conservatism of the older generation. But it did take me a while before I could use 'Frau' in the translation, because it is a modern form, and you have to be courageous to be modern. I also think it is easier for Angela Winkler to say 'Frau' rather than 'Weib'. Translators like Heiner Müller used 'Weib', but this form is dead now. It is gender oriented and what men would use to insult women. A woman would never describe another woman as a 'Weib'.

But would it not be more appropriate here, since Hamlet is after all insulting Ophelia?

Certainly, but 'Weib' belongs to the world of Schlegel and to the world of the Nazis. The expression 'Das Weib gehört ins Haus' is Nazi German, and I did not want to interfere with these connotations. Similarly, in my translation I prefer to use the new German word 'nobel' rather than the older form 'edel', since this older word has connotations of class and nobility in Germany. My mother is a countess and this word

'edel' is the sort of word that she would use. When Hamlet uses it, it should not carry these social connotations, and when Ophelia says 'what a noble mind is here overthrown', it is important to understand that she is referring to the greatness of his mind and not his social class. When Hamlet questions whether it is 'nobler in the mind' to suffer the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune', I felt that both 'edel' and 'noble' were wrong, and so I opted for the more democratic 'sinnvoller' ('wiser'). You have to be careful with connotations.

I notice that you do not use the modern German pronouns 'du' and 'Sie', but the literary form 'Ihr'. Was that also because of the connotations they carry?

Yes. The class distinction marked in English by 'thou' and 'you' can be better conveyed by the German pronoun 'Ihr' rather than 'Sie', and I always call this 'Frederizianisch' German, which harks back to feudal times, when there were specific requirements in the way one addressed others or was addressed by others.

Which parts of the play did you find most challenging to translate?

It took me almost a year to translate *Hamlet* and it was the soliloquies that I found most difficult because there is so much pressure on them and indeed on the play as a whole. The play is weighed down with expectations from the audience. I have translated *Richard III*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Julius Caesar* and these were difficult enough, but translating *Hamlet* was like climbing the Himalayas. It's probably better not to run around telling people that you are translating *Hamlet*, because of the expectations that you build up in people's minds, and of course the first question I get asked is, 'Isn't there already a translation by Schlegel?' I also had my own high expectations of Gertrude's monologue, in which she describes the death of Ophelia. I wanted to make it as beautiful as possible and to make it flow like music, and to give it the proper rhythm in German.

Are you satisfied with your own translation of the plays?

Yes, I think so. Sometimes I have new ideas about better ways in which I could have translated some of the lines and perhaps made them a little shorter, but it would have taken me another year, and indeed you could spend a whole lifetime translating the play.

As you were translating Hamlet did you consult any other translations or did you try to avoid them?

I tried to avoid them, but I used Eschenburg's prose version, and I also looked at Hans Rothe's version. He of course changed Shakespeare a lot and adapted rather than translated the play, but he had some fresh ideas at the time. It is difficult to know where to draw the line between translation and adaptation, but I was aiming for a translation. As far as editions are concerned, I used the Cambridge Shakespeare Edition as a base text, but I like the Furness edition, which has pages and pages of

footnotes explaining the many connotations of English words and these explain the lines for me, so that I am able to translate them

But what happens when a word or line seems to escape interpretation?

If there is no solution to a riddle in the source text then I do not see it as my responsibility to explain it in the translation. For example, Hamlet's reference to the 'hawk' and the 'handsaw' has generated lengthy discussions, in which solutions have been proposed, all of them contradictory, and I do not think that this line is meant to be interpreted. It is a moment of sheer madness. I think my version is a slight improvement on Zadek's, since he used 'Falken' and 'Säge' ('hawk' and 'saw'), which loses the double meaning as well as the alliteration. I have used the words 'Falken' and 'Fuchsschwanz' ('hawk' and 'foxtail'), which are both animals and preserve the alliteration, but a 'Fuchsschwanz' is also the name of a saw, so there is slightly more complexity there. In my translation of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* there is a reference to putting pigeons at the foot of a plague victim, but this has no meaning for modern English audiences. I did some research and discovered that live pigeons were cut open and placed at the feet in order to draw the plague from the patient. Having understood this image, I then translated it, but only as the image exists in the play. I did not try to explain it for German audiences. They should be left to puzzle over it as you are in English. Interpretation is a personal activity of the translator and it should not become part of the translation. It is a tragedy of translations, such as those by Günther, that obscurities and riddles in the source text are explained, and this prevents the free rein of the audience's imagination.

What degree of lucidity do you aim for in your translations?

I try to make the German version as difficult as it is in English, but this is never really possible. Translations are always a reduction and simplification of the original. Zadek was born in Berlin, but he grew up in London and he knew English perfectly, and yet even he had problems understanding *Hamlet*. It was only in the late seventies when he decided to produce the play in Bochum that he had to read the text in German and this was the first time that he felt he understood the play.

How does translating Webster compare with translating Shakespeare?

Shakespeare's language is more problematic, because of the range of contradictory meanings that every word seems to have, but thematically I found Webster more difficult. *The Duchess of Malfi* is such a perverse and cruel play that I had to do other things whilst translating it. I needed some emotional balance and so had to get away from this intense cruelty at regular intervals. And when I'm translating, I can't do my own writing. When I was translating *The Duchess* I found that my writing was proving to be a failure, so I took a break from writing my novels and instead translated Marguerite Duras' novel *Savannah Bay* as a kind of antidote. The play is about an old and a young actress, and the two women speak to each other in a way that is manic and rhetorical and very repetitive. The language of this play is completely different to Webster's and it's also a different world and I found that this

worked very well as I was translating Webster's darker text.

You mentioned in your essay that your translations of Shakespeare's plays are meant only for the stage. Does this mean that they cannot be published and read as poetry in the way that Shakespeare can?

No. Three of them have been published by Rowohlt Verlag, but I have not been as lucky as Frank Günther, who has found a publisher with Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag. I tried to talk Rowohlt into publishing my other translations, but at the moment the book market is in something of a crisis. Rowohlt is really at the head of this crisis and translations of plays are the last thing that they will publish. I'm very sad about that.

Walter Benjamin once said that a work has an afterlife in translations, because they keep the work alive by constantly changing it. Does this mean that there is no single right way to translate a play, and that to a certain degree all translations are valid?

Yes, and it is also a matter of taste. Some prefer Frank Günther's versions and some prefer mine. Evaluating translations is very subjective. What I personally value is the eroticism of the lines, and I do not feel that a translation is very good, if it does not convey the energy, the eroticism and the music of Shakespeare's lines. For this reason I do not like Heiner Müller's translation of *Hamlet*, because Müller's language is very hard and cold and he places too much of himself in the translation. He is unable to creep under the skin of another writer, which you have to do as a translator. I cannot reconcile the sound of Müller's harsh, brutal language with what I understand to be Shakespeare and the way I hear Shakespeare as spoken by Gielgud and Olivier. Müller does violence to the text and to the German language. Thomas Brasch, another East German Shakespeare translator, who was writing after Müller, but in the latter's school, has a similar approach to translating. I try not to be too violent to Shakespeare.

And how did Peter Zadek find your translation as a theatre text to work with?

He likes it very much. In my translations the soliloquies such as 'To be or not to be' are poems with a high level of poetic register, but the dialogue in between is everyday language. When Zadek produces Shakespeare, he sees to it that the high and low levels of language are combined to produce a more fluent and less jarring effect, such that we do not have blocks of literary German interspersed with blocks of colloquial German. If another director were to use my translation, and if he were to direct in a very German way, then he would make the distinction clear between the passages of poetry and the more everyday dialogue.

Is this a typically German way of directing?

Yes, very much so. And Peter opposes this German way of directing. People have criticised my language for lacking these degrees of high poetry and lower prose

passages, but this is the way in which Peter directs and has his actors say their lines. *In his book Subsequent Performances Jonathan Miller noted that although the meanings of a play will change over time, it is nevertheless easy to detect when a work has been 'denatured' or when the deep structure of its inherent meanings has been dislocated. How do you know when a word or a line in your translation is not 'Shakespeare' or that it has lost contact with the original?*

I don't know. This is an impossible question. It is perhaps easier to feel that something is not Shakespeare, but I cannot say why. How can you say what is and isn't Shakespeare? All I know is that 'Hofmannstreiben' is definitely not Shakespeare! It is perhaps marginally easier to say what isn't Shakespeare. There have been many recent debates about whether Hamlet is fat, as Gertrude says whilst her son is fighting Laertes. I wrote that Hamlet is not 'fit' and this, I think, is still Shakespeare. My word fits the context of the fight scene much better, where 'fat' just makes no sense at all. I mean, perhaps Burbage was fat, but Angela Winkler certainly isn't. So, you have to change the words and yet it can still be faithful to the original.

Zadek translated Othello in 1976 for his production and used 80% of Erich Fried's translation, 10% of Schlegel's translation, several lines from Eschenburg and two lines from Rothe. Afterwards he realised that what he had created was a monster. Do you think there is a danger in mixing translations?

You would have to ask Zadek about that. Zadek had a problem, because he initially intended to use Schlegel's translation and then realised that it was too dated. He started to work with Erich Fried on a new translation, but Zadek wasn't very happy with the way Fried translated. He said that the translations read like poems, and indeed Fried is a very good poet, but the texts were not right for the stage. You could celebrate his translations as poems, but you couldn't play or act them. Fried's translations were a little pompous and Zadek could not use them. This is why he felt it necessary to alter the translation. Fried also shared this concept of translation that was common in the sixties that everything had to be explained. He had to explain everything and unravel the metaphors and Peter again felt that this was too German. Fried does not have much authority nowadays in the theatres, perhaps only in Austria, where this very pompous style is still very much alive.

Do you have a final word for your detractors?

German critics write pages and pages in which they describe the play, but they always take an interest in the work of the director and completely forget about who provided the language bridge from English into German, which for me is the most interesting part. It is just a pity that most reviewers of plays in translation forget that what they are hearing is precisely that: a play in translation, not the play itself.

Reinhard Palm (Zürich: 24 October, 2000)

Why did you feel it necessary to translate Hamlet?

Quite simply because I wasn't happy with the existing translations. All translations have weaknesses. Every translation of *Hamlet* and of Shakespeare's other plays is really good, but each in a different aspect. In the romantic scenes Erich Fried is almost always better than in the plebeian scenes. Frank Günther was certainly more contemporary in the language of the plebeian characters than Erich Fried in the seventies. Every translator has excelled in just one element of Shakespeare's art. I wanted to be as good in every aspect of Shakespeare.

Was your Hamlet translation commissioned by Uwe Erich Laufenberg for the production in Zürich in 1998?

No, I began *Hamlet* at the same time as *Twelfth Night*, and I spent four years working on those plays between 1989 and 1993. They were not translations that were written either on commission or under the pressure of having to produce the text for a production. You need a great deal of time to translate *Hamlet*; it can't just be done to order. I did, however, write my translation of *Measure for Measure* on commission, but that was the only one. My version of *Hamlet* was finished and had in fact been lying around in my study for about three years. Laufenberg liked it and decided to use it in his production and asked me to translate *Measure for Measure*, but that is not the way I usually work.

Laufenberg used many lines from Heiner Müller's Hamletmaschine in his production, which were incorporated into your translation. Why did he not simply use Müller's translation of Hamlet from 1976?

I rate Heiner Müller above all modern Shakespeare translators, but Laufenberg felt his translation of *Hamlet* to be somewhat musty and too dusty. The problem with Heiner Müller is that he was translating under a very different impetus and packed a lot of concealed criticism into his translation. The conflict in which Müller was living at the time has become less acute, and so his translations now sound a bit stuffy, rather like an un-aired room. But for me, Heiner Müller is one of the best *Hamlet* translators, if not the best. Laufenberg built the *Hamletmaschine* because he didn't want the audience attaching too much importance to the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy. The educated classes in Switzerland would all have been sitting on the edge of their seats waiting to see how 'To be or not to be' would be spoken. Laufenberg wanted to take away this pressure both from the actor playing Hamlet and indeed from the production as a whole. The elitist audience would have compared the speech to the way Joseph Fiennes or Wil Quadflieg had spoken it. In order to remove this pressure, Laufenberg had all of the characters utter the famous line at different points in the play. The effect was very comical and it liberated the production. The audiences were also liberated, because they no longer had the stress and the pressure of having to judge the actor and his lines. It's the same with *Faust*, where everybody waits for the Easter promenade scene or Gretchen's monologue when she finds the

jewellery box. I think it is important that a director take this Olympian pressure off the actor, so that the audience does not become obsessed with who speaks the lines the best and performs the role the most beautifully.

Could you say something about your translating methodology?

I work from the Arden Edition and use the footnotes quite a lot. I rarely consult any other English editions, because I do not want to get involved in English philology, but I do still want to keep up to date with editorial research. I don't take a great interest in the history of the editions themselves. I tend to translate straight from the English text. *Twelfth Night* was an interesting case. It is hard to believe that the language of Olivia and of Sir Toby is from the same pen. I have often considered, just as an experiment, having the play translated by two different dramatists with diametrically opposed styles. I would have the court scene and the romantic world of Olivia translated by Botho Strauss, and the comic scenes by Peter Turrini or Frank Xaver Krötz, both of which write in a very coarse and plebeian style. When I translated *Twelfth Night*, I tried to recreate the style of these writers and produce the extreme effect produced by the clash of styles that one finds in this play.

Do you always have the classic translations of Schlegel and Tieck at the back of your mind when you are translating?

Yes, and when you work in the theatre, you become very familiar with their translations, especially the more central lines of the plays. Theatres continue to use the older translations because they do not have to pay any royalties, and so there will always be lines from Schlegel-Tieck ringing in a translator's ears, when he or she attempts to re-translate a line. When I began *Twelfth Night*, all I could hear was the first line from Schlegel: 'Wenn die Musik die Liebe Nahrung ist', and I could not think of anything else and it prevented me from finding my own version.

Did you consult any other translations before you began your own versions?

No, I tend to stick to the original. I do not analyse existing translations, but try to focus on what Shakespeare wrote. But I did have one translation of *Hamlet* that I drew on as a parallel text, and that was the one written by Theodor Fontane, and I think that this one is a very good translation. I even showed it to Laufenberg and suggested that he might want to use it. Of course, it is marked by the language of the nineteenth century, but I think it is one of the most accurate translations in its interpretation of the source text. I also value the formal aspects of the text, but I do not become obsessed with producing a philologically precise translation. I leave that to the scholars. It often happens that I don't even read the play before I translate it. I just dive straight in, as was the case when I translated *The Winter's Tale*. I knew the play in German, but I didn't embark on a great analysis of the text before I translated it. As a rule, I translate the text, check it twice, and then read it a third time to edit it and that's it.

Do you believe the Schlegel-Tieck translations can and should be improved and superseded?

Absolutely. They are even erroneous in parts and they definitely must be improved. They are highly conservative, especially when it comes to the sex and brutality in the Shakespearean text. The goings-on between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew create a violent and positively sadistic scenario, but to them it is just a bit of fun.

Do you see the Schlegel-Tieck translations as serving any function?

Yes, of course. They have a positive role to play as instruments, which form the canon of Shakespeare in German.

These classic translations are still regarded by many as definitive. Do you nurture any hope when translating that your own versions will stand the test of time and achieve a canonical status?

Oh no, that would be too presumptuous. Translating is the most precise form of reading and that is just what I do. I read the texts. If a word in the original text is monosyllabic, then I try to translate it into German using a monosyllabic word, and I also prefer masculine to feminine line endings, and try to keep the same number of syllables. My translations are quite popular because they are concise and not gossipy and do not have any baroque adornments. They have this monosyllabic force that you find in Shakespeare's language. In 'To be or not to be, that is the question,' the word 'question' is the only one in that line that is polysyllabic. Moreover, it is Latinate in origin. All of the others are of Germanic origin. That is the thing that draws me to translating Shakespeare: these ancient Germanic languages are connected to the intellectual Latin language creating a mixture of instinct and intellect. This is what I try to transport into German, which no German translation has successfully managed to achieve so far. This conflict between instinct and intellect is contained in the very lexicon of the language and it forms the essence of the English language. Monosyllabic instinctiveness and polysyllabic intellectuality are a force within Shakespeare's language that needs to be adequately transmitted in German. Because all other translators have so far failed, I see it is as my task to continue translating and trying to capture this element of the original works.

But I feel that Hamlet is difficult to translate, because we are so uncertain about how we are to respond to the work, rather than just the surface problem of 'translating' the language.

Yes, I would agree. *Hamlet* is not the sort of play where you reach a point at which you can say you have understood it. As far as I am concerned, the Closet Scene does not admit any kind of interpretation. The whole dialogue in it is a mystery, and I have never seen it produced in a convincing way. It is always reduced to the simplistic Oedipal situation, which I find extremely unsatisfactory.

Would you say that the Closet Scene was just a problem of interpretation for us, or was it also a problem for Shakespeare?

I believe it is a deeper problem of Shakespeare's original creation, a problem even in the dramatic event as Shakespeare designed it.

Does this mean that you will simply delete any scenes in the text from your translation if you feel that they malfunction dramatically?

No, I translate integrally. Any cuts must be made by the director. All my translations are complete. It is the same with the Gravedigger Scene, which I have never liked, because it seems to take away so much of the play's impetus dramatically at the end. However, the resolution in *Hamlet* is also strangely connected with this long scene. It is the same in *Twelfth Night* with the exorcism scene, in which the devil is driven out of Malvolio. This type of scene always seems to have a retarding effect on the finale, and I always feel that the story could be brought to a close more expeditiously without it. But this moment of anarchy in the representation of events is also part of Shakespeare's genius, and so it has to be translated, even if one thinks the scene serves no function dramatically. I always provide a complete translation based on the Arden Edition and do not get involved with the discussion about which lines belong in the Quarto and which in the Folio, and which edition uses which.

Elisabeth Plessen has written that she does not like to translate riddles, and that the translator should try to solve them, since there seems to be no point in translating something you do not understand. Do you agree with this statement?

No, because Plessen is also interpreting Shakespeare's riddles. I have an optic metaphor for this kind of thing, which I call the 'prismatic style'. The translator shines a light through a prism, when he translates the text, and this ray of light is broken up into the colours of the spectrum. The translator sends a kind of translation ray through a word and then he can also control which colours we see. Words have a range of senses, which they can cover, and I attempt to find an equivalent word in German that corresponds with this range of the spectrum of meaning. For example, I could translate Shakespeare's 'horse' with either *Gaul* or *Roß* in German, but if I read 'horse' in the original, I will translate that as *Pferd* and will not consider whether to interpret Shakespeare's intention as *Roß* or *Gaul*. I do not believe that Elisabeth Plessen has found the conclusive meaning of *Hamlet*. No one can do that. Plessen has interpreted the play and deleted potentially contradictory meanings. There are many directors who cut lines rather foolishly because they cannot understand them. As a translator, I can afford to translate a riddle as a riddle. Even when things are not clear in the original, they can still be translated. There are levels of abstractness and imprecision in German that can be used when meaning is obscure in the English text. If a word tends to hover between meanings in English, then I must find a word that does the same in German.

And because the wordplay and the humour of Shakespeare's text are perhaps no longer so acute, sex and death becoming increasingly less taboo, do you as a translator have to revive dated humour with contemporary references?

No, I try to transmit the comic level of the source text as it stands in the original. Of course there are jokes that have become pale with time, but I do not try to improve what Shakespeare wrote, or make him funnier. Shakespeare's language has been beautified so much in translations that there is great scope to produce new effects by brutalising the text and making it somehow more dangerous or unpleasant.

Do you think it is important for spectators to know in advance which translation they will be hearing in a Shakespeare production?

No, not at all.

But the audience can hear which translation is being used on stage, and whether it is an older or a more modern version?

Certainly. Especially where the German language has an old word that has been superseded by a more modern one, such as *Oheim* and *Onkel* (uncle). But the play must be kept fresh and exciting. It is really up to the director and actors what they do with the language and whether they choose to deform the language of the translation, which has also happened to me. The ring-monologue in *Twelfth Night* contains two or three complicated thought processes, which must all be conveyed in the translation. I think it is a sign of weakness, when an actress cannot handle the language of the translated text and deforms it. The audience then begins to feel that the language of the original work is not very good and they lose interest. It is very important that there is a level of understanding between the stage and the audience.

What do you think about modern translators' work, such as Frank Günther's?

I find Günther's translations very arrogant and too wide-meshed. The way he translates is like trying to catch sardines in a wide-meshed net. He lets so many possibilities slip through the net, and nuances that he is unable to catch. I find his approach coarse and crude and rather disrespectful, especially in his handling of the content of the plays, and that troubles me. It is a very sloppy way of translating and not accurate enough. It's certainly not what Shakespeare's language deserves. Some lines and rhymes demand that the translator be a little freer in his rendering, but Frank Günther gets carried away with a lot of the wordplay, which loses touch with the original. German often does allow the possibility of remaining close to the original and yet preserve the same playful qualities and wit, and so it is a shame to depart from the original.

Günther's translations are read and regarded as authoritative in many German schools. Do you see it as a problem that school children are perhaps not getting the best first impression of Shakespeare's work?

Thankfully it is not my problem. The next generation has to deal with that, if this is the sort of impression they are getting of Shakespeare. For eighty years people thought that eating spinach was good for you, because it contained a lot of iron. Generations of children were forced to eat spinach until they realised that it was an error in the nutritional calculation. It's always the same. If school children are really getting a lasting impression of Shakespeare through the translations of Frank Günther, then I think this is a sad state of affairs.

It seems to me that Günther's translations receive a lot of support from the German Shakespeare Society and that they have helped to popularise the translations to a certain extent.

Yes, but the Shakespeare Society is an extremely dubious club. Apart from the expensive yearbooks, which nobody ever reads, they really only produce a lot of 'after-criticism'. As far as I am concerned, the Society is a completely superfluous institution and I do not set much store by it. As far as popularisation is concerned, I'd be very surprised if Frank Günther's popularity depended on the Shakespeare Society. They tend to hang on his popularity because they themselves are too weak to form their own opinions. It is a very incestuous association, which seldom makes its own decisions.

You have recently used Wolfgang Swaczynna's translations of the history plays for the adaptation 'Blutspuren' at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich. How do you rate Swaczynna's work?

I find his translations very good actually. The language he uses is not entirely modern and the translations have a literary quality. At some points in the text I think he translates in a style that is a little too literary for the stage. A translation for the theatre must have 'Direktheit', but apart from that, I rate Swaczynna's translations very highly. Normally I don't make statements on the translations of colleagues, either in the press or in academia.

Neither of you has published your translations. Does this not impede their popularisation?

Of course I would prefer as many readers as possible to read my translations and for my versions to be used in theatres. But my translations are not easy to read, because Shakespeare is not easy to read. Although most readers find Günther's translations very readable, he is nothing more than a simplifier. He makes everything so easy.

Do you think there are differences between how a young audience and an older one expect Shakespeare to sound in German?

I am very familiar with the audiences in Zürich and have always worked in cities where there is a strong educated class, and when they come to a Shakespeare production, they expect to hear classical language. Dirty jokes or coarse and sadistic

humour are always risky with an older audience, where it is safer to give them the beautified language of Schlegel. But I don't believe this is a problem for younger audience members, as Shakespeare has been popularised in films and especially by Hollywood. *Shakespeare in Love* is a wonderful script by Tom Stoppard. I think it is a positive thing that Shakespeare as a myth has been popularised in this way.

You also break down the myth of Shakespeare in German. Is it part of your translating policy to change familiar expression from Schlegel such as altering Hamlet's 'fraglich' to 'befragbar' ('questionable' shape) and his description of Polonius as 'Fischhändler' to 'Fischzüchter' ('fishmonger')?

Yes of course. If a word or expression has acquired a proverbial status based on an erroneous translation, then naturally I will re-translate it. I do not go out of my way to preserve the familiar lines from Schlegel just so that they will be recognisable.

Do you feel that Shakespeare thus lacks any stable linguistic identity on the German stage given the many ways that he has been translated?

The multitude of translations is a kind of rumour in German theatres that Shakespeare exists. As far as my translations are concerned, I offer more than a rumour because my versions get closer to Shakespeare.

But all translators say that.

They can't, because they are not so close to Shakespeare.

You have translated eight of Shakespeare's plays so far. Do you have plans to translate others?

I will certainly continue my negotiation with Shakespeare in German. Sooner or later I see myself translating *Richard III* and perhaps also the *Henriad*.

Wolfgang Swaczynna (Berlin: 29 October, 2000)

When did you first begin translating Shakespeare?

I began translating Shakespeare when I was still at school, even before I began my 'Abitur' [A-Levels]. I had a go at translating some parts of *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*, and that was over forty years ago. When I left school, I became an actor and the first drama of Shakespeare's I played in was *Measure for Measure*, which was in the translation of Hans Rothe. The director was Brandenburg, who had used Rothe's translations a lot in the 1920s and 30s. At first I was annoyed, as I didn't think it was a very good translation, but slowly I realised that this text can be spoken and played so much better than Baudissin's version. It was during the rehearsals for this production that I started to translate the play myself. My translation of *Measure for Measure* has been used repeatedly in theatres, most recently in Würzburg in 1993. When I read Shakespeare at school, it was always in English, so I had little knowledge of the Schlegel-Tieck translations and no real desire to improve the texts. The main stimulus that began my career as a translator were the translations of Rothe and the English originals. I wanted to combine the speakability of Rothe's versions with greater linguistic accuracy.

Can you describe the climate in Germany for translators after the War?

After the War there was a need for classical-sounding plays, though Bochum was of course the exception. There they mixed translations of Wieland and Eschenburg with a lot of Rothe's adaptations. The poet Erich Fried also became famous for his translations in the 1960s, especially for his version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Fried was my biggest competitor at that time, but I soon noticed that he was not a good translator. He wrote very fine poetry, but his translations are hardly worth discussing. His lyrics, which were modern at the time, contrasted terribly with his very conservative translations that sounded like Schlegel's. We were fully aware that Shakespeare's plays had no act or scene divisions or copious stage directions, but Fried stuck close to the old tradition. Older members of the audience were probably less disturbed by Fried's language, as it was not such a great leap from the romantic quality of Schlegel's translations with which most people were familiar. People used to mix up Shakespeare and Schlegel, but they don't any more. Certainly no one ever complained that my translations didn't sound like Schlegel. I guess the problem with my translations is that they have never been modern enough for the ultra-modern audiences and never old-fashioned enough for the more conservative audiences.

Is there a possibility that audiences may not believe it is the same play of Shakespeare's if the text is changed in a modern translation?

I translated the title of *Dream* as *Ein Mittsommernachts Traum*, rather than the standard *Sommernachtstraum*, because I always believe in translating the titles according to how they are worded in the English rather than following the tradition of translating them according to how they have become standardised in German. This was never a problem for audiences at the time. I did not have the courage to translate

the title of *Romeo and Juliet* literally, but although I used the German name Julia in the title, I kept Juliette in the text. Similarly, I kept the German name Heinrich in the titles of the *Henriad*, but used the English 'Henry' throughout the plays. I became aware of the importance of preserving the English names, rather than Germanising them, when I was translating the *Henry VI* trilogy for the recent adaptation of *Blutspuren* at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich.

Do you make your translations available to the reading public?

In 1964 I signed a contract with the publishing house Bärenreiter Verlag, the head of which was a man called Erich Spiess. This was a very profitable time in my translating career, because I discussed with Spiess very intensively every line, if not every word, of my translations, and the debate was extremely rigorous and highly productive. It was certainly possible to order a copy, but there was really only contact between the publisher and the theatres. I have nothing against my translations being published and read as literature. My translations were used so often in the 1970s that I was able to live off the profits. In 1979 I studied again and became a librarian at the Ibero American Library in Potsdamer Platz. Erich Spiess of the Bärenreiterverlag sold my translations to theatres for a very low price, whereas my present publisher, Krista Jussenhoven, demands more money. I was surprised to hear that the Shakespeare Bibliothek has copies of my translations. I gave a copy of my translation of *Much Ado* to the English Seminar in Berlin, but the Bibliothek in Munich must have ordered other copies of my work.

Do you feel that Frank Günther's translations have become popular because they are so easily accessible through DTV?

Frank Günther's translations are used in many theatres, but it is only recently that his texts have been widely available in bookshops. His translations were only made available to theatres through the publisher Nyssen and Bansemer, and only recently became available to the public through DTV. I would say that Günther is perhaps my biggest competitor at the moment. Theatres still use the Schlegel-Tieck translations or else write their own translations in order to cut costs and avoid having to pay royalties. There seems to be a constellation of reasons why a translator might not be recognised.

How do you feel about the quality of translations of your competitors?

Günther's translations are sometimes very good, and sometimes very strange. I met him at the round-table debate in Vienna in 1988 and we discussed the problems of translating Shakespeare. The debate was published by the Dramaturgische Gesellschaft. The debate was to have consisted of myself, Frank Günther, Michael Wachsmann and Erich Fried, but Fried died shortly before the conference. I often find that Günther, although a very good translator, is too impulsive and makes his decisions too rapidly. His spontaneity is often a positive trait in his translations and has helped to make them very successful, but he doesn't give his translations enough

thought. Wachsmann is the complete opposite. He analyses every detail of the texts scrupulously.

I was told recently by Wolfgang Weiss of the Shakespeare Society that Frank Günther's translations are being studied in many German schools. Are school children getting an accurate first impression of Shakespeare?

I am doubtful that Günther's translations are read so much in the English lessons of German schools. If he is widely studied, then there is certainly a problem if the English teacher does not expose the pupils to the texts in English, or at least to other translations.

Do you think audiences really do notice the difference between various translations of the same play?

Sometimes audiences do notice differences in modern translations, particularly in the famous lines, but normally they don't pay much attention to the translation that is used. They are more interested in what they see on stage. However, I did notice that a few lines from Thomas Brasch's *Richard II* sounded odd. I think this might leave audience members wondering if this is an accurate translation of what Shakespeare wrote in English. Generally though, audiences couldn't care less if it is a translation by Maik Hamburger, Heiner Müller, or whomever. It is better not to over-emphasise this problem. Audiences do not analyse plays linguistically and are indifferent to how it has been translated.

Do you write translations with the intention that they should stand the test of time like the Schlegel-Tieck versions?

I would of course like my translations to be canonised, but I think that audiences should never forget that they are listening to a translation, not to the original. I'm sure a translator always hopes that his translation will last, and I try not to use language that ages very quickly, but in a hundred years there will be different audiences with new forms of language. Today everyone seems to be using the words containing *geil* and *knack*, so I have tried to incorporate these new words into my translations to keep them contemporary.

You mentioned that you are now looking over some of your earlier translations in order to update them. What has changed since you first wrote them?

I have changed. I have translated thirty of Shakespeare's plays now and have acquired a greater sensitivity to Shakespeare's language in that time. A translation is never finished and compromises always have to be made, but they can be made in different ways at different times. When I was younger, I was much bolder and translated very freely. Now I am much more industrious and interested in the complexities of the language. I was very impressed by the work of the GDR translators, and in my translations the sort of language I use has certainly been influenced by the work of

Brecht and Hacks, who used very concise formulations, dialect expressions and lines that had great *Direktheit*. I learned from Hacks just how speakable dramatic language can be.

In a recent production of Hamlet at the Staatstheater in Kassel, the director Armin Petras kept a lot of the English lines when he used the translation of Heiner Müller. Would you ever consider leaving certain lines in English, given German audiences' increasing familiarity with the English language?

No, I would never advocate the use of English in translations of Shakespeare. It would sound too much like a mannerism. It is permissible to keep the text as a whole in English, but not to mix the languages. It would only irritate or amuse the audience to hear English in a German translation.

How did your translation of Hamlet come about?

My *Hamlet* translation was commissioned for a production in Würzburg in 1971, which was used at the Salzburger Festspiele with Wil Quadflieg in the title role. My translation has proven to be very popular and was used throughout the seventies and eighties and more recently in Regensburg in 1991 and in Esslingen in 1997.

Where did you look for the 'text' of Hamlet before you began to translate?

I use copies of the first edition of the Q1 and F (Penguin 1962), which contain the old punctuation. I also read Dover Wilson's New Cambridge edition of *Hamlet*, which is very exciting and authoritative. He was a man who understood the theatre. Punctuation gives a text its rhythm. *Much Ado* is completely broken up with commas, which means that the speeches have to be read very fast and without pauses. The lines all run over without full stops and should not be broken up. The *gestic* quality of the language is also important. It forces us to perform the language in a particular way.

Do you feel that Hamlet as a dramatic form creates problems for the translator?

Yes. I would say the Closet Scene is perhaps the most problematic in the whole of *Hamlet* because the three texts of the play interpret this moment differently. The First Quarto places more stress on the Queen, who admits that she made a mistake, but that she played no part in the murder of her husband, whereas the Folio treats the Queen very differently. It is only really in Q1 that Gertrude becomes a real character in her own right, but in the Folio and in the eclectic English editions, she is always pale and incomplete, since so many important details are left out. That poses a very real problem for the translator.

The translator Reinhard Palm mentioned recently that he found the Gravedigger Scene to be one of the most problematic, because it seems to slow the action down at

the end of the play, and that the form as a whole shows that Shakespeare was having problems with this work.

Palm as a man of the theatre should understand how important 'interruptions' are. such as Malvolio's exorcism scene in *Twelfth Night* and the Gravedigger Scene in *Hamlet*. It would be impossible to have three hours' uninterrupted tragedy. Some comic relief is necessary. Shakespeare's secret is in his timing, his arrangement of moods and the balancing of atmosphere, all of which have to be timed to perfection. The Gravedigger Scene is charming and does not interrupt the plot. I feel that the dialogue between Hamlet and Horatio is in the wrong place and I have moved it, but the Gravedigger Scene is calculated quite exactly to achieve maximum dramatic effect in the last scenes of the play.

You seem to solve the cruces and riddles of the text in your translation. Does this mean that you do not believe Shakespeare to have incorporated a mysterious element into the idiom of the play?

I think *Hamlet* is actually one of the easiest plays to translate. *The Winter's Tale*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Othello* reveal Shakespeare's language as becoming ever more concise and dense. These plays are terribly difficult to translate.

You have also interpreted Hamlet's flesh as 'befleckt' (sullied) rather than solid.

Yes of course. Hamlet could not have been talking about 'solid' flesh. It doesn't make any sense and, besides, solid flesh cannot melt. Hamlet was talking about his sullied flesh.

You seem to be very sure of that.

I am. I cannot interpret it any other way. Later, when Hamlet tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he can tell a 'hawk from a handsaw', he is clearly telling them that he can tell the difference between good and bad people, so I understood both words to be references to birds, the hawk being the bird of prey, and the second a bird preyed on. I thus translated them as 'Reiher' and 'Habicht'.

Do you not allow for the possibility that Hamlet wanted to give the King's spies something intangible to take back to Claudius, or at least evidence of his disturbed mind?

No, I think Hamlet wanted Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to understand him, so there is no mystery there.

Also in this dialogue Hamlet tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he has given up all kinds of 'exercises'. Elisabeth Plessen translated this with 'Körpertraining', which has connotations of body-building, and Frank Günther opted for

'Hofmannstreiben', a nonce word that implies courtly pursuits. You understood this as 'Tätigkeiten' or 'activities'.

I believe Hamlet is talking about riding and fencing and other general activities, which he has now given up, and this possibly suggests that Hamlet has become lethargic. This could be important later when the Queen says that he is 'fat'. I translated this as 'wet and out of breath', but maybe Hamlet really has put on weight due to his lack of exercise. The problems surrounding Hamlet have arisen because so many people have tried to interpret it. The play is actually a very simple and compelling thriller. The third soliloquy, 'To be or not to be', is a slow and meditative speech, which comes at a point in the play when Hamlet has already left behind that tendency to philosophise that he brought back with him from the university. So this soliloquy needs to come immediately before Hamlet's dialogue with Polonius in the second act.

I believe Hans Rothe also rearranged this soliloquy in order to make the plot more fluid and less disjointed.

That's right, and indeed it was Hans Rothe's translation, which first gave me the idea. Kleen produced *Hamlet* in Coburg in my translation, which was a school production. The play lasted over three hours and gripped the children's imagination in a way I had never seen before. Hamlet's character is complex but not limitless. His problem is that he thinks he is unable to explode and he curses himself at the start of the play, because of this inability, but in fact he can explode, as we see when he kills Polonius. The play is not at all unfathomable. Just because Shakespeare read Montaigne, people think *Hamlet* is bursting with philosophical truths. It is annoying to hear Zadek's production, as he fails to convey the full text and the result is lame. One should not be afraid of using the text to create an effect on stage.

But if the text of Hamlet can be understood, interpreted, and translated in so many different ways, where is the continuity and the connection between these various manifestations?

The original work will always contain more than any translation. That translations have nothing in common with one another and no connection with the original is probably over-emphasised. There is actually very little difference between the various translations of *Hamlet*.

Do you have any plans to continue translating Shakespeare?

Last year I was producing translations for *Blutspuren* in Zürich. Langhoff had produced *Henry IV* at the Deutsches Theater in my translation, so my publisher sent him my translation and Langhoff accepted it, having rejected all the other translations including Frank Günther's. The director of *Blutspuren* had seen my translation of *Henry IV* at the Deutsches Theater and wanted all of my histories, but I had not translated *Henry VI*. I only had one year so I interrupted all of my other translations and translated the trilogy in twelve months. I have translated three quarters of *King*

John and I still have to do *All's Well*, *Timon of Athens* and *Cymbeline*. After that I will translate the adaptations: *Henry VIII*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Pericles*. On average, I need about one year to translate a play. If I am still alive after that I will translate Marlowe, Jonson and Webster.

Maik Hamburger (Berlin: 30 October, 2000)

Do you feel that it is important to German audiences to know in advance of a production whose translation it is?

No, they're not interested. They don't even know that it has been translated. I was in the Bremer Shakespeare Company one day for the opening of one of my translations and my wife said to the woman sitting next to her, 'My husband has to go up onto the stage now, because he did the translation,' and she said, 'No. What do you mean he did the translation? I've had the translation in my cupboard at home for years and years.' Most people think the translation is the original.

Who do they think wrote the translation?

They don't think about it at all. The general impression is gradually changing, of course, with the growing opening towards the English language, but until about twenty years ago certainly everyone who read Schlegel-Tieck thought he was reading Shakespeare. They say for example that *Shakespeare* said: 'O schmelze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch,' and for them that is Shakespeare. You even see it in literary articles where people quote subtle or controversial passages and their proof is 'Shakespeare said...', and then they quote Schlegel-Tieck. It has become so much part of German mentality to think of this as Shakespeare, or that Shakespeare was German, that the consciousness of a new translation has certainly become important in theatrical circles, but in the general public I don't think it has become a vitally important issue.

The Schlegel-Tieck translations have become canonical, but are they likely to lose this status for future generations?

There's a growing divergence between the literary and theatrical traditions. It is one of the problems of having a classical author in a foreign language, because there are hundreds of quotations, which become known in a certain canonical translation. These quotations that have been known in English and repeated in English for four hundred years, have remained the same, and you can always count on them as a basis of communication. In another language there is a certain resistance to that, because once you have got used to these quotations, you don't like to change them. They become set in your mind and are part of your spiritual makeup, and these quotations remain, such as 'Sein oder nicht Sein, das ist hier die Frage'. I think this line had already been changed by Fontane. The point is that the Schlegel translation has survived, because it is so good, and I'm talking about Schlegel as distinct from the translations of Dorothea Tieck and Baudissin, which are more problematic. But Schlegel is a monument of German literature and one of the great creations of the romantic literary movement in Germany. As such, it survives as a piece of language even if it isn't any more so interesting as a theatrical text, hence the divergence.

Does this mean that we are reading Schlegel's texts as translations of Shakespeare or as works in their own right?

It's difficult to separate, because it is Schlegel's work, but Shakespeare is behind it all. The basic problem is not so much that Schlegel got some of the meanings of the words wrong. One problem of Schlegel's translations for us today is the general romantic literary attitude with which they were written, but even that I would subsume under the problem of the theatrical context. I think Schlegel was able to write this romantic translation in this way, because he was not aware of what a theatre needs and what an actor needs. He didn't realise the physical connotations of the text, which Shakespeare, of course, put in naturally, being an actor himself in this great theatre of his. Schlegel saw this as literature and he found a wonderful literary form for it, but he didn't see the theatrical qualities. His translations are good for rhetoric and declamation, but the way they tell an actor what to do physically are elements that Schlegel was not able to see, because he wasn't working with the theatre. There was no national theatre that could have done Shakespeare's plays. The theatre, as you know, was art for a coterie, for dukes' courts and so on. There were certain rules for a theatre, which had been derived from Gottsched and Goethe to create a very fine, decent, noble and elevated theatre without any of the plebeian contributions. Schlegel translated Shakespeare without seeing this element as an important factor in the text itself, and also the plebeian aspect of the acting profession. The plebeian elements of the plays act as a communicative leap to audiences, who are immediately affected by what's happening and who do not have to make great intellectual efforts in order to be able to understand them. This is a sub-language in Shakespeare's text, which none of the classical translators could understand.

Not even Goethe was willing to use Schlegel's translations and initially they were not popular, only later reaching this supreme position within the canon as it was developing.

Goethe regularised Schlegel. If he didn't like Schlegel, it wasn't for the reason that he saw deficiencies in his translations. On the contrary, Schlegel was already too wild for him and he wanted to have his nice five-act play, so he regularised the translation in his productions and Schiller did the same in his own adaptations of Shakespeare in Weimar, but he went too far the other way. In his writings on Shakespeare Goethe is always praising the dramatist's wild nature, but in his theatre he liked to have everything nice and artistically organised. So he wasn't critical of Schlegel for the right reason. At some point, probably in the twentieth century, Schlegel's translations did become canonical, but initially there was a backlash against Schlegel. He wasn't totally accepted in his day, and there was also Voss doing a translation that was contrary to Schlegel's, but Voss didn't really survive, whereas Schlegel did. I think Schlegel's canonisation also had to do with the industrialisation of the book market. You had to have the complete volumes in nicely leather-bound books and with the pages edged with gold, the sort of thing you would display on your bookshelf, something which is sacrosanct and which is legitimated as a monument of literature. It was the bourgeoisie in the *Gründerzeit* that wanted this, so the translations of Schlegel-Tieck were canonised also by the people who needed something to display on their bookshelves.

Do you think that Frank Günther's success in publishing his translations is helping to push his texts towards achieving canonical status?

DTV commissioned a number of well-known German Shakespeare scholars to write the afterwords to each of Frank Günther's translations for a good fee, so Günther immediately had practically all the German Shakespeare prominence on his side. That is one reason why you would get such a solid backing for his translations amongst Shakespeareans, which you generally don't find. You generally find that Shakespeareans aren't so sure in their opinion about what a translation would be like; it's not their problem, really. If they are real Shakespeareans, they work with the English text, of course. The German text is only a subsidiary interest for them.

Is it simply the case that the translations of Schlegel-Tieck are suited more to the page than the stage?

I wouldn't say that at all. I would say that they are the best texts for the theatre and also the best texts for reading. May be people's reading habits need to be changed. You can read Schlegel as eloquent poetry, but if you read a good modern translation, I think you get more involved in the theatrical side of the play, and you would yourself act out the various parts and feel what they were doing and what they were saying. But the other side of it is that modern translations generally don't have the standard of Schlegel, and that's quite a different matter. The level that a good modern translation could achieve would be far superior for today's readers than Schlegel's verse.

Achim Freyer recently used Schlegel's translation of Hamlet for his production at the Berliner Ensemble, which sounded very beautiful and yet it appeared that the actors were using this antiquated translation to declaim their lines and create a patina effect.

Yes, but you have to remember that Freyer is a painter. He is not an actor and he is not really a theatre man. He became famous as a set designer and as a professor of art. We discovered Freyer for the stage in 1965 when we did O'Casey's one-act plays. Freyer up till then was only known as a painter and didn't know anything about the stage. We got him to do the set for these plays, and then he got more and more involved in the stage, but as a designer. He did some wonderful designs, but, of course, the effect is a visual one in his theatre. Then he started directing operas and plays and you still see the hand of the visual artist. He makes good pictures and arrangements. He arranges the actors in a way that they are visually exciting, but he is not so interested in the way that an actor expresses himself through his body, the physical part of acting that Brecht called the 'Gestus'. So his productions are prominent, because of their visual effect, the atmosphere that comes across. He probably wouldn't understand the theatrical commitment in Shakespeare's text. I saw his *Hamlet* and I thought it was very interesting. He was probably right to use Schlegel's translation. Everyone is a clown in the plot and there is this typical figure of stumbling over your own feet and being physically unable to carry out what you want to do. This is applied to all figures, not only Hamlet, but Claudius and the Queen and everybody. What Freyer does is to contrast this with the sublime and

subtle language of Schlegel's poetry. The effect is that these people are talking terrific poetry and then they're stumbling over their feet all the time, so it gets the contrast. But I don't think that's what Shakespeare really meant when he wrote *Hamlet*. Freyer's production is fine in its own terms, since it's a new interpretation. Shakespeare is amenable to everything, and as long as the effect at the end is a convincing one, then it's okay. But I wouldn't cite that as an example of Shakespeare's text being used in the most fruitful way.

But if you are saying that there are no better translations than Schlegel's in terms of the poetry, how do you see the way forward for future Shakespeare translators?

No, I'm not saying that. Schlegel's is poetry of the nineteenth century, as is his concept of poetry, and the way the ear receives poetry also changes. I'm saying that Shakespeare's poetry is also imminent in his writing for theatre, in his theatrical connotations, and the poetry is also in there, and you get better poetry, I think, if you follow him in that way.

So there is still room for improvement?

There's always room for improvement. You will never get the perfect Shakespeare translation. You get it may be for the day on which it is made. Then it may be the best that can be done with the language at its present stage and with the present consciousness of art. It is a process of approaching Shakespeare. If you take the good translations, you will probably get closer and closer to Shakespeare, but you never reach him.

You mentioned earlier that 'Gestus' is an important element of the Shakespearean text for translators, but how easy is it to define and quantify this gestic element?

You cannot define it. The best definitions are still the ones that Brecht gave, and it is something that an actor quickly realises and feels. There is an example in *The Tempest*, when Ferdinand comes on and hears all this music from the island and he says: 'Where would this music be? In the earth, in the air...?' Ferdinand uses the subjunctive, because he is not sure of himself; he's feeling for something. It would be different if you said: 'Where has this music come from?' I also translated this line with the subjunctive. It was performed by Friedo Solter, and his Ferdinand came rushing on the stage, brandishing his sword and saying: 'Where would this music be...?' etc., totally contrary to this text, in which I had taken great trouble to get the *Gestus* of Shakespeare. So, even if you have the *Gestus* in the text, the director needn't necessarily use it that way. But that's a matter of interpretation and you could do that in an English production as well. You can never realise the whole content of a Shakespeare play in a production. You have to have an idea why you want to do it and that means that you set different accents. But I think a translator should not think of the director's concept or of changing the accents in any way.

But can you be sure that the 'Gestus' you feel in a line is the same as the way an actor hears the gestic quality?

I think you can. I think you can explain it by acting the lines. You could get a good actor and say: 'These lines to me suggest the following...', and you would act them and that would be convincing. You probably know this television series by John Barton, and he also wrote a book about it called *Playing Shakespeare*, where he worked with a lot of actors, and this is precisely what they do. This group of actors delves into what a text is saying and they try various methods. John Barton has got a very good ear for that sort of thing and says: 'Well, don't you think there is a bit more to say, a more subtle feeling or more temperament...' etc. Although they discuss this from their own standpoints, you realise they are coming to a conclusion, which has a certain kind of objectivity, because they are feeling their way through it very carefully. There are two things: you have to feel what the text is saying and let the text flow into you, and then you have to objectify what you are doing or what kind of actions you are induced to do by this. Obviously this 'too, too' in Hamlet's 'O that this too, too solid flesh would melt' is a double-pounding gesture, and you can really see Hamlet beating his breast. That is obvious in the line. How the actor uses it is another matter, but if you look into the line Shakespeare wrote, there is a syncope which is obviously meant to be there and that is the important *Gestus* in that line. Schlegel is right off the mark with his 'O schmelze doch dies allzu feste Fleisch'.

How do you feel about the use of modern German in a translation of Shakespeare, especially as audiences are expecting to hear language that is old and rather unusual?

I feel that sometimes in a modern translation the attempt to get modern slang into the language is too crass and is highly disturbing

It is interesting that you say the audience is being disturbed by a quality of the translation.

It's disturbing to me, I don't know about to the audience. They might laugh because something sounds out of place, such as a piece of slang or everyday language, and I don't know if that is an effect one should strive for. It depends on the ear that the translator has for the language. If he has a good ear and a fine feeling for language, he can use anything. He can use something that he heard yesterday in the street, but it would be in the right place and it wouldn't stick out like sore thumb so that you can say, 'Ah, here he is being modern'. In *Faust* Gretchen and Mephistopheles sometimes speak very everyday language and slang, but it's all in the right context and creates a wide spectrum of language without being grotesque or funny on purpose.

Hamlet describes to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he has given up all 'custom of exercises', which does not stand out in the English text, but Elisabeth Plessen has translated this as 'Körpertraining' and Frank Günther rendered it as 'Hofmannstreiben'. How do you feel about the choice of these words?

I think both are totally wrong. You have to have a feeling for what sphere of speech a word like 'Körpertraining' comes from. If I were telling you that I used to do a lot of sport, but that now I have lost interest in all that, I would say 'Körpertraining', because it is something specific and it has to do with fitness rooms and riding bicycles. But that would be a joke, but it is not the kind of joke that I would appreciate in *Hamlet*. And the Frank Günther expression, I would say, is very forced. I'm not sure what word we would use there.

'Übungen' perhaps?

Well, that's the normal thing there. 'Übungen' could mean riding or fencing or anything and people know immediately what it is. You know what Hamlet means: he is getting fat. Both of those renderings are examples of what I said. Modern translations have expressions that stick out like a sore thumb. I'm not saying that you couldn't find a modern expression for that. I think 'Übungen' is good, but if somebody else found something better, that would be okay too. But you can't have something absolutely anachronistic like motor cars or bicycles in a translation of Shakespeare's plays. Only the director can do that. You can have Romeo and Juliet and a gang riding on bicycles on stage, but if you are translating Shakespeare, you shouldn't talk about motorcycles.

How do you feel about the translator's use of English forms of address such as 'Mylord', 'Sir' and 'Madam'?

They are not present day expressions. It might have been different in Schlegel's time where you had lots of princes and you could Germanise the titles of people. Doing that today, especially as we do not have the same class structures, Germanising 'My Lord', and 'Sir' would mean putting the translation back in time, whereas 'Mylord' is timeless and they still say 'Mylord' to judges in England.

Is it better to keep traces of English language and culture in a modern translation of Shakespeare's work?

It is not a compliment of a translation to say it doesn't sound like a translation, to say it sounds as though it were written in German. I think you have to have certain signs and certain evidence that it has come from a foreign language. You can use some of the structures and the syntax that a foreign language is able to produce, which the German language does not produce in its normal syntactic use. You can stretch the German language and you can use the foreign language to get the German language to bring out the wider meanings and forms of expression that would not be normal in German. You know about the three distinctions Goethe makes. Of course, a German translation should not sound anglicised or follow the English word order too much, but you often have to do this. If you need a word at the end of a sentence that in German would be in the middle, then you put it at the end of a sentence and you have an inversion, which you wouldn't have in Shakespeare. If you are able to improve the precision of the meaning and the poetry, then you should do that. You shouldn't sit down in your own language like you would sit in an armchair.

So you would advocate Goethe's third method of translating and argue that there should be traces of the foreign text to remind the audience that this work has been taken from another language and culture.

Yes, but again this is not something that should obtrude. If the audience has become aware of it, then you are doing too much. It should be at the level where the audience is just becoming aware of it. This is also a question of acting. I've had people that have read a translation of mine and said: 'This is rather unusual and I don't know why you are expressing it this way.' Then you get an actor that knows how to work with it, and he immediately understands, and people realise why it was written in this way. At the beginning of *Measure for Measure* Shakespeare must have had a reason for writing 'Of government the properties to unfold'. A normal person would have written 'To unfold the properties of government', so why does Shakespeare turn it round? That is again a question of *Gestus*.

In the 1970s there was a group of Shakespeare translators in the GDR including yourself, Heiner Müller and Klaus Tragelehn. You all felt that Shakespeare could best be translated in this socialist climate. Do you still have those feelings now that Socialist East Germany has come to an end?

I don't reject the feelings with regard to our approach to Shakespeare's text. It wasn't a question of Marxist terminology. We were talking about our feeling of the value of human beings and a possible future that one had in mind. Heiner Müller said at some point that he could write blank verse for an East German worker, because they were the subjects of history, whereas in West Germany you couldn't, because they were being used as a product of history, and the facts bore us out. We had drama written in blank verse in East Germany by Heiner Müller, Volker Braun and Peter Hacks, which was good drama and no one in West Germany would think of writing in blank verse, because of the different atmosphere and the attitude that they had to speech. I think a feeling of the value of human endeavour and of a perspective that things were going to progress gave you a feeling of being able to do this. It's also a question of language. You can't just create a language out of nothing. The blank verse that we used in our translations was evolved by Bert Brecht, who was an explosion in the German language. He is the most important thing that has happened in the last hundred years, and he enabled us to see things and to develop techniques of working with blank verse that had been impossible before.

In the interview in Theater der Zeit (1970) Tragelehn cited the example of 'government', which could be translated with 'Staat' rather than 'Regierung' to give certain socialist connotations. Is this just an isolated example or was there really such a thing as an East German translation of Shakespeare?

Isolated words do have this effect, but in general there wasn't a specific language for the GDR, and it did not diverge so much from the language of West Germany after 1945, particularly on that level. An example I had from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was in the Mechanicals' scene, where Pyramus and Thisbe are talking through the wall, and of course I used 'Mauer'. Without being blatantly topical, this was a word that had a gyp to it, whereas if I had said 'Wand', which had been said up to then, it

would have been neutral. In my translation of *Julius Caesar* I used the word 'Parteien' for 'factions' and people got very annoyed about that. The head of the theatre school in Leipzig, who was also a member of the Shakespeare Society and one of the leading lights at that time, said: 'No, you can't say Parteien, that's too topical and it's against the faction.' I said, 'Well, Parteien means 'faction' and that is what it meant in Shakespeare's time, so I am sticking to Parteien.'

How did economic influences affect your translation work in East Germany?

The economic conditions in which we were working were very conducive to being able to delve as deeply as we could into the play to get at as many of the various depths as possible. The fascinating things about Shakespeare's works (some people say it is the ambivalence, but I wouldn't say it's that), are the many, many levels in each play. The ambivalence comes from these levels being in certain ways concurrent but also contradictory to each other. In *Love's Labour's Lost* there are about six or seven levels. I translated this play recently and I did my best to try to get two or three out of a possible five levels, and I was happy if I got that. This is something I have been used to from the beginning, although the *Hamlet* translation I did with Adolf Dresen was done under the pressure of time, because we had to produce it. I have always used a lot of time to do my translations, because I wasn't pressed by dead lines. I try to look into all the levels and make many attempts to reproduce them in the German language. That was possible under GDR conditions and not something that is possible under present day conditions, if you are making a living out of it. I'm fortunate in that I am a pensioner now and I can take my time. I can still apply these old habits I have of taking my time and being as thorough as possible with my command of language and my sensitivity to Shakespeare, in order to get as much as possible out of it. That is something that no present-day translator can afford to do.

Do you mean that translators cannot be thorough?

I'm not saying it is impossible, but you can't if you are making a living like that. Günther, Brasch and Plessen have to do a translation in a certain amount of time, which means that they may not even become aware of certain levels, because they are not going deep enough into it. But the economic situation is not very good for doing thorough translations of that kind, so that mixes up with the socialist ideology factor. Of course Shakespeare was also working for money and he was under the stress of time to do it. But Shakespeare was like Mozart: someone who could think on about ten levels at the same time. Anyone who has tried to reconstruct a Shakespeare play needs more time. If Shakespeare's genius is 100% and we have 0.1% then we need a thousand more hours even to approach it.

Was there a significant difference between the ways theatres in East and West Berlin approached Shakespeare, and is there still a difference a decade after the fall of the Wall?

Yes, there was a considerable difference, although the theatres were aware of each other to a certain extent and would learn from each other. The Wall prevented people

travelling, and particularly there was a difference because the audiences did not intermix. You would possibly get a few West German spectators in an East German audience, but hardly anyone from the East could go and see a West Berlin play, so there was a difference. Now everything is growing together and the differences are getting less and less. The theatres of the East were the Berliner Ensemble and the Deutsches Theater, but the Ensemble did not have a corresponding theatre in the West, because it was uniquely bound up with Bertolt Brecht and his successors. You could possibly say that Peter Stein's Schaubühne might have been a correlative to the Berliner Ensemble.

And is the Ensemble trying to preserve its past and the traditions that developed during its lifetime under the GDR, or is it now moving more towards a western approach to creating theatre?

There were hopes of preserving the past, but they are being dashed. I am not sure if the hopes were legitimate. The Berliner Ensemble had this terrific period with Bertolt Brecht, then after he died it had another ten really good years with Weckwerth and Tenschert, and then it deteriorated. It had a period of upsurge when Ruth Berghaus took it over in the seventies, and then it really declined and became a museum. After the 'Wende' there was an attempt to resuscitate it with a committee of four or five directors: Heiner Müller, Peter Zadek, Fritz Markwart and Matthias Langhoff. This concept of cultural authorities (that if you haven't got one man who is good enough to be the manager of a theatre, then you get five geniuses and have five-fold genius), is just ridiculous, because each individual personality pulls in a different direction and the result is zero. The same thing happened before that in the Schiller Theater where you had the consortium of Alexander Lang, Volker Klaus and Vera Sturm, and this all totally went to pieces. In the Berliner Ensemble after the 'Wende' there might have been a real attempt to get a new renovation of Brechtian thought on Brechtian lines, but in a present-day way. If you had had one man to do that, Heiner Müller, say, then it might have been possible. There was an attempt to do this and they produced a number of Brecht plays, such as *Arturo Ui*, in a very interesting production by Wutke. They did *The Measures Taken*, also an interesting production. There was a start there, but because of this ridiculous situation in the management, and then also because of Müller's death, everything stopped. Then they got Peymann in, who is deliberately obscuring all remembrance of Brecht at the Berliner Ensemble. He's got a play about Brecht in the Repertory, but he has removed all of Brecht's furniture, he has removed all the furniture that Helene Weigel designed for the Green Room, and he's chucked out all of the posters and pictures that were hanging around there. So he's obviously making a clean-cut with Brecht. That tradition is now dead at the Berliner Ensemble. Whether it is legitimate or not is a different matter. You could say that you shouldn't keep a person alive for so long when someone else needs to start. But the Brecht tradition that had more or less evolved at the Berliner Ensemble came to an abrupt end when Peymann took over a year ago.

How has the Deutsches Theater changed since the end of the GDR?

The Berliner Ensemble has changed, but what for me is personally much worse, is what is happening with the Deutsches Theater, because this is of course my theatre

where I worked for thirty years. The Deutsches Theater has this tradition going back to 1803, when it was founded, and when people like Otto Braun worked there. Then Reinhardt took it over and then Hilpert worked there, and there were many artistic profiles working there, but there was somehow a basic concept, which is difficult to define. It has something to do with the humanistic roots, with the belief in Humanism, in educating people and giving an aesthetic experience to people. It is difficult to define, but it's there to see for everybody who knows the Deutsches Theater, and it was preserved, and this is the fascinating thing. It was preserved during the Nazi period by the Intendant, Heinz Hilpert, who had very clear ideas about what art was. He was not a Nazi at all and he got into trouble with Goering all the time. He used hardly any Nazi writers, and if he did, there was no political theatre, so he was able to keep this Humanistic core alive over the Nazi period. Then after the War the Deutsches Theater was taken over by Matthias Langhoff and then by Wolfgang Heinz right up to Dieter Mann. Thomas Langhoff was the last Intendant after the Wende, who was the son of the old Matthias Langhoff. Again during the GDR period there were attempts to make it into a Staatstheater, to make it a consolidating pillar in socialist culture, and again it didn't let itself be suppressed in that way. It kept this flame alive also through the whole of socialism and now, ten years after the change, there is going to be a change of Intendant, which is going to stop all that. It is going to be taken over by a man from the Maxim Gorki Theatre, who ran it quite well. The Gorki Theatre has quite a different profile. If you have a left-tenant, who has done quite well and you suddenly promote him to a general, that is what has happened here. He has become interested in the cultural tradition at the Deutsches Theater, and it is going to be led away from that into a totally different direction. Wilms doesn't know the GDR, and he doesn't know the Deutsches Theater. He only came to Berlin three or four years ago and he has a totally different concept. I don't want to compare it, and I'm not undervaluing it, but it's not the concept that the Deutsches Theater has kept alive for almost a hundred and twenty years. So that is something, which I find very unfortunate. It also has to do with the increasing commercialisation of theatres and with the need to get quick returns, quick reactions, no long-term thinking any more. I think that is something that has annoyed many people about the Deutsches Theater, because they have always thought in the long term when doing productions of the classics. The theatre was concerned about the long-term effect of its productions, about influencing thinking and culture, and as I said, it is basically the same problem for the Shakespeare translator that you are getting a new culture that is based on short term attempts.

Could you explain what the consequences were for your translation and for Heiner Müller's after the court case in 1977?

The Volksbühne under Benno Besson was using our translation of *Hamlet* from 1964, but claiming that it was Heiner Müller's, since he had altered about ten per cent of our translation. We have a recording of the text that was spoken on the stage and this confirms that it was mostly ours. Indeed, Anselm Schlösser also confirmed that the text used was ninety per cent ours. Müller's changes really only affected the written text, so that this became more like Müller's, but the translation was hardly changed at all on stage. Adolf Dresen and I did not want a public scandal. We were not interested in taking the matter to court, since we merely wanted an injunction to ban our translation being used under Heiner Müller's name. The matter was not really one of

plagiarism. Henschel Verlag stated that our translation was the legitimate and proper one and that Müller's was not. If anyone used the text, they would be sued for plagiarism. For the next eight or ten years no theatre dared to use Müller's text for fear of being sued. Our translation became more popular, but of course Müller was a respected dramatist with reputation on his side, and it wasn't long before theatres did start to use his version again. The situation between Dresen, Müller and myself became very awkward and Henschelverlag suggested some sort of reconciliation. The idea was that the programme produced by theatres for their productions should make it quite clear that no translation can be one hundred per cent independent, and that Müller's translation is dependent on the earlier version of Maik Hamburger and Adolf Dresen. Theatres should acknowledge this, and both Dresen and I should receive a proportion of the royalties. As Müller's text became more popular, our version became less so. We often do get royalties, but seldom the acknowledgement, and there are so many theatres performing *Hamlet* and many of them in Müller's translation, that it is impossible to keep track of whether those theatres are acting legitimately and indeed legally. I think also the East-West allegiance plays an important role in this controversy. Theatres using my text tend to have an allegiance to the East, whereas those using Müller's text have an allegiance to the West. There is a lot of commercial exploitation of translations in theatres and no knowledgeable critiques about translation.

How do you feel about Hamlet as a form of art and as a work for translation?

I disagree with T. S. Eliot's thesis that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure. I think Shakespeare exerted his powers to the utmost in the creation of this work and he succeeded. Shakespeare knew exactly what he was doing and he finished the job. Problems of interpretation arise because of textual corruption. We do not know which texts were used or how they relate to each other. Each Shakespeare play has its own body of language and is in a different key, rather like a piece by Mozart. I always believe that a translator has to re-translate the first twenty pages of a Shakespeare play when he has completed it, because it takes so long before the translator has managed to discover this key. If a translator does not do this, then he has not captured the right mood and key. Generally modern translators do not feel for this mood. I admire the translations of Frank Günther and find them to be very witty in parts, but they all sound the same, and Shakespeare's works do not. If you read the first few pages of one of Günther's translations, you have no idea which one it is, because he doesn't reflect that difference in the key of the various dramas, and Elisabeth Plessen does not at all. This is what I have recently attempted to do with my translation of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and I am not entirely satisfied with my version.

Do you translate riddles and cruces from texts such as Hamlet?

In cases such as Hamlet's reference to the 'hawk' and 'handsaw', you find that English philologists cannot decide what the text means, and a translator certainly cannot translate all of the indecision of the philologists. Similarly, we cannot know if Shakespeare meant 'solid' or 'sullied', though I suspect he meant one and not both. I find it very difficult imagining that Hamlet was talking about both solid and sullied flesh at the same time.

What is there that connects all manifestations of Hamlet in productions and translations in the continuing afterlife of the text?

I believe it is the continuity of a specific feeling. The pleasure of art is the pleasure of discovery, it is not a stable, unchanging element of the object itself. We do not have pleasurable feelings from looking at Picasso's 'Guernica', but we do experience new feelings, and the world that is opened up to you and the new feelings that come into your life. It is like when Kepler discovered the motion of the planets. Suddenly he had an epiphany. When you hear, read, see or translate *Hamlet*, it is like a coming out of the dark. Giorgio Strehler once said that you produce a play because of one specific moment in it that speaks to you and offers you this opportunity for discovery. I would agree with this, but add that a play like *Hamlet* is produced because of this continuing discovery it affords. Rather than looking for a stable core in the object of the play, I would look for a continuity of experience, and this is dependent on *Hamlet* and its audiences, not just on the play disconnected from society. You can see when a translator has made an effort or not to translate the text. If the translation is done merely for profit or to hang one's ideas and one's name on, then this is not a translation. In Castorf's *Hamlet* in Cologne the text played almost no part at all. But it is clear when a translator has involved himself with the play and negotiated with the terms of the work. This shows that a discovery has been made and I don't think you can argue with that.

Andrew McKinnon (Glasgow: 16 December, 2000)

Why did you produce the First Quarto of Hamlet at the Nottingham Playhouse in 1983 rather than the longer, received version?

I had always been interested in the First Quarto for two reasons. The first one was because there is a problem about the placing of the Nunnery Scene in the Second Quarto and the Folio, as opposed to the First Quarto. Secondly, it had always struck me that the longer version of *Hamlet* was a very odd play. When I read the First Quarto, I realised it was probably the right play, and I became quite interested in it, and then I read *Fratricide Punished*, and thought it was utterly fascinating. I began to get very interested in the business of cutting down versions of Shakespeare's plays. At that time the scholarly press was printing theatrical editions of the plays with the traditional cuts marked. I got the edition of *Hamlet* and I was stunned by the amount of cuts that there were in the traditional playing of it, so I started to investigate the idea of doing the First Quarto. One of the things that really appealed to me was that it is short. That season at Nottingham was full of very long plays. There was a production of *Mother Courage* and I directed *The Matchmaker* that season as well, which is a play I adore, but it's also a long play. There was an existing promise to an actor in the company that he would play Hamlet, which caused some complications later on, but we decided in the end that we would go with the First Quarto. That was partly because it gave a slightly better range of opportunities to the Ensemble, and also because it didn't cause too many difficulties. Neither Getrude nor Claudius has such big parts in the shorter version, and Corambis is not such a big part either, so it was more a kind of Ensemble thing. These were also pragmatic reasons. I am very interested in William Poel, the pioneer of staging, and he had done the First Quarto. I was interested in doing this version, because of some of the things he had said about it. So that was basically why we did it.

You were driven mainly by practical considerations, and did not want to do a four-hour production?

We could have done the long version, and we were going to, but it was a suggestion of mine that we should do something slightly different. Also, there had been rather a lot of *Hamlets* during those eighteen months or so, as there always are, and so it was quite interesting to have a slightly different twist on it.

Did you find that you had to make a lot of changes to the text of the First Quarto before it was ready to be put on stage?

A couple, but not that many. There was no readily available edition of the First Quarto when we did it, so I had to prepare an acting text, which was then typed up, which I do still have, somewhere. I used the photographic reprint of the First Quarto, and also the Furness Variorum. Apart from minor tidying-up of individual words, I don't remember doing that much. I did leave some things to be solved by the actors, like 'To be or not to be', which is such a mess. And there were a few other things that I planned to change in the theatre during rehearsals. But I did have the idea from the

beginning that the performance would be in two halves. There would be a much longer first half that would end with Hamlet's departure for England, because the Laertes subplot is very much cut down as well in the short Quarto. It is not eliminated completely, but it is very much cut down in the First Quarto. And I quite liked the idea of a longer first half and a shorter second half, and that was the way it worked: it was about an hour and thirty five minutes, and about forty minutes for the second half. But that was it, as far as the changes I made before we started rehearsals.

Roger Warren, in his review of your production in the Shakespeare Quarterly, suggested that you distrusted the plot sequence of the First Quarto, because you had returned the central soliloquy to the middle of the play, and re-incorporated Hamlet's final soliloquy. Is he right?

Yes, he's right. I did include the last soliloquy, but I don't actually remember moving 'To be or not to be', so I'm not sure he is right about that. He's quite right about 'How all occasions do inform against me'. I felt that from the point of view of the actor playing Hamlet, there is such a huge hole in the play if that speech is not included. I think I included it for pragmatic reasons rather than scholastic reasons. It is a very effective end to the first half, and the actor wanted it. I felt that it gave him as an actor the chance to do what he needed to do in the last scene, and to get off the stage with that particular kind of attitude. Warren is right in the sense that that speech was not integral to the First Quarto. But then it wasn't a text for scholars. It was being used for the purposes of a company of actors. I think probably, if I were doing it again, and I were doing the First Quarto, I wouldn't do that. But I am not sure that I would do the First Quarto again. What I would probably do is cut *Hamlet* along the lines of the First Quarto. I would cut the Second Quarto text and use the structure of the First Quarto.

Could you describe the stage design of your production?

There was a permanent stage, because we did five or six plays in repertoire. We did *Coriolanus*, *Mother Courage*, *Candida*, *Hamlet* and a few others that escape me now. The permanent stage was carpeted and had a revolve. The Nottingham Playhouse stage is quite high, and the designer, Hugh Durrant, had the very good idea of having a two-pointed apron, which came right out into the audience and was like a triangle. If you stood at the apex of the triangle to address the audience you were on a sort of narrow platform and there were people sitting on either side. That was the basic set, which was carpeted and had traps in it, and at the back there were two very high walls with lights on top of them, and that was it. I am very interested in the idea of the presence of tradition in the play, and I am very interested in the presence of the father and the grandfather. Anthony Ward and I looked at some wonderful photographs of Bomarzo, which is that garden in Italy. It has grotesque monsters and things in it, and their mouths open up and are the entries to grottoes and caves and the like. Ward had some pictures of that, and I have always wanted to go there. There was also an opera by the Argentinian Ginastera about Bomarzo, which was built by a mad duke, and is like something out of Edgar Allan Poe. So we talked a lot about that and Anthony had also found some photographs of this giant head of Constantine the Great in one of the thousands of courtyards in Istanbul, which are full of ruins. And there was a

wonderful photograph of this giant head with a man standing beside it. So what we ended up with was, on one end of the revolve, a structure that was a column with a huge armed bust of a king and a great sweep of stone-effect fabric coming down to the floor. And that was it. There was no other set, and this just turned for different scenes, and it provided a wonderful place for all the hiding scenes. It was like hiding behind a statue. When we did the Play Scene, the audience on stage was facing this statue and the theatre audience was perpendicular to the stage audience, so it worked quite well. Then in the second act we shifted it. The second half began with the Gravedigger Scene, so we started off with the back of the statue facing the audience, and the graves were traps in the stage floor. Then the stage revolved and all of the other things in front of the statue came into view. It looked great and Ward is a very talented designer. It is possibly a heretical thing to say, but I don't think it is a very satisfying experience to produce *Hamlet*, and I'm sure other directors have felt the same. The experience of directing *Macbeth* is very different. I saw a photograph of Buckingham Palace being sandbagged in preparation for the War, and I thought this would have made a wonderful stage design for a production of *Hamlet*. It would have been a good image for the play, but then I realised that it was too simple.

Was there a large cast of actors?

Yes, there was a very large cast; we had about seventeen or eighteen people in it. And there were six hundred costumes in total.

So there was no doubling in any of the major roles?

No, except for the fact that the Ghost, the Gravedigger and the Player King were all played by the same actor, which I think is a wonderful idea.

Did Hamlet come out to address the audience in his soliloquies, or were the spectators witnessing Hamlet thinking out loud as it were?

I wanted him to talk to the audience, but he couldn't do it, so he ended up talking to the air. This, I thought, considerably diminished the effect of what he did. The man who played Claudius was able to do that very well.

Do you think the First Quarto of Hamlet has any noticeable dramatic advantages over the longer texts?

The text must have been very heavily cut when it was originally done. I think the actors who put together the text of the First Quarto did have a pretty fair idea as to how it was originally played. I would trust their memory of the parts that they played. in terms of the structure, though not of course in terms of the words. That curious little scene where Horatio comes on and explains part of the plot to the Queen is primarily there, because although they knew that structurally there had to be something to explain, they didn't know what it was, because they had obviously been back-stage doing other things. And it's not a famous bit like 'To be or not to be'.

where you can actually imagine them hanging around to hear what was said. It's just a bit of plot-filling. So they brought together two characters, Horatio and the Queen, who in the full text never actually meet, to have a relatively short conversation about that. I thought that a lot of the actual cuts worked very well. Some of them had obviously been made, either because they couldn't remember, or because they had run out of time. One of the things that struck me, though I must say I haven't explored this since, is that I didn't have any of the difficulties that other people have told me they have had with the scenes of Ophelia's madness. There is obviously quite a lot that has been cut out of these scenes in the First Quarto, but the action of the mad scenes was terribly clear. To a degree, and in all productions of Shakespeare this is true, the director's role is not primarily to sort out the positions of the actors, because the text tells you what to do. This was very clear in the shorter version of *Hamlet*, and it was particularly clear with the Ophelia scenes. If I did *Hamlet* again, which I must say I would quite like to do at some time, I would reorganise the text into that structure as far as I could, or I would examine the possibility of doing that anyway, because it flows very well. The instinct of the actors compiling the First Quarto wasn't complete of course, because one of them must have played Voltmand. The whole speech of Voltmand's is word for word completely correct, but it totally throws that scene out of kilter, because after all of these people have been fumbling through the business as quickly as they can, you suddenly get those lines like 'Most fair return of greetings and desires', which go on for twenty five lines. I think the First Quarto is theatrically a very workman-like piece. Some, but by no means all, of the traditional cuts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are direct replications of the First Quarto, though of course they couldn't have known about it, because it wasn't discovered until the middle of the nineteenth century.

It is often felt that the First Quarto is more immediate or direct than the longer versions, but I wonder if this is just because there is a novelty effect to the shorter version that you don't have with the Second Quarto and Folio, which we have been used to for almost four hundred years.

There is a kind of relief when you know you are going to see it. I have only ever seen one other production of it. I think one of the great problems about *Hamlet* is that it is a play that is continually done for no particularly good reason, other than to give a lot of actors the chance to play nice parts. For example the Kenneth Branagh *Hamlet*, which was directed by Adrian Noble, was an utterly appalling experience. It was a very interesting and clever production, but it was very obvious to me that Kenneth Branagh had nothing whatever to say about the part, and he was just doing romantic acting in a lot of costumes, whereas Mark Rylance, in a not very good production by Ron Daniels with some terrible acting, was utterly riveting, because he had an incredibly clear idea about what the play was about. Douglas Hodge, who is a wonderful actor, when he was quite young, played Hamlet in Bolton, which I went to see. He had a very clear idea as to what he wanted to do with the part, and as a result it was an electric evening, though again it wasn't a particularly good production itself, and it certainly wasn't well acted. So, I think one welcomes the knowledge that one is going to see a cleaned version of the play. I think it is true that you come away from all productions of *Hamlet* having noticed something new in the text, and I think that is true of all Shakespeare productions, even if they are terrible. But it is alarming how many productions of the relatively full text you sit through where people just have not

had any ideas. I don't mean new ideas, but any actual ideas at all. I was at a production at the Citizens' Theatre here in Glasgow some years ago, and that is where I saw the production of the First Quarto, which they set in a lunatic asylum. They have produced *Hamlet* four times and the last production looked glorious, but the boy who was playing Hamlet had obviously not been directed in any significant way. He had passion and he was very striking, but he didn't even have the story of the play in his head in any way. So he just came out and did Hamlet and then went back in again. I suppose I do feel about the First Quarto that it is actually much closer to what the Elizabethans might have seen.

So you feel that the First Quarto is in some senses more authentic than the Folio text?

Absolutely. The Folio just has everything. I also think that the First Quarto points to what it was that the Jacobean popular audience actually enjoyed, which is action, good story telling, crisp character, and not hanging about.

The Queen of the First Quarto is less morally ambiguous, and even Hamlet appears to be more straight forward. Do you think that the swift action of this shorter version compensates for what is lost in the complexity of the characters?

No, I don't think it compensates for those of us who are interested in *Hamlet*. I think it might compensate for people who just want to see the play. I have seen maybe forty productions of *Hamlet*, and I find it fascinating to compare productions. I am going to see Simon Russell Beal's production in London next month and also Peter Brook's, because I am interested in productions, but it is different if you just want to go and see the play.

And clearly Shakespeare was also writing for different audiences?

It is quite possible that there were different versions of the play for different audiences, bearing in mind that the company, certainly after 1600, was playing simultaneously, and playing some of the same repertoire in two completely different theatres to completely different audiences. And, of course, some of the plays were written especially for the more intimate indoor candlelit theatres, but some of the plays were played in both. It would be interesting to see whether there were two different versions of a play written for different audiences.

It is difficult to know whether these plays were adapted for different audiences with Shakespeare's consent, or collaboration.

I think we have to assume that they didn't have his consent, such as the issuing of the First Quarto, and I think it is very possible that he wanted to preserve as full a text of the play as possible. Since the Second Quarto was set up from the First Quarto, I don't think it is all that likely that the Second Quarto represents the final version either.

So although the Second Quarto did have Shakespeare's consent, it is in some senses less authoritative than the First Quarto, which reflected theatre practices, but didn't have the author's consent?

Yes, exactly. You also have to remember that these plays were disposable items. They played them for as many productions as they could safely get away with, and when they were finished, they published them. They were not hanging on to them all of their lives in the hope that they could somehow revive them, except in the merest handful of cases. Even something that we revive constantly like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* wasn't played much in Shakespeare's later life at all, and I think *Hamlet* is an unusual one from that point of view. If you spend any time looking at the text of *Macbeth*, it is obvious that there are huge bits missing. What we know as *Macbeth* is very obviously not what Shakespeare wrote, and it is not just the fact that some of *Macbeth's* lines are missing here and there; it is structurally very peculiar indeed. But that play was published, and there was a Quarto of *Macbeth* as well, so they were published much more as souvenirs after the event.

The shorter Quarto of Hamlet seems to lack the ebb and flow or the shifting changes of mood in the longer Hamlet. Do audiences really appreciate a snappier pace to the action?

I don't want to say snappy, which makes it sound like a cartoon. I think the Second Quarto is a postmodern view of an imperfect text, and we know that we cannot rely on the Folio to print accurate texts. *Love's Labour's Lost* has an example of two or three false starts, printed from the manuscript, which should have been taken as obvious cases of authorial revision. In the case of *Hamlet*, I don't think that any of the three existing texts represents the full work. I am thinking from a theatre perspective rather than from an academic perspective, but I don't think any of the three texts represents what Shakespeare wrote.

It has been suggested that the First Quarto is more entrenched in the revenge tradition, whereas the longer versions are more an ironic comment on this older tradition. Do you feel that this form of 'Verfremdung' was Shakespeare's doing or is it our construction of the meaning of the play?

I think it's ours rather than his, but I don't think it means that Shakespeare wasn't aware of the irony, of which I'm sure he was very much aware. It is not just to do with revenge either. I think it has to do with action and inaction. I know it is unfashionable now to say this, but the absolute key thing for me about *Hamlet* is that his son was called Hamnet and his son had died in infancy. He was called Hamnet rather than Hamlet, but the two names are very close. The idea of whether action ever changes anything is something very significant in *Hamlet*, and I think that he is exploring that.

Does any of this come through in the First Quarto?

No, but it was obviously in the 'play'. It is very important to remember that the First Quarto is a version of the play, because 'To be or not to be' is in there. It's not as if it has been forgotten about. Crucially, however, the last soliloquy is not there, and this soliloquy is very much about the necessity for any kind of action. I don't think it is an ironic comment on the nature of revenge, so much as an ironic comment on the nature of action.

Is the meaning of Hamlet what the play was, or what it has become, and is it a director's task to remove this accretion of critical attitudes that has built up around the work, in order to get to the play's essential meaning?

I don't think you can be enthralled to the meaning that it had in the past. There is no such thing as an archetype in the theatre. I think that the only meaning is that which has survived for us. That we are producing the play now doesn't mean that you have to set it in modern dress or any of those things, but it does mean that you have to address the question of why it is that the play is still important now. In most cases (and this is why I think that *Hamlet* is an exception), there is a reason why a play is relevant now. There was a reason why there was a sudden spate of productions of *Troilus and Cressida* during the Vietnam War, for example, or why the Histories have become more important in the last thirty years. *Henry VI* was hardly ever performed until very recently. I think *Hamlet*, however, is performed because it is famous. I don't really think of *Hamlet* as being like a play at all. I think of *Hamlet* as being much more like the Elgin Marbles, or the Parthenon, or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. It has gone beyond the bounds of its art form, and it has become a kind of icon in itself. Its fame and enduring nature are part of the reason why we do it. I don't know of many other works of art, which are really like that in the field of performing arts. I don't know many other plays that are like that, except, interestingly, *Oedipus*. I think that the relationship between *Hamlet* and *Oedipus* is very under-explored and very interesting. What they are both about is obviously the relationships of fathers, mothers and sons, but really about struggling to come to terms with the past and how the son inherits and fits into tradition. In a sense it is about the establishing of a man's individuality in the face of the past. I think that's one of the reasons why *Hamlet* gets done so often, and it is one of the reasons why *Hamlet* gets done so badly so often. An awful lot of people in doing *Hamlet* are really struggling with an act of revenge. So it's a kind of rite of passage piece. I think it is inseparable from what *Hamlet* has been over the last four hundred years as opposed to what the story of *Hamlet* is. I'm much less attracted to the First Quarto of the play now, I must say. But one of the reasons why I was attracted to it then was because it was closer to the original and it offered the possibility of cleaning all that rubbish away. Of course, it doesn't, because you have to approach it from the twentieth-century sensibility anyway.

Roger Warren also wrote that your production reflected a 'simpler, more innocent theatrical world'.

In a way the First Quarto tells the story of *Hamlet*. The play as we have it now, the formative text as we have it now, tells the story of *Hamlet* the play as well as *Hamlet* the character. The First Quarto tells the story of *Hamlet* the character, so I think there is a kind of accretion that builds up around that like the pearl in the oyster. I was

charmed by the idea that it was possible to break through that accretion. As I have become older, I have realised that this is not right, because there is no such thing as an *echt* of anything, and as soon as it exists in the world for more than one minute, it becomes part of that world and begins to accrete. If you smash a pearl, you don't actually find the grit in the centre; it has done its job and gone. I think it was a naïve view of the play to do it like that, but I wanted to get back to a simpler view of the play. Also something we haven't talked about before is that the religious questions in the First Quarto are clearer cut than they are in any of the others, and I was quite interested in the more black and white world in which to present *Hamlet*.

Does this mean that all of the problems surrounding the characters are really of our own making and that the play was never a problem for audiences originally?

I don't know that I would quite go as far as that. I think it was a problem play for Shakespeare, because of the issues that he was examining, but I think an awful lot of the problems have been added to it since. *Troilus and Cressida* is a really good example of another kind of problem. There are thousands of problems about the staging of *Troilus and Cressida* and there are thousands of problems in the play, but it is not a 'problem play', because there is a way of solving these problems. You can make a decision about Cressida, you can make a decision about how Agamemnon should be played, and you can make a decision about Ulysses. In the end I don't think you can make a decision about *Hamlet*. I think you just have to allow it to exist for itself. Every production of *Hamlet* is partial, every production of *Hamlet* is biased, and every production of *Hamlet* presents an incomplete view of the play.

Do you find it interesting or infuriating that characters become problematic in the longer version of the play?

I think they're probably not part of what people were originally supposed to understand by *Hamlet*, but then it is not Shakespeare's property any more. People talk about postmodernism as if it were something that happened in 1975, but theatre has always been a postmodern art, because it has had to be continually viewed ironically. You have to view a text ironically in order to produce it at all, any text, it doesn't matter what it is. I am teaching actors next term for a production of *The Seagull*, and of course *The Seagull* has a very close relationship to *Hamlet*, and Chekhov was very interested in *Hamlet* anyway. You can't not take a postmodern attitude to *The Seagull*, but you can't not take a postmodern attitude to any play now. I don't believe that it is all that different from the attitude of Charles Kean in the fifties doing the first archeologically correct production of *The Winter's Tale*, or the change of the portrayal of Shylock towards the end of the eighteenth century. I think all of these are what we would call postmodern.

Are you more in favour of keeping the different texts of Hamlet as discrete entities, or do you feel that we gain more theatrically from conflating them in a single unitary text?

That is a very interesting question of course, because there are very few great continental dramatists, whose texts are in such a bad state as Shakespeare's. If you look at Racine's texts or Schiller's texts, or Goethe's, they are really quite complete. Of course there are lots of manuscript quibbles, but you don't have this same peculiar publishing history. All these famous plays were published respectively in more or less the full text. The situation is slightly different in Spain. A lot of the plays, particularly of Lope de Vega, are published, but there are questions about some of the texts. But Britain was an unusual place from that point of view, because of the highly commercialised nature of the theatre, which meant that people wanted to get texts out quickly. Whether the Germans would be interested in it is another matter.

Translation seems to involve an appropriation of everything. It is rare that a translator appropriates selectively. The idea of translating just one textual version is in some senses a very incomplete activity.

Translators are not interested in historical versions of plays; they are only interested in the whole thing. Something I have often wondered about, and I don't know whether this is at all an analogy, which is useful to you: towards the end of his life Henry James revised all of his books very extensively and made them very much longer. Which version is translated by the Germans? It would be interesting to know whether they have gone for the later revised versions, or the earlier ones. Presumably there weren't two different translations?

It is a question of what has already been appropriated culturally and recognised as James's work. If a long time has been spent loving and admiring a corpus of work, then even the author's intention to revise those works may not be regarded as authoritative. Translators tell me that their job is to translate the edition of a Shakespearean text that is most current, rather than getting involved in the debate on the history of editing and textual transmission.

Yes, I think that's true, and I think that theatrically it is the only solution. There is a very interesting man called Robert David McDonald, who is one of the triumvirate of directors at the Glasgow Citizens', and he says something very interesting about translation, which is in one of the books about the Citizens' Theatre. He says that there are only two worthwhile translations of any play, one is the translation you make today, the other is the translation that was made within five years of the first performance of the original work. There are apparently some very early English translations of Molière, which offer a completely different view of the work from the ones that we know, because of course they were filtered through that sensibility. I would tend to agree with McDonald that in the interim translations are only valid for their time. And I think it is a real problem with something like Schlegel, and of course the French equivalent, because whole generations have come to love these as translations of Shakespeare, but they are not Shakespeare. They are translations of Shakespeare for the nineteenth-century audiences. Interestingly, *The Man Without Qualities* has just been re-translated. I have never read it, as I don't speak German, but I bought the new translation. It's a very difficult piece to read, but I'm enjoying it very much. I was at a friend's house and she has the old translation, and the old translation is only twenty years old. I read the first couple of chapters and of course it

seemed like a different book. I think that translators can only translate for now. If Schlegel were to be counter-translated back into English again, it wouldn't look like Shakespeare. I mean, what is it that they are translating? It is not a literal translation. They are forming a work in this tradition of *tradittore*. It is very interesting to read the first translations of Ibsen by William Archer, and to compare them with the modern translations of Ibsen. If you think about Schlegel as being like William Archer, no one would ever use him at all. The problem with translation is that the translator is intentionally trying to make the translation more cogent and lucid than the original. When you do not speak the language of a translated text, you have no idea how close or how far away you are from the original. The original is important only because it is there. There is no authorial authority. We could improve the Elgin Marbles, but only in our minds, we should never try to improve the originals.

Do audiences feel that they are in some way not being given the real Hamlet at a performance of the First Quarto, but rather an imposter Hamlet?

I don't think that audiences any longer think of the Second Quarto/Folio as being the real thing. I think they would probably recognise the First Quarto as not the one they know.

Is there not a sense of uneasiness that audiences feel, or a sense of complicity in challenging the culturally accepted work?

But it's not so culturally accepted now. I think audiences, generally speaking, know that they are not misquoting. It's not the question that a spectator can't remember the play, or has learned it badly; it's a different version. You wouldn't have that with a poem. If you look at a sonnet by Shelley or Keats, you wouldn't have a situation where somebody said, 'we've discovered another version, how am I going to print that?' There must be lots of other versions, I imagine, but they were the first thoughts and they have authorial integrity. That's not the case with the First Quarto of *Hamlet*.

Do you think that the First Quarto of Hamlet can only ever be used subversively as an attack on the received version?

The First Quarto cannot be seen as a work in its own right. It is a version of the play, and it is interesting for what it tells us about an imperfect play. We are never going to know what Shakespeare intended. It is another glimpse of an imperfect play.

Does this feeling that the First Quarto does not provide enough of Hamlet also affect the actors who perform this version?

The reason why the actors in Nottingham were so receptive to doing the First Quarto was because they were quite relieved not to have to do three and a half hours or four hours of text, and also because it was quite a new experience. Quite a lot of them had done *Hamlet* before, playing different parts, and they were quite excited by the idea of doing something different. But I also believe that the whole classical theatre

tradition in this country has gone. People like me who can look back over thirty or forty years of *Hamlet* productions are looked on like weird curiosities. Most people see *Hamlet* once or twice.

Do you think it would hold an actor back, not wanting to be remembered as the Hamlet of the First Quarto?

Not especially. I don't think an actor would want to play in Nahum Tate's *King Lear*, but I don't think that's true of something as universal as *Hamlet*. As a further example, I don't think an actor would worry about the fact that he was doing Yeates' translation of *Oedipus* rather than Lattimer's, because in Yeates' version you are getting enough of the essential *Oedipus*.

Do you feel that Shakespeare consummately managed his materials, or do you believe, as Eliot did, that Hamlet is an artistic failure?

I entirely agree with Eliot. I think *Hamlet* is an artistic failure, because the material exceeded his capacity to shape it in a theatrical form, and interestingly enough, I think it centres on the relationship between Hamlet and his mother, the oedipal relationship. Shakespeare needed Gertrude to behave the way she behaves in order to make the play work, but he couldn't fit it psychologically into the framework, and so there is a gap. That's why the First Quarto is more satisfying, because Gertrude comes across as more human. She says: 'I didn't know about all this, but now everything is going to change and it will all be better again'. But what Shakespeare was trying to do was something infinitely more complicated and deeper, and I think it shows. I think it shows in one or two other things as well. I think it shows in Claudius to a much lesser extent. But I would add that there is no worse problem in the working out of the dramatic action in *Hamlet* than in any of Shakespeare's other plays. The ending of *All's Well* is just as problematic, but I do think *Love's Labour's Lost* is a case where Shakespeare decided, during the writing of the play, on a different kind of ending. With *Hamlet* Shakespeare did have a problem mastering his material, and *Lear* was the only time when Shakespeare seems to have been able to master his dramatic material. This is the only play of Shakespeare's with a really satisfying tragic resolution. In his present production Peter Brook turns the play around completely so that it ends with the first line: 'Who's there?'

Given that Hamlet has been produced many thousands of times over the last four centuries, it seems strange to think of this play as an artistic failure.

Hamlet is an aesthetic failure rather than an artistic failure. It is always produced in spite of itself.

Do you find the ending of the play satisfactory?

Well, I think the thing is, it kind of stops, doesn't it. Hamlet had to die, after all.

Why do you think Hamlet dies?

Hamlet dies because he kills Polonius. If Hamlet hadn't killed Polonius, he wouldn't have died. The chain of events, which ends up with Hamlet's dying, is sparked off because he kills Polonius. He demonstrates to Claudius that he is capable of killing him, and therefore he has got to be killed, not sent away or kept under lock and key, but killed. Why does he come back to kill Claudius? Because he has proved he can kill, and he comes back because he has still got something to do. He's still got to do what the Ghost told him to do. When the Ghost appears in the Closet Scene, he doesn't say: 'Okay, forget about it, it was all a terrible mistake'. He says: 'Remember what you've got to do. Look after your mother, but remember what you've got to do'. So his extreme lightness of mood after the killing of Polonius, I think, is because he realises that he was right and that the King is guilty, which he didn't know before. He also knows that he could kill him. So he comes back, he's very shocked by Ophelia's death, but he's still got to find a way of killing the King.

But Hamlet couldn't kill the King without giving some reason to the Court why he was doing it.

Yes he could. I think you are being over-logical about this. He hasn't been told by the Ghost to explain why the King has to be killed, he has been told by the Ghost to kill the King.

But there is the small fact of regicide. The court has no reason for believing that the new King should be killed.

You are talking about the court as if it were some kind of parliamentary democracy. Hamlet kills the King and then becomes King.

But then he has to answer for an act of regicide.

To whom?

To his subjects. Killing a King has ramifications, even if you are a member of the royal family.

No, not at all. Not in the world of seventeenth-century politics.

How do you feel about Peter Zadek's recent production with Angela Winkler in the title role?

I was very disappointed by Zadek's limited use of the steel container. What we had on stage was this wonderful, mysterious magic box abandoned on a building site with Hamlet in it. To some extent all works of art are like this. What I did find interesting about Zadek's production was that Winkler's Hamlet was mad right from the start. It

is unusual for a Hamlet to be so hysterical so early. Winkler was not afraid to play right to the limits in a style of acting that was on the whole very un-British. and actually quite American. Only a woman playing Hamlet could be so hysterical.

Do you mean that men cannot be hysterical?

Not on the stage. Angela Winkler is also a wonderful actress, though in this production her range was somewhat restricted. I found the gravediggers in their silver decontamination suits vulgar. At the Trust Theatre in Amsterdam there was a production of *Hamlet* based on the book, *The Elizabethan Hamlet*, in which the author argues that Polonius had incestuous feelings for his daughter. Laertes was a good-looking, charismatic man and there was a homoerotic element between Hamlet and Laertes. The gravediggers were embalmers who cleaned Ophelia's body out and stuffed her with cotton wool. At the end of Necrosius's recent production the Ghost broke down and howled and threw itself across Hamlet's body, which I thought was a nice touch. Our reactions to the body after death seem to be very different now. A dead body has its own aesthetic. Gielgud once said that hardly anyone fails at playing Hamlet and hardly anyone succeeds at playing Macbeth. There is a successful *Hamlet*, but it only exists in our heads and it is a composite of McKellen, Gielgud, Winkler, Rylance etc. There will never be an ideal production.

Sebastian Rudolph (Zürich: 22 June, 2001)

What has it been like to work with the Neo-Nazis in Schlingensiefel's production?

At first, before they actually arrived, I thought it was a great idea. But on the first evening, when they all turned up, I just walked into the canteen and saw them all sitting there with expressionless faces, especially Jürgen over there, the singer. I took one look at him, turned round and went straight home. I said: 'No way. I'm not doing it'.

Was it a problem to work with people that had no theatrical training?

No, it had nothing to do with theatre. I just didn't want to become so wound up or to become as full of bitterness as they obviously are. When they came here they brought all of their hatred with them and it was inevitable that there was going to be a huge amount of uneasiness. But during the course of our work with them, all of that has changed. It is not so much over political issues that we have disagreements, because the political differences between the 'Aussteiger' and us are very clear-cut. I would say that we have had most problems, and continue to have problems, on a more personal level. But it is surprising how they have developed over the last few months. At first they couldn't even look you in the eye.

You mean they had problems looking at the rest of the cast?

Yes, but also they couldn't look one another in the eye either. It's those kinds of purely human things that really stand out. I noticed straight away that Jürgen couldn't stand people touching him, which started me thinking about things. A real turning-point for me with Jürgen happened on the third or fourth day of rehearsals. When we took a break no one could find him, and I eventually found him sitting downstairs. For the past half an hour he had had a nose-bleed, which had really shaken him up, because it had never happened to him before. I get nose-bleeds myself when I am under stress, so I could understand how he was feeling. It was incredible to see. Here was this Neo-Nazi, who must have a really sensitive core and yet he must hate himself for it. Then we began to talk, and I discovered that he really is a very sensitive human being.

I notice that you use the word 'Aussteiger' more than 'Neo-Nazi'. Do you have a lot of sympathy for these people, who have violent pasts?

Admittedly, when I start talking about the problems of the 'Aussteiger', I do start to wonder whether it is all just a lot of social kitsch, and it all sounds very trite. If people have a difficult childhood or never really have a home within them, it doesn't mean that they suddenly have to become a Nazi. But what I have come to realise is that this is not a political or ideological problem, but a social one. These people are looking for a home because they have never been given one. They are looking for the truth and trying to divide the world into black and white, but that's not how the world

works. I get the feeling that their experiences here in the theatre have taught the 'Aussteiger' about what they are missing in their lives. At first they told us all we were sick and that they hated us, but gradually they admitted that they didn't hate us and were impressed by the way we had let them into our lives.

Does this mean that you are all best of friends now?

No, I wouldn't say we were all best friends. There are still too many differences between Jürgen and Torsten and the rest of us, but what they said to us has really impressed me. They said: 'Think about it, we have come into your world, but you have never experienced what it is like to live in ours. I would like to see how you would cope if you spent two months alone living in the sort of environment where we live'. I thought that this was a valuable insight and, of course, they're right. They've adapted to us and we do see one another outside the theatre. I like them all a lot.

Have you played Hamlet before?

No, it's my first Hamlet.

Hamlet is a play that many people seem to know very well. Was it difficult for you to un-learn the traditional Hamlet?

No, it wasn't difficult, because our performance text developed slowly out of rehearsals. We started off with the Gründgens CD and listened to it from start to finish. Then we began to re-arrange it and experiment with the shape of the text, and there was quite a lot that we had to cut out. In the beginning Christoph [Schlingensiefel] wanted to play Hamlet. I knew that I would be in the production, but all the time I was thinking about the one role that I really wanted to play, namely Hamlet. And I kept thinking, 'How can I take the lead role away from my director?' But then a few days later Christoph phoned me and asked if I would like to play the lead role, and I said yes. For a few weeks there was a lot of confusion about who was going to play what, but that soon sorted itself out.

With all the adaptation done on the text, do you think that the normal, classical Hamlet is still recognisable in this production?

But it is the normal, classical Hamlet.

You deliver the 'To Be or Not To Be' soliloquy in tights and high heels and wearing lipstick like Marlene Dietrich. Does this not confuse the audience?

Admittedly, you do need to know the play before you can appreciate and understand our Hamlet, but I have heard a lot of people say: 'Wow, it's amazing. That really is Hamlet. The whole play is there.'

What relevance does Hamlet have to German Neo-Nazis?

I think the great thing about Christoph is that he has really managed to drag this old play into the present. And what has become apparent through *Hamlet* and through our conversations with the 'Aussteiger' is that there is no clear division between truth and falsehood, the thing that Hamlet is so desperate to find. He is also obsessed with the problem of not being able to say directly what he really wants to say. He can only express himself through different roles that he plays, or through a short theatrical production that he stages, so that he can say the things that he otherwise could not say straight out. The fiction of the play and the reality of the problem that the 'Aussteiger' face are closely related.

There seems to be nothing very new about deconstructing Gustav Gründgens' Hamlet. How do you feel about this use of an alienated theatre tradition?

During rehearsals I really fell in love with the way Maximilian Schell plays Hamlet in the Gründgens recording. But it is a kind of love that also allows for the fact that I find this style of production terrible. It's terrible the way the Ghost appears, and it's also a German Ghost and is totally unsexy. What we also have in our production is the oedipal relationship between Hamlet and his mother, which we took from Olivier's film. That is not at all in Gründgens' version. The language is also from the Nazi period. It is terrible and yet beautiful at the same time. I love it.

You seemed to enjoy those moments when you and Bibiana Beglau as Ophelia turned into vampires like something out of Roman Polanski's Dance of the Vampires.

I enjoyed it in the sense that it was fun to do, but not in the sense that I find it funny. When we first started rehearsals, we all found it comical and nobody took it seriously, but it soon became too interesting to reject as a parody. It has a serious point.

Schlingensiefel told me that this production is like an Ed Wood 'B' Movie, where everything seems to go wrong. What is the purpose of this 'amateurish' effect?

What happens is that the performance changes every evening. That is also partly due to the fact that we always seem to be standing at different points on the stage every night. But I do believe that one of the most powerful effects that a play can have, both for the audience and for the actors, is the uncertainty that prevails. Doubt is a great energiser on the stage and it pulls the floor from under you and intensifies the dramatic experience. There is nothing powerful about a completely predictable performance, where everything is calculated to perfection. The moments when we provoke the audience, and when Christoph provokes the audience, and also himself, are planned to destroy any sense of predictability. We never know where the other characters are going to be on stage and it takes away the security that a lot of actors feel they need. For me, that is what acting in the theatre is all about. It's about surprise. You need that with *Hamlet*.

The audience this evening seemed to respond quite positively to the Neo-Nazis. Do you think the novelty could be wearing off?

I often ask myself the same question, but I really do not know what the long-term effects are going to be. Is indifference not also a form of reaction? The 'Aussteiger' might also be realising that their presence is no longer having the same effect on audiences, which could have interesting consequences.

The text of the play is reduced, SS men hold microphones to the characters' mouths whenever they speak, and the Neo-Nazis beat Claudius to death with baseball bats. Is this not making a mockery of a great work of literature?

I had a friend here in the production, who left half-way through rehearsals. He just disappeared, and later sent me a letter explaining what had happened. He wrote that the production would have mocked everything that was dear to him, and it was making *Hamlet* and art itself into something ridiculous. This production really affected him deeply. Of course, I see things a little differently, but I can certainly understand why he feels as he does. I hope we can get beyond the negative criticism and make people see the value of this production, as well as helping to provide the 'Aussteiger' with the sort of contact that they are looking for.

Would you consider working with Schlingensiefel again in the future?

Yes, any time. Right from the start it was a great wish of mine just to be in the production, so yes I would definitely work with Christoph again. He is in my view one of the greatest theatre men.

Christoph Schlingensief (Zürich: 22 June, 2001)

What gave you the idea to produce Hamlet?

Almost a year and a half ago I was in the canteen of the Volksbühne in Berlin and Christoph Marthaler suggested that I should direct a play for the theatre. After all of the plays that I had written and developed freely myself, he thought it was time I turned my attention to a classical work. I have always said that that's not really my cup of tea, because I'm not a great fan of traditional theatre and I don't go very often. I have always found classical plays very boring. The sort of things that directors do with historical plays, and the way they try to convert the material into something real on the stage, always strikes me as inadequate. I don't think that this kind of transformation is very successful. Of course, I don't want to imply that my way is always successful. I just have a different approach. Then Marthaler suggested that I produce *Hamlet* and play the title role myself, and I said 'Great, super idea. I'll do that', and the timing was perfect as well, because Marthaler had just been offered the position of Intendant at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich.

I heard that you had not actually read the play when you began to direct it. How did you develop a script for the production?

That's right. I hadn't read the play. I looked at it about six months ago, but had difficulty reading it. I rarely read novels and I can't read specialised literature either. I prefer to watch films and listen to radio plays. But then the dramaturg at the Schauspielhaus, Robert Koall, sent me an old recording of Gustav Gründgens' *Hamlet* from 1963 with Maximilian Schell and Marianne Hoppe and I listened to it. It was then that I began to understand for the first time what the story was really about. I stored the recording as a sound document on my laptop, which I also use when I write my radio plays. I find that I can work better with acoustic material than with written texts. I then underlaid some music to the Gründgens soundtrack and began to build up a script with my computer. Because the recording is already an adaptation of the play, I played around with the text and the rhythm of the lines and focused on those sections that I found particularly interesting and deleted those I didn't like, and I also altered the meaning partly. I deleted the whole of the Gravedigger Scene, there are no Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and I have turned Claudius into what I call a 'global king', or the way I understand a universal king. He has completely degenerated and all he does is call out the main phrases and lines from his speeches and the rest he just slurs and mumbles. I made a point of rearranging the text and slinging out a lot of it.

What influenced you especially in the making of this production?

I had always made films, and I have only worked in the theatre since 1993. When I had finished cutting the *Hamlet* text, I built into it the music from Hitchcock's *Psycho* and Visconti's *The Damned*, both of which contain Hamlet figures. I believe that Anthony Perkins in *Psycho* is an archetypal Hamlet figure, because he too has a problem with his mother and is caught in this hesitancy that paralyses him. It's just

like when Hamlet says: 'Man delights not me - nor woman neither'. Hamlet and Perkins both think: 'If only the world knew what twisted thoughts I have and what horrific acts I am capable of'. I sensed this connection between Hamlet and Perkins very clearly as I was working on developing Hamlet's character. I was able to build up a script and I gradually found my way into the story, which, to be honest, had not really gripped me when I had tried to read it. It did not seem to require any input as a reading text.

And this long text you managed to reduce to 90 minutes.

Yes, exactly 90 minutes. Just like a good film. In fact, it is as if Ed Wood had made a film of the play. My production falls somewhere between Mel Brooks and Ed Wood.

But is your version still recognisable as Hamlet?

It is still recognisable as *Hamlet*, of course, but it has become a very condensed version. A lot of people are astonished to find that they do recognise the play in my production, although we did have one school group that came to see the play. In a discussion with the audience after the performance the children wanted to know which character was Hamlet. I thought this was so funny, but it does sometimes happen. Actually, it is obvious that the character on stage longest must be Hamlet.

What distances your version of the play from more classical forms of Hamlet, such as Alexander Lang's in Weimar?

Well, I did not want to present Hamlet as a madman, such as you find in Nicolas Stemann's production in Hannover. I saw his version and thought it was incredibly boring, because there was no mystery to it. You notice this mysterious element in Gründgens' version; it has some kind of catholic secret built into it, which is connected to the melodrama of the 1930s theatre.

Has Catholicism been a big influence on your films and productions?

Yes, because I was brought up a strict Catholic and in my childhood I had an extreme obsession with justice and honesty. In my youth there was a mania, certainly a neurotic or psychotic need to tell the truth, or at least express one's doubts. I think that has shaped my productions, which all deal with the problems of keeping secrets, including *Hamlet*. I am interested in generating that kind of pathos, but for very different reasons. Irony is an art form and I have used all kinds of elements to create an ironic effect. It is the pathetic and melodramatic effects of film that characterise my own style of production. I wanted to establish a basis in my *Hamlet*, a kind of reconstruction of the Gründgens era, but one that could be switched on and off at will. In those moments when the melodrama was switched off, I could jump in and do my bit of nonsense and then switch the melodrama back on again to prevent the audience becoming complacent.

Are you setting yourself up as a model to other theatre directors, saying in effect that this is how theatre really should be?

Certainly not. In fact, my form of theatre could not exist without the more traditional kind. If all directors went racing through the town with 180 demonstrators, it wouldn't have shock-value any more. When just one director does this, it is considered provocative and the police can arrest me. I think the work of other directors is very important, it's just that they have a different approach. They are perhaps more cautious and calculating, but as I always say, if you are still in control, you are not going fast enough. I also like to mull things over slowly, but I try to suppress this urge and throw myself into a political action. I don't find it too challenging to think and act at the same time, and I think that's the only way to get things moving in the theatre. I am also someone who cannot do very much with words alone. When I direct, I often like to convert words on the stage into action. I go screaming around on stage and raging about, because I cannot utter long stretches of text. I do not want to say that my theatre is the new theatre and this is how it should be. That would be the death of theatre for sure.

How would you define your role on the European theatre scene?

I like to think of myself as a theatre activist. I see my work as theatrical and artistic activism. I usually theatricalise aspects of reality that are just beginning to cross over into art or artificiality. For about twenty years now my work has given me a reputation for being an *Enfant Terrible*, and I am beginning to feel more at home in this role now, more than I used to. Previously I tried to oppose this popular view of myself, but now I just say: 'Let the crowds be entertained'. I give audiences as much entertainment as I can pack into the production. Now I really don't care if people think of me as a political clown.

What is your function in the play as Fortinbras?

As Fortinbras I am on my way to entertain the troops. I am more of a musical star than a general, and I entertain the soldiers, who, as Hamlet says, 'fight for an egg shell'.

Do you and the other soldiers wear real SS uniforms?

No, it's a kind of fantasy Nazi uniform, such as you see in Mel Brooks' films.¹ But I use the 'naziline' emblem, nothing authentically SS. I arrange entertainment programmes for the people who 'go to their graves like beds'. I have called this section of the show 'Schlingensief Entertainment', because of all the critics who accuse me of being an exhibitionist or a provocateur. But these are just synonyms for different kinds of entertainers. In my productions I use so much noise and aggression

¹ Schlingensief's singing and dancing Nazis were influenced by previous comic parodies of the Nazis including Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940), Alan Johnson's *To Be or Not To Be* (1983), and Mel Brooks' Monty Python travesty, *Springtime for Hitler* (1968), now adapted into the Broadway musical, *The Producers*.

and vomiting and God knows what, perhaps also as a way of proving to the older generation of theatre directors that I too can create an effect, and in this ultra-conservative Europe, I seem to be able to cause a sensation.

In the production you use real Neo-Nazis to play the travelling Players who come to Elsinore. Is this a new aspect in your work?

No, I have always used this theme in my films. All this Neo-Nazi stuff is permanently around in Germany. There are continuous attacks on foreigners. In 1993 I made a film called *Terror 2000*, in which I developed the theme of right-wing extremism. But I must stress that I do not sympathise at all with fascism. I hate anti-Semitism, racism and violence. I have never had a fight in my life, except when I have been attacked. I am just fascinated by the mentality of dictators, soldiers, and people who are living under oppression.

What did the Hamlet text offer for your political engagement with 'naziline'?

Something that I had heard in the recording of *Hamlet* and that really interested me was the line of the Player: 'Für uns und unsere Vorstellung mit untertäniger Huldigung ersuchen wir Genehmigung' [For us and for our tragedy, / Here stooping to your clemency, / We beg your hearing patiently], and this was a theatrical concept that fascinated me. I was intrigued by the idea of using theatre in the way that Hamlet uses it, namely as a mousetrap in which to catch people, to make them react and to stir them up with the power of theatre. Usually if audiences don't like a play, they just leave the theatre and say 'Fuck you' or 'this is not my kind of thing'. In my plays at the Volksbühne, *100 Jahre CDU* and *Rocky Dutschke '68*, people started to fight in the audience. That was an effect I was striving for with *Hamlet*. The Neo-Nazis came on stage and uttered this line that asks the audience for approval for their theatrical performance, and the audience really were stirred up by the power of the theatre. I managed to turn the world of the audiences upside down with my 'happening' or my 'mousetrap', just like I have been storming against the SVP here in Zürich and have been stirring everyone up by saying that Switzerland is full of Nazis. Three months ago this business with Nazism was not even an issue here, it had been completely swept under the table. Of course the effect has been that a lot of subscribers have stopped coming to the Schauspielhaus and the atmosphere inside the theatre has been as it was out on the streets. One fifty-year old woman said it was the worst theatre evening she had ever had, but you would be surprised how many positive reactions my production has had.

You said in a previous interview that the Neo-Nazis are being harmed by society. Could you explain that?

It's about the Neo-Nazis' need for validation. They are looking to be validated as human beings, but unfortunately their methods are at the expense of other social and religious groups. I always say that society is not tolerant enough of these young people. There are many voices of morality that say to the Neo-Nazis: 'Think of your future, children, come to us and we will show you the way and lead you to the truth'.

In my opinion these moralisers are failing to solve the problem, which is that these young people need validation and not a lecture. These young people should not be morally conditioned by society's self-appointed ethics commissions. It's not about genetic engineering here; we are in the very concrete realm of human lives. We need to buy these young people back from the leaders who are seducing them. Society expects these Neo-Nazis to repent their sins by crawling through the town in sackcloth and ashes. That is why I think Neo-Nazis are being harmed by society.

[In the background can be heard Neo-Nazi Jürgen Drenhaus' rehearsing with the skinrockband 'Body Ckecks']

That is the song of the Neonazis. Jürgen is so wound up. He always drinks a bottle of Jägermeister before he goes on stage. He's rehearsing for tonight.

Are your 'naziline' project and the new organisation, REIN, in some ways a reaction against the internal minister's defective programme, RAUS?

The RAUS project uses DM 70 million to re-condition the Neo-Nazis. They get constitutional protection, a new beard, a new telephone number and a house in Sindelfingen. They become a completely new person, but I don't believe that that works. Is it really acceptable to make people change their identity before they can be allowed back into society? That's not the way forward. They are better off on the outside.²

Are these so-called 'Neo-Nazis' not really just punks and hooligans that are fixated on Nazi paraphernalia and do not have the slightest idea about fascist ideology?

No, there is a social difference. Today you can be gay or pierced all over or have a strange hair-style and your mother and father accept that and are willing to talk about it, as we see every day on TV talk shows. But if you say: 'Mum, I have painted a swastika in the garden', or if you say 'Heil Hitler' every morning, it frightens people in a way that doesn't happen with standard punks and hooligans. And you cannot talk about ideology with fifteen or sixteen year olds. You cannot say to them: 'Do you think there really was a Holocaust? Was it so terrible what happened to the Jews? What are your views on the Palestine problem?' We could talk about whether right-wing extremists believe that a double passport is necessary and that foreigners must learn German before they are accepted, but it's not about pumping their heads with the 'right' kind of ideology.³ It's about giving them validation. Society has a

² The German 'Bundesanstalt für politische Beziehung' pays up to DM 150 000 to every Neo-Nazi willing to enter the RAUS programme of social re-integration. The 'Bundesanstalt' also paid DM 50 000 to allow Schlingensief's *Hamlet* production to be staged at the 38th Theatertreffen in Berlin this year. Schlingensief's 'naziline' project (see www.naziline.com), has now generated the new organisation, REIN, which forges contact between Neo-Nazis and society and does not provide Neo-Nazis with a new identity or demand a change of ideology.

³ Germany is currently debating the introduction of the 'Doppelpaß' that will allow children of immigrants to retain two nationalities until the age of 23, after which they must choose one

responsibility to buy back the Neo-Nazis from the people who are convincing them that they are fighting for a just cause.

Why did you use real Neo-Nazis on the stage instead of actors? Do you feel that the effect would not have been as successful?

The whole atmosphere would have been very different with actors, less convincing and less real. Of course, in the moments when we did not have any Neo-Nazis, we did toy with the idea of using actors. Of the seven Neo-Nazis, we have just one who is an actor. He functions as a kind of submarine for me, watching them and listening to what they are planning, because I don't trust them. There was a lot of distrust on both sides. Torsten Lemmer, when he arrived with his people, did not believe that I was serious in wanting to help them, and thought I was just trying to prove how clever I was in making the Neo-Nazis perform for me. After two weeks he wanted to leave the production and the programme and go back to his violent life style.⁴

Could you tell me how the Neo-Nazis reacted to Shakespeare?

At the beginning Jürgen kept saying to us: 'You're all sick. Talking like that and moving about in that way is just ridiculous.' For them it was a new experience to be on stage and with people who are perhaps gay or behave in a strange manner or do not appear to be 'normal'. *Hamlet* seemed especially stupid to Jürgen, who really could not see the point of the play. But what I did notice was that this line from the text, 'Und wer in Not sucht den falschen Freund, verwandelt ihn sogleich in einen Feind', seemed to touch something in Jürgen, and it seemed to give him a handle on the play. There were actually a number of lines from the *Moustrap* that all the Neo-Nazis could really understand and accept. The texts that they shout on stage have been modified slightly, but now they are the sort of things that Jürgen and his companions like to chant in the pub of an evening.

Audiences in Switzerland are perhaps more conservative than in Berlin. Did your Hamlet serve a different function at the Berliner Theatertreffen than in Zürich?

It was certainly the most demanding production I have ever done, because I did not really get involved in the performance itself at the Volksbühne, as I do here in Zürich. In Berlin I just did the Xylophone scene at the end. I did not stop the performance continually as I do here, and I think that is why it was not as successful in Berlin as I had hoped it would be. I did not surprise people in Berlin in a positive way, such that they exclaimed: 'Wow, that is really great'. Rather, they were surprised in a negative sense, asking: 'What is he doing here? Why is he offering us this dreadful

nationality and forfeit the other. Immigrants in Germany may gain German citizenship after eight years' residence in the country and must pass a German language test.

⁴ Torsten Lemmer, a Neo-Nazi from Düsseldorf, is producer of Nazi rock band 'Störkraft' and editor of right-wing music magazine, *Rock Nord*. He owns 51% of the world's right-wing music industry, which, during Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* production, he offers to sell to German internal minister Otto Schily. Lemmer's proposal has been supported by Christoph Marthaler, Frank Castorf, Tom Stromberg, Jürgen Flimm, Luc Bondy and Peter Zadek.

production? Why are all the characters so wooden?' But the audiences were still provoked by the production and when the Nazis appeared on stage, the audience began to shout and boo and that is something that has not happened at the Volksbühne for some time now. However, in Berlin there is a cultural phenomenon of using things once and throwing them away, and I feel that this is what happened to my production. After a few performances it went onto the rubbish heap with all the rest of the unwanted stuff.

Could you tell me why, after the premiere in Berlin, you took the Neo-Nazis on a tour of the city and placed a wreath on Brecht's grave?

Because Brecht was a proclaimed anti-fascist. It was also planned as a media event, and it attracted hundreds of photographers and journalists, who wanted to see a few Neo-Nazis. Actually it was all so stupid. If they wanted to see 'real' Neo-Nazis they should have gone around some of the former Eastern zones and around Brandenburg. There they would really have had something to take photos of. My people are more like Popnazis. They are young people who are not completely moronic and can articulate their thoughts. Also at Brecht's grave we used Yorick's skull and performed some of the Gravedigger dialogue. In the play itself I stop the performance and tell the actors to change the name of Yorick to Blocher and we see what happens to the text and the effect it has when it deals with people that everyone knows.⁵ That is for me real theatre. By changing the names we can imagine what will happen in a hundred years' time. Then people will laugh at Blocher, just as we laugh now at the fool Yorick. It makes the audience think more about what the text means and about their own time and their own politicians. At these moments I am doing pure Brechtian theatre, and I am creating the same kind of 'Lehrtheater'. It's what Brecht would have called a 'V-Effekt'.

Has your Hamlet production been successful as a form of therapy for re-integrating the Neo-Nazis back into society?

It is not the case that *Hamlet* has really altered their lives. I believe that it has offered the Neo-Nazis a public platform from which to explain their situation. What was a really valuable experience for them was that they encountered a public that does not come from the same world as they do, that is bourgeois and antagonistic, but can be felt to be gradually moving closer to understanding the problem that the Neo-Nazis have. This wall of resistance certainly irritated the Neo-Nazis, but it also forced them to think about this problem of communication. In Peter Kern's film, *Der Rest ist Schweiz*, there is an antifascist called Rock, who is really into terror tactics and is completely tattooed. He didn't want anything to do with the Neo-Nazis here at first, but gradually he started to talk to them and he and Jürgen had long discussions, and they came to the conclusion that they both share similar views and are both fighting for the same reasons. The social system does not allow them any space and it tries to make them operate in a certain way, to serve a given function. It was such a crazy image seeing the two of them sitting together and talking. I never imagined that a

⁵ Christoph Blocher is leader of the SVP, the political party that Schlingensiefel has been campaigning to ban. Schlingensiefel accuses Blocher of being right wing and racist.

Neo-Nazi and an antifascist would ever sit down and talk things over, or that they would realise that they were fighting for the same thing. Who is it who gives us these roles to play? Hamlet asks himself the same question. Individuals are made to play certain roles and this is what drives Hamlet mad. It is not that Hamlet himself was mad, as everyone says, but it is his environment that has made him mad. The environment has gone haywire.

Do you see this as a general function of the theatre to unite different types of people?

Yes, because people would not normally come together, and theatre as an integrative agent is wonderful. Theatre at its best was always a process of integration. When I read or hear something by Shakespeare, I feel that Shakespeare's society is a strong presence in those plays. It was an integrative organisation where people could identify with very different kinds of people by shouting out. It was a common process of thinking and everyone was involved. Today in the theatre audiences just sit there stupidly and stare at the stage and think 'O, how clever', and they go home and feel more important than before. I am not aiming for this kind of theatre. I believe that the theatre has fulfilled its original function when it has made the audience react, and this is not just something that characterises *Hamlet*.

So your Hamlet also had a social function.

People often say: 'I am on the outside because the people in the middle keep me there. They just want to sleep in their armchairs and pretend that they are happy. Their security on the inside depends on their little enemies on the outside.' I think that is why it is so difficult to bring outsiders back into society, because the 'middle' into which you bring them is just a dead zone. It is not humans that are failures, it is the system that is the failure, but that can be explored through theatre. This stage, this artistic space, can act as the middle ground in which people from the outside can move around and meet others and correspond. They can experiment with what it would be like if they were allowed to enter the middle space and to interact. The social system that we have in the west is a market economy and my *Hamlet* is shaped by the forces of a market economy. It represents a social centre that only allows people in from the outside when they are prepared to give up their identity and everything they believe in. I wanted to show that this is wrong.

Stephen Greenblatt's theory of 'social energy' seems to be particularly relevant here. Is it important to you that life feeds into the theatre and the theatre feeds back into life?

Heiner Müller said something that really appealed to me: 'One makes theatre during a performance and after the play is over, people leave the theatre building and the town has disappeared'. You have to bear in mind that theatre has become a kind of vacuum where events in the world outside cease to exist for the three hours of the play. What I like to do is go out into the streets and start some political action just before going onto the stage. The actor's way to the stage should not be past the porter, through the canteen and up to the stage, it should be through the streets. You should go out in the

afternoon and rally or collect signatures for a petition and by eight o'clock you will be acting on a full tank.

Would that be your advice to actors, who want to inject more relevance into their performances?

Yes, but within limits. The sort of political actions I have been doing here in Zürich cannot be done four times a year, or perhaps even every year. But what is true is that there are too many directors, who arrive in a town, build up their pseudo family, decide on a play to produce, get drunk and talk over the production, modify the play to introduce some contemporary relevance and then, after the premiere, move onto the next theatre with a wad of cash in their pockets. I find that artificial and it's not a way that I can follow. It has nothing to do with life. I think it is important, and certainly more fun, to bring life into the theatre and to haul the theatre outside into the real world. I even have politicians who come to the theatre to perform in my production. They bring their own costumes and play all kinds of roles, but they have no contract and they don't get paid.

Would you say that you have reached your goal with this production of Hamlet?

No, I wouldn't say that. I'm never happy when I reach the goals I set for myself. My aim was to generate discussion about the place that Neo-Nazis are denied in our society. It was my intention for audiences to be unsure about whether the Neo-Nazis are serious in wanting to leave their past, or whether it's just a bluff, whether we can believe them, or whether we must not believe them. I do think that I have opened up discussion, but I wouldn't say that I have transformed society or that I now have a right to sit back and enjoy my annuity. That has not happened and it was not something that I was striving for.⁶

⁶ Schlingensiefel's *Hamlet* premiered on 10 May 2001 at the Schauspielhaus in Zürich and remains on the repertoire. It will also be produced at the Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf in the autumn of this year and spring 2002.

Appendix C: Representative Samples of Translations Examined in this Study

The following is a collection of extracts from some of the translations examined in this thesis. I have chosen the samples based on what I feel to be sections of the texts that best represent the overall style of the translations. These samples illustrate points in the translations that reveal the social, cultural, political and artistic climate in which the translators were working, but the samples also provide a glimpse of how the translators appropriated *Hamlet*, re-inventing the play in their own style. The representative sections also show how the resources of the target language came into play, and how the translators' consummate fashioning of the language's expressive potential facilitated the re-creation of *Hamlet* in German. These samples offer the most enjoyable parts of the translations to read and provide cultural and linguistic snap-shots of the afterlife of *Hamlet* in a century of shifting views on the nature of the play and on the function of translation and adaptation.

August Wilhelm Schlegel

(5.1.26-60)

Erster Totengräber:

Ja, da haben wir's. Und es ist doch ein Jammer, daß die großen Leute in dieser Welt mehr Aufmunterung haben, sich zu hängen und zu ersäufen, als ihre Christenbrüder. Komm, den Spaten her! Es gibt keine so alten Edelleute als Gärtner, Grabenmacher und Totengräber: sie pflanzen Adams Profession fort.

Zweiter Totengräber:

War der ein Edelmann?

Erster Totengräber:

Er war der erste, der je armiert war.

Zweiter Totengräber:

Ei, was wollt' er!

Zweiter Totengräber:

Was? bist ein Heide? Wie legst du die Schrift aus? Die Schrift sagt: Adam grub. Konnte er ohne Arme graben? Ich will dir noch eine andre Frage vorlegen: wenn du mir nicht gehörig antwortest, so bekenne-

Zweiter Totengräber:
Nur zu!

Erster Totengräber:
Wer baut fester als der Maurer, der Schiffsbaumeister oder der Zimmermann?

Zweiter Totengräber:
Der Galgenmacher, denn sein Gebäude überlebt an die tausend Bewohner.

Erster Totengräber:
Dein Witz gefällt mir, meiner Treu. Der Galgen tut gut: aber wie tut er gut? Er tut gut an denen, die übel tun. Nun tust du übel zu sagen, daß der Galgen stärker gebaut ist als die Kirche, also würde der Galgen an dir gut tun. Noch mal dran! frisch!

Zweiter Totengräber:
Wer stärker baut als ein Maurer, ein Schiffsbaumeister oder ein Zimmermann?

Erster Totengräber:
Ja, sag mir das, und du sollst Feierabend haben.

Zweiter Totengräber:
Mein Seel, nun kann ich's sagen.

Erster Totengräber:
Frisch!

Zweiter Totengräber:
Sapperment, ich kann's doch nicht sagen.

(Hamlet und Horatio treten in einer Entfernung auf.)

Erster Totengräber:
Zerbrich dir den Kopf nicht weiter darum, der dumme Esel geht doch nicht schneller, wie du ihn auch prügeln magst; und wenn dir jemand das nächste Mal die Frage tut, antworte: der Totengräber. Die Häuser, die er baut, währen bis zum Jüngsten Tage. Geh, mach dich ins Wirtshaus, und hole mir einen Schoppen Branntwein.

Gerhart Hauptmann

(4.5.128-155)

Hamlet:
Wo ist mein Vater?

König:
Tot.

Königin:
Doch nicht durch ihn.

König:
Laß ihn nur satt sich fragen.-

Hamlet:
Wie kam er um? Ich lasse mich nicht äffen.
Zur Hölle, Treu'! Zum ärgsten Teufel, Eide!
Gewissen, Frömmigkeit zum tiefsten Schlund!
Ich trotze der Verdammnis; so weit kam's:
Ich schlage beide Welten in die Schanze,
mag kommen, was da kommt! Nur Rache will ich
vollauf für meinen Vater.

König:
Wer wird Euch hindern?

Hamlet:
Mein Wille, nicht der ganzen Welt Gebot.
Und meine Mittel will ich so verwalten,
daß wenig weit soll reichen.

König:
Höre, Hamlet, wenn du von deines teuren Vaters Tod
das Sichre wissen willst: ist es deiner Rache Schluß,
als Sieger in dem Spiel so Freund als Feind,
Unschuldige und Schuld'ge zu vernichten?

Hamlet:
Die Schuld'gen nur.

König:
Wollt Ihr sie kennenlernen? –

Hamlet:
Den Freunden will ich weit die Arme öffnen
und, wie der Lebensopfrer Pelikan,
mit meinem Blut sie nähren.

König:
So, nun sprichst du
als guter Sohn und echter Edelmann.
Daß ich an Eures Vaters Tode schuldlos
Und am empfindlichsten dadurch gekränkt,
Soll Eurem Urteil offen dar sich legen
wie Tageslicht dem Auge.

Königin:
(*leise zu einem Edelmann*) Laßt sie ein.

Hamlet:
Was gibt's? Was für ein Lärm?

(Ophelia erscheint, phantastisch mit Kräutern und Blumen geschmückt)

O Hitze, trockne mein Hirn auf! Tränen, siebenfach gesalzen, brennt meiner beiden Augen Sehkraft aus!

Hans Rothe

(1.2.129-158)

Hamlet:
O wie besudelt ist dies Fleisch, o daß es
Zerginge, schmelze, sich in Schlamm auflöste!
Hätte der Ewige doch nicht verboten
Hand an uns selbst zu legen! Gott, o Gott,
wie ekelhaft, hohl, abgeschmackt, und sinnlos
muß mir das Treiben dieser Welt erscheinen!
Scheußliches Bild: ein ungepflegter Garten,
der geil ins Kraut schießt bis gemeine Triebe
ihn überwuchern! Dazu ist es gekommen!
zwei Monate erst tot – nein, nicht so lang,
nicht zwei! ein solcher König! ein Sonnengott
vor diesem Faun! hat meine Mutter so
geliebt, daß er dem Himmelsatem wehrte,
rauh ihr Gesicht zu streifen! Erde und Himmel,
warum denke ich das? Weil sie zu ihm gehörte
und ihre Liebe immer größer wurde
je mehr sie davon gab! Und doch – ich will es
nicht denken – nach einem Monat! Schwachheit,
dein Name ist Weib! Nach einem kurzen Monat,
eh noch die Schuh sich abgenutzt, darin sie
mit Tränen einer Niobe dem Leichnam
meines armen Vaters folgte – sie! meine Mutter-
o Gott, ein Tier, das nichts empfindet hätte
länger getrauert – heiratet meinen Oheim!
Du, Mutter, nimmst den Bruder meines Vaters,
der ihm so wenig gleicht wie ich dem Zeus!
Nach einem kurzen Monat als das Salz
rechtloser Tränen noch nicht einmal die Röte
aus wunden Augen wusch – ist sie vermählt!
Das ist nicht gut, und niemals wird es gut-

Maik Hamburger

(5.1.96-132)

Hamlet:

Noch einer. Warum sollte es nicht der Kopf eines Advokaten sein? Wo sind seine Spitzfindigkeiten, Haarspaltereien, Prozesse, Klauseln und Tricks? Was gestattet er jetzt diesem Rüpel, daß er ihm die dreckige Schippe auf den Däz gibt und kommt ihm nicht mit Tötlichkeitsklage? Hm. Der Bursche war vielleicht zu seiner Zeit Landkäufer, mit seinen Hypotheken, Verpflichtungen, Abtretungen, doppelten Bürgen und Zessionen: ist das die Abtretung seiner Abtretungen, die Zession seiner Zessionen, daß jetzt sein schöner Kopf in den Abtritt getreten wird? Wollen ihm seine Bürgen keine Einkäufe mehr bürgen, auch doppelte nicht, als die Länge und Breite von paar Urkunden ausgemacht? Die Kontrakte seiner Länder passen kaum in diesen Kasten, sollte da der Eigentümer nicht mehr Platz haben, he?

Horatio:

Kein Jota, Mylord.

Hamlet:

Macht man nicht Pergament aus Schafshaut?

Horatio:

Ja, Mylord, auch aus Kalbshäuten.

Hamlet:

Schafe und Kälber, die darin Sicherheit suchen. Ich will mit dem Kerl sprechen. Wesen Grube ist das, heda?

1. Clown:

Meine, Sir-

Oh, und im Lehm ne Lücke

Ist für den Gast genug.

Hamlet:

Wenn es deine ist, dann bist du wohl der, der selbst hineingefallen ist.

1. Clown:

Da seid Ihr reingefallen, Sir, obwohl Ihr draußen steht, ich für mein Teil laß mich nicht reinlegen und bin trotzdem drin.

Hamlet:

Willst du mich reinlegen, sagst, es ist deine; sie ist für die Toten, nicht für die Lebendigen.

1. Clown:

Euch leg ich lebendig rein, todsicher.

Hamlet:
Wer ist der Mann, für den du gräbst?

1. Clown:
Kein Mann, Sir.

Hamlet:
Welche Frau dann?

1. Clown:
Frau auch nicht.

Hamlet:
Wer soll da begraben werden?

1. Clown:
Eine, die Frau war, Sir, aber Gott hab sie seelig, sie ist tot.

Erich Fried

(3.1.121-130)

Hamlet:
Pack dich in ein Kloster! zu den guten Jungfern! Warum willst du eine Brüterin von Sündern sein? Ich bin selber leidlich ehrsam; und doch könnt ich mich solcher Dinge bezichtigen, daß es besser wär, meine Mutter hätte mich nicht geboren. Ich bin sehr stolz, rachsüchtig, ehrgeizig; mit mehr Missetaten bei der Hand, als ich Gedanken hab, in die ich sie fassen kann, Phantasie, ihnen Gestalt zu verleihen, oder Zeit, sie in Szene zu setzen. Was sollen denn solche Gesellen wie ich tun, wenn sie da herumkriechen, zwischen Erde und Himmel? Wir sind Erzschorken, alle miteinander, traue keinem von uns! Geh deiner Wege, zu den Jungfern in ein Kloster!

Wolfgang Swaczynna

(3.4.51-88)

Königin:
Ach; welche Tat?
Was meinst du mit mörderischen Worten?

Hamlet:
Schau her auf dies Gemälde, und auf dies,

das lebenswahre Abbild zweier Brüder –
sieh welcher Adel lag auf dieser Braue,
Apollons Locken, Stirn des Jupiter,
ein Aug wie Mars, zum Drohen und Gebieten,
die Haltung, wie Merkur der Götterbote
wenn er sich senkt auf himmelnahen Gipfel –
in einer Einheit, wahrlich einer Form,
der jeder Gott sein Siegel aufgedrückt,
als Bürgschaft für die Welt, dies ist ein Mann,
und er ist tot. Ermordet, schlimm ermordet,
dies war dein Gatte. Schau jetzt her was folgt.
Hier dies Gesicht, Vulkan der Höllenschmied.
Ein Blick der fähig ist zu Mord und Raub,
finster verhangen, Höllenglut im Auge,
ein Kinderschreck und Grausen für die Welt –
dies ist dein Gatte, gleich der faulen Ähre
verderblich seinem Bruder. Hast du Augen?
Konntest du diese schöne Alm verlassen,
und mästest dich im Sumpf? Was? hast du Augen?
Nenn es nicht Liebe – denn in deinem Alter,
regt sich das Blut nur zahm noch, es ist brav,
und folgt der Einsicht – aber welche Einsicht
vertauschte den, mit dem? Was für ein Teufel,
hat dich beim Blindkuhspiel so genarrt?
Nur Augen, ohne Fühlen; Fühlen, ohne Sehen;
Ohr, ohne Hand, und Aug; Geruch, nichts weiter;
auch nur der Bruchteil eines echten Sinns
geht nicht so fehl –
O Schamm! Wirst du nicht rot? Rebellische Hölle,
kannst du selbst alte Knochen noch erregen,
der Jugend sei die Reinheit dann die Wachs,
und schmelze in eigener Glut. Ruf nicht nach Scham,
wenn ungestümer Brand zum Ausbruch drängt,
da selbst der Frost, so tatenlustig brennt,
und die Vernunft ist Kupplerin der Lust.

Heiner Müller

(4.4.32-66)

Hamlet:

Wie jeder Anlaß aussagt gegen mich
Und spornt meine langsame Rache: Was ist ein Mann
Wenn sein Hauptgut, die Ernte seiner Zeit
Schlafen und Fressen sind? Ein Vieh, nicht mehr.
Er, der mit so viel Denkkraft uns begabt hat

Voraus zu schau'n und rückwärts, gab uns nicht
Die mächtige und gottgleiche Vernunft
In uns zu schimmeln ungebraucht. Was ist es
Tierische Dumpfheit oder feiger Skrupel
Der zu genau bedenkt den Ausgang, ein
Gedanke, der, gevierteilt, ein Teil Weisheit
Und stets drei Teile Feigheit hat. Ich weiß nicht
Wozu ich noch lebe zu sagen: Das ist zu tun
Und habe Grund und Willen und Kraft und Mittel, es
Zu tun? Exempel, grob wie Erde, mahnen.
Diese Armee, von soviel Macht und Masse
Geführt von einem Prinzen, zart und vornehm
Sein Mut gebläht von himmelstürmendem Ehrgeiz
Scheidet dem ungewissen Ausgang Fratzen
Und gibt, was sterblich und gebrechlich ist
Dem Schicksal und dem Tod und der Gefahr preis
Für eine Eierschale. Wirklich groß sein
Heißt, nicht sich rühren ohne großen Grund
Doch Kriegsgrund finden groß in einem Strohhalm
Wenn es um Ehre ist. Wie steh ich da
Mein Vater tot, geschändet meine Mutter
Stachel genug meinem Verstand und Blut
Und laß es schlafen? Und seh zu meiner Schande
Den nahen Tod von zwanzigtausend Mann
Die für ein Trugbild, ein Phantom des Ruhms
Ins Grab gehn wie ins Bett, um einen Fleck
Auf dem die Anzahl keinen Platz zum Krieg hat
Nicht Grab genug und Boden, die Erschlagenen,
Drin einzuscharrn? Von jetzt an malt mit Blut
Meine Gedanken, oder seid für nichts mehr gut.

Frank Günther

(3.2.91-119)

König:

Nun, wie ist heut unser Neffe Hamlet?

Hamlet:

Wie ich heut esse? Ja aber wie ein Scheunendrescher eß ich, heut hau ich rein, wie's
liebeshungrige Chamäleon, wenn's an der Liebe fehlt, schlemm ich an Luft, bin
geradezu genudelt mit versprochenen Windeiern. Kapaune kann man nicht besser
mästen.

König:

Ich hab mit dieser Antwort nichts zu schaffen, Hamlet, mich treffen diese Worte nicht.

Hamlet:

Sehr richtig, denn ich hab sie nicht recht getroffen. – (zu Polonius) Herr, sie spielten früher mal auf der Universität, sagten Sie?

Polonius:

Das tat ich, Prinz, und galt als guter Darsteller.

Hamlet:

Wen stellten Sie denn dar?

Polonius:

Ich stellte den Julius Cäsar dar. Ich wurde ermordet auf dem Kapitol. Brutus mordete mich.

Hamlet:

Brutal von ihm, so ein kapitales Kalb zu ermorden. Sind die Schauspieler fertig?

Rosenkranz:

Ja, mein Prinz, sie erwarten Ihre Erlaubnis.

Königin:

Komm hierher, Hamlet, Lieber, sitz bei mir.

Hamlet:

Nein, liebe Mutter, hier dies Metall zieht mehr an. (*wendet sich an Ophelia*)

Polonius:

(*apart zum König*) Oho! Hörn Sie das?

Hamlet:

(*legt sich zu Ophelias Füßen*) Fräulein, soll ich mich in Ihren Schoß legen?

Ophelia:

Nein, mein Prinz.

Hamlet:

Ich meine, den Kopf an Ihrem Schoß.

Ophelia:

Ja, mein Prinz.

Hamlet:

Sie meinen, ich meinte was Anschößiges?

Ophelia:

Ich meine gar nichts, mein Prinz.

Hamlet:
Ich meine, schön wär's, zwischen Mädchenbeinen liegen.

Ophelia:
Was ist, mein Prinznz?

Hamlet:
O nichts ist, ein gedankliches Loch.

Ophelia:
Sie sind witzig, mein Prinz.

Frank-Patrick Steckel

(3.1.56-90)

Hamlet:
Dasein oder Nichtsein heißt die Frage:
Was zeugt von edlerm Geiste, sich den Schlingen
Und Pfeilen des barbarischen Geschicks
Erleidend auszusetzen, oder aber
Mit der Waffe auf ein Meer von Plagen
Loszugehn und Schluß. Der Tod – ein Schlaf
Das Herzweh und die tausend Widrigkeiten,
Die Fleisches Erbe sind, zu endigen,
So zu vergehn, was könnte man mehr wünschen?
Der Tod, ein Schlaf; ein Schlaf, vielleicht ein Traum –
Jawohl, da hakt's: was in dem Todesschlaf
Für Träume kommen mögen, wenn wir erst
Die sterbliche Verstrickung abgeschüttelt,
Das läßt uns zögern – das verhilft dem Elend
Zu langem Leben, denn wer wollte wohl
Den Peitschenhieb und Hohn der Zeit ertragen,
Des Unterdrückers Faust, des Stolzen Dünkel,
Verschmähter Liebe Pein, des Rechtes Trägheit,
Die Anmaßung der Ämter, und den Fußtritt,
Mit dem Nichtswürdige Verdienst belohnen,
Wenn er den Schlußstrich selber ziehen kann
Mit jedem Messer? Wer würd' Lasten schleppen,
Ächzend, schwitzend, durch ein hartes Leben,
Wenn nicht die Furcht vor etwas nach dem Tod,
Dem unentdeckten Land, aus dessen Grenzen
Kein Reisender zurückkehrt, ihm den Willen
Lähmte und bewirkt, daß wir es vorziehn,
Die Übel, die wir haben, zu ertragen,
Als zu andern, fremden, uns zu flüchten.

So macht Besorgnis alle uns zum Feigling,
Die ursprüngliche Farbe der Entschlußkraft
Wird mit fahler Rücksicht überkränkt,
Und Unternehmungen von Größe und Belang
Verkehren sich durch den Bedacht ins Schiefe
Und kommen um die Tat. Doch still, die schöne
Ophelia. In deinen Bitten, Nymphe,
Gedenk' all meiner Sünden.

Reinhard Palm

(5.1.158-175)

Hamlet:

Wie lang liegt ein Mensch in der Erde, bis er verrottet?

1. Gräber:

Tja, wenn er nicht schon vor dem Tod verrottet ist – da wir heutzutage viel lustsüchtige Leichen haben, die kaum bis zum Hineinlegen halten – so wird er Euch etwa acht oder neun Jahr halten. Ein Gerber hält Euch etwa neun Jahr.

Hamlet:

Warum er mehr als ein anderer?

1. Gräber:

Nun, Sir, seine Haut ist so von seinem Gewerbe gegerbt, dass sie das Wasser eine gute Weile abhält; und das Wasser ist ein schlimmer Verweser von so eines Hurensohns Leichnam. Da ist ein Schädel, der lag dreiundzwanzig Jahre in der Erde.

Hamlet:

Wem seiner war er?

1. Gräber:

Der eines wahnsinnigen Hurensohns. Wem seiner denkst du, dass er war?

Hamlet:

Tja, ich weiss es nicht.

1. Gräber:

Die Pest über diesen wahnsinnigen Schuft! Er goss mir mal eine Flasche Rheinischen über den Kopf. Der Schädel, da, Sir, war Yorick's Schädel, des Königs Spassmacher.

Norbert Kollakowsky

(1.2.62-67)

König:

Ergreif die Gunst der Stunde und, Laertes,
Nütz den Tag, nütz die Zeit, wie's dir gefällt.
Doch nun, mein Vetter Hamlet und mein Sohn-

Hamlet:

(*beiseite*) Er nennt mich Sohn, doch ich bleib unversöhnt.

König:

Was, hängen stets noch Wolken über Euch?

Hamlet:

Nicht doch, mein Fürst, den Sohn quält Sonnenglanz.

Elisabeth Plessen

(2.2.295-310)

Hamlet:

Ich habe in letzter Zeit, doch ich weiß nicht warum, alle Heiterkeit verloren, vernachlässigt alles Körpertraining; und in der Tat geht es so schwer mit mir, daß dieser herrliche Bau, die Erde, mir vorkommt wie ein kahles Vorgebirge, dieser so außerordentliche Baldachin, die Luft, seht ihr, dieses prächtige, über uns schwebende Firmament, dieses majestätische Dach, das goldenes Feuer durchbricht – ja, das kommt mir vor wie eine widerliche Ansammlung ansteckender Dünste, nicht mehr. Welch Meisterstück ist ein Mensch! Wie nobel durch Vernunft, wie unbegrenzt in Fähigkeiten, an Gestalt und Bewegung wie bestimmt und bewundernswert, im Handeln wie gleich einem Engel, im Begreifen wie gleich einem Gott! Die Schönheit der Welt, das Vorbild aller Tiere, - und doch, was ist mir diese Quintessenz von Staub? Männer gefallen mir nicht – nein, Frauen auch nicht, obwohl ihr das durch euer Lächeln zu sagen scheint.

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