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Theatre of Unease

"The self is an illusion done with mirrors."[1]

Coming to New Zealand, foreigners always have the same kind of experience. They are constantly being asked "How do you like New Zealand?" or "What do you think of New Zealand?" When you make the mistake, as I did, to take this question literally and really say what you think, and there's some criticism involved, the questioner will normally be shocked and completely taken aback. It seems New Zealanders asking these questions are only after one answer: confirmation of their opinion, which seems to be that New Zealand is God's Own (or God Zone). This craving for reassurance seems to me to be more developed in New Zealand than in other countries I have seen. Two things, I think, are remarkable: first, that New Zealanders seem to need to ask the question (in a way that an American or Australian would not imagine doing); second, that the answer is so prescribed (whereas in Germany, for example, the question seems to anticipate a critical response, a kind of reality-check). It seems in asking this question, New Zealanders are using the otherness of the foreigner as a mirror not so that they can discover how they are perceived but somehow so that they can confirm their idealised image of themselves and their country, as if they were suspended in a permanent version of the Lacanian Mirror Stage.

[1] Gallop 83. Parts of this essay were originally published in "Why Devise, Why Now? Why New Zealand?"

I want to link Lacan's idea of the Mirror Stage with Augusto Boal's idea of theatre as a mirror. In *Rainbow of Desire*, Boal writes:

> Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that, in this act of seeing, it can see *itself* – can see itself *in situ*: see itself seeing. Observing itself, the human being perceives what it is, discovers what it is not and imagines what it could become.[…] The human being alone possesses this faculty for self-observation in an imaginary mirror. (13)

For Boal, "its mother's eyes, its reflection in water" presage the imaginary mirror of theatre" (*Rainbow* 13). That is, the stage as mirror effects the recognition of truths about self and other, rather than the self-deception that Lacan's Mirror Stage implies: "the *méconnaissances* that constitute the ego, the illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself" (Lacan 6). If the Mirror Stage is, in Jane Gallop's words, "a lost paradise" (85), then New Zealanders seem still to insist that their paradise is not lost.

In Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, mirror exercises have a central position:

> Two lines of participants, each person looking directly into the eyes of the person facing them. Those in line A are the 'subjects', the people, those in line B are the 'images'.[…] Each subject undertakes a series of movements and changes of expression, which his 'image' must copy, right down to the smallest detail. (121)

In the course of the exercise, subject and image swap roles, and the mimetic mirrors are replaced by distorting and narcissistic mirrors, among others. The distorting mirror "'answers', 'comments', 'enlarges', 'reduces', 'caricatures', 'ridicules', 'destroys', 'relativises'[in an] attempt to destroy the partner's mask" (*Games* 125). In

the narcissistic mirror, "each participant looks at himself in the mirror and sees himself beautiful" (*Games* 125-6). Boal's idea of these is that "we seek ourselves in others who seek themselves in us" (*Games* 126).

When I do these exercises with my theatre students, for the most part they find them incredibly difficult. If they don't avoid them altogether by giggling, I can see via their lack of precision that they are pretending to look at and work with each other instead of seeing what they look at. It seems to be very hard to look in the mirror and see yourself, or for that matter to show someone else what you see in them. It seems too close, too revealing, too intimate. The image of the self may be put into question. If for Boal, seeing "ourselves as we are seen" (*Rainbow* 26), is the essence of theatre, then obviously these students have a long road ahead of them.

This may not just be a problem for New Zealanders. But when I ask students to do exercises from the *Theater of the Oppressed* (ie, Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, and Invisible Theatre), the most difficult problem they encounter – aside from my oppression of them by making them do this work, as they keep telling me – is that it is hard for them to find any instances of oppression in their experience that they can share. This leads many of them to conclude that Boal's work is not applicable to New Zealand, and they don't just mean his original Third World revolutionary theatre experiments; they also dismiss ideas like Cop in Head, which were developed as a way of dealing with the internalisation of social oppression in First World countries, perhaps because they might have to confront themselves as potential oppressors.

My students are mostly middle class, only occasionally of Maori or Pacific Islands descent, and as eager theatre students, they are representative of the theatre-making and -going public here. Much of the theatre in New Zealand mirrors them and the middle class society with which they are identified. The mirror that New

Zealand theatre seems to hold up to its audience often seems to be one of reassurance, that everything is all right or it will be. And when New Zealand theatre companies take on plays from the UK or the US, in order to assure themselves and their audiences that they are partaking in the same high cultural pursuits as elsewhere, they somehow manage to avoid, rather than seek out, the possibility that the plays' social criticisms might be relevant for New Zealand. It is difficult to generalise about New Zealand theatre in this way. On the other hand, such generalisations are already at work in the visual arts, in dance theatre and in film – where, on the contrary, what is perceived to be shown in the mirror is that under the veneer of New Zealand society lurks something brittle, brutal and disturbing.

The most well-known of these generalisations is the one that Sam Neill and Judy Rymer coined in a documentary about New Zealand film: *Cinema of Unease* (1997). For them a common denominator of New Zealand film since the 1970s was "a troubled reflection [of a nation]," of "two betrayed people [ie, Maori and Pakeha] living side by side in Paradise." Theatre in New Zealand doesn't seem to have attracted such a potent descriptive phrase, and one could even argue that theatre in New Zealand typically strives for the reverse: to appear smooth and to keep the audience at some ease, especially if the play in performance is taking on difficult subjects in earnest. This may have something to do with the precarious existence theatre finds itself in in New Zealand: their audiences being middle-aged and from the middle classes, and slowly fading away.

I would like to propose that the theatre take its cue from New Zealand film. A Theatre of Unease would move beyond the Lacanian Mirror Stage to the mirror that Boal prescribes for the theatre. This Theatre of Unease would discover the uncanny in the familiar, the fierce in the apparently meek. Rather than settling into the easy

securities of conventional theatrical situations and texts, or trying to keep up with the Joneses in London's West End and New York's Broadway, I propose that this Theatre of Unease would intentionally look for the ephemeral, the indeterminate and the risky in classical and new texts as well as in devised performances. The social and psychological existence, and the desires and problems of the performers, uncouth, rough and sometimes seemingly lacking in style, would be made the object of training and rehearsal, and be mixed with the text or content of the performance. Out of this crucible, a performance could take form which would offer audiences a less easy, but more satisfying, reflection of themselves.

Ten years ago, I began a series of theatrical explorations based on Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.[2] At centre is the moment when Robinson comes across a footprint in the sand of his desert island. Horror at the possibility of the presence of an other is his first reaction. But a moment later, he begins a process of reassuring himself that the footprint may be his own in what Lacan might term the "dialectic of identification with the other" ("The Mirror Stage" 2). When Robinson comes face to face with Friday, later, he then tries to reconstruct Friday in his own image, through a process of imitation.[3] In Boalian terms, Robinson makes himself "A" (the subject) and Friday "B" (the image). But it is not a Boalian mirror. Robinson shapes Friday in his own, idealised image. Frozen in the Lacanian Mirror Stage, Robinson shows symptoms of what one might call, after Lacan, a colonial neurosis (Lacan 6-7). Like my students, the figure of Robinson does not look to the mirror to see himself as someone other might see him, but rather to reassure himself that the other is, after all, just the same as him. Perhaps one might diagnose a kind of postcolonial neurosis in my students

[2] *Robinson Crusoe, or: I, That Was Born To Be My Own Destroyer*, adapted and directed by Peter Falkenberg, Free Theatre, 6-16 November 1996. *Crusoe: A Lapsarian Mass in Twelve Movements*, adapted and directed by Peter Falkenberg, Free Theatre, 30 June – 2 July 1998.

[3] For a more in-depth discussion of this project, see: Falkenberg, "Lacking Desire/Making Drama."

that makes it difficult for them to do the Boal mirror exercise. Perhaps one can extend this diagnosis to mainstream theatre in New Zealand as it tries to deny its postcolonial anxieties by hiding behind a façade of ease.

The encounter between the colonial and the native other, so central to *Robinson Crusoe* is also central to bicultural New Zealand, which is something I explored further in my production of *Footprints/Tapuwae*.[4] From the middle of the twentieth century, there have been attempts to develop a distinctive New Zealand identity through the creation of a distinctive New Zealand theatre – first by Pakeha playwright/performers such as Bruce Mason and Mervyn Thompson, and more recently by Maori theatre artists, notably Hone Kouka and Jim Moriarty. Recently, the dominant political agenda in New Zealand – driven perhaps by the encroachments of globalisation and the prospect of a homogenised internationalised identity – has come to prescribe a bicultural theatre as the best platform for the development of a bicultural identity which would encompass all New Zealanders. But the drive to merge Pakeha and Maori cultural identities in order to create a new, hybrid identity that transcends other specific cultural identifications is repeatedly confounded by the drive to maintain separate cultural practices and privileges.

In *Nga Tangata Toa*, Hone Kouka took Ibsen's *The Vikings at Helgeland* as both model and muse, using the Northern European founding myth as the foundation for a naturalistic play about the encounter between Maori warrior culture and Pakeha settlement. Nonetheless, what is the effect of Kouka's choice to identify his people with a Nordic myth when Maori have very strong creation myths of their own? What effects accrue as a result of taking such a specific European model, when Maori have their own, equally powerful performance traditions? The fusion of European form

[4] *Footprints/Tapuwae*, a bicultural opera based on Wagner's *Ring* cycle, adapted and directed by Peter Falkenberg with Taiporoutu Huata, Free Theatre, 16-24 November 2001.

and content with that of Maori in Kouka's play is both provocative and troubling for me, as someone whose own (ie, German) culture – with all its historical implications – was appropriated in service of another. In *Nga Tangata Toa*, Kouka reverses the usual exchange between European and Native. Although it critiques the effects of contact between Maori and European, especially the effects of assimilation, by simulating the conventions of European tragedy, Hone Kouka's play ultimately denies difference and appears from my perspective to colonise itself.[5]

In my production of *Footprints/Tapuwae*, I set my interpretation of the Germanic myth of the Nibelungen in Wagner's *Ring* cycle against Taiporoutu Huata's traditional staging of a Maori myth in an attempt to create a dialectical theatre in which the otherness of Maori and European cultural identity – both in myth and in aesthetic form – became strands to be interwoven but not merged. Taking my provocation as a starting place, Tai Huata worked separately with his own company, using Maori song and dance, and performing in Maori, while my company performed an adaptation of Wagner's opera cycle. The overall performance was structured so that one experienced two discrete performances in which the two cultures could talk to, without necessarily understanding, each other, using two completely different languages, performance practices and theatrical companies, counterpointing, echoing, but never fusing. In the juxtaposition of Germanic and Maori warrior cultures, the European side represented itself as decadent and self-destructive at the end of the performance, whereas the Maori side represented itself as in the process of return and revival.

In the bicultural performance of *Footprints*, the bi stayed bi: the strangeness of one culture to another was highlighted and made visible for analysis by performers

[5] This observation builds upon a conversation I had with Hone Kouka when he was Writer in Residence at the University of Canterbury in 1996.

and spectators alike. This is not to say that all spectators appreciated the refusal of the production to end in a more conventional joining together of European and Maori, whether in celebration or lamentation. In fact, the production was criticised by some, because it made them uncomfortable in seeing the two sides remain separate and un-reconciled. It was not easy, especially for Pakeha New Zealanders, to identify with either the coloniser or the colonised, when their postcolonial assumption is that, being descended from British settlers but no longer settlers themselves, they have transcended this dichotomy. This source of postcolonial unease for Pakeha is recognised by Gilbert and Tompkins in *Post-Colonial Drama* as stemming from "their ambivalent positioning in the imperial paradigm as both colonisers and colonised" (113).

In Boalian terms, it is possible to say that one doesn't want to look in the mirror and see oneself as the oppressor/coloniser, or even necessarily as the oppressed/colonised. *Footprints/Tapuwae* can be seen as an exploration of mirroring between groups on the stage, and between the performance and its audience in Boalian terms. In the performance itself, the subject/image relationship worked in the same way as a Boalian mirror in that the position of subject was occupied by each group in turn: the emergence of a particular motif in one group's performance – for example, the dragon in the *Ring* – would be answered by an equivalent motif in the other group's performance – that is, the taniwha of Maori myth. One might argue that many in the audience, also taking the subject position, were confounded in their expectations of, and desire, for a more idealised, hybridic image in keeping with bicultural ideology.

A bicultural mirror is also in the centre of Jim Moriarity's theatre marae performances, especially those taking place in New Zealand prisons.[6] Here the audiences are mainly Pakeha, the prisoners mainly Maori. These performances begin with the prisoners performing the haka, thus confronting audiences with an image of the savage other. The bars of the prison environment are not so different to those of a zoo, where wild animals are displayed. The haka is followed by testimonial performances by each prisoner, presented in the form of psychodrama, a theatre therapy where the audience acts as witness to the inmates' stories of sin and redemption, and to their implicit desire to be more like the audience than themselves. In the end this means that the prisoners, like Robinson's Friday, could be seen to enact a coming to reflect the values of their middle class audiences, reassuring those audiences of their own positions and removing the unease of facing the possibility that they might have had anything to do with putting the prisoners into their place. They can identify with the prisoners' trials and tribulations, but at the same time they can deny that they are also actors in the social drama that makes prisons and prisoners. The idealised bicultural mirror of Moriarty's prison performances allows audiences the comfort of remaining in a Lacanian Mirror Stage.

Perhaps I should clarify that when I write about my own productions here, I am only applying the notion of the Boalian and Lacanian mirrors retrospectively. So I can see now in *Fantasia*, a more recent production, elements of a Lacanian Mirror Stage both in its form and in its content.[7] Provoked by the demonisation of Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden in the justification for the American/British war in Afghanistan and Iraq, *Fantasia* was an environmental, multi-media performance in

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[6] For more detailed descriptions of Jim Moriarty's work, see, for example: Glassey and Welham, "Koorero with Jim Moriarty"; and McNaughton, "Negotiating Marae Performance."

[7] *Fantasia*, devised and directed by Peter Falkenberg, Free Theatre, 19-22 October 2005 and 12-26 August 2006.

four parts. Audiences entered an Oriental bazaar, witnessed an Arabian fantasia,[8] wandered through a series of caves and watched a scene in a harem. Throughout these scenes, the action was doubled – both live and filmed – with the film action projected onto large screens that were arranged to create each environment in turn. So for example, *Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves* in their cave were reflected by Osama and Al-Qaeda in their caves, and the scene from *The Abduction from the Seraglio* by Mozart where the cruel lecherous Pasha who threatens torture becomes an agent of reconciliation and salvation was mirrored by projections from *The Sheik*. The performers reflected in their action the filmed excerpts from various Orientalist films, and their images were at points introjected into the films, so that Orientalist ideology could literally seen as a "projection." Images of the spectators were also captured and projected onto the screens during the performance. If, in Lacanian terms, "the mirror stage is a drama […] which manufactures for the subject […a] succession of phantasies" (4), then in *Fantasia* what one saw was an other as constructed by the self in a succession of theatrical and cinematic images.

Arabian fantasies that have occupied our collective subconscious since the Crusades have taken on new virulence in our minds through recent political events. The ideal of Western democracy is projected onto the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because, like Robinson Crusoe, we want them to want to be like us. In *Fantasia*, my project was not to explore the "real" or the "authentic" Arab, but rather to look into Western constructions, desires and fears of the Arab other, and how these misconceptions can be seen to create their own political and social realities. Edward Said, at the start of *Orientalism*, claims: "The Orient was almost a European invention" (1). He sees his book as an attempt to eliminate "the Orient and the

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[8] Equestrian performance.

Occident altogether" in order to advance "a little in what Raymond Williams has called the 'unlearning' of 'the inherent dominative mode'" (28). My production of *Fantasia* tried to make the process of othering the Arab so visible that the audiences would be compelled to recognise their role in this process. Said wrote that Arabs "are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization" (108) in 1979, but he could have written it with even more force now.

But at the end of *Orientalism*, he changes tack. He claims that he wanted to show

> that the development and maintenance of every culture require[s] the existence of another, different and competing *alter ego*. The construction of identity […] involves the construction of opposites and "others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from "us." Each age and society re-creates its "Others." Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of "other" is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a contest involving individuals and institutions in all societies. (331-331)

Coming from this point of view, the Mirror Stage could be seen not as a stage of regression and neurosis, but as something that is necessary for the creation of identity and reality at all stages of human development.

Perhaps a country as new as New Zealand, one that is built upon colonisation as it is, still can be seen in the act of continuously devising an identity for itself, one that mirrors its idealised memory of the homeland rather than seeing itself as just another island in the South Pacific. Isolation, the lack of an other, ultimately can lead to the loss of identity, and makes it even more urgent to create one, even if only in the

imagination. In my most recent production, *Philoctetes*, the isolation of the main character (a Robinson without a Friday), who has been exiled on a deserted island for ten years, was reflected in the staging on scaffolding; each actor was framed in a cell and prevented from direct communication with any other as well as the audience.[9] Each actor had to create his or her own fantasy of a self and a reality that was never confirmed by the mirror of an other. Even the dialogue was spoken as interior monologues, implying that each of the actors was imagining his or her own island and own version of the same story, and each member of the audience was therefore also left to devise his or her own narrative and explanation for what he or she saw on stage.

Coming to New Zealand from Germany in the 1970s, I had to go through a sort of delayed culture shock. Everything that initially seemed familiar, provincial and boring somehow did not quite fit; it became strange, *unheimlich*. What at first appeared to be civilised – more English than the English, as Christchurch prides itself to be – showed glimpses of being shockingly not. In Pakeha New Zealand, I perceived a kind of exoticism in reverse. Fierce and strange Maori war dances I could understand, as I expected them to be that way, but I did not expect the dominant white culture on closer inspection to be so strange and opaque in its own right. In the University Staff Club, the then Vice Chancellor told me about the Parker-Hulme case: in the 1950s, the daughter of a previous Vice Chancellor, who had lived in the very building where the Staff Club was housed (the Homestead), had helped a school-friend kill her mother, beating her brutally with a brick in the park, because the mother stood in the way of their fantasy-centred relationship and their attempt to get away from New Zealand. The story of the Homestead and the two murderous girls did not fit together: the first supremely civilised, the second brutally savage. At the

[9] *Philoctetes*, text by Sophocles and Heiner Müller, adapted and directed by Peter Falkenberg, Free Theatre, 12-15 October 2006.

time, I thought I might make a film on this case, partly documentary, partly fictional, starting with interviews with the still living participants in the trial, but these early plans disappeared because of lack of money.

Recently, it became possible for me to make a film, called *Remake*, using new and cheaper digital technology.[10] In the meantime, the film *Heavenly Creatures* (dir. Peter Jackson 1994) had been made, which meant that I had to find a new way of approaching the case. Instead of writing a script, I decided to devise the film with the actors, much as I do in the theatre; the women (or girls) would in effect make the film both as process and as plot. They would drive the search, the plot, the enquiry, the film, rather than the director, and the camera would be part of the film. This was an enquiry that I could only embark on by proxy. I am not a young woman, and I am still not a New Zealander. I felt I have not enough understanding of either.

Both actors were uneasy about their lives in New Zealand and were considering leaving to live elsewhere. In this way their lives mirrored the lives of the girls in the 1950s, whose dreams of escape drove their actions, and this is where the actors found their initial points of identification. Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme fantasised about making a film after their escape. I told the actors to make a film to precede, or to be, their escape. I left the two actors for long passages alone, working together, getting to know each other. I had them read the court cases and diaries; they were to write their own diaries, do their own research, visit the places where Parker and Hulme had been in and around Christchurch, and write down their dreams and thoughts about themselves in comparison with Parker and Hulme. They could choose what to share with me or not. What they showed me in their explorations, then, were their selections, from which I selected what would be the "script" for the film. But I

[10] *Remake*, directed by Peter Falkenberg, 2006.

realised that they had created a relationship that sometimes deliberately excluded me and the cameraman.

Now I had a further problem. Not only did I still not fully understand Parker-Hulme, but I also had two actors whose relationship was a partial mystery to me, and perhaps just as with Parker-Hulme, to themselves as well. *Remake* does not seek to explain the actions of Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme, or to close it into the past; rather it tries to leave open the uneasiness of 1950s Christchurch as something still present in us here today. The prurience that might drive us to look at the fantasies and deeds of those young girls is not denied in my film, and in fact it is highlighted by the way one is made aware of the camera in the mise en scène throughout.

Peter Jackson's film *Heavenly Creatures* serves as a central paradigm for the *Cinema of Unease*. But before the film came out, the Court Theatre in Christchurch staged a play based on the Parker-Hulme case called *Daughters of Heaven*.[11] When the plans for the play were announced, there were quite a number of objections against the staging of this case as in "bad taste," and it is understandable that the writer and director were concerned to reassure their audiences.[12] The device they developed in order to perform this reassurance was the character of a prurient maid, Bridget, who was introduced ostensibly to bridge the gap between audience and stage. In actuality her function was to prevent a possible mirroring effect. First of all, it reassured audiences that they were not as provincial and prurient as Bridget in watching the girls. Secondly, the device of the maid prevented the audience from seeing their own connection to the action on the stage, as she was performing a series of interventions by standing between the girls and the audience and interjecting her own, often comic, commentary. So the theatrical treatment of this topic, with its

[11] *Daughters of Heaven*, written by Michelanne Forster and directed by Elric Hooper, premiered at the Court Theatre (Christchurch) on 19 October 1991.
[12] See, for example, "Court Theatre under fire for latest play."

obvious inherent uneasiness, in effect could be seen to offer its audience a look at a savage other without sacrificing its own idealised vision of itself as neither prurient nor murderous. Even the film *Heavenly Creatures*, as much as it deserves its place in the Cinema of Unease, still at the end reassures its audience by showing the girls as either mad or bad or both. What it seems to do in the end is not so much to explain as to to judge the girls' actions as being a fault of their character, rather than having anything to do with the society in which they lived and even less to do with us now.

More recently, the Parker-Hulme case provided the centrepiece of an exhibition in Christchurch in 2004 which had as its theme "The Canterbury Gothic." The exhibition notice begins: "Lurking behind the South Island's legendary picture-postcard views and the stoic jaw of the Southern Man is a dark side – a gothic underbelly of paranoia, alienation, and unease" (Milburn). Parker-Hulme was represented in the exhibition by "Ann Shelton's stealthy 2001 photographic diptych *Doublet {After Heavenly Creatures}*, which depicts the infamous Victoria Park path [where the murder took place] in two mirror images. It is as though the paths, leading away from one another, out of frame, represent the increasing separation of history and myth" (Shelton 7, qtd. in Milburn). The mirrored images of the empty paths, as they appear to invite viewers to step onto one or the other, at the same time seem to suspend us between the mirrors, unable to move and frozen in time and space.

In *Remake* I tried to double and mirror the Parker-Hulme narrative with the narrative created with my two actors. But I also added another layer of mirroring by having them perform scenes from Jean Genet's *Maids*. Parker-Hulme in their relationship mirror each other as well as try to play different roles and identities in their attempts to imitate different film stars. In Genet again the maids mirror each

other as well as playing roles and different identities. In his introduction to *The Maids*, Jean-Paul Sartre says:

> Thus, each of the two maids has no other function than to be the other, to be – for the other – herself-as-other.[…] Each sees in the other only herself at a distance from herself. Each bears witness to the other of the impossibility of *being* herself[….] (18-19)

The maids are caught in an endless loop of mirroring, as were the historical Parker and Hulme, and as are my actors. The characters in Genet's play mirror each other, but are also constructed as mirrors to an historical murder case. My actors mirror each other, and also mirror historical figures as well as Genet's creations that also mirror each other and historical figures. The unease that emerges as a result is not so much due to the savagery of the action, but to the possibility that in all these mirrors there is no real self and not even an other to blame.

Perhaps I find myself in a similar loop. Watching New Zealanders in life is often to see them perform ease, possibly as a cover for deep unease: "Good as gold!" "She'll be right!" "A hundred percent!" And I also give a performance, because what I see in the mirror of the people I meet is a construction of an identity that is foreign, in which I don't fully recognise myself, but which I find myself performing accordingly. Tracy C. Davis writes:

> Through being spectators to the *theatrum mundi* of civil society, engaged but not absorbed watchers, we bring our whole experience to bear on what is seen without insisting on sameness as the criterion of worth. Do we not appreciate art for its ability to show us new ways of seeing, being, thinking? Is it not maudlin when it shows us what we already know and feel? And yet it is the

> act of withholding sympathy that makes us become spectators to ourselves and others. (154)

What a Kiwi audience expects in the theatre is that their performance in life is being reflected and approved of on the stage. In Boalian terms what they expect is a narcissistic mirror. They might even accept a distorting mirror (a character like Bridget, perhaps), because they will assume that it is not really themselves that they see. If one wants to destroy the notion of sameness as a criterion of worth, perhaps one has to constantly shift the mirrors to make a Theatre of Unease where we can catch sight of ourselves at least for a moment.

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