

BEING POLITICAL IN GERMAN THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE: ANNA LANGHOFF AND CHRISTOPH SCHINGENSIEF

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THIS PAPER CHALLENGES THE WIDELY-HELD ASSUMPTION that political theatre and indeed theatre itself is currently in a state of crisis. Its case studies concern the ‘political’ in German theatre between 1994 and 2000, a period in which being an artist, being political and making political theatre took on new and contested meanings, weathering ‘crisis’ in interesting and inventive ways. In the decade after the opening of the Iron Curtain, which included the fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification in 1989, Germans experienced the triumph of capitalism over communism, the rapid ‘westernisation’ of East Germany and the associated loss of the socialist alternative. Commentators such as Andreas Huyssen wrote that reunification triggered a crisis for the left and called for an urgently required re-imagining of the radical, the political and the alternative within the expanded field of European capitalism (Huyssen 1995, 39-66). German theatre between 1994 and 2000 is set therefore within a period in which being political is increasingly problematic.

The period also coincides with technology-driven changes in media and communications that also impact on theatre. Hans Thiess Lehmann understands the crisis in theatre as related to the proliferation of image-based media over the language-based representational systems in which theatre is located. As he writes in the prologue to the influential *Postdramatic Theatre*,

[f]or both theatre and literature are textures which are especially dependent on the release of active energies of imagination, energies that are becoming weaker in a civilization of the primarily passive consumption of images and data. Neither literature or theatre is essentially characterized by reproduction but rather organised as a complex system of signifiers (2006, 16).

Theatre’s seemingly antiquated resistance to digital reproduction renders it ‘off-line’ in the Information Age but, as Lehmann admits, the capacity for the communal reception of live performance foregrounds possibilities for “*the mutual implication of actors and spectators in the theatrical production of the image*” (Lehmann 2006, 186; emphasis in original). On this logic, live theatre’s capacity for and generation of social interactivity in the co-production of meaning offer productive possibilities for political engagement. The political function of theatre is also reaffirmed by feminist theorists including Janelle Reinelt and Jill Dolan. Reinelt writes that “[t]heatre and performance, seen as an institution whose chief function is the production of the social imaginary, can play a potentially vital role in shaping social change” (in Dolan 2001, 7). The theatre, on this Brechtian-influenced model, would conceivably

fulfil the social function of being “a place of democratic struggle” in which spectators “deliberate on matters of state in an aesthetic mode” (7). This view contains possibilities as it calls on the socially engaged spectator, who still exists in the live space of performance, to participate in what Lehmann calls “the politics of perception” (2006, 185). While Dolan affirms simply that “[a]rt is profoundly political” and cites the interventions of the National Endowment for the Arts (the N.E.A.) as proof, Lehmann suggests that theatre can “show the . . . latent authoritarian constitution of the political body” by resisting its logocentric control and interrupting its regulatory practices: “[i]t is not through direct thematization of the political that theatre becomes political but through the implicit substance and critical value of its *mode of representation*” (2006, 185; emphasis in original). For Lehmann, this will be the mode of postdramatic theatre, but as this paper argues, dramatic or text-based theatre ought not be discounted as a mode of being political.

This paper is concerned therefore with the question of political theatre in a mediatised culture and challenges the assumption that theatre is in a state of crisis. It offers a study of theatre and performance practices that respond to, even resist, the new political condition of unified Germany by critiquing its chronic failure to adequately address the issue of foreigners, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees. The rise of nationalist discourse had alarmed many on the left while Helmut Kohl’s government glossed over anti-foreigner violence with a celebration of German unity. Yet, as Andreas Huyssen wrote, “[a]sylum, immigration, and citizenship are the primary discursive terrains in which German national identity is currently being written” (1995, 70). Television images of neo-Nazis and hostel-burnings sent good Germans onto the streets in candle-lit processions. There were moral, political and national issues at stake for the newly unified nation as well as access to enormous stocks of national wealth. The theatre and performance works considered in this paper respond to the challenges of the nationalist debate by finding new ways to stage the political in the new situation. At the very least, the national debate is tackled by a younger generation of artists and activists. For this discussion, I draw on Lehmann’s theory of postdramatic theatre to analyse two performances that deal with the wave of anti-foreigner sentiment that surged in the early 1990s and continued into the 2000s. Anna Langhoff’s *The Table Laid* (1994) is the little-known but important dramatic precedent for Christoph Schlingensiefel’s provocative *Bitte Liebt Österreich* (Wiener Festwochen 2000).

The two artists, Anna Langhoff and Christoph Schlingensiefel, belong to a generation of artists and intellectuals, born largely, but not exclusively, in the 1960s and 70s, on both sides of the Wall, who drew attention to the unequal social relations that soon emerged in the post-communist period. Many of these artists provoked debate about new subject formations: arrogant West German industrialists and investors, communists turned property developers (the so-called *Wendehals*—turncoats), cosmopolitan elites, refugees, neo-nationalists and activists.

Anna Langhoff is a Berlin-based writer and director, who was born into one of East Germany’s most prominent theatre families. Her grandfather, Wolfgang, an actor and director, was the Managing Director of the respected Deutsches Theatre in the postwar years from 1946 to 1963 (Weber 1993, 75). She spent much of her early childhood at the Berliner Ensemble and Volksbühne where her father, Matthias and uncle Thomas, were directors before moving to France with her family. The Langhoffs returned after reunification with Thomas Langhoff appointed as Artistic Director of the Deutsches Theater, at whose experimental Baracke theatre *The Table Laid* was produced in 1994. Langhoff’s father, Matthias, was appointed to the ill-fated board of management of the Berliner Ensemble in 1991. Anna was subsequently mentored by Heiner Müller, who in taking over as Artistic Director of the Berliner Ensemble in 1995, commissioned her as writer.¹ Schooled in the social realist mode of postwar theatre, Langhoff’s contemporary plays are neorealist text-based dramas. Christophe Schlingensiefel

had a quite different background. Born in 1960 and educated in West Germany, Schlingensiefel dabbled in independent film and performance before being invited to take up a post as resident director at the Volksbühne am Rosa Luxembourg Platz in the former East Berlin. From this base, he launched his reputation as the *enfant terrible* of German theatre, making a name for himself in the late 1990s with a controversial performance installation at Documenta, Kassel, in which he invited the public to “Kill Helmut Kohl!” (see Schlingensiefel’s website, below). In 2000, he was invited by Vienna Festival director, Luc Bondy, to make a work that would critique Austria’s right-wing anti-foreigner coalition government. The work, entitled *Foreigners Out: Please Love Austria*, is the second case study in this paper. While Langhoff’s neorealist plays and Schlingensiefel’s performance events sit at opposite ends of Hans Thies Lehmann’s dramatic/postdramatic theatre divide, both demonstrate the limits of liberal society’s capacity to deal with complex social problems.

Foreigner speech and nationalist violence in *The Table Laid*

Anna Langhoff’s *Transit Heimat/gedeckte tische* (*The Table Laid*) (1996, 1997) is a play about central and eastern European refugee and immigrant families who reside in a refugee hostel while waiting for permits to remain in Germany. It is a fable in the Brechtian sense of the collapse of communism and the break-up of the Soviet Union that saw more than two million ethnic Germans and eastern Europeans from the former Soviet bloc nations arrive in Germany in the early 1990s.² The West German economic miracle, together with a liberal approach to refugees, made it the primary destination for Eastern Europeans escaping contracting and dormant economies (Kurthen 1995). With the old state-run manufacturing plants liquidated, immigrants tried to survive the collapse of communism by migrating to the wealthy economies of western Europe. In newly unified Germany, however, they were met with a resurgent nationalist discourse and increasing anti-foreigner violence. The wave of anti-foreigner violence had culminated in the hostel burnings at Mölln and Solingen where there were fatalities. The play represents these issues in a neorealist scenario that ends in violence.

The Table Laid raises the ghosts of German xenophobia, critiques its nationalist basis and boldly raises these issues for a cosmopolitan Berlin audience. Through its English translation and publication and a rehearsed reading at the Royal Court, London, the play reached a wider public embroiled in its own national debates about foreigners. In Germany, Chancellor Helmut Kohl was considered soft on violence against foreigners and the slogan, ‘Germany to the Germans’ raised particular concern among liberal Germans (Huyssen 1995, 69). Anti-foreigner sentiment is shown in the play to take tacit and overt forms. It is inscribed in the meanness and inadequacy of the migrant hostel but also in the attitudes of the inhabitants of villages and towns where shopkeepers refuse to accept the refugees’ vouchers and, more dangerously, neo-Nazi youths write slogans—*Asylanten raus!* [Foreigners out]—on the walls of the hostel (1996, 5).

The dramaturgical action consists primarily of the entry and exits of families to and from the “*bare and dirty*” communal kitchen of the hostel and the dialogic exchanges that take place as they meet each other (1997, 145). The production at the Baracke at the Deutsches Theater, Berlin, in 1994, directed by Sewan Latchinian and designed by Meentje Nielsen, emphasised the pressure-cooker of forced communalism and lack of privacy with harsh fluorescent lighting that bears down on the inhabitants. It is not pretty theatre and the stage refuses the spectatorial pleasures of line and light.

The condition of the refugee subject is represented as time-rich and space-poor in a volatile mix that increases anxiety and sets off explosive tempers. Without work-permits or money, there is little to do to pass the time placing the foreigners passively at odds with the affluent time-poor culture of late capitalism. There is little scope for the ‘creative capacities’ of immigrants, that is, the potential for

creative social activity contained in the knowledge, languages and skills they bring with them to a new country (Hardt and Negri 2004, 133). Rather, in Langhoff's fable, the central and eastern European poor are a wasted resource, left to indulge in negative emotions and behaviour, accusing each other of perceived and actual slights, indulging in drunkenness and melancholia and memorialising the past. Existing in a 'transit *Heimat*', a liminal, transitory state of being, that is neither one thing nor another, their transience is traumatic. They live the condition of 'real existing' mobility as free-floating beings whose experience of life as a foreigner is dehumanising and deprived.

The fable moves along with the entrance of the chronically under-resourced social worker who has naïve hopes for a happy multiculturalism. Typically a woman, Frau Mertel, the Social Worker is rendered totally ineffective by the funding cuts that have savaged social welfare programs. She initiates a banquet-project and secures the funding to hold a communal feast for which the women will cook national dishes. But by the time the food is cooked and the table laid, and after some festive music and dancing, the agent of multiculturalism will be found dead in the woods surrounding the hostel. Her body will be carried in and laid on the table amongst the national dishes, the table transforming from a source of life-giving food, into a mortuary slab. A note left at the hostel and found by a Russian immigrant points to neo-Nazis. It reads:

SO-GEHT-ES-DEN-ASYL-AN-TEN-HU-REN-UND-AL-LEN-AN-DER-EN-RO-TEN-VOT-ZEN!-DEUTSCH-LAND-DEN-DEU-TSCHEN-SIEG-HEIL! (1996, 41).

The as-yl-um sl-ag gets this. And all oth-er red cu-nts. German-y for the Ger-mans. *Sieg Heil!* (1997, 188).

The violent language mimics the anti-foreigner slogans of the 1990s and draws shocking attention to the rise of neo-Nazism in the post-reunification era. The accused, however, will be a scapegoat, a volatile young Polish foreigner, and the vital evidence pointing to the neo-Nazi murderers will be concealed by a Russian immigrant for fear of becoming involved. In the end, there are two dead bodies: the older German woman and the young Pole, who on his first night in prison commits suicide in his cell.

On Hans Thiess Lehmann's model of dramatic and postdramatic theatre, *The Table Laid* is a text-based piece of dramatic theatre. It has a fictional dramatic world, a fable, named characters, a dramaturgical structure of four scenes and a sequence of actions that lead to the recognition of the true state of things and a grim catharsis of sorts. The theatrical frame encloses a fictive cosmos. Yet, as this analysis tries to show, this mode of dramatic theatre retains a political dimension.

In a carefully considered but much criticised decision by the playwright, the foreigners' dialogue is undertaken in broken German, or Pidgin-German. Not far inside the German border, skinheads attack a Roma family:

Anna: Sie schreien: "Raus! Raus! Ausländer Raus! Weg!" Wir nichts machen, alle Angst. Aber die schlägt uns. Brüllen laut, ganz laut, mein Schwester blutet . . . Junge Männer ohne Haare halten lange Stock, alle an Füßen Soldatenstiefel, sie lachen, treiben, schubsen mich. Polizei kommt spät. Kommt ganz langsam . . . mit Gummihandschuhe angefaßt (1996, 10).

Anna: They shout: "Out! Out! Foreigners Out! Fuck off!" We do nothing. All fear. But they beat us. Shouting loud. Big loud. My sister bleeds . . . Young men with no hair holding stick. All on feet soldier boots. They laugh. Pushing. Shoving. Police come late. Come very slowly . . . touch us with rubber gloves . . . (1997, 151).

The Pidgin-German empathises with the outsider's perspective of German anti-foreigner sentiment. Langhoff has said "[w]hat can be misunderstood as broken German is in fact a theatrical choice that I sought consciously" (Müller 2003). Her intention is not to reproduce foreigner-stereotypes but to present linguistic difference as one of the defining conditions of the foreigner. Its effect is similar to the use of dialect in dramatic texts and performance that point to competence-based social hierarchies among language users. German theatre scholar David Barnett has suggested that "dialect is no longer a token of a realist aesthetic, it actively calls the characters' use of language into question" (1998, 189). Applied to Langhoff's play, the foreigners' Pidgin-German is a constant reminder of the problem of being in transit. It draws attention to the speech act, to the mechanics of speech, the struggle to create meaning and the problem of miscommunication in a way not normally possible in naturalistic dialogue. In this way, the play's dramaturgy exceeds the limits of naturalism. On the question of ethnic stereotyping, that is also related to the language issue, Langhoff has acknowledged the danger of the text dredging up "latent racism". Actors can, she says, "miss the target" which is to represent, sincerely, the facticity of difference without resorting to artifice (Mueller, 2003). The contrast between the linguistic competence of German anti-foreigner slogans and the linguistic 'incompetence' of the foreigners' Pidgin-German offers 'a complex system of signifiers' that mutually implicates performers and spectators in the politics of language production within foreigner communities in the early 1990s. Langhoff has successfully manipulated the neorealist medium to point to the politics of signification that mediates the encounters between nationals and foreigners. At the same time, she uses dramatic language as testimony to the violence imposed by one linguistic community on another.

Transit issues in Christoph Schlingensief's *Bitte Liebt Österreich* [*Please Love Austria*]

Christoph Schlingensief's *Bitte Liebt Österreich* (Vienna, 2000) is an installation and performance event that takes place over six days in June 2000 at Herbert von Karajan-Platz in Vienna next to the Viennese Opera House. Its controlling idea is the adaptation of the *Big Brother* reality television concept to the question of asylum seekers. On the first day of the performance, Schlingensief introduces to a curious public the twelve asylum seekers who will enter the shipping containers where they will live until their eviction. The winner will receive cash and the chance to marry an Austrian volunteer and apply for citizenship. Above the container is a large sign, '*Auslander Raus*', that causes great distress to spectators, some of whom pull it down in an act of resistance during the week. (Schlingensief's people replace it.) Alongside the sign are the blue flags of Austria's far right Freedom Party (F.P.Ö.) and the logo of the tabloid newspaper *Die Kronenzeitung*. Each day, Austrians are invited by the megaphone-wielding Schlingensief, live in the square and online, to evict two asylum seekers.³ On eviction the asylum seekers are escorted by security to a waiting car before being 'deported'. The performance is a multi-media event, performed live in real time, simulcast on closed circuit television and the Internet and filmed for a documentary that is released on D.V.D. in English and German and available through the shop on Schlingensief's personal website.

Aimed at the German-speaking public, the performance is also intended for English-speaking audiences. The documentary is sub-titled and Schlingensief's website is available in German and English. The bi-lingual performance, documentation, promotional material and website and its high level of interactivity with spectators suggests Schlingensief's political and commercial awareness of the heteroglossia of the contemporary arts in its global arena. His highly visual and action-based presentation, along with the familiarity of the *Big Brother* format, speaks the visual language of western media, offering multiple entry sites for a number of possible audiences both in German-speaking countries and online. Its use of live action, media, interactivity, billboards and megaphone addresses takes the performance outside the realm of theatre and drama places it in the realm of the event.

In this respect, *Bitte Liebt Österreich* is a typical work of postdramatic theatre that since the 1960s has moved away from language-based literary drama. It shares much with the Situationists, who in the 1960s practised art that had to do with the theory or the practical activity of constructing situations. No longer based on text or on the dramatic representation of narrative, character, dialogue or a fictional dramatic world, postdramatic theatre is driven by the philosophical and aesthetic forces of post-modernity (Lehmann 2006, 175). That said, postdramatic theatre typically takes place in the present, preferring presence, “the doing in the real” (Lehmann 2006, 104), over representation, “the making present” (21), of dialogue and action on stage. In *Bitte Liebt Österreich*, Schlingensiefel takes in the social and political situation of western Europe, including the expanded horizon of Orwell’s Big Brother and he utilises the degraded reality T.V. scenario of the same name to parody not only the sovereign power of the state but participatory democracy itself. The people of Austria, inscribed with the collective memory of Hitler, Nazism and the Final Solution, vote, watch and create the performance. In this way, as much as the asylum seekers in the containers, the Austrians in the square and on-line, manifest the ongoing problem of difference, inequality and oppression and the structures which reproduce it. It is a stunningly brilliant and seductive performative conceit.

Bitte Liebt Österreich registers with Lehmann’s category of “cool fun” (2006, 118). This is a mode of theatre that “mimics and reflects the omnipresent media”, and/or “finds its inspiration in the patterns of television and film entertainment” as well as a classical, here modernist, intellectual heritage. It arises from feelings of resignation and rebellion.

It seems that the strangely static state of the social (despite the transformations through world politics since 1989) can hardly be resisted by the arts head on but only through an attitude of deviating and turning away. This lays the foundation for Cool Fun as an aesthetically thriving attitude (Lehmann 2006, 119).

Parody is cool fun and the documentary shows amused spectators and bystanders enjoying the spectacle including the objections of irate Austrians. While *Bitte Liebt Österreich* radically hails and cynically exposes the presence of anti-foreigner tendencies in liberal western society, it avoids the seriousness and earnestness of politically correct theatre. Its value when it works is that it creates a “live moment of public debate” (Lehmann 2006, 122), which it certainly did. The situation also includes its location.

Taking place in the square onto which the Viennese Opera House opens, the containers confronted the classical theatre of old Europe with its bastard child. Standing on a platform in the square, Schlingensiefel with megaphone, is part-genius and part-maniac with an alarmingly effective nod to an earlier Austrian. The event succeeds in running for the week and the daily evictions are observed by crowds and caught on camera. Schlingensiefel is Hitler, Stalin, Mao, a sideshow spruiker and a T.V. host cajoling and exhorting people to vote for their evictee. He is Edmund standing up for bastards: the asylum seekers from the offshore territories of globalisation. As one fellow artist from Berlin observed, “[o]utside the Opera House, it was a meeting of the elites from all over the world” with the issues of the day.⁴ Yet, Schlingensiefel is no Edmund, despite the outrage of Austrians who called him first a German and then an artist. His right of reply included access to the most sophisticated means of self-representation and expression that advanced capitalism has to offer. Nor was he a lone discontent; Austrians and the European Union had voiced their opposition to the coalition. Questions linger about the effectiveness of the performance long after the event leaves Austria. Jörg Haider had already resigned in February, 2000, European sanctions had been imposed and the F.P.Ö lost out in the 2002 elections. What claims can be made on behalf of *Bitte Liebt Österreich*?

Comparison

The Schlingensief machine contrasts with the more earnest treatment of anti-foreigner sentiment in *The Table Laid*. While *Bitte Liebt Österreich* is the more radically conceived performance, and *The Table Laid*, by comparison, labours in an out-dated dramatic mode, the latter work merits recognition for its anti-hegemonic, non-western point of view. As a playwright, Langhoff is steeped in the East German theatre's emphasis on the critical relationship between dramaturgical form and social content derived from Bertolt Brecht, and an explicit interest in social questions.

Schlingensief's website announces that "[n]o other German director has in recent years been as active as Christoph Schlingensief in earning the term "political" for his theatre." West German born and raised, he is a prolific theatre director, film-maker, performance artist, political activist, talkshow host who moved to East Berlin's Volksbühne after the fall of the wall, quickly established a cult reputation as an unpredictable and daring theatre artist and became enmeshed in so much mythology that it is difficult to separate truth from fiction. Perhaps in this way he is the consummate postmodern artist.

In the fictional world of *The Table Laid*, the newly opened central and eastern European borders, together with the collapse of state-owned industry, have produced the figure of the foreigner whose desire for liberal democracy is strictly regulated, with hope constrained. Schlingensief's *Bitte Liebt Österreich* replaces the hostel with the shipping container pointing to the expanded movement of human desire along the shipping routes and freeways of the global economy. It is the downside of mobility. The spatial confrontation of the ugly container and the Viennese Opera House demands that attention be paid to this contemporary phenomenon.

While recognising *Bitte Liebt Österreich* as a radical critique of a generalised western liberal culture, his asylum seekers at the end of the day remain anonymous. They appear as ethnicised objects of the largely western European gaze. Playing to the gaze, they disguise their 'real' appearance and identities, for the sake of the fiction, displaying, it must be said, creative capacity for parody and play. While this self-objectification works as a critical reflection of western attitudes, the asylum seeker subjects remains mute: biographical information is released in prewritten bites rather than spontaneously given. They never communicate, for instance, with the public that observes and votes for them. They remain on the whole other, different, not the same as Austrians and Germans, but an homogeneously othered group nonetheless. Indeed, the piece relies on the ambiguity of the performers' identities. Spectators wonder if they are real asylum seekers, performers, ethnic extras or actors (some were). At least one critic noted that "nobody really understood to what extent everything was staged" (Irmer 2002, 63). The effect was controlled public chaos.

On the other hand, with its focus on the interior of the hostel and individualised foreigners with fictional names and histories, *The Table Laid* offers insights into the different tensions, anxieties, conflicts and unmet desires of western Europe's central and eastern neighbours: the Poles, Russians, Serbs and Croats who bring different languages, histories and attitudes to the European table. Langhoff's retention of dramatic language allows her to theatricalise storytelling so that actors and spectators can "deliberate on matters of state in an aesthetic mode" as Reinelt suggested. This occurs as the play gives testimony to the stories of newly self-realising European subjects whose encounter with capitalist Western Europe is only recent. Their situation is not unlike that of female and working class subjects in the late nineteenth century whose stage characters contributed to and reflected changes in public attitudes. The play confronts western Europe with its minorities' stories.⁵ Schlingensief, on the other hand, only lets you look, choose or evict based on the visual appearance of the asylum seekers. It is his voice not theirs on the megaphone.

It is true that Langhoff thematises the political while Schlingensief's political is embedded in his radical form. Langhoff's production relies on an 'antiquated' dialogue and character-driven dramatic form while Schlingensief's performance breaks new ground. Langhoff's play is crafted rather than chaotic and interactive; it retains the distancing effects of dramatic time and space while Schlingensief blurs the boundaries between performance and the everyday and performance and media. Yet Langhoff's dramatic work constitutes an important prologue to Schlingensief's later more theatrical and performative intervention into the politics of exclusion that, as his work shows, had become further elaborated by 2000. The *Big Brother* format demonstrates how the public is coopted into the race-based politics of inclusion and exclusion through a debased form of democracy that had seen Austrians vote, in 1999, for the anti-foreigner far-right Freedom Party. If Langhoff responds to localised neo-Nazi attacks on foreigners in the towns and villages of the reunited nation, Schlingensief shows how the culture of exclusion has gone mainstream in the major media networks and city centre. Both works expose the shift from the politics of class to new hierarchies of language, ethnicity and race in post-communist Europe.

This paper has investigated divergent modes of political theatre in German-language theatre and performance between 1994 and 2000, which is set within the broader context of post-communist Europe. It has challenged the opposition of dramatic and postdramatic theatre where the former is cast as an antiquated form incapable of dealing with the complex issues of late capitalism and globalisation. This paper finds that the representative theatrical examples, while differing in aesthetic form, share a critical engagement with issues that arise with the opening of Europe's eastern borders and the tensions associated with increased cross-border movement. They point to the contradiction of traumatic, harrowing and precarious border crossings made by newly liberated eastern European subjects who desire a share in the much-vaunted western lifestyle only to find that it is strictly regulated along lines of language, ethnicity and community. Being political in these works is to foreground the situation of the foreigner to expose the "latent authoritarian constitution" of western liberal democracies and to reveal the limitations of their claims to support an open society.

Notes

1. Interview with the artist conducted by Melinda Hetzel for the Theatre in the Berlin Republic Project, a project funded by the Australian Research Council, conducted by Denise Varney, 2004–2006. The author acknowledges the Akademie der Künste Arhic in Berlin, and thanks Ms Sabine Zolchow and the Sammlung Theatre der Wende for her assistance with the research for this paper.

2. According to the Migration Policy Institute,

[w]ith the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of travel restrictions from the former Eastern Bloc countries, an additional three million ethnic Germans returned to Germany between 1988 and 2003. Almost 2.2 million of these arrived from the former territory of the Soviet Union, with Poland (575,000) and Romania (220,000) providing the remaining flows.

Migration Policy Institute, 2006: Information downloaded regarding migration in Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Philip Martin and Michael Teitelbaum, <http://migration.ucdavis.edu/rs/more.php?id>. Accessed: 28/02/2006.

3. http://www.schlingensief.com/schlingensief_eng.php

4. Interview with Berlin-based writer, director, actor Reinard Kuhnert (Denise Varney, Melbourne, 2003).

5. Langhoff directed a theatrical version of Ingo Schulz's *Simple Stories* at the Schauspiel in Leipzig in 1998.

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