

# OTHELLO IN GERMAN



Since 1765, Shakespeare's *Othello* has been translated into German more than 40 times.

Shakespeare was adopted as a German 'national' writer in the early 19th century. No writer's plays are produced more often in German, even today. New translations appear constantly.

Seven new *Othellos* have been published since the year 2000: German interest in this play is intensifying.

Every different translation reflects its place in space and time – in the case of *Othello*, current ideas about black men and white men, black men and white women, natives and immigrants, 'supersubtle Venetians' and 'wheeling strangers'.



The story of German *Othellos* is a microcosm of German cultural history. Translators' choices reflect changing ideological norms through the periods of Romantic proto-nationalism, national unification,

colonialism, fascism, national division, re-unification, and (since 2000) the de-ethnicisation of German citizenship law.

This research deploys new methods in comparative

studies of multiple re-translations, using language technology to assist a hermeneutic approach.

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