DISJOINTED CONFESSIONS: *ADIKIA* AND RADICAL DERADICALIZATION IN SCHLINGENSIEF'S *HAMLET*

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The time is out of joint. The world is going badly.

Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (2006)

Giving and forgiving have an essential relation to time—it binds forgiveness to the past but is granted in the present of the present.

Jacques Derrida, *Forgiving the Unforgiveable* (1999)

In 2001, in Zürich and then later in Berlin, German filmmaker, theatre director and performance artist Christoph Schlingensief staged a version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* which he subtitled: *This is Your Family—Nazi-Line.* The play was conceptualized as an alternative to German Interior Minister Otto Schily's federal deradicalization programme designed to help 'redemptive' neo-Nazis reintegrate into society. Schlingensief used *Hamlet* as a vehicle, a way into what could be called 'radical deradicalization'. This is to say that the form of his project—his inventive staging of *Hamlet*—is radical, but the outcome involves the participants endeavouring to deradicalize from neo-Nazi ideology. Schlingensief's staging of *Hamlet* retains, for the most part, a historical set and traditional 14th-15th century costuming; however, sheets of swastika wallpaper are included in the set and swastika flags sometimes flank the stage. This is intended to give the appearance that a

'historical' version of *Hamlet* is being performed in the Nazi era. Through much of the performance Schlingensief makes use of an audiotape of a 1962 version of *Hamlet* and frequently has his actors move their lips while this audio track is playing in the background. In this 1962 version, Gustaf Gründgens, a prominent actor in Nazi Germany plays the eponymous role. It will become clear that Gründgens' link to the Nazi party makes the decision to use this audiotape significant.

Schlingensief's replication of the 1962 version is dramatically disrupted in the famous mousetrap scene (Act III, scene II). Usually this scene involves a play within the play of *Hamlet* itself in which Hamlet instructs a group of actors performing for King Claudius, Queen Gertrude and numerous courtiers to act out a play, *Murder of Gonzago*, in which a king is murdered by his brother, who goes on to marry the queen. Hamlet aims to force his uncle Claudius to confess to fratricide, or at least gauge from his reaction whether he killed Hamlet's father. In Schlingensief's production the players who then enter the stage ostensibly to perform the play-within-a-play are a group of 'redemptive neo-Nazis' attempting to separate themselves from the right-wing scene, dressed in contemporary fascistic-style clothing: bomber jackets, white-laced Dr. Martin boots, white braces, long black leather coats, etc. Although this scene remains one of confession, it is not the confession of Claudius that has primacy here, but that of the six redemptive neo-Nazis. Each of them shares their own personal experiences with the audience, both from the stage and amongst the seated crowd. By staging this encounter between the apparently redemptive neo-Nazis and the audience, who are given the opportunity to ask questions of the six men, Schlingensief is trying create a space in which a process of deradicalization and reintegration can be set in motion. He is forcing the audience to confront the extremist elements of their society, but also giving them the opportunity to 'forgive' these neo-Nazis for their 'sins' in order for a proper reintegration and deradicalization to occur.

Schlingensief's production also attempts to comment on and create debate about the 'rottenness' of the State, to refer back to Shakespeare's famous line, not just Switzerland where this production was initially staged, but also in the surrounding countries, which had all witnessed increased the approval ratings and growing influence of far-right parties. Furthermore, this coincided, as Slavoj Žižek suggests, with a mainstreaming of anti-immigration politics in Europe in the early part of the 21st century, specifically the tendency of the main parties in Holland, Germany, France, Austria, etc., to embrace xenophobic platforms that were previously associated with the fringe far-right parties. Žižek argues that this is part of a politics of fear, a result of the predominant mode of politics today, which he calls *post-political biopolitics* (2008, 34). By post-political, Žižek points to the popular belief that contemporary politics has left behind the ideological struggles of much of the 20th century and instead is able to concentrate on high-level management and administration. His use of the term biopolitics in this context refers to the regulation of security (34). He goes on to argue that

> with the depoliticised, socially objective, expert administration and coordination of interests as the zero level of politics, the only way to introduce passion into this field, to actively mobilise people, is through fear, a basic constituent of today's subjectivity. For this reason, bio-politics is ultimately a politics of fear. (Žižek 2008, 34)

Although Schlingensief's *Hamlet* is a reaction to a politics of fear in contemporary Europe, I argue that it does more than reproduce fear as a means of impassioning the political field. Rather, his production attempts to combat the politics of fear through a notion of giving and forgiving which could be seen to align with Jacques Derrida's thinking in *Specters of Marx* (2006), which also uses *Hamlet* as a point of departure to suggest that contemporary political discussions must be haunted by the spectre of Marx, from whom we can inherit the philosophy of responsibility and the spirit of radical critique (60–63). What I will do here is address Schlingensief's production by analyzing the work through the conceptual rubric of *adikia* (disjointure, dislocation, injustice) and *dike* (jointure, ordering, justice), concepts which can be traced back to the oldest extant Greek text, the Anaximander fragment, but which are also pivotal to the themes and language of the play *Hamlet*. Drawing on Martin Heidegger's and Derrida's re-evaluations of the Anaximander fragment, I will relate these concepts to the contemporary political scene and illustrate how Schlingensief's work attempts to intervene in the *adikia* caused by a current politics of fear.

The Anaximander fragment is considered to be the oldest extant Greek text and thus the oldest (partial) text of the Western philosophic tradition.[1] Charles H. Kahn argues that "[w]hat the system of Anaximander represents for us is nothing less than the advent, in the West at any rate, of a rational outlook on the natural world" (1960, 7). The small fragment that I will quote shortly is the only piece of his written work that remains. Both Kahn and Costas Douzinas (2010, 87) suggest that this piece of writing is of central importance to Heidegger's philosphy, as he uses the Anaximander fragment, and other early Greek writings by Heraclitus and Parmenides, to refocus the question of being, which he considers to be neglected in much of the metaphysical tradition.

On the first page of his discussion of the fragment, Heidegger quotes both Friedrich Nietzsche's and Hermann Diels' translations of Anaximander, not only as a means to show the "different intentions and procedures" (1975, 14) from which the translations arose but also as an impetus to take "each word of the fragment seriously" (Krell 1975, 11). Nietzsche's translation appears in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* in an essay on the Preplatonic philosophers; it was published posthumously in 1903, although originally written in 1873 (Heidegger 1975, 13). Diels was a scholar of the ancient Sophists and is considered to have popularized the term Presocratic (*Vorsokratiker* in German); his translation of Anaximander also appeared in 1903 in *Fragments of the Presocratics* (Heidegger 1975, 13–14). The quotations cited here have also undergone another process of interpretation through the translation from German into English by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. The English version of Nietzsche's translation reads: "Whence things have their origin, they must also pass away according to necessity; for they must *pay penalty and be judged* for their *injustice*, according to the ordinance of time" (Heidegger 1975, 13; my emphasis). Diels' translation reads as follows: "But that from which things arise also gives rise to their passing away, according to what is necessary; for things render *justice and pay penalty* to one another for their *injustice*, according to the ordinance of time" (Heidegger 1975, 13; my emphasis).[2]

I have added emphasis to the translations of *dike* (justice, penalty) and *adikia* (injustice) to focus on elements which, it will become clear in Heidegger's "violent interpretation" (Krell 1975, 11), have strong connections with the language of *Hamlet*. Both Nietzsche and Diels follow the traditional translations of *dike* and *adikia*, which are based on goddesses from ancient Greek mythology. The best-known image of these goddesses (or personifications of concepts) is Dike throttling the ugly and blotch-faced Adikia while beating her with a stick (Webster 1954). In this image Dike is thus rendering justice and forcing Adikia to pay penalty for her injustice. Heidegger argues that, although justice and injustice may be literal translations of *dike* and *adikia*, they are not necessarily faithful. Rather, Heidegger asserts that one should think of these terms as something closer to jointure and order on the one hand, and disjointure and disorder on the other. He states,

> The fragment clearly says that what is present is in *adikia*, i.e. is out of joint. However, that cannot mean that things no longer come to presence. But neither does it say that what is present is only occasionally, or perhaps only with respect to some one of its properties, out of joint. The fragment says: what is present as such, being what it is, is out of joint. To presencing as such jointure must belong, thus creating the possibility of its being out of joint. What is present is that which lingers awhile. (Heidegger 1975, 41)

The 'awhile' for Heidegger is transitional; it lingers between approach and withdrawal, between what he describes as the two folds of absence where something comes to presence: "In this 'between' whatever lingers awhile is joined" (Heidegger 1975, 41). The 'between' is therefore jointure, in the sense of the join and order, as it belongs to whatever lingers awhile. This is a key aspect of Heidegger's ontology: the presence of being involves a lingering, a coming to presence or 'presencing' between the here and the there, between the approach and the withdrawal. At times Heidegger also describes the being of language in a similar vein. Indeed, in an essay "The Way to Language" he articulates the design of the being of language as such: "Speaking, *qua* saying something, belongs to the design of the being of language, the design which is pervaded by all modes saying and of what is said, in which everything present or absent announces, grants or refutes itself, shows itself or withdraws" (Heidegger 1982, 122). Again, the absences and withdrawals become key to his formulation of being language *qua* language, as does his foregrounding of showing as coming to presence that is so prevalent in his interpretation of Anaximander.

In Heidegger's understanding of *dike*, presencing, or coming to presence, comes about in jointure:

> The jointure belongs to whatever lingers awhile, which in turn belongs in the jointure. The jointure is order. *Dike*, thought of on the basis of being as presencing, is the ordering and enjoining of order. (Heidegger 1975, [43])

 Heidegger's original German version reads:

> Die *Fuge* gehört zum Je-Weiligen, das ist die *Fuge* gehört. *Fuge* ist der *Fug*. *Dike*, aus dem Sein, als Anwesen gedacht, ist der *fugend-fügende fug*. (Heidegger 1994, 357; my emphasis)

Heidegger's wordplay on '*fuge*', '*fügend*' and '*fug*' creates a metaphor of, or at least has linguistic links to, carpentry, building and construction and thus also introduces the sense of bringing something quite materially into being. In his ruminations on language Heidegger also uses metaphors of building and growing to ascribe the unity of the being of language as design. He posits: "The "sign" in design (Latin *signum*) is related to *secare* to cut—as in saw, sector and segment. To design is to cut a trace" (Heidegger 1982, 122). Yet he further argues "we make a design when we cut a furrow into the soil to open it to seed and growth" (122). Indeed, for Heidegger, the way to language is a process of building, of creating a path, of continually providing the way *and* being the way (130). *Fugend* is the present participle of *fugen*, which means joining, grouting or linking, while *die Fuge* means joint, interstice, gap, or seam. Later, it will become clear that Derrida, developing on from Heidegger, uses the metaphor of the hinge in a similar vein, as it suggests the joining and coming together of two things but also highlights the importance of the gap and the seam-in-between in this jointure. *Fügend*, a different word in German, is the present participle of *fügen*, which similarly suggests assembling, joining, connecting and fitting, but it is important to note that '*sich fügen*' means to conform or comply. *Der Fug* is commonly used in the phrase *mit Fug und Recht*, which means 'rightly so,' 'within rights,' or how things 'ought to be'. While *das Recht* denotes law, justice and authorization, *der Fug* is generally not used as a stand-alone word, appearing only in certain formulations, such as *mit Fug und Recht*, to connote 'right' or 'entitlement.*' Fug* also has roots in the Middle High German word 'vuoc(-ges)', meaning craftsmanship and commensurability, which can be seen in the antonym that is still in use, *Unfug,* used to designate something being inappropriate or incommensurable. Thus, for Heidegger, jointure and enjoining of order suggest a constructive process of linking and fitting together, an assembling in which the seam or hinge is still present, while also connoting that this process is one that puts things in the 'right' order, how they 'ought to be.'

Adikia, on the other hand, is the absence of *dike,* the absence of order and jointure. It occurs when all is not right with things, when things are out of joint or dislocated (*aus den Fugen*) or not going as they ought to (*aus den Fugen gehen*). As Derrida points out, when the time is out of joint, "something in the present is not going well, it is not going as it *ought to go*" (2006, 27). *Adikia* also suggests a process without care, something reckless. Heidegger argues that the presencing that comes about through the jointure of that which lingers awhile between the here and there can overcome the recklessness present in *adikia.* He states, "Insofar as beings which linger awhile give order, each being thereby lets reck belong to the other, lets reck pervade its relationship with the others" (1975, 47). The now archaic word 'reck', the opposite of 'reckless' (that is tantamount to 'wreck' for that matter), suggests taking care or having care in relation to others. In his attempt to be faithful rather than literal to the poetics of the fragment, Heidegger posits that care, order and jointure, rather than judgement and the paying of penalties, are the means of overcoming the presence of *adikia*. His translation of the Anaximander fragment is thus significantly different from that of Nietzsche or Diels. The translation, furthermore, is withheld until the end of Heidegger's essay and thus is continually deferred, perhaps suggesting that the journey to reach the final translation should prove as important as the translation itself.

Heidegger's translation reads "… along the lines of usage; for they let order and thereby also reck belong to one another (in the surmounting) of disorder" (1975, 57). [3] One will notice that Heidegger's translation is shorter than both Diels' and Nietzsche's, which, according to Michael Eldred, is due to the fact that what Heidegger quotes is considered by contemporary philologists to be genuinely Anaximander's words. Furthermore, Eldred reminds us that in his translation Heidegger returns to an earlier meaning of the Greek word *ti/sij*, which Nietzsche and Diels have translated as *Buße*. Rather than 'penalty' and hence punishment as *Buße* connotes, Eldred states that Heidegger claims the word used to mean 'estimation' or 'esteem'. In other words, Heidegger has inverted the meaning of that phrase from the negative (penalty) to the positive (reck and care).

In *Specters of Marx* (2006), Derrida returns to Heidegger's reading of Anaximander and agrees, in general, with Heidegger's ontological positioning. However, he attempts to bring to the centre the disjointure of *adikia* that he maintains is sidelined in Heidegger's overemphasis on jointure and care (32). Indeed, Derrida foregrounds the dislocation and disjointure of and in Being which he finds to be passed over too quickly in Heidegger. But what is important here, for my purposes, is how Derrida frames the idea of *adikia* as disjointure and disorder and *dike* as jointure and order whilst still retaining, or at least not completely separating them from, the traditional notions of injustice and justice. I wish to focus on Derrida's reassessment of what he suggests Heidegger invokes yet underplays: that is, justice (and jointure) should be thought of as a gift and not an act of vengeance or a punishment. These ideas are of course key to a play that deals with the problematic nature of trying to put things right, trying to re-join that which is disjointed through the act of vengeance.

In Act I, scene V of *Hamlet,* Hamlet first encounters the ghost of his murdered father. The former king tells young Hamlet that his brother Claudius poisoned him in order take the throne and marry Hamlet's mother Gertrude. He commands Hamlet to swear on his sword that he will avenge his father's death to put things right, back in order, in the rotten state of Denmark. Hamlet swears to this act, yet soon after bemoans this new-found responsibility, uttering the famous line: "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right." In Derrida's analysis of this scene he points out:

> Hamlet does not curse so much the corruption of the age. He curses first of all and instead this unjust effect of the disorder, namely, the fate that would have destined him, Hamlet, to put a dislocated time back in its hinges—and to put it back right, to turn it back over to the law. He curses his mission: to do justice to a de-mission of time. He swears against destiny that leads him to do justice for a fault, a fault of time and of the times, by rectifying an *address*, by making of rectitude and right ("to set it right") a movement of *correction*, reparation, restitution, vengeance, revenge, punishment. (Derrida 2006, 23)

Hamlet is thus lamenting the fact of having to carry out a punishment, just as he complains about the notion that justice, putting things right, must come through vengeance. He bemoans the punishment of having to punish, of rendering justice through penalty for another's injustice. For Derrida then, it is Hamlet, before Heidegger, who problematizes *dike* as rendering justice by

avenging the injustice of *adikia*. As I have mentioned, this is the manner in which Nietzsche and Diels interpreted the Anaximander fragment, as rendering justice through vengeance for injustice, and it is this process which Hamlet begrudgingly undertakes. What Derrida attempts to do, through a rereading of Heidegger, is to separate the idea of justice and 'putting something right' from that of vengeance and punishment. In a departure from his predecessors, Derrida radically suggests that *dike* is a matter of giving. It is not a gift in and of itself; rather, Derrida argues that to put right *adikia* must involve a gift and not a punishment. He states that there "is first of all a gift without restitution, without calculation, without accountability" (2006, 30). He suggests that Heidegger's examination of the Anaximander fragment sets this groundwork, so to speak, for this conceptualization of the gift, and "removes such a gift from any horizon of culpability, of debt, of right, and even, perhaps, of duty" (2006, 30). He further argues that Heidegger wants to "wrest it away from that experience of vengeance whose idea, he says, remains 'the opinion of those who equate the just (*Gerechte*) with the Avenged (*das Gerächte*)'" (30). I would suggest that Schlingensief's *Hamlet* plays out these tensions between *dike* (as order, jointure, justice and as a gift) and *adikia* (disjointure, disorder and injustice) on both inter- and extra-textual levels.

Schlingensief's *Hamlet* can be seen as peripherally related to a larger group of projects and deradicalization programmes designed to help right-wing extremists 'drop out' of the neo-Nazi scene and integrate back into society. In a Dutch study conducted in 2006 for *Racism and Extremism Monitor*, researchers gave a report on different deradicalization programmes in Germany in order to generate ideas for similar programmes in the Netherlands. The report was one of the first studies to take an in-depth look at these deradicalization programmes, as the German government did not make public figures about or evaluations of the numerous programmes (Grunenberg and van Donselaar 2006). At the time the report was published in 2006 there were approximately 40,000 right-wing extremists across the country (Grunenberg and van Donselaar 2006, 102). In Germany a division is made between four different forms of right-wing extremism: political parties, violent right-wing skinheads, neo-Nazi groups (*Kameradschaften*, who are more politically and ideologically focused than the skinhead groups), and political commentators (Grunenberg and van Donselaar 2006, 103). In an attempt to curb the impact of these groups, whose adherents commit around 30 criminal offenses per day, numerous governmental and non-governmental, federal and state-wide 'drop-out' programmes were established around Germany from 2000 onwards (Grunenberg and van Donselaar 2006,102). Schlingensief's project was set up as a counterpoint action to the official Exit programme set up in that year by then Federal Minister of the Interior Otto Schily (SPD).[4] Following his own axiom that "art ought to be more political and politics more artful" (Schlingensief quoted in Gade 2010, 89) Schlingensief's project was an attempt to gauge whether theatre, in a small way, could contribute to the process of deradicalization. Indeed, I argue that Schlingensief's *Hamlet* is a radicalization of the play through its disjoining and fracturing in order to encourage a 'real-life' deradicalization. Through a connection with the well-known Austrian actor and director Peter Kern, who played Claudius and would later direct a documentary about the production of *Hamlet,* six neo-Nazis who were prepared to sever their ties with the extremist scene contacted Schlingensief and arranged a meeting with him in Zürich (Lemmer 2011, 257). Once Schlingensief could assess that the participants were serious about 'dropping out', a six-week rehearsal process began. As a method of promoting the project and alongside preparation for the

actual performance, street actions were also held to draw attention to some of the xenophobic policies of the Swiss People's Party (SVP [*Schweizerische Volkspartei*]).[5]

I would argue that Schlingensief's decision to adapt *Hamlet* and use this particular play, as part of his Nazi-Line 'drop-out' project that encourages deradicalization, is significant for three key reasons: the themes of the play, the production history of *Hamlet* in Germany and the idea of confession. Firstly, the themes of the play itself, spectres of the past haunting the present, directly relate to popular motifs in Schlingensief's work. For instance, *Bitte liebt Österreich* (2000) was an action/public performance in which Schlingensief drew parallels between the political language of contemporary exclusion and the exclusion endorsed under National Socialism, through a process of 'overidentification'. Stevphen Shukaitis suggests that overidentification, particularly in relation to politics, involves "taking the stated norms of a given system or arrangement of power more seriously than the system that proclaims them itself" (2010, 26). It involves amplifying and exaggerating a particular ideological position in order to point out the inherent flaws in that system. With *Bitte liebt Österreich* Schlingensief uses this strategy to critique the slogans and policies of the far-right anti-immigration party, the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), whose founding members were former National Socialists and whose party slogans often echo those of Nazism (Gärnter 2003, 19). In this work, too, as in his production of *Hamlet*, Schlingensief was interested in giving embodiment to the spectres of the past that haunt the present.

The second key reason relates to the history of German productions of *Hamlet*. Schlingensief links his *Hamlet* to that of Gustaf Gründgens, an actor who was closely affiliated with the Nazi party. Although the recording of Gründgens' *Hamlet* to which Schlingensief's actors lip-synch is from a 1962 performance, a younger Gründgens played Hamlet in 1936, when he was general manager of the State Theatre of Berlin and on the Reich's Cultural Senate and the President's Council (Kvam 1990, 144). The links between Gründgens, the Nazi party and German theatre is further the focus of a novel, *Mephisto*, by Klaus Mann, who was the son of Thomas Mann and the former brother-in-law of Gründgens himself. *Mephisto* was published in 1936 in Holland, where Mann emigrated in 1933 after the Nazi takeover. The book was banned in Germany under the Third Reich and was first published in East Germany in 1956 and in West Germany in 1965, though it was withdrawn the following year. It was not until 1980 that it was re-published in West Germany, and in 1981 an award-winning West German-Hungarian co-produced film of *Mephisto* directed by István Szabo was released. The central character of *Mephisto* is Henrik Höfgen, a thinly disguised portrait of Gründgens. Mann, adapting themes from the story of Mephistopheles and Doctor Faustus, charts how Höfgen abandons his initial objections to Nazism and ingratiates himself with Nazi leaders in order to improve his position in the theatre world. He is portrayed as arrogant and cynical and uses his acting ability to help promote Nazi culture. Indeed, Mann openly asserts about Gründgens himself:

> I visualize my ex-brother-in-law as the traitor *par excellence,* the macabre embodiment of corruption and cynicism. So intense was the fascination of his shameful glory that I decided to portray Mephisto-Gründgens in a satirical novel. I thought it pertinent, indeed necessary, to expose and analyse the abject type of

The turning point of Höfgen's and indeed Gründgens' career was playing the role of Mephistopheles in Goethe's *Faust I* and *II* shortly before Hitler came to power in 1933. Through much of the film version of *Mephisto,* the Minister President of Prussia, (modelled on Hermann Göring, who had direct control over the Prussian State Opera and State Theatre in Berlin), refers to Höfgen by his stage name Mephistopheles. The irony that becomes clear to both the audience and also to Höfgen as a character is that, although he is most famous and respected for his depiction of Mephistopheles, it is in fact the Göring character who is effectively the true Mephistopheles, as he is the one who provides Höfgen with his elevated position in society but retains a large amount of control over him. This becomes more evident when Höfgen is preparing to play Hamlet and the Minister President makes clear that Höfgen is allowed to perform the role only because he allows it (Kvam 1990, 144). The real Göring similarly placed Gründgens' name on Goebbels' *Gottbegnadeten list* (gift-of-God list), a catalogue of over 1000 artists whose work was considered critical to Nazi culture and who were thus exempt from taking part in the military mobilization from September 1944 onwards. Although Gründgens was required to give testimony at the denazification hearings, he was exonerated and given permission to continue his career and remained a prominent figure in the German theatre world, playing both Mephistopheles and Hamlet again.

Considering Gründgens' history, Schlingensief's decision to use the audio track from his performance of *Hamlet* is significant. The audio to which the actors in Schlingensief's production are effectively lip-synching or miming helps establish a direct link with the past, a past that haunts Schlingensief's *Hamlet* in the form of a direct association with Nazism, but also one that Schlingensief wants the audience to realize still haunts contemporary political life, both in the xenophobic policies of far-right parties and in the extremist movement from which the 'redemptive neo-Nazis' come from. The lip-synching to Gründgens' audio creates the sense of mechanical recitation and also alludes to the way in which slogans, as used by extremist groups, are often repeated unthinkingly as if being lip-synched. The use of Gründgens' audio thus sets the scene for the audience's encounter with the confessions of six neo-Nazis.

Confession, as I have suggested, is the third key reason that Schlingensief decided to stage *Hamlet.* As indicated earlier, the play-within-a-play in *Hamlet* is designed to 'trap' Claudius into confessing to the murder of Hamlet's father, not necessarily in the form of a spoken confession, but a confession nonetheless, through what Hamlet anticipates will be his behaviour while watching a re-enactment in minute detail of his own murder of the king. In the mousetrap scene Hamlet therefore asks his friend Horatio to assess Claudius' behaviour while watching the play. He instructs his friend to

> Observe my uncle; if his occulted Guilt
> Do not it self unkennel in one Speech,
> It is a damned Ghost that we have seen,
> And my Imaginations are so foul

> As Vulcan's Stithy. Give him heedful Note,
> For I mine Eyes will rivet to his Face,
> And after we will both our judgements join
> In Censure of his Seeming. (Act III scene 2)

In this scenario Hamlet plans to judge and condemn the king, Hamlet seems to have already made up his mind, to make him pay the penalty for the injustice he brought on Hamlet and his father. The confession that Hamlet seeks is not a religious one from which Claudius will receive forgiveness for his 'unforgiveable' crime of fratricide, but one that will justify, even demand, Hamlet's revenge. The text draws attention to the tension between confession, forgiveness, and vengeance in the scene that follows, in which Hamlet intends to kill Claudius after he has observed his guilt during the play. After Claudius leaves the court, Hamlet searches for him with the objective of making him pay with his life, but is prevented from carrying out his plan because at that moment he discovers his uncle, Claudius, is praying. Hamlet believes that if he kills Claudius while he is praying God may grant forgiveness and permit him passage to Heaven:

> Now might I do it, but now 'a is a-praying;
> And now I'll do't; and so 'a goes to Heaven,
> And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd:
> A villain kills my Father, and for that
> I his sole Son do this same Villain send
> To Heaven.
> Why, this is Hire and Salary, not Revenge.
> 'A took my father grossly full of Bread,
> With all his Crimes broad blown, as flush as May,
> And how his Audit stands who knows save Heaven? (Act III scene 3)

It is apparent that there are strong connections between the financial metaphors in Hamlet's speech and a religious sense of confession and forgiveness. The speech conjures up the idea of an audit that is present in the parables of stewardship in the gospels of Luke and Matthew, a reckoning of one's accounts which are be to cleared and debts forgiven, if one is truly repentant, when it comes to the Last Judgement. Hamlet insists his uncle must not have a clean account with his debts forgiven when he shuffles off this mortal coil. Nevertheless, Hamlet still curses his duty to put things right, his perceived duty of punishing Claudius by killing him. He curses the situation that requires him to bring *dike* (order and justice) to the *adikia* (injustice and disorder) of his rotten State, a form of *dike* that he believes will only come into being through punishment and vengeance.

The play-within-a-play device in *Hamlet* is one of the most common examples for demonstrating the concept of *mise en abyme.* The expression was first used in relation to literature and visual art in a dairy entry by André Gide in 1893, but became a popular critical term after the publication of Lucien Dällenbach's *The Mirror in the Text* in 1977 (Ron 1987, 417–18). Dällenbach suggests that "[a]s an organ of the work turning upon itself, *mise en abyme* appears as a modality of reflection" (1989, 8). A *mise en abyme* is a work within a work, a smaller, more confined, self-reflexive version of itself. One could think of the Russian matryoshka doll, in which one doll is placed inside of the other, as another example of this. However, what Schlingensief does with the mousetrap scene is

something slightly different. I would argue that the scene in Schlingensief's *Hamlet* is closer to what Marie Clair Roper has called a *mise en écart*. In her Derridean reading of Alain Resnais' 1963 film *Muriel* Roper suggests,

> The analysis of self-representation in *Muriel* can be approached through the phenomenon of "mise-en-abyme" ("text within a text"), which has been widely studied around literature; by this expression, I mean the "enshrining" within a surrounding film … of a miniature film … which would reflect it in a reduced form. One notices in Resnais' film, this device undergoes a dismantling process, so that the film image cannot be stabilized in a single fixed reflection; the "mise-en-abyme" in *Muriel,* which is multiple, shifted, always displaced and passed around from place to place, belongs more to a generalized and conflictual "mise-en-écart" [setting apart]; the "enshrined" film apart itself … apart from its project … apart from *Muriel* itself; *Muriel* is set apart from its own production. (Roper quoted in Kreidl 1977, 113–14)

Like Bernard's film in Resnais' *Muriel*, the confession of the six neo-Nazis in Schlingensief's *Hamlet* involves a conflictual setting apart. Like the original *Hamlet* it generates confession, or at least stages a confession, but the confession does not serve as a mirror or a miniature of the play itself. However, if we consider the production history of *Hamlet* that Schlingensief invokes by using the audio tape of Gründgens' performance, it is not completely separated from the play's history either; it remains on the periphery of it, as a joint but not a mirroring. Schlingensief's mousetrap scene is thus linked to the original play and the history of the play in 20th-century Germany through an inverted mode of confession and through links to Nazism evoked by the use of the audio from Gründgens' performance, thus producing a *mise en écart* performance of a *mise en abyme* structure. This also illustrates the importance of the full title of Schlingensief's piece, *Hamlet: This is Your Family—Nazi-line*.[6] Nazi-line not only alludes to the idea of a helpline for Nazis, which the production is effectively providing, but also suggests a kind of genealogy, as does the phrase "Hamlet: This is Your Family." The title functions to link the contemporary neo-Nazi amateur actors to Gründgens, implying that they are the family of Gründgens in the context of post-20th-century theatre.

It is the mousetrap scene, the play-within-the-play and the setting for the (oblique) confession, that becomes the key scene in which Schlingensief unhinges the original text and brings *adikia* into his production of *Hamlet*. By doing so, Schlingensief does injustice to the play, disrupts it and literally fractures it, conjuring up a necessary seam or interstice in order to arrive at the possibility of forgiveness. In Act III scene 2 of Schlingensief's *Hamlet,* Schlingensief enters the stage as Fortinbras in a SS uniform, and provides the signal for the beginning of *Deutschlandlied* (Song of Germany), a neo-Nazi hard-rock song from a band signed to the record label RockNord that belongs to one of the six 'redemptive neo-Nazis', Torsten Lemmer. The neo-Nazi amateur actors next have an open exchange with the audience, explaining who they are and their associations with the right-wing scene; they then renounce their links with neo-Nazism and invite questions from the audience. Thomas Irmer points out that although the confessions of participants about their involvement

with the right-wing scene are apparently true—that is, they are not written by Schlingensief—they are not ad-libbed and are clearly well rehearsed (2002, 64).

In the Zürich performance, for example, Lemmer admitted that he had made a living from his xenophobic views and actions, through RockNord album sales, the management of skinhead bands, the sale of neo-Nazi paraphernalia such as badges and flags, and the book he had written about skinhead rock (Irmer 2002, 65). Lemmer was the most controversial member of Schlingensief's entourage also arranged that his close associates, Jan Zobel, Tim Holzschneider and Jürgen Drenhaus, whom Irmer, and calls his "other right-wing … comrades-in-arms" (2011, 257), also take part in the project. Schlingensief drew criticism from German politicians and media outlets for using Lemmer in his production. For instance, Green party speaker Cem Özdemir claimed in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* newspaper that Schlingensief's use of Lemmer in the project reflected badly on the entire reputation of the drop-out programmes (Irmer 2002, 66). Commentators questioned the sincerity of Lemmer's confession and repentance, claiming it was a vehicle for him to gain media attention and thus help pave the way for a new career path, both as a politician (he ran for mayor of Düsseldorf) and an author (he wrote about his departure from the neo-Nazi scene in, for instance, *Rechts raus: Mein Ausstieg aus der Szene* (*Right Out: My Exit from the Scene*). Whether the sincerity of the redemptive neo-Nazis' confessions can be trusted, Lemmer did help found deradicalization programmes in Zürich, Düsseldorf and Berlin, so he publicly distanced himself from the neo-Nazi scene in an active manner (*Hamlet: This is Your Family: Nazi-Line*). By placing Lemmer and his associates on stage, Schlingensief also forces the audience to encounter radical elements within society and confront the fear that these men represent. This is a fear that is seen both in the ideology of neo-Nazism—fear of the immigrant and fear of the Other, as manifested in hate speech and acts violence—and a fear of confronting and accepting that this ideology is actually a (small) part of liberal society.

Indeed, throughout his career Schlingensief had dealt with fear and more specifically a politics of fear in a variety of ways. In *Bitte liebt Österreich* he overidentifies with the politics of fear disseminated by the FPÖ. In 2003 he even founded the Church of Fear, which one can still join online, a church that proclaims to be:

> A community of non-believers that renounces the beliefs proffered by 'public secret societies' in the worlds of politics, business and culture. The CHURCH of FEAR is openly suspicious of sermons from political sectarians, TV evangelists and global conspiracists; they stand accused of instrumentalizing weakness and pain, frustration and hysteria—of consumerizing fear. (Church of Fear)

With *Hamlet,* Schlingensief attempts to engage with the concept of fear through a staged encounter between 'the redemptive neo-Nazis' and the audience. The audience in this context stands in for a general liberal sensibility belonging to the "leftist culturati", as Lemmer (2011, 257) puts it, which, at least publicly, has a politically correct tolerance for otherness. Žižek suggests:

> Today's liberal tolerance towards others, the respect of otherness and openness towards it, is counterpointed by an obsessive fear of harassment. In short, the

Other is just fine, but only insofar as his presence is not intrusive, insofar as this Other is not really other. (Žižek 2008, 35)

One could view the relationship between six 'redemptive neo-Nazis' and the audience in a similar way: they are Other to the audience who can tolerate them insofar as they are not intruded upon by the neo-Nazis' reintegration. However, Schlingensief attempts to challenge this schema and burst the 'tolerance bubble,' so to speak. There is also another layer to the fear of the Otherness of the neo-Nazis in this context, particularly for the Berlin audience. The neo-Nazis represent a fear of the alien from within, because they do not come from a different cultural heritage or speak a different language. This encounter requires the audience to recognize that actual reintegration cannot happen if the Other must always remain at a distance. The confession scene in Schlingensief's *Hamlet* brings this fear into the foreground in order to highlight that deradicalization needs such an encounter if actual reintegration is to occur.

Nonetheless, the idea of confession certainly has religious overtones, and forgiveness is a central part of the confessional process. Derrida suggests that "[s]ometimes, forgiveness (given by God, or inspired by divine prescription) must be a gracious gift, without exchange and without condition; sometimes it requires, as its minimal condition, the repentance and transformation of the sinner" (2001, 44).[7] In their introduction to Derrida's *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, Simon Critchley and Richard Kearney further remind us:

the way in which the Abrahamic moral tradition, in which forgiveness is a central concept and which is at the basis of the three great monotheisms, has globalised itself in a more or less secular form. Increasingly, we live in a world where forgiveness is demanded, granted, or withheld. (Critchley and Kearney 2001, x)

I would argue that Schlingensief's reworking of the mousetrap scene attempts to evoke a secularized version of this confession-forgiveness scheme. The confessions of the neo-Nazis suggest that they owe a debt to society for the wrongs they have committed. Indeed, the financial metaphors of confession mentioned earlier are almost taken literally by Lemmer, who donated a large portion of the wealth he made from the propagation of xenophobic ideas to future deradicalization programmes. In saying this, Schlingensief's disjoining of the mousetrap scene in order to stage an encounter between the audience and the neo-Nazis does not force or require the audience to 'buy into' the confession-forgiveness scenario. What it does do, however, is challenge them to entertain the idea that if these deradicalization programmes are to be taken seriously, if they are actually to encourage reintegration, then a secularized version of this scenario, amounting to the forgiveness of debt, with all the numerous connotations of that word, must be taken seriously. It highlights the idea that neither liberal tolerance of the Other nor the repulsion and exclusion of the Other are paths through which actual deradicalization and reintegration will occur. What Schlingensief has done is to resuscitate the ghost of Hamlet's father in order to test the dissensual possibility of justice for the past without vengeance. To do this, Schlingensief had to disrupt the play itself and introduce a form of *adikia* into the production in order to work toward an idea of *dike,* with all its gaps and seams, that favours actual reintegration over punishment.

Notes

[1] It is generally accepted that Anaximander lived from around the end of the seventh to the middle of the sixth century B.C.E. and therefore the fragment is approximately 2500 years old. Anaximander was a contemporary of Thales and also lived and taught in Miletus. Gerard Naddaf suggests that there is consensus that Western philosophy and science find their roots in Miletus and that Anaximander was the first (Western) philosophical writer (2005, 63).

[2] Nietzsche's original German reads:

> Woher die Dinge ihre Entstehung haben, dahin müssen sie auch zu Grunde gehen, nach der Notwendigkeit; denn sie müssen Buße zahle und für ihre Ungerechtigkeiten gerichtet werden, gemäß der Ordnung der Zeit.

Diels' reads:

> Woraus aber die Dinge das Entstehen haben, dahin geht auch ihr Vergehen nach der Notwendigkeit; denn sie zahlen einander Strafe und Buße für ihre Ruchlosigkeit nach der festgesetzten Zeit.

The two German translations differ considerably in their translation of the last phrase relating to time, despite the fact that this phrase is re-rendered the same in the English translations. Nietzsche's "*Ordnung*" refers to order, orderliness, system and rule. By contrast, "*festgesetzt*" suggests that something has been established or fixed by agreement or appointment, i.e., that it does not necessarily belong to a divine or universal *Ordnung*.

[3] ... *entlang dem Brauch; gehören nämlich lassen sie Fug somit auch Ruch eines dem anderen (im Verwinden) des Un-Fugs.*

[4] There is also a non-governmental organisation called EXIT which is based on a Swedish organisation of the same name.

[5] A popular example of the SVP's controversial campaigns rhetoric were billboards erected across the country with the image of three white sheep kicking a black sheep off the Swiss flag, underscored by the phrase "creating security" (*Sicherheit schaffen*).

[6] The title was originally in English.

[7] For Derrida pure forgiveness is "without power, *unconditional but without sovereignty*" (2001, 58).

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Biography

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