

## **Translator's influences on Hitler's *Mein Kampf***

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Does an unambiguous 'Mein' – as in Hitler's – 'Kampf' exist, or is the influence of translators and their specific backgrounds so significant that 'My' struggle has turned into 'Their' struggle? To gain more insight into this question, we hypothesize that digital tools could be used to uncover substantive differences between nine different translations of *Mein Kampf*. For this, we use a research method consisting of stages which are consecutively more specific. In the two final stages, those of 'close reading' and 'contextualisation', it is no longer necessary to analyse 2.5 million words to find substantive differences, but only the specific passages that emerged as the most deviant.

First we use Mallet to identify overarching themes based on topic modelling. A few overarching topics become immediately visible; for example 'anti-Semitism'. When the anti-Semitic discourse is represented in a graph per chapter per edition, it becomes clear that the distribution of anti-Semitic discourse is skewed. Several specific translations – mostly English versions – feature the theme of anti-Semitism more prominently, while Mallet could not locate the theme 'anti-Semitism' in MKI.

Yet are the words in these 'anti-Semitic' topics merely interpretable within the context of biological racism? For example, words such as 'culture' are multi-interpretable. Only a few words are so vital for the racist discourse that they will be found in most of the anti-Semitic clauses and usually can't be interpreted in any other way. So, in order to verify the validity of the previous claim that a few editions differ substantively, the study focuses on the words 'Jew', 'Blood', 'Race', and 'Aryan', whilst narrowing the corpus down to the chapters eleven to sixteen, i.e. the chapters in which the most extreme deviations occurred. To verify the validity of the claim that a few editions differ substantively, the study focuses solely on the occurrence of these words, in all their variants. It becomes clear that the distribution of anti-Semitic discourse is still skewed. Sentences as 'juden' und 'wieder juden' – with emotional and rhetorical repetitions – are translated into 'the jew', and 'eine sich blutig bekämpfende Rotte von Ratten', – with a focus on blood – turns into a 'swarm of rats that bitterly fight against each other'.

Looking into the background of every translator and translation, it offers tools to explain the differences. For example, Mussolini chose a Jewish translator, resulting in the least anti-Semitic translation. Contextualisation can also lead to new insights: for instance, a less anti-Semitic translation was commissioned by the Nazis, whilst a more anti-Semitic one was above all an anti-Nazi translation. Since the Nazis were inclined to display their political Nazism as a viable alternative for the liberal democracy, they minimized anti-Semitic notions, whilst the anti-Nazis wanted to depict Hitler as a crude, cruel and purely anti-Semitic dictator.

The results might not lead to the conclusion that 'Mein' Kampf was turned into 'Their' Kampf, but it does demonstrate substantive differences between several editions of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* that are the result of different contexts, combined with the influence of translators and their specific circumstances.