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Finding Ourselves: New Zealand Theatre's Overseas Experience

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Abstract

Throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand's dramatic history, there has been a strong impulse for plays from this country to be toured and performed overseas, despite the considerable financial and geographical challenges posed. The colloquial expression OE (Overseas Experience) marks the importance of this desire, in which it is only by leaving home that the New Zealander realises their identity.

The Overseas Experience of New Zealand theatre has been an overlooked aspect in scholarship. This thesis investigates how the meaning of a New Zealand theatre work might operate in a specific time, place, and moment. It is the first to consider connections between a range of New Zealand productions overseas, including touring works, and works that non-local companies have chosen to perform. The study attempts to balance breadth – giving an account of overseas performances of New Zealand work primarily from 1941-2016 – with depth, making extensive use of archival research to analyse in detail significant moments in New Zealand theatre's OE. From these selected case studies, it builds a larger argument, drawing on concepts such as post-colonialism, transnationalism, and globalisation, to understand the wider development and reception of New Zealand theatre's OE.

Theatre is a site where issues of national identity can be raised. The core of this thesis is how New Zealand national identity is performed through drama, and how this identity is read by audiences around the world. This work demonstrates how the OE has been driven by anxieties around constructing a unique New Zealand identity through the theatre, and gaining legitimacy for this represented identity through overseas approval.

This study engages with the whole theatrical enterprise as a play travels from concept and scripting through to funding, marketing, performance, and the critical response by reviewers and commentators. These findings are of global interest to academics, producers, and theatre artists as a significant resource for theatre touring and practice.

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This is for the dream chasers, the identity shapers, the risk takers: the theatre makers.

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The year of the first performance of each play is bracketed when first mentioned.

INTRODUCTION

The Edinburgh Festival Fringe dream goes something like this: your show opens to a standing ovation, it collects rave five-star reviews, sells out its season, and travels on for a world tour. The Fringe reality is more like this: your show opens, plays to only a handful of people each night, you spend most of your day 'flyering' in a forlorn effort to fill more seats, your season loses money, and you pack up your bags and go home. Ever since Bruce Mason took his solo play *The End of the Golden Weather* (1959) to the 1963 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, New Zealand theatre makers have tried their luck at the Fringe, the largest multi-performance event in the world, viewed as a gateway for the wider global theatre market. In 2014, Creative New Zealand (CNZ), the Government's arts funding agency, supported six theatre works to travel to the Fringe as part of a branded mini-season called NZ at Edinburgh. Described by *The Guardian* as "New Zealand's biggest ever cultural charge to Edinburgh,"[1] 240 New Zealand artists from the disciplines of theatre, dance, literature and other art forms were supported by CNZ to attend festivals held at Edinburgh that year (including the Fringe and Edinburgh International Festival). The six selected New Zealand Fringe works were a drop in the ocean against 49,497 performances of 3,193 total shows in 299 venues at the Fringe alone. Over three weeks, performances sprang up in "every spare stage, school hall, pub back room and alleyway in the Scottish capital."[2] The overwhelming number of shows New Zealand theatre makers were up against provides a good metaphor for the challenges faced by New Zealanders in the wider world theatre market: How can theatre from Aotearoa/New Zealand stand out, differentiate itself, and get seen by audiences overseas?

If audiences at the 2014 Fringe wanted to get a sampling of Aotearoa/New Zealand theatre, they could have gone to see the world's first Pasifika musical, *The Factory* by Vela Manusaute (2011), set during the backlash to Pacific migration in 1970s New Zealand. Next, they might have seen the provocatively titled *Black Faggot* (2013) by Victor Rodger, in which two actors presented a series of monologues articulating a contemporary queer New Zealand-Samoan perspective. Or, *On the Upside Down of the World* (2011) by Arthur Meek, a solo show from the perspective of a female early colonial settler; *Strange Resting Places* (2007) by Rob Mokaraka and Paolo Rotondo, which centred on the experiences of a Māori Battalion solider in Italy during World War Two; and *Duck, Death and the Tulip* (2013), a children's puppetry show, adapted by Peter Wilson from the 2007 book of the same name by German author Wolf Erlburch. For something different, they could have tried *The Generation of Z*

(2013) by David Van Horn, Simon London and Benjamin Farry, an immersive and interactive theatre experience where audiences attempted to survive long enough to be evacuated from the Zombie apocalypse. The NZ at Edinburgh Fringe season prompts the question: How did we get there? On an immediate level, we must ask why this particular curation of productions was supported by CNZ to represent New Zealand theatre on the world stage. What were the factors that enabled these shows to be produced in Edinburgh? And why "there" – why were the resources put into Edinburgh as the overseas destination?

The narrative promoted for the NZ at Edinburgh Fringe theatre season was of an inclusive multi-cultural nationalism. Excepting the children's show and the Zombie fantasy, the Māori and Pasifika content showcased an image of a proudly multicultural New Zealand to these audiences. Joyce McMillan, previewing the season in *The Scotsman*, situated New Zealand as a site of "cultural alchemy," on a journey from being the "Britain of the southern seas," to claiming a "powerful identity as a Pacific nation."[3] The programme offered "a vivid, wide-ranging and revealing glimpse of where New Zealand's post-colonial culture stands now – still mid-journey, still evolving at impressive speed," and McMillan concluded that the "New Zealand story is both *unique* and full of *global resonances*"[4] (my emphasis). Arthur Meek, who wrote *On the Upside Down of the World*, echoed McMillan's claims. The season marked a rejection of colonial paradigms that New Zealanders were "second-rate Brits," and instead demonstrated that the country had embraced an identity as "a Pacific country, the largest Pacific island."[5] Meek's play, which explored the British settlement of New Zealand, was, ironically, the only entry to articulate New Zealand's majority Pākehā (New Zealand European) identity. *Black Faggot*, *The Factory*, *Strange Resting Places*, and the dance works chosen for the Edinburgh International Festival shows, Mau's *I AM* (2014) and Te Matatini's *Haka* (2014), celebrated Māori and Pasifika cultures within New Zealand.

This image was not reflective of the theatre environment back in New Zealand. New Zealand's mainstage theatres are dominated by European and Pākehā narratives; between 2011 and 2015 only 6% of productions by main centre theatres were of Māori or Pasifika work.[6] To take a generous view, the NZ at Edinburgh season was an attempt to brand and promote a confident, culturally mature Polynesian-New Zealand at ease with a diverse, multi-cultural identity, "unique," but also "full of global resonances" for the audience to relate to. The less generous view is that it highlighted New Zealand's cultural hypocrisy; presenting to the world inclusive and pluralistic values, these were aspirational rather than reflective of New Zealand's dominant theatre scene. What is revealed here is an identity problem in New Zealand drama. How can a country be both unique and full of global resonances? Is New Zealand a proudly

Pacific country as claimed, or does the season reveal ongoing insecurities around New Zealand's identity? If so, how is this is represented in drama?

The disjuncture between the goals and outcomes of the NZ at Edinburgh Fringe season revealed fascinating fractures in how the nation was presented to, and received by, international audiences that year. The season was a political and economic tool, a cultural product to build brand recognition in an overseas market, with the potential for future exports, and further visibility back home. But in competition with the 3,187 other Fringe shows, the New Zealand season did not fare well, and both *The Factory* and *Strange Resting Places*, in particular, struggled to attract audiences. High profile *Guardian* critic Lyn Gardner dismissed the "invasion of New Zealand theatre" as less than world-class.[7] The two New Zealand Fringe shows that gained the most attention from audiences and critics did not focus on representations of New Zealand cultural identity, nor fit within the projected Pacific-New Zealand national image. The first, *The Generation of Z*, a site-specific work, adapts to its host city; for the Fringe it became a story of a Zombie outbreak in Edinburgh, and therefore its country-of-origin was largely irrelevant to Edinburgh audiences. While *The Generation of Z* had received CNZ funding support since its early development in New Zealand, *Calypso Nights* (2013), a solo show featuring Barnie Duncan as the clown Juan Vesuvius, was one of six other New Zealand theatre works (all solo performances) that entered the Fringe without gaining CNZ's NZ at Edinburgh promotional and financial support. Duncan flew to Edinburgh as one of the cast members of *Strange Resting Places*, and took the opportunity to also enter his own show. In the afternoons Duncan performed in *Strange Resting Places* to tiny audiences, while in his 10:45pm *Calypso Nights* slot he sold out his final fortnight and won the Fringe Genius Award from entertainment website *The Skinny*. In the *NZ Herald* report on NZ at Edinburgh, Duncan rejected the premise of the season:

> I'm not interested in making works that are specific to New Zealand so I didn't want to create a character that traded off that whole 'New Zealand in Edinburgh' thing […]. I also tour outside New Zealand quite a lot and I like doing stuff for people who don't know who I am because then you get a more honest response.[8]

Duncan wanted to avoid cultural expectations that an audience might bring into a work billed as a New Zealand show.

The NZ at Edinburgh Fringe offerings in 2014 mark a point in the story of New Zealand theatre overseas. In order to understand how this point was reached – "How did we get there?" – we need to know how the cultural history of New Zealand theatre bought us to that Edinburgh moment. To answer this question we also need to know more about the "we," and the implicit

opposition, "them." How is New Zealand represented to the international audience, why is it represented in that way, and how might the international audience receive it? The 2014 NZ at Edinburgh Fringe season is one of many journeys that New Zealand theatre has made overseas. "How did we get there?" is a question asked over a range of productions in this study. What follows next are the stories of Aotearoa/New Zealand Theatre's Overseas Experience, and the challenges of making it from here to there and back again.

Here and There

More than half a century ago C.K. Stead argued that "a tension exists somewhere in the mind of every New Zealander between 'here' and 'there'."[9] "Here" is home, safe and limited, "there" is the idealised site of life, culture, and art. Throughout this country's dramatic history, there has been a strong impulse for plays from New Zealand to be toured and performed overseas, despite the considerable financial and geographical challenges posed. The colloquial expression OE (Overseas Experience) marks the importance of this desire. The OE has become a mythic rite of passage for New Zealanders, in which one travels and works overseas, traditionally Britain, New Zealand's colonial motherland. Nigel McCarter writes, four decades after Stead, that "it became the 'accepted thing' to go off on the 'big OE' immediately after college and before settling down."[10] Jude Wilson, David Fissure and Kevin Moore argue that the OE "has largely been the result of a young colony's search for a distinctive and separate cultural identity."[11] In *Being Pākehā Now*, Michael King describes his personal realisation that his travels made him feel "more, not less, a New Zealander":

> I became more deeply conscious of my roots in my own country because I had experienced their absence […]. I missed common perspectives with Māori and Pākehā New Zealanders: the short-cuts to communication that people from the same cultures share in accepted reference points, recognised allusions, a similar sense of comparison, contrast and incongruity, a peculiar sense of humour.[12]

On his OE, King formed a better sense of what he saw as a unique culture in New Zealand. Paradoxically, the more New Zealanders were able to experience the "there" of the outside world, the further a sense of "here" could be developed. It is overseas where one finds oneself.

Anxiety around national identity has been one of the defining features of Aotearoa/New Zealand drama, memorably articulated by the explosive challenge – "Whaddarya?" – delivered to the audience at the end of Greg McGee's 1981 play *Foreskin's Lament* (46). The anxiety emerged around the problem of how to create a home-grown drama that reflected the

uniqueness of New Zealand society, which could also be accepted by that society. In 1960 New Zealand playwright Bruce Mason wrote that most theatre produced in New Zealand was spent on the "reproduction of established European and American commercial successes," but strongly advocated that "theatrical activity in New Zealand could never wholly justify itself until New Zealanders began writing, designing, dancing on themes thrown up by their own way of life."[13] New Zealand's regional community theatres offered an "internationalist" programme of plays "mostly copying successes on the English stage" which "catered to a small, local, middle-class audience, providing that audience with a taste of the wider world."[14]

While cultural nationalism was advocated within New Zealand's literary circles in the 1930s, New Zealand drama did not catch up until the 1960s. Bruce Mason's work attempted to construct a sense of a distinctive New Zealand identity, informed by New Zealand's bicultural relationship between Māori and Pākehā. My use of Pākehā describes the white settler population of New Zealand, "people and influences that derive originally from Europe [mostly the British Isles] but which are no longer 'European'."[15] Arguably, only a minority of Pākehā would demonstrate the commitment to biculturalism and enlightenment to tikanga Māori advocated by Mason, and occasionally I make a distinction in the thesis between Pākehā, which implies a degree of cultural competence, and Anglo-New Zealander, which I use to describe the majority European population in New Zealand, whose values are dominant. The 1970s commercial successes including Roger Hall's *Glide Time* (1976) and *Middle-Age Spread* (1977), largely reflected mainstream Anglo middle class values, largely unconcerned with a Māori worldview. McGee's *Foreskin's Lament*, examining the toxic masculinity of New Zealand's rugby culture, was another breakthrough in the development of a homegrown theatrical canon. During the "1970s and 1980s New Zealand stages were the Pākehā's oyster,"[16] or to put it more bluntly, white and male. Since then, the mainstream Anglo-New Zealand norm has continued to dominate, though this has been challenged through works from Māori, Pasifika, Asian and feminist perspectives. David O'Donnell observes a recent trend with New Zealand theatre that expresses "not only multiple identities, but questions any notion of a fixed identity."[17] While the identities have changed, a sense of insecurity has remained stubbornly present. As this study will demonstrate, theatre makers have grappled with what it means to live in New Zealand, make theatre in New Zealand, and whose voices get to represent it.

As with the New Zealander's OE, New Zealand theatre's OE is most significant in terms of the forging, testing and consolidating of identity in the nation's dramas. The unresolved anxiety around identity has encouraged the impulse to present drama overseas in

order to articulate New Zealand identities and gain international validation. In his Doctoral thesis, my supervisor, Murray Edmond, flips the OE letters to create the EO, the Enormous Other, "everything that lay beyond the small town."[18] In this conception, New Zealand is small, isolated, and insignificant; the world beyond the island is enormous and special. Michael King, during his travels, began to resent "being made to feel that the centre of the universe was *there*, and what happened on the periphery, where I came from, was of little consequence."[19] Dramatic theorist Marc Maufort identifies in New Zealand drama a "struggle for self-definition hampered by an acute sense of social and intellectual inferiority towards the centre of the Empire."[20] Acknowledgment from the Enormous Other is craved and resented. As playwright Bruce Mason sarcastically put it, "if Elsewhere says it's good, then it must be."[21] Nationalistically motivated tours, beginning with Mason's performance of *The End of the Golden Weather* at the 1963 Edinburgh Fringe, then, can be understood as an attempt to demonstrate what makes New Zealand culture unique, and gain legitimacy for this identity through international approval, akin to a Hegelian model where recognition by the other is the basis of self-consciousness. New Zealand theatre makers cannot be certain of the quality of their work until they have tested themselves in the overseas marketplace. As Parts One and Three of this study will show, co-existing with anxieties of inferiority and the need for validation, the act of touring implies that there is a belief in the significance of what a production has to say in the overseas market.

While international performances are linked with the formation of New Zealand identities, by comparing oneself against, or gaining legitimacy from the Enormous Other, they can also be motivated by ideas of escape. In Bill Pearson's 1952 essay "Fretful Sleepers," written while in London, Pearson wonders whether escape from New Zealand might be "viable and desirable."[22] For Pearson, the New Zealand audience for fiction, films and plays was unwilling to "co-operate" or "speculate about themselves."[23] Pearson's sentiment has continued to echo through the decades. Bruce Mason often wrote about New Zealand as a hostile climate for the artist; for example, his conception of New Zealand as a culture of "recession and diminution."[24] In 1974 playwright Robert Lord moved to America, leaving behind a New Zealand "hampered by its smallness."[25] Lord believed that it was "impractical for anyone in New Zealand to make any sort of career out of fiction writing"[26] and "if you're stuck [in New Zealand] and can't get out, then it is hell."[27] When I interviewed Charlie McDermott, the producer of *The Generation of Z*, in London in 2015, he shared the same view that New Zealand theatre was "a tiny, tiny speck of an industry" where the majority of New Zealanders "do not value the arts in our culture."[28] It is true that the relatively small population

of New Zealand limits potential audience reach, and if work is to have an ongoing life, there is significant appeal in capturing a potentially much larger audience in overseas destinations. These comments also point to a persistent feeling that the New Zealand audience is inferior to those that can be found "Elsewhere." Little New Zealand, with its isolated industry and small audience size, is the hell to be disowned, while overseas is the paradise, to be embraced. Such a view speaks less to the actual quality of New Zealand audiences, and more to the continuing manifestations of the anxieties of identity, a recurring theme throughout this study.

When plays from New Zealand are presented on overseas stages the stakes are raised: the performers and plays become ambassadors of New Zealand theatre. When a work is identified as a New Zealand play, there is an expectation from the overseas audiences that it will reveal something of what life is like in New Zealand, and how similar or different it is to their own. Theatre is a site where questions of national identity are raised. How do we (New Zealanders) perceive ourselves? How is New Zealandness emphasised or devalued? These are the questions this thesis will investigate.

Conceptual Boundaries

I: The Nation

The core of this thesis is the investigation of how New Zealand national identity is performed through drama, and how this identity is read by audiences around the world. The 'national' is therefore a conceptual term of critical importance. Benedict Anderson reminds us that the nation state is a relatively recent construct, which he defines as an "imagined political community."[29] The "imagined" is particularly pertinent for our dramatic purposes: there is nothing inherent or natural about the national community, but repeated cultural performances of all kinds encourage its members to imagine it as if it were so. While Anderson states that the imagined nation is also "always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship,"[30] in practice, the monolithic signifiers of nationhood construct a fantasy of a limited imagination. National identity absorbs and narrows, so only some forms of cultural expression come to represent the nation. Identity is often "exclusive and homogenous," and "usually represent[s] and consolidate[s] the interests of the dominant power groups within any national formation."[31] However, the identity is never stable, ever changing, and what is included in the "imagined community" is continually challenged. Theatre is an ideal site for identity to be enacted and

negotiated. It might conform to the dominant expressions of the imagined community, or deconstruct and resist them.

This notion of national identity, as a site of contestation, is especially relevant to New Zealand within a post-colonial framework. Rather than marking a period after colonisation, post-colonialism is most usefully applied when used as an "engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies."[32] Post-colonial drama is an important epistemology that I draw on in understanding New Zealand drama. Post-colonial drama studies have focussed on the development of works within colonised nations. This thesis offers an application of post-colonialism in order to understand the performance of theatre beyond national boundaries. Using the post-colonial lens, it can be seen that one of the notable features about the New Zealand nation is its settler-invader history. In *Post-Colonial Drama*, Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins explain that settler-invader colonies, in which settlers overwhelmed the indigenous population, resulted in historical guilt and amnesia, as the settler-invaders were "implicated in the dispossession of indigenous peoples from their homelands and in the (partial) destruction of their cultures."[33] But the settler-invaders were also driven to establish "authenticity for a society dislocated from the imperial centre and, simultaneously, alienated from the local land and indigenous culture."[34] Thus, the Te Reo term "Pākehā" is adopted by some New Zealand Europeans to lend indigenous authenticity to the white-New Zealander identity as one that has diverged from its settler antecedents. Analysis of New Zealand dramatic texts reveals how notions of authenticity and belonging have attempted to be established. The drama of the national "imagined community" of Aotearoa/New Zealand, influenced by its settler-invader colonial history, is concerned with the ongoing contestation of what kinds of identity are performed, and the quest to establish the imagined community's own legitimacy.

Since New Zealand national identity is a broad and unstable concept, containing a multiplicity of identities, defining what constitutes a New Zealand work is not always straight-forward. What, for instance, should we make of playwright Roger Hall, who emigrated from Britain to New Zealand aged nineteen, and is considered New Zealand's most popular and commercially successful playwright? Hall declared that "all my writing had been done here, my craft had been learned here, and the plays were peopled with New Zealanders."[35] However, a major case study in Chapter V analyses how Hall rewrote *Middle-Age Spread* (1977) to be peopled by British characters for performance at London's West End. If Hall was reverting to his home country and originating identity, can the West End *Middle-Age Spread* still be considered a New Zealand play? What of Robert Lord (the subject of Chapter VI), who, after

establishing himself as a playwright in New Zealand, emigrated to America in 1974, and spent the majority of his writing career in that country? Can his plays written for America also be considered Kiwi? And what of Richard O'Brien, who emigrated from Britain to New Zealand aged nine, and returned to Britain aged 23 where he would write his cult classic *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973)? Can *Rocky Horror* be considered a New Zealand play?

To answer these questions, we might look for markers of New Zealandness within each play: distinctive elements that are perceived to represent a national character or consciousness. In order to understand how national identity is produced and received through drama, the concept of a feedback loop is enlightening. Commonly applied to electronic circuits, the term implies a network of cause-and-effect where information is fed back into itself. Erika Fisher-Lichte argues that live performance involves an autopoietic feedback loop in which the interaction between the audience and the performers results in constant adjustments as "spectators as well as the actors perceive and, in turn, respond" to each other's reactions.[36] While I am in agreement with Fischer-Lichte's conception, my reference to the feedback loop is specific to how national identity is imagined, identified and understood within a work. This feedback loop operates within the live moment of performance à la Fischer-Lichte, but also in the reading of the scripted text; that is, when I as a Pākehā New Zealand theatre scholar investigate how national identity operates within a particular text, such as *The Rocky Horror Show*. Therefore, on one side of the loop is the work itself, made and interpreted by a specific creative team, and on the other side, the audience receiving the work in performance or on the page. Playwrights write (and companies make) for their own sort of imagined community, a desired audience who will respond to the concerns of the work. Most New Zealand plays produced overseas were written initially and primarily for an ideal local and knowing audience who would understand the meaning of the work within the given local context. This ideal local audience would share with the playwright, to repurpose Michael King's description of his encounters with other New Zealanders on his OE, "accepted reference points, recognised allusions, a similar sense of comparison."[37] Jerry C. Jaffe, in an essay on the performance of New Zealand identity, refers to "self-referential" markers of identity that operate within a feedback loop, which Jaffe defines as "markers New Zealanders might recognise as markers of New Zealand identity."[38] When a playwright uses these markers they are intended to resonate "in a particular way for those of a particularly sympathetic cultural background."[39] When these markers are recognised by the local audience, theoretically, "a 'sense' of New Zealandness" is created and reinforced. [40]

However, it is not simply a case of the playwright populating the text with markers of national identity; I use the term feedback loop precisely because the markers can only become markers of national identity if the audience or reader perceives them to be so. In *The Rocky Horror Show*, Brad, the young American, exclaims "I thought it was the real thing," when he realises he has been seduced by his host, Dr Frank-n-Furter, rather than his fiancée (18). To pose the question, "Is *Rocky Horror* the real thing – a New Zealand play?" opens critical possibilities and meanings that may not exist in performances overseas. As will be explored in Chapter V, *Rocky Horror*'s New Zealand consciousness exists under the surface as an alternative narrative and reading; the thing itself can be said to be "in drag." Applying Judith Butler's discussion of gender performativity to national identity complicates the search for the "real thing" and provides further nuance to the feedback loop concept. As Butler argues that "gender parody reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin,"[41] *Rocky Horror*'s cultural parody can be viewed as an imitation without a cultural origin. Like gender identity, national identity "can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived."[42] Butler's gender paradigm is analogical to New Zealand's colonial situation, in which the identities of both the tangata whenua and colonisers are changed post-contact, and everyone is a simulacrum. Therefore, there is no "real" New Zealand identity, because there can be no "real" national identity, just a set of assumptions and a "stylised repetition of acts"[43] that become naturalised by their very repetition. This is one way the theatrical feedback loop operates in relation to national identity: New Zealanders read a work in a particular way and recognise markers of New Zealandness within a work, which reinforces their own sense of New Zealandness. The identified New Zealandness is a fantasy, but the recognition of what constitutes national identity is perpetuated by the feedback loop process. (I have contextualised the process in terms of dramatic texts, but this feedback loop can also be applied to the wider sociological phenomenon of the construction of and belief in mythologies of nationality.)

The feedback loop is a useful strategy for considering how New Zealand identity can be read and received in a work. How does the feedback loop operate when a non-local, non-knowing audience view a production from New Zealand? This thesis identifies self-referential markers of New Zealandness and national identity that can be read by local audiences in specific plays, and questions how these are read when the plays are transported outside of their national boundaries and onto the international stage. In instances when overseas performance disrupts the feedback loop and the recognition of national markers, the fantasy of national

identity can be revealed. Hence, a conceptual caution: you can read New Zealand into a work, but you can also read (or write) New Zealand out of it.

The organising category for this thesis is theatre with a national New Zealand origin that has been performed in countries outside of New Zealand. These may be works that have originated and been performed first in New Zealand, or the origin might be through the artist's background and experiences, such as Robert Lord and Richard O'Brien. Limiting my discussion to theatre performed outside of New Zealand provokes insights into the development of New Zealand theatre, and the anxieties displayed in the type of work theatre makers were able to produce or distribute offshore. My guiding question is not "Is it a New Zealand play?", but rather, "What kind of New Zealand play is it?" That is, what kind of New Zealand national identity emerges when examining the overseas productions, and what are the ways this might be read in an overseas context compared to a local context?

Having established the "national" as a theoretical concept, we move out to the "international." Benedict Anderson's nation is limited, because of the "finite, if elastic boundaries," beyond which lie other imagined communities.[44] Internationalists advocate for greater co-operation between nations for their mutual interest. Glenda Sluga sees the relationship between nationalism and internationalism as "neither antagonistic nor even analytically separate principles."[45] Sluga argues the "twinned liberal ideologies internationalism and nationalism inspired a wide range of imagined communities."[46] When placed against another "imagined community," the identities can be made stronger in opposition: our imagined community is not like theirs.

The international is not the same as the global. Where the international sees co-operation between many, for the global, "what was many becomes one."[47] This conceptual difference is used to distinguish the time periods of Part One (1941-1991) and Part Three (1991-2016) of this thesis, both of which investigate touring productions from New Zealand. Part One is titled "Touring the International World" because internationalism, of which World War Two was its "apogee,"[48] defines this historical period. The nation remains the "basic unit" in international relations of trade and treaties.[49] With the intensification of globalisation after the end of the Cold War, "globalising processes increasingly undermine much of the discourse on the peculiarities of the nation and render it partly redundant."[50] Part Three is titled "Touring the Global World," recognising the period from the early 1990s to the present as one of "increasing diversification, of new hybrids forms emerging from the continuous interplay of difference."[51] While internationalism consolidates the sense of the homogenous national state, globalism undermines it.

The national is also challenged by the transnational. Transnationalism as a framework attempts to move past the post-colonial binary. New Zealand adopted biculturalism as a Government policy in the 1980s, recognising The Treaty of Waitangi (1840) as a founding document, and the bicultural relationship between tangata whenua and tauiwi (non-Māori). Post-colonialism, with its emphasis on the bicultural relationship, is limited in its applicability to a multicultural population and power relationships beyond the historical colonial network of relations between Māori and settler-descended Pākehā. The transnational is associated with "migrant, diasporic and refugee communities not directly emerging from the colonial experience."[52] The "increasing flow of populations, the mobility of individuals, the increased crossing of borders and the blurring of the concept of 'home'" has produced "a range of transnational literatures and other forms of cultural production that extend the field of post-colonialism in productive ways."[53] For performance theorist Amanda Rogers, transnationalism allows "us to apprehend how the relationship between culture, people and place is reconfigured as national territories no longer automatically provide the main locus of identification and belonging."[54] The danger with transnationalism is when it is used to hail the 'racial other' by another name; that is, associating transnational theatre with ethnic minorities. Conversely, where it can be introduced to disrupt ideas of the monolithic nation, and investigate intercultural, hybrid identities, it is a valuable tool. Chapter IX uses transnationalism to investigate a range of plays with immigrant narratives that have toured from New Zealand, from Indian Ink Theatre Company's *Krishnan's Dairy* (1997) to Red Leap Theatre's *The Arrival* (2009).

II: Theatre as Mirror

Hamlet's speech to the players in William Shakespeare's play, written between 1599 and 1602, has often been used as the basis for defining the purpose of theatre, to hold "the mirror up to nature, to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure" (3.2, 22-24). Hamlet's ideal is theatre that can reflect back the audience's own society, revealing aspects of themselves: their desires, fears, hypocrisies, and the time and place that they live. Crucially, *Hamlet* is set in Elsinore, not England, but presumably, if Shakespeare followed the view of his protagonist, he believed a play about the Denmark court could hold his Globe's audience attention and entertain, but also speak to something of their own age and body of time. *Hamlet* the play has proven endlessly malleable in its revivals over the past four centuries. Modern revivals are often eager to prove how

'relevant' the play is for audiences. In 2014 *Hamlet* was selected by Shakespeare's Globe to embark on a "Globe-to-Globe" tour, aiming to visit every country in the world over two years. It sought to show how the play's 'universal' themes could speak cross-culturally, and the tour's central principle was that "Shakespeare can entertain and speak to anyone, no matter where they are on earth."[55] Hamlet's mirror is remarkably versatile, but it begs the question of exactly what reflection the audience see. Are people the same everywhere, or do cultural distinctions create very different reflections, meanings, and uses for this play, speaking in very different ways to people around the globe?

In *Theatre and Postcolonial Desire*, Awam Amkpa tweaks Hamlet's mirror, situating the role of theatre as "reflecting a desiring process through which we imagine and live alternative universes."[56] While people consume stories, and enter alternative worlds through a range of mediums on the screen and on the page, what makes theatrical performance unique is the embodied liveness of the medium. The physical presence of the performers within the same space as the audience gives this confrontation an immediate corporeal reality. Marianne Schultz emphasises that "a live performance can never be repeated or received the same way twice" as "each performance constitutes new expressions, understandings, and interactions from both performers and audience members."[57] The mirror is influenced by these real bodies, marked out and othered as actors and characters. For this thesis, what is at stake is how the mirror operates when a New Zealand play is put in an overseas context, and what happens in the moment of theatrical exchange between two cultural others, the performers and the audience. How are the cultural identities of each disrupted, transformed or reinforced by the passage of live performance? Do audiences see the other in the performance mirror, exotic and different to themselves, or do they ultimately see themselves reflected back?

To examine this question, I adapt and apply the concept of cosmopolitanism, which involves a "receptive and open attitude towards the other" and attempts "to work towards the possibility of connection and dialogue with the other."[58] Cosmopolitanism has been criticised as being an ideal rather than a practice. However, by applying this concept to my project I provide another framework to explain and analyse what happens when drama is performed to a non-local, non-knowing audience. The self-selected audience, who have gone to a theatre show from New Zealand, display "a conscious attempt to be familiar with people, objects and places that sit outside one's local or national settings."[59] A cosmopolitan audience might develop "the ability to reflexively observe and judge different cultures" and possess "semiotic skills to interpret images of others."[60] International performance can construct such a cosmopolitan zone, but can also reinforce existing cultural assumptions and power structures.

I will show that the emphasis for New Zealand work overseas has predominantly not been one of cultural difference, but of cultural similarity. Part Two explores how a process of cultural adaptation occurs when work from one place is re-orientated for performance in another place. This may be an explicit adaptation, where the New Zealand setting of a work is exchanged with the new local site of production. Self-referential markers of New Zealand identity are exchanged with markers intended to stimulate recognition for the new audience overseas. Cultural adaptation however is more usually implicit: New Zealand work is adapted by the audience, rather than for the audience. While exoticism and alterity can attract an audience to a work because of the novelty of difference, it can also be demonstrated that, within the feedback loop of the cosmopolitan zone, overseas audiences actively search for markers of similarity and cultural equivalence, such as the cases of plays produced 'true to label' by overseas companies, without textual alteration, as examined in Chapter VII.

These markers of cultural equivalence are features critics identify as universal in a work. However, this universality is often anglo-centric (belonging to a wider worldview of the English-speaking world) and misleading. Ric Knowles argues in *Reading the Material Theatre*:

> Traditional dramatic analysis assumes scripts and productions "have" universal meaning that is available for interpretation by audiences anywhere […], that it speaks across various kinds of difference to our common humanity. In doing so, however, such work tends in the interests of what is understood to be universal truth to police the norms of common-sense understandings of dominant cultures, and to efface significant cultural and material differences based on such things as national, political, cultural and geo-graphical location, together with class, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.[61]

This is the binary of cultural difference (or particularism) versus universalism. Knowles notes that cultural difference in theatre tends to either be "packaged for consumption as exotic or charming," or, "to be treated as interesting and energising but fundamentally incidental local variants on a (therefore more important) universal or transcendent humanism."[62] Part One will show the ways this plays out with the debate around whether New Zealand theatre was regional – offering a distinct culture of its own – or provincial, a sub-set of Anglo-culture. Provincialism is often extended to claims of universalism: people are alike everywhere. The extremes of the regional and provincial poles are "equally 'sterile'," leading either to "universal sameness," or "the incommensurability of cultures (cultural relativism)."[63] Culture is another of those highly complex terms, as cultures do not "break down fallaciously into separate entities."[64] Culture is never stable, always mixing, always mutating, always being performed in countless combinations. Just as there can be no determinable universal essence, nor can there be a determinable fixed cultural essence.

To complicate this binary, I employ and adapt philosopher Francois Jullien's concept of "the common." Jullien defines the common as "what we are a part of or in which we take part, which is shared out and in which we participate."[65] The common is not a neutral space; it is highly charged and political, where different cultural practices, histories, and power structures meet. For the purposes of this study, I define the common as what peoples believe they share, or hold in common, with one another. It is when an audience member in Edinburgh, Singapore, or India can watch a performance from New Zealand's Indian Ink Theatre Company and can see something of their own lives in the dramatic mirror. The common is subjective and in flux. The common does not reveal universal themes, nor actual cultural similarities, but is a space through which one body of cultural knowledge connects with another. I examine what artists and audience find in common, and what this reveals about each party. I am also interested in what falls outside the common, what does and does not translate, what does and does not resonate. As such, my thesis continues to oscillate around these questions of cultural similarity and difference, and the space in common between the drama and the audience. I investigate what the paradigms of portability are for each work: what allows a specific work to be programmed for a specific time, place, and audience, how the meanings are translated and interpreted in the mirror of this specific communal context, and how this portability can operate differently when moved elsewhere.

Getting There

Whether a New Zealand play makes it overseas is determined by various funding, touring and venue models. Most theatrical organisations in the English-speaking world can be categorised as either commercial or not-for-profit.[66] Not-for-profit venues and presenting organisations are subsidised by public funding and private donors. In theory, the not-for-profit sector can take more risks, programming work on perceived artistic merit over box office considerations, and may therefore be receptive to, even positively interested in, New Zealand work if it aligns with their organisational priorities. However, they remain accountable and tied to funding bodies, and are liable to become more risk-averse within climates of policy changes and funding cuts. Works may attempt to position themselves artistically and financially for the international Festival and Fringe circuit. For open access Fringe Festivals like Edinburgh's, companies need only to secure a venue and pay a registration fee to be included. International Festivals demand a particular type of artistically and conceptually high-end theatrical product that "tend to be

admired for virtuosity, innovation, or skill."[67] Pertinent to this study, Ric Knowles argues that "remounting productions at international festivals that emerged from particular cultural contexts or were designed for specific local audiences changes the cultural work that they perform and the ways in which they are read."[68] As to commercial theatre, such as New York's Broadway and London's West End, Ric Knowles advises that "the theatrical production is understood to be a 'property' (hot or not), a commodity whose value is primarily, if not exclusively, economic, and whose participation in dominant models of commercial production is virtually prohibitive of extensive or radical social critique."[69] In a commercial context the perceived saleability and money-making potential of a New Zealand work is valued over artistic considerations. While artists may have high-minded ideals about the artistic worth of their work, generally the programming of the work comes back to two key questions: Who will fund this? Will this sell?

For a playwright hopeful for production by international companies, the use of an agent to distribute scripts to companies on their behalf is a typical tactic. Playmarket, the New Zealand Playwrights agency, was established in 1973 and distributes client plays to international companies. Playmarket provided me with the records of their international licenses between 1997 and 2014, a period in which they issued 288 separate licenses for performances of New Zealand work overseas.[70] While 23 of these were for public readings, the remainder were for staged productions of at least one performance. Some of the licenses represented New Zealand companies touring to overseas destinations, but the majority were for amateur and professional overseas companies performing a New Zealand work. Roger Hall, the playwright who has had the most works performed overseas, used separate agents for the New Zealand, Australian and British/American markets. Agents lobby producers and companies with their clients' scripts, take a commission on the playwright's royalties, and can advocate for the playwright's financial and legal interests. Agent representation is a passive way to gain production. While it is in the agent's financial interest to promote the playwright, Playmarket's data reveals that only a very small minority of the plays within the 1997-2014 period were licensed to three or more different international companies. Australia is the main overseas market that Playmarket licenses to, and, apart from America and Britain, few other countries have produced New Zealand scripts. New Zealand plays have rarely travelled further afield than what historian James Belich terms the Anglo-world. Belich describes this as a "transcontinental, transnational entity" in which "transfers of things, thoughts, and people," – and in this case, theatre – "lubricated by shared language and culture," flowed more easily from countries within the Anglo-world than from without.[71] New Zealand plays have spread within

this Anglo-market of Australia, Britain, North America and Canada, but have rarely travelled beyond. It is not surprising that it is a very Western, and colonial, route for the New Zealand play to travel.

Overseas touring is cost prohibitive for a New Zealand company, and audience box office rarely covers the costs of travel and freight, venue fees, personal fees, marketing and other associated costs. Companies must apply for grants, court sponsorship, and hold fundraisers. Over the last five years local crowdfunding websites, such as Boosted and PledgeMe, have become a ubiquitous way of eliciting donations from theatre makers' networks, which often sees industry colleagues subsidising each other. Most tours rely on government subsidy from Creative New Zealand, formerly the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council. From 2009-2013 CNZ implemented a pan-artform International Strategy which promoted international exposure as "priority" for the "artistic and economic sustainability" of New Zealand artists, and stated, "international markets offer the potential to expand and diversify audiences, extend the life of a work, and provide additional employment and sources of income to artists."[72] Where New Zealand work has been programmed by an international venue or producing partner, CNZ may decide to fund costs associated with international travel and freight. Funding rounds are competitive, and CNZ has the power to deem if a company is "international ready" or not. In this way, the funding body acts as an arbiter of what *kind* of New Zealand theatre gains representation overseas. Of course, companies may choose to bypass CNZ funding, but rarely have the financial means to make it overseas without some form of support from the body or its predecessor. The fascinating story of Red Mole Enterprises, a company that relocated overseas without funding support between 1979-1988, is analysed in Chapter III.

How I Got There

A travel grant to research *The Generation of Z*, which had followed its 2014 NZ at Edinburgh season with a 2015 season in Whitechapel, London, was a rare opportunity to study a live performance of one of the works this thesis examines. I participated in *The Generation of Z* four times in London in order to experience the four different storyline combinations on offer. During one of these performances a zombie spat fake blood all over me, which was one novel way of becoming immersed in my research. Theatre is an ephemeral form. Each performance offers a re-creation of the play to win over the hearts and minds of a particular group of people

gathered to watch the drama. Plays exist, then they are gone. Sometimes they are captured on video, or photographs are taken, but our main record is usually the printed script. Reviews also offer clues as to what happened during the performative moment when play and audience met. The ephemerality of theatrical performance carries issues of access and loss, and a distinct methodological challenge for my research. Katie Normington questions how one can "retrieve a theatre history for which there are few traces?"[73] While I was able to see (and be splattered) by *The Generation of Z* live, for the majority of my cases I had to reconstruct the moment of live performance through the textual traces the productions had left behind.

Aotearoa/New Zealand's theatre's own overseas experience has been an overlooked component of the country's theatre history, so the availability of secondary sources is a hurdle. Critical writing about our drama has focussed inwardly on the formation and consolidation of a unique New Zealand tradition. References to international productions are often brief and written in largely positivist terms – they went over there, and it was good. For example, Kata Fülöp's Doctoral thesis on the construction of identity in Pasifika theatre makers does not examine how examples of overseas performance contributed to those identities.[74] George Parker's thesis on the traditions of solo theatre includes examples of plays that had been toured overseas, such as Bruce Mason's *The End of the Golden Weather* (1959) and John Broughton's *Michael James Manaia* (1991), though Parker focusses on local receptions and meanings.[75] The three general histories of New Zealand theatre – *A Dramatic Appearance* by Peter Harcourt, *New Zealand Drama* by Howard McNaughton and *New Zealand Drama* by John Thomson – focus on productions within New Zealand and are useful in discussing New Zealand theatre trends within the country up to the 1980s. This cluster of histories, published between 1978-1984, emerged during a period concerned with the legitimisation of theatre in New Zealand, but there remains a significant gap in the historiography as there have been no comprehensive performance histories since.

Acknowledging this absence, *Performing Aotearoa*, edited by Marc Maufort and David O'Donnell, was published in 2007 and features essays and interviews documenting some of the recent developments of theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand in order to "reflect the evolving New Zealand identity in an age of transition moving towards twenty-first century globalization."[76] It makes an important contribution to the historiography, though there are only a few mentions of productions overseas. *Act*, the theatre magazine of Downstage (1967-1975) and then taken over by Playmarket (1976-1986), provided a useful contemporary record of New Zealand plays performed overseas through its month-by-month record of theatre activities. This subsequently became *Playmarket News* (1988-2009) then the *Playmarket*

Annual (2010-). These publications provide details of international production of New Zealand work as they occurred, but little sustained analysis. *Australasian Drama Studies* (University of Queensland) features an article by Hilary Halba on "Robert Lord's New York."[77] Murray Edmond, in his Doctorate on New Zealand's alternative drama traditions, investigates the international touring experiences of Amamus in 1975 and Red Mole between 1979-1984,[78] a rare instance where international touring by New Zealand companies has received serious consideration. This has offered a useful springboard to build my own arguments in Part One about the significance of the overseas tours of these two companies.

The relative barrenness of the New Zealand drama's historiographical landscape when it comes to overseas performance is this thesis's challenge and opportunity. It is a challenge because there are few pre-existing frameworks I can draw on. It is an opportunity because I can offer a considerable amount of new information to the historical record. The study of transplanted national dramas and plays is also relatively uncharted in international scholarship; while translation studies in theatre is an established field, and there are numerous studies considering how work has been produced across different cultural contexts (most notably global studies of productions of Shakespeare's texts), there are few comparable works that focus on the international performance history and reception of theatre from a singular nation. *Playing Australia* edited by Elizabeth Schafer and Susan Bradley Smith considers how Australian theatre has been played abroad in the 19th and 20th centuries. The questions raised in *Playing Australia*, such as, "What price a Global culture?"[79] and "When is an Australian playwright not an Australian playwright?",[80] can usefully be applied to a New Zealand context, but the multi-authored series of essays does not provide an overall paradigm or method of analysis relevant to this study. While the study of transplanted national drama is not the focus of Ric Knowles' *Reading the Material Theatre*, his case studies analysing how particular theatrical productions have moved across international festivals offer an informative framework.

This thesis seeks to chart a new territory for New Zealand drama scholarship. Marc Maufort observes the "extraordinary productivity of the New Zealand stage has not received its full scholarly recognition […] nor has the drama of Aotearoa been granted its rightful place in the official canon of English-language playwriting."[81] This thesis provides a much-needed historical account of overseas tours and productions of New Zealand theatre and considerations of their significance. In examining cases of productions performed outside of New Zealand, the thesis tracks larger developments and changes in Aotearoa/New Zealand drama itself. What sort of work is being made and what kinds of New Zealand identities are represented? In Part

Three, recent New Zealand productions *The Arrival* (2009), *The Factory* (2011) and *The Generation of Z* (2014) receive serious scholarly attention for the first time. The findings of this thesis will be of global interest to academics, producers, and theatre artists as a significant resource for theatre touring and practice. There is an important story that has not previously been told about how New Zealand has imagined and conceived of itself in drama on the international stage, and the challenges of exporting New Zealand theatre and identity to the world.

Archival records have proved a substantial aid in telling this story. When I embarked on this thesis I did not know that I would read Robert Lord's correspondence about living in New York, sight Bruce Mason's cue sheet for *The End of the Golden Weather*, or listen to a cassette tape of a New York performance of Red Mole Enterprises' *The Last Days of Mankind* (1979). The archives have presented a treasure trove of primary resources including reviews and press clippings, financial records, and private correspondence. The University of Auckland's Special Collections offered material on Red Mole Enterprises, which was used to build on Murray Edmond's work on Red Mole and to uncover new insights into their overseas experience, as revealed in Chapter III. Similarly, Robert Lord's archive at the University of Otago's Hocken Collections allowed me to extend on Halba's article in Chapter VI. The correspondence in the Hocken Collections' Roger Hall papers was particularly useful for providing new understanding of the West End version of *Middle-Age Spread*. Playmarket allowed access to their client files stored in their Wellington office, from which I could draw from reviews and press clippings related to international productions of playwrights such as Toa Fraser, John Broughton, and Gary Henderson. Victoria University's J.C. Beaglehole Room provided substantial archives relating to Bruce Mason (whose overseas experience is mostly absent in John Smythe's 2016 survey *The Plays of Bruce Mason*). Wellington's Alexander Turnbull Library had useful records for a number of companies, including Amamus and Wellington's Downstage Theatre Company. Interviews were also conducted with theatre makers such as Charlie McDermott of *The Generation of Z,* Deborah Hunt of Red Mole, and Justin Lewis of Indian Ink Theatre Company; these add further context, as their subjective testimony can join the other traces to assist the analysis of what happened and why.

The most challenging task was recovering the traces of information about how the multi-faceted audience/spectators from different cross-cultural contexts received and interpreted the performance. The critical record is used as a substitute for the study of the audience response to each production, as we generally cannot access how the paying audience responded to a production, though contemporary media like Twitter do offer some traces.

Reviews are used in this thesis in the same way Ric Knowles does in his work, "as providers of evidence of receptions and interpretations – readings – that were enabled by particular local stagings for specific local audiences."[82] Reviews demonstrate possible meanings that were made available to a specific audience at a specific location. It is through my reading of all the available traces that I analyse how the meaning of a New Zealand theatre work might operate in a specific time, place, and moment. From these production case studies, I then build a larger argument, drawing on theoretical concepts and historical movements, to understand the wider development of Aotearoa/New Zealand theatre's OE.

The Journey From Here

This thesis follows a three-act structure, with smaller chapters within each of the three parts focusing on specific productions as case studies which illuminate the central argument. It attempts to balance breadth, giving an account of overseas performances of New Zealand work primarily from WWII to today, with depth, analyzing in detail significant moments in New Zealand theatre's OE. This study engages with the whole theatrical enterprise as a play travels from concept and scripting through to funding, marketing, performance and the critical response by reviewers and commentators. While I have aimed for a comprehensive study, because so much of the information is new to the historiography, it is not possible to cover all instances of productions overseas within the boundaries of this thesis. Deciding which productions to use as case studies comes with a significant responsibility. They must represent a unique moment on the OE: a new market, a particular reception, or a different kind of New Zealand identity being performed. They must be examples of stage drama: theatrical (they are performed live by actors) and dramatic (working from a script by a playwright or devised by the cast containing elements of character, conflict, and narrative), but they do not always need to be performed on a traditional stage (for example, the immersive theatre work *The Generation of Z*).

An aspect that I was unable to resolve in selecting the final case studies was a balanced gender representation. This is particularly the case for the overseas performances of plays written by singular playwrights, who are predominantly male (the exception being Stella Jones in Chapter VII, who was indeed exceptional in her period as a female playwright from New Zealand who had work performed overseas). This reflects a systematic bias, not only within New Zealand, but theatre worldwide, of gendered hegemony in which male identifying playwrights are overwhelmingly produced on stages compared to female or non-binary

identifying playwrights. Note for example the list of 2014 New Zealand at Edinburgh plays with which this thesis opened – all were by male writers. An ever-present subtext in this thesis is who gets to represent and speak for New Zealand on world stages, and this gendered orientation is one of the stories of this OE (the representation of sexual and ethnic identities are others). The cultural nationalist movement in New Zealand, from which local drama eventually emerged in the 1950s, was predominantly led by men, and historically the New Zealand national was largely defined by the masculine. In the International World, female practitioners are represented overseas via collectives (Red Mole, Heartache and Sorrow). In the Global World, more female playwrights have been produced overseas (Briar Grace-Smith, Miria George, Dianna Fuemana, Jean Betts, Fiona Farrell), but still in far fewer numbers than male playwrights. This is reflected in licensing figures from Playmarket for international performances from 1997-2014, in which twice as many male playwrights (36) had their work licensed for international productions compared with female (18).[83] Through my selected corpus I have endeavored to present a reasonably accurate image of the range of activity across New Zealand overseas productions, and as such the systematic imbalance and largely masculine orientation of the work that has travelled are reflected in the case studies. I have, however, attempted to make interventions where I can. For example, interviewing Deborah Hunt to balance the archival record of Red Mole which was skewed towards Alan Brunton's perspective.

I have also had to make judgment calls as to what can or cannot be considered theatre. I have included the Kiwi Concert Party, the New Zealand Defense Force's WWII Entertainment Division, because of their use of dramatic sketches, and because they were New Zealand's most important performance export in this period. I have included musical theatre *The Factory*, but not opera. Nor have I included dance companies like Mau, Atamira, and Black Grace, who have regularly performed overseas but sit outside the scope of this thesis.

Part One, "Touring the International World," considers the significance of a range of different journeys made by theatre artists from New Zealand through overseas tours of their works from 1941-1991. The International World is used as an organising category, as during this timeframe the New Zealand state reoriented its place in the world for post-war internationalist conditions. This period revealed a considerable anxiety regarding the formation of a distinct regionalist identity in New Zealand drama. Chapter I introduces the Kiwi Concert Party, which reflected a largely colonial identity. Part One then traces the cultural nationalist attempt to construct markers of New Zealandness in drama. Chapter II looks at how Bruce Mason attempted through *The End of the Golden Weather* to articulate to British audiences a

New Zealand national identity that had emerged from the colonial settlement, a theme that was extended with Amamus' tour of *Gallipoli* (1973) to London and Poland, which sought to establish this WWI campaign as the crucible of a distinct New Zealand identity. Chapter III explores how the long exile of Red Mole Enterprises overseas (1979, 1981-1988) challenged these emerging nationalist narratives. They rejected the New Zealand local and demonstrated internationalist concerns in their overseas work in their attempt to find their own place in America's avant-garde. Part One ends with Chapter IV, featuring two touring productions from Wellington's Downstage Theatre, *Hedda Gabler* in 1990 and *Michael James Manaia* in 1991. 1991 provides a convenient cut-off point. With the end of the Cold War the world was realigning, and New Zealand drama was also changing.

Part Two is entitled "Adapting Nationalities," and focuses on the performance of theatre by overseas non-New Zealand companies, who adapt New Zealand plays to meet the cultural concerns of their local audiences. Part Two questions what are the possible appeals of a New Zealand work for overseas companies, and how culturally-specific contextual elements in the plays are dealt with and interpreted. Concerned with productions from 1930 till today, this topic is placed in between Part One and Part Three, as it provides further context to the development of New Zealand theatre during the International period, as well as looking forward to the Global. Chapter V, "Writing New Zealand Away: From Merton Hodge to Roger Hall," investigates how New Zealand identity is adapted and rewritten to fit the local cultural context of the producing company. Robert Lord, who attempted to make a career as a playwright in New York, is an important figure in New Zealand theatre's OE and is the subject of Chapter VI which explores his American experience. These cases are then opposed with instances where New Zealand work has been performed 'true to label' in Chapter VII, without alteration to the setting, asking why these works suited the needs of the producing company.

Part Three, "Touring the Global World," picks up where Part One left off chronologically, examining the significance of recent touring productions. What makes this period distinct are the accelerated conditions of globalization, which challenge the nation state, and the concerns of New Zealand work being toured have also shifted. After *Michael James Manaia*, theatre with a Māori identity has sought to articulate itself on the overseas stage, with the most notable instance being the tour of *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* (*The Māori Troilus and Cressida*, 2012) to London's Globe Theatre, explored in Chapter VIII. There has also been a shift in representing identities beyond the bicultural paradigm, seen in Chapter IX on "The Global Immigrant," and how transnationalism further complicates the representation and reception of cultural identities. As with Red Mole in the International World, the Global World

also sees instances where local identity is rejected altogether, marked by recent work by Indian Ink Theatre Company (Chapter X), and the season of *The Generation of Z* in London (Chapter XI).

Overall, this thesis grapples with the ways New Zealand drama has represented the nation, its people, and its theatre on a world stage. This is a story about how we perceive ourselves, and how the world, in turn, has perceived us.

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[6] "Review of Theatre: Final Report," Creative New Zealand, 2015, 17, http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/assets/paperclip/publication_documents/documents/470/original/final_report_2015_review_of_theatre.pdf?1448404948

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[12] Michael King, *Being Pakeha Now: Reflections and Recollections of a White Native* (Auckland: Penguin, 2004), 178.

[13] Bruce Mason, "The Māori as Artist," *Te Ao Hou*, vol. 8, no. 31 (Jun. 1 1960), 1.

[14] Murray Edmond, "Lighting out for Paradise: New Zealand Theatre and the 'Other' Tradition," *Australasian Drama Studies*, no.18 (Apr. 1991), 186.

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PART ONE: TOURING THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD

Introduction: Performing Nationality

When Bruce Mason spoke at the International Drama Conference in 1963 (coincident with his appearance at the Edinburgh Fringe where he performed *The End of the Golden Weather*), he highlighted the role of the national within international theatre. Such was the status of the attendees at this conference that critic Kenneth Tynan remarked that "if a bomb were to drop on this room, world drama might never recover."[1] Mason addressed the state of New Zealand's emerging national theatre, what it could offer the world, and "provincial and regional problems."[2] Mason critiqued comments made by Sir Kenneth Clark in support of Britain joining the European Common Market in the journal *Encounter*, in which Clark argued that "an innocent, authentic local culture is impossible."[3] Clark pointed out that the belief that "art must be national" was a relatively recent construction from the German Romantic Movement, and that the greatest periods of European art were international.[4] Clark continued:

> All that the Artist can do is to master the international language and, if he speaks it involuntarily with his own native accent – Australian, Mexican, or whatever – that may add to his charm. But if he tries to trade on his accent he becomes a provincial nuisance.[5]

Clark's position, though highly Eurocentric, was that national difference was an artificial separation between peoples. Mason's counter-argument was that establishing distinctive national identities was of vital importance, especially for countries on the margin like New Zealand. This debate was articulated in the period via the terms regionalism and provincialism, which is the particularism versus universalism debate (as outlined in the Introduction on page 14) in another guise. Both the regionalist and the particularist would agree "we are not like each other," and while a universalist would say "we are all the same," a provincialist from the cultural centre like Clark would say, "you are the same as me."

The provincialism versus regionalism debate featured in New Zealand's literary scene in the 1960s. Cultural nationalists like Mason were concerned with establishing what made life in New Zealand unique compared to the rest of the world, which led Kendrick Smithyman to warn in his 1965 study of New Zealand poetry that New Zealanders' "understandable interest in how different we may be from others sometimes persuades us not to see how like others we are."[6] Like Clark, Smithyman believed that "the discovery of continuity and simultaneous order" was the truer aim compared to "the searching and teasing of distinctiveness."[7]

Provincialism emphasised continuity with the shared colonial culture and the desirability of performance in the cultural centre, and cultures within the Anglo-world were seen to be alike. Regionalism emphasised discontinuity and difference and the unique locational pressures that can be located in a dramatic work. The view is summed up by Allen Curnow's conception of how "the New Zealander suffering the real New Zealand experience […] drastically differentiated [New Zealanders] from other people."[8] Regionalism is generally identified with segmentations within countries, notably the Southern Agrarian movement espoused by Allen Tate and others in the USA, but if New Zealand is considered a hinterland to an Anglo metropolis, regionalism and nationalism can generally be interchangeable as terms. While there may be regional differences within New Zealand, when set against the world, the entire country can contain, as Curnow believed, distinct "influences that can be found in this country and nowhere else."[9]

Mason was a passionate advocate for this cultural nationalist view. Susan Lilian Wilson describes Mason as the "first New Zealand playwright to consistently insist on the affirmation of his own culture and so challenge the hegemony of colonising power."[10] In his speech, Mason argued for the importance of regional locality. Echoing lines from *The End of the Golden Weather*, Mason told delegates:

> When your ancestors and mine put all their chattels on to ships and went half-way across the world to transplant the Scottish and British way of life, they took with them not only pots and pans and thousands of years of history, but also a whole system of totem and taboo and a British and Scottish puritan background, which they unleashed on the unsuspecting population.[11]

Though early settlers attempted to transplant and replicate these cultural systems, a divergent culture and worldview had developed in New Zealand. And Mason believed that this culture was continuing to transition: "New Zealanders with British and Scottish ancestry were slowly turning Polynesian."[12] Mason predicted that "the effect of this is going to be our special contribution to art and theatre in particular."[13] For Mason, the confluence of cultures at the bottom of the world would result in something unique. In the 1970s, the Amamus company was also interested in the regional identity forming in New Zealand. Rejecting the dominance of the "performances of plays written by overseas authors" in theatres in New Zealand, they argued that "there are specific experiences, specific cultural patterns which are in essence New Zealand; and if local theatre is to truly interpret the culture in which it exists, it should be concerned with these patterns."[14]

Mason's comments, together with Amamus' position, reveal a considerable colonial anxiety about establishing what was unique about the nation and that it was more than just a

provincial echo of the British motherland. The focus of Part One of this thesis is how New Zealand's search for that elusive authentic regional identity manifested in touring productions from post-WWII to 1991. The period begins with the Kiwi Concert Party, which, as will be discussed in Chapter I, represented the epitome of provincialism in New Zealand performance. An entertainment division of the army, established during WWII, the Kiwi Concert Party continued to tour New Zealand and Australia for almost ten years following armistice, with a programme that reflected a shared trans-Tasman culture, informed by British and American popular culture. It was as if the war had never finished, or at least had not dramatically altered New Zealand society or the country's place in the world.

Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts explains that settler-invader colonies:

> have frequently been far less successful than other kinds of colonies in dismantling the colonialist elements in their social institutions and cultural attitudes. This is to some extent because of the peculiar hegemonic strength exerted by notions of a filiative connection with the Imperial Centre […]. Such connections tended to keep the settler colonies more dependent on the apron strings of their colonial masters […], usually at the expense of the recognition of the rights of their indigenous peoples.[15]

Whereas other countries in the Commonwealth began a period of decolonisation after the war, New Zealand appears to have been content to continue to be the happy little colony. New Zealanders wanted and expected to return to "the values and circumstances of the pre-war era."[16] Michael King notes "the immediate effect of WWII and its aftermath was to turn New Zealanders in on themselves – as individuals and as families – and to confirm some of the most profoundly imprinted social patterns of the pre-war years."[17] Society's focus was the nuclear family, the house and garden, and Britain was still invoked as "home."[18] However, this retreat to insularity began the shift away from the expression of a "fondness for the imagined English past," towards a search "for domestic sources from which its nostalgic imagination could be (re)assembled."[19] Paul Moon argues that the "strain of insularity was eventually elevated to a national virtue […] homilies to 'home' in another hemisphere were replaced by silent and singular contemplation of the New Zealand landscape."[20] New Zealanders shifted their gaze inwards.

Meanwhile, New Zealand's foreign policy strategy "had been thrown into a state of confusion during the war," and the post-war international balance of power had been "drastically altered."[21] While New Zealand still had absolute loyalty to the old Empire (now the Commonwealth), Britain's influence had been weakened, and New Zealand began to be "more active in dealing with states outside the Empire."[22] New Zealand needed to negotiate an internationalised world in which the United Nations represented new hope for cooperation

between nation states, and to "find its way in a global political and economic system dominated by the USA and constrained by the exigencies of the Cold War."[23] David Capie summarises New Zealand's international relations during the post-war period as "a complicated amalgam of lingering loyalty to Britain, adjustment to the rising global influence of the USA and a continuing desire for international relations to be based on consent and universal principles, not power politics."[24] These were post-war contradictions: as the state began to pursue an international strategy beyond the colonial relationship, society retreated to domesticity and pre-war values. This insularity then began to plant the seeds for a reorientation of where 'home' might be located.

While there had been a bloom of literary nationalism in the 1930s from writers like Allen Curnow, Frank Sargeson, Denis Glover and Robin Hyde, this had not yet cross-pollinated New Zealand's dramatic scene. The immediate post-war period's theatrical performances, exemplified by the Kiwi Concert Party, had little local colour. The only other overseas tour in this period also followed the Kiwi Concert Party to Australia. The Canterbury Student Players, directed by Ngaio Marsh, visited Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra in 1949, with productions of Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603) and Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921), where they attracted "good crowds and excellent reviews."[25] A performance of Marsh's production of *Six Characters* the year before for Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, and the Old Vic Company led to the invitation by impresario Dan O'Connor to tour Australia, an "unprecedented undertaking for a student company."[26] Both the students and the Kiwi Concert Party were in Melbourne at the same time and demonstrated the extreme ends of colonial theatrical performance: the high-art of Shakespeare and European 'modern' drama, and the popular entertainment of the concert party. Within New Zealand, the New Zealand Players toured professional theatre from 1953 to 1960, though they did not attempt entry into the Australian market, and few of their plays were locally written texts. Otherwise, theatre in this period was dominated by local amateur societies who privileged mostly British scripts. There was some activity in the British Drama League playwriting competitions which encouraged local writers, but few crossed-over into full length plays. A New Zealand drama was waiting to be invented.

Playwrights began writing plays featuring New Zealand characters and settings, and some sought production overseas. *The Tree*, by Stella Jones, in fact premiered in Bristol for the Rapier Players in 1957, and was also performed by the Newcastle Repertory later that year, before it was produced locally by the NZ Players in 1959. *The Tree* dramatised the tension between the post-war social insularity, and the competing desire to experience overseas life.

The Tree opens on the back porch of the Willis family home in a "New Zealand town" outside of Auckland, in a time period circa 1957, where Herbert lives with his two adult daughters, Daisy and Lucy. Act Two takes place as a flashback to the 1940s, fifteen years prior. World War Two is the unspoken subtext of the play – in the published play Jones had excised all references to the war that existed in a previous draft. While the Kiwi Concert Party's colonial identity emphasised the shared experiences of the war, here a New Zealand identity was based on forgetting the war. *The Tree's* dramatic conflict is whether it is better to leave for overseas opportunities like Herbert's third daughter Hilda, the black sheep of the family who left New Zealand when she was nineteen, or to stay and make a life on the "tame, safe little" New Zealand back porch like Hilda's sisters (83). Explored in further detail in Chapter VII, *The Tree* is notable for the way it captures the competing desire to locate New Zealand, not Britain, as home, versus the opportunities provided by overseas experience.

Bruce Mason, often claimed as a pioneering dramatist in the New Zealand canon, enthusiastically pursued overseas production of his work. In 1958, he sought commercial West End performance of his play *Birds in the Wilderness*, which had premiered in Auckland that year. It was performed by the London Repertory Players with a cast which included Kenneth Warren and Prunella Scales in a Sunday night try-out at the Lyric Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue (the same venue which would later host Roger Hall's *Middle-Age Spread*). Of its Auckland Festival production, the *NZ Herald* reviewer recorded that "there were times when we forgot that this was a New Zealand play."[27] Such an act of forgetting was not possible at the Lyric Theatre. *The Times* considered it "as winning and fresh a comedy as we have seen this season," and Mason reported "*The Stage* was ecstatic, but not ecstatic enough to warrant a full production."[28] Indeed, while the novelty of a New Zealand production attracted unprecedented press attention for a single staging, it was not enough to lead to a subsequent full production. The play "failed to run" and it "was difficult for managers to know in quite what milieu the play was set and how to make it viable to audiences."[29] Mason received interest from a theatre manager who wanted the setting to transposed to Northern Ireland, but Mason refused as it would "make mincemeat, not to say nonsense of my theme."[30]

Bruce Mason's most notable British success was on television. A BBC Television version of his play *The Pohutukawa Tree* (1956) was screened in Britain in October 1959 as part of Sunday Night Theatre. Hira Tauwhare reprised her role as Aroha and expatriate New Zealanders and Australians completed the cast.[31] *The Pohutukawa Tree*, which at that time had only received small workshop productions in New Zealand, has since become regarded as a classic text in New Zealand; however Mason felt that it was "patronisingly dismissed" in its

debut in Wellington.[32] In Britain, arguably because of its cultural difference, it was contextualised as a successful antipodean challenger to the usual Sunday Night fare: the *Daily Herald* critic hyperbolically claimed that "it has taken a New Zealander to write the best play ever seen on British television."[33] While Bruce Mason was not successful in reaching the West End, the broadcast gave him a larger audience than any live theatre production would have done. *The Pohutukawa Tree* did receive a Welsh production in 1960, after the producer saw the BCC broadcast.[34] Māori matriarch Queenie Maraira was played by Kitty Jones and the production included a "Māori song"[35] that was in fact adapted from a thirteenth century Welsh lament by Arwyn Jones, who "changed some of vowels and asked a Welsh composer to set it in a primitive idiom."[36] The programme drew equivalence with the Welsh culture, explaining that "*The Pohutukawa Tree* has the same significance to the Māori as the Oak Tree to the Welshman."[37] This was a fascinating instance of New Zealand theatre overseas: a Welsh company attempting to find cultural renewal through a play from New Zealand which deals with the decline of Māori culture, though their interpretation of cultural equivalence would have been illusory.

Another significant production during this period was James K. Baxter's *The Wide Open Cage* (1959), which became the first New Zealand play (with a New Zealand setting) to be produced in New York City. Performed by an "all-American cast," it was produced in the off-Broadway Washington Square Theatre venue in 1962. [38] *The Wide Open Cage*, *The Tree*, *The Pohutukawa Tree*, and *Birds in the Wilderness* were the first attempts to promote work with visible markers of New Zealand identity to international companies, reacting against the type of provincial entertainment that the Kiwi Concert Party represented.

This background sets the stage for Chapters II-IV in Part One. Bruce Mason was the first to tour the emerging regionalist national (Anglo) identity with his play *The End of the Golden Weather* (1959) to the Edinburgh Fringe in 1963. This was the same year that regular jet services between New Zealand and the United Kingdom began, a development that strengthened the concept of the New Zealander's OE. [39] New Zealand became interested in the world again. With the production of New Zealand theatre still relatively rare through the 1960s, the next notable trip was not till a decade later in 1972, when Theatre Action was the first of the experimental line in New Zealand to go overseas, when *Once Upon a Planet* (1972) was taken to Suva, Fiji as part of NZ Trade Week. Founder Francis Batten had spent two years training under Jacques Lecoq in Paris, and Theatre Action's work demonstrated that not all New Zealand theatre artists were interested in the regionalist debate; Theatre Action were more concerned with an internationalist theatre practice. *Once Upon a Planet* was an improvisatory

clown piece, with a setting that was "simply the imaginary space the five clowns shared."[40] Suva also hosted the first South Pacific Arts Festival that year, a four-yearly event that New Zealand delegates have been involved with since its inception. (For more see the discussion in the Introduction to Part Three on page 177.) Mason's overseas legacy was finally matched in 1975 when Amamus' *Gallipoli* (1974), about New Zealand's involvement in the ill-fated 1915 WWI campaign, toured to Poland and London. Both *The End of the Golden Weather* and *Gallipoli*, the subjects of Chapter II, were attempts by very different theatre makers to prove a regionalist identity for New Zealand, and to gain validation for this identity through recognition by overseas audiences.

Chapter III looks at a challenger to this nationalist movement, Red Mole Enterprises. Though they traded on their New Zealand origins when it proved marketable to do so, they left their nationalist concerns behind on their long OE in an attempt to speak an internationalist language. There were few international tours after Amamus and Red Mole, primarily because it was an activity that did not gain much support from the New Zealand government or Arts Council. Red Mole funded their own activities. In 1977 Bruce Mason had sought support from the Ministry of Foreign affairs to present New Zealand drama at either the Edinburgh International Festival or the Fringe. He hoped for a "whole area devoted to New Zealand work" at the 1978 Festival, including a cycle of his solo plays and his large-cast *Awatea* (1965). (Mason initially hoped to offer Sir Laurence Olivier the part of blind Māori elder Werihe.)[41] Mason argued that a showcase of New Zealand works "would attempt to redeem [New Zealand drama] from a purely provincial status."[42] The proposal was rejected and Mason was advised that it was "not possible at this time for the Government to undertake the major promotion of New Zealand drama."[43] In 1979 both Red Mole and Heartache and Sorrow, a New Zealand company based in London, applied to represent New Zealand at that year's Edinburgh Fringe, but, as explained in Chapter III (pages 73-75), only Heartache and Sorrow was successful. In 1981 Christchurch's Court Theatre's production of Bruce Mason's final play, *Blood of the Lamb* (1980), toured for two months in Australia. Mason was proud that the play was travelling "true to label [...] my ladies are kiwis or nothing."[44] Mason, who died on the last day of 1982, was clearly preoccupied throughout his career with maintaining a regionalist national setting overseas.

It was not till 1990 that the next significant trips were attempted by Downstage, Wellington's professional theatre company. This is the subject of the final chapter in Part One, examining the ways two touring works by Downstage sought to reveal regionalist New Zealand identity to overseas audiences. The first was Artistic Director Colin McColl's production of

Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, which set the play in 1950s Wellington during New Zealand's retreat to insularity, then *Michael James Manaia* (1991) by John Broughton, which reveals tensions in Aoteoroa/New Zealand's colonial legacy and bicultural identity.

Touring can be seen as a declaration to overseas audiences of who "we" are, and what "we" have to say, presenting their own conception of their imagined community to the world. The international audience can then judge this from their own cultural viewpoint. The touring productions in the International World revealed the anxiety of identity formation: to prove the legitimacy of both the unique New Zealand culture, and/or the quality of New Zealand theatre, they needed to test themselves off-shore.

[1] Max Cryer, "N. Zealander Took Part in Edinburgh Festival," unidentified newspaper, c.1963, 1959-65 Scrapbook, Carton 5 Box 2, Bruce Mason Papers [BMP], J.C. Beaglehole Room, Victoria University, Wellington.

[2] I.E. "Bruce Mason Reviews Trip," *The Dominion*, Dec. 28 1963, 1959-65 Scrapbook, BMP.

[3] Kenneth Clark in "Going into Europe," *Encounter*, no. 112 (Jan. 1963), 56.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Kendrick Smithyman, *A Way of Saying: A Study of New Zealand Poetry* (Auckland: Collins, 1965), 12.

[7] Ibid., 26.

[8] Smithyman, 34.

[9] Ibid., 39.

[10] Susan Lilian Williams, "Metamorphosis at 'The Margin': Bruce Mason, James K. Baxter, Mervyn Thompson, Renée and Robert Lord, Five Playwrights who have Helped Change the Face of New Zealand Drama" (Doctoral Thesis, Massey University [Palmerston North], 2006), 88.

[11] I.E.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Quoted in Murray Edmond, "Old Comrades of the Future: A History of Experimental Theatre in New Zealand, 1962-1982" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Auckland, 1996), 177.

[15] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts (Second Edition)* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 59.

[16] Paul Moon, *Encounters: The Creation of New Zealand A History* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2013), 154.

[17] Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Group, 2004), 413.

[18] King, 415.

[19] Moon, *Encounters,* 297.

[20] Ibid., 298.

[21] Paul Moon, *Turning Points: Events that Changed the Course of New Zealand History* (Auckland: New Holland Publishers, 2013), 154.

[22] David Capie, "New Zealand and the World: Imperial, International and Global Relations," in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 586.

[23] Ibid., 576.

[24] Ibid., 586.

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[25] Peter Simpson, *Bloomsbury South: The Arts in Christchurch 1933-1953* (Auckland: University Press, 2016), 290.

[26] Ibid., 289.

[27] Bruce Mason, "Foreword," in "Birds in the Wilderness," MS, 1958 (Provided as PDF by Playmarket, 2014), viii.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Mason, "Jottings on the Character and Spirit of Downstage," MS, 1967, Carton 5 Box 1 Folder 5, BMP.

[30] Mason, "Preface," in *Blood of the Lamb* (Wellington: Price Milburn and Victoria University Press), 1981, 9.

[31] John Smythe, *The Plays of Bruce Mason* (Victoria University Press and Playmarket: Wellington, 2015), 75.

[32] Mason, "Jottings on the Character and Spirit of Downstage."

[33] Ibid.

[34] Theatr Fach Llangefini *The Pohutukawa Tree* Programme, 1960, 1959-65 Scrapbook, BMP.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Mason, "The Pohutukawa Tree in Wales," *Te Ao Hou,* vol. 9, no. 34 (Mar. 1961), 30.

[37] Theatr Fach Llangefini.

[38] "The Wide Open Cage in New York," *New Zealand Theatre,* no. 131 (Feb. 1963), 13.

[39] King, 456.

[40] Edmond, "Old Comrades of the Future…," 104.

[41] Mason to Hon. David Allan Highet, Minister for Arts, Sep. 26 1977, Carton 7 Box 4, BMP.

[42] Mason to Lance Adams-Schneider, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nov. 11 1977, Carton 7 Box 4, BMP.

[43] Mason to Lance Adams-Schneider, Nov. 2 1977, Carton 7 Box 4, BMP.

[44] Mason to Roger Hall, Oct. 18 1980, MS-1442/002, Roger Hall Papers, Hocken Collections, University of Otago Library, Dunedin.

Chapter I

And the War Played On: The Kiwi Concert Party

When the Kiwi Concert Party toured New Zealand during furlough from their campaign in 1943, they asked their audiences to imaginatively transport themselves to the army camps in North Africa:

> [You] are in the desert; the theatre walls and the comfortable seats have gone, the chilly stars are gleaming above you. You sit down on the sand […]. From widely scattered dug-outs and trucks you and your pals have walked across the sand, converging on a small focus of human gaiety, an oasis of light and sound in a vast black world.[1]

This described the Party's typical performance conditions during the war. A New Zealand entertainment unit formed in 1941, the Kiwi Concert Party provided performances for allied troops and locals throughout Crete, Syria, Malta, Italy and North Africa. The party continued following the end of the war, and from 1946 to 1954 the Concert Party toured Australia and New Zealand as The Kiwis, including a two-year occupation of Melbourne's Comedy Theatre. The WWII Concert Party, along with the New Zealand Pierrots of WWI (who also toured post-war as The Diggers), have been excluded from New Zealand drama histories. The Kiwi Concert Party's importance in New Zealand Theatre's Overseas Experience cannot be overlooked. They embody New Zealand's popular entertainment during the war and the decade following, and should be considered one of New Zealand's most successful theatrical touring companies.

In early 1941, the New Zealand troops were in Egypt. A group of soldiers performed a makeshift concert on their troopship during the journey there, and were invited to perform again in the Maadi camp tent, a recreational facility at New Zealand's Egypt base camp. Lt-General Sir Bernard Freyberg, C.O.S. of the New Zealand division, was in attendance and was inspired to establish a permanent entertainment unit within the division. The Kiwi Concert Party was assembled from soldiers within the division to entertain "troops in the field, preferably as near to the front line as possible," and required to maintain their own weaponry with a regular infantry drill.[2] The Party was unique during the war; while there were frequent performances for the allied troops, these were conventionally comprised of non-combat performers, "assembled in civvy street back home, then sent overseas on package tours of base establishments."[3] Member Tony Rex noted the New Zealand entertainment division had a "comparatively small casualty list over those five years of war," with one member killed in action, two wounded, and five taken as prisoners of war.[4] Over 100 people were members of

the Concert Party at various times during the Middle East and Italian campaigns,[5] and a Pacific Kiwi Concert Party unit was also established in New Caledonia in April 1943.[6]

For over 13 years the Concert Party opened their show with their original tune, "A Song to Start the Show." The lyrics began: "Here's a song to start the show, it's just a tune to whistle as you go […]. We're giving you a few of old and new, so here's a song to start the show."[7] It continued, "Sons of the Empire everyone / Helping the motherland as of yore / Like our fathers the Anzacs did before," invoking shared "national, imperial and trans-Tasman identities."[8] Each performance was approximately two-and-a-half hours. Sketches were interspersed with vocal and instrumental items. Their revues included clowning and female impersonators. Terry Vaughan, who was the musical director and producer for the majority of the company's existence, explained that:

> The Kiwis were not the popular idea of a soldier show [...]. There were no uniforms on stage, no jokes about the cook or the colonel. The humour was gentle rather than brash, rarely risqué and never camp. […]. The idea was to simply give the boys a break from what they heard all day, to give them a reminder of civvy street – something they might have taken the girlfriend to back home and, with luck, would again.[9]

While the New Zealand furlough tour asked the audience to imagine themselves participating in the overseas campaigns, the shows during the campaign attempted to transport their audiences back to civvy street, and provide a nostalgic re-creation of the popular entertainment they had enjoyed at home. The way that the dramatic mirror worked for the Kiwi Concert Party was not to reflect the soldiers as they were in the present, but to reflect an idealised version of what they were in the past. The Concert Party's dramatic mirror had the function of 'bringing them home.'

Therefore, many of their scripts began by reconstructing older sketches that company members had seen performed prior to the war. In "Primrose, or Just a Simple Village Maid," the company borrowed the Ralph Rackstraw sailor character from Gilbert and Sullivan's *HMS Pinnafore* (1878), and placed him in a new drama where he saved his childhood sweetheart and her mother from being thrown out of their house by their landlord, a "fearsome walrus-moustachio-ed Squire […] whom the audience would hiss."[10] Another popular sketch was "The Little Puddlecombe Concert Party," an "affectionate slur on English rural life."[11] The Kiwi Concert Party performed what was the popular drama of 1930s and 1940s New Zealand. According to historian Christopher Burns, "the most popular routines were those, such as Red Moore's impersonations of American celebrities, which drew on the audience's familiarity and fascination with a wider culture of entertainment."[12] Burns categorises the Kiwis' material as "largely informed by their place within a transnational web of popular culture."[13] One aspect

that more clearly placed the company as New Zealanders was the inclusion of Māori songs, an explicit marker of New Zealand's colonisation. The company found these to be a "sure-fire hit."[14] Terry Vaughan recorded that when the all-Pākehā unit played to the Māori battalion, the Māori songs resulted in an "almost continuous barrage of laughter, cheers and applause" and expressed that the occasion of "Pākehā singing [to Māori] their own songs and getting away with it" was "pretty funny."[15]

The last full-scale revue during war time was performed outside Siena on 6 November, 1945 for an audience of the Divisional Artillery, four and a half years after the premiere of Revue No.1 on 1 May, 1941. After the war, the Kiwi Concert Party sailed for New Zealand early January, 1946. One month later, The Kiwis, led by Terry Vaughan, played a two-week capacity season at His Majesty's Theatre in Auckland. The Kiwis had been formed earlier by discharged concert members, and had been viewed with suspicion by members of the Concert Party still in Europe, who had heard "that some had not even seen Home Service."[16] The Kiwis had an offer from J.C. Williamson Theatres Ltd for a three-month tour of Queensland, and asked Vaughan to take over the company upon his return. He agreed, as "the temptation to see a bit more of the world was too much."[17] The Williamson company owned many of the major theatres across Australasia, and produced their own plays, musicals, opera, and ballet which were toured through their theatres. Historically, Australian tours to New Zealand were a major economic endeavour in the late nineteenth and early twentieth Centuries, with J.C. Williamson productions regularly visiting New Zealand. There was little travel in reverse, the exception being George Leitch's *The Land of the Moa* (1895), a melodrama spectacular featuring a recreation of the Pink and White Terraces and the Tarawera eruption which destroyed them, which toured to Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane. Vaughan explained The Kiwis' arrangement with the J.C. Williamson company:

> The Kiwis provided the show – the company, orchestra, costumes and settings – and in return received, each week, 40 per cent of all gross takings; from the Firm's 60% came the theatres and theatre staff, all publicity and promotion, travel and freight costs and a touring manager.[18]

The tour got off to a difficult start in Queensland. According to Vaughan:

> For the last two years of the war the Bananalanders had endured a million Yanks in camp and on leave. Any mention of the military made Queensland blood run cold, and J.C. Williamson's billing of the Kiwis as an 'all-soldier Revue' was hardly a publicity masterstroke.[19]

While Queensland wanted to forget to the war, fortunes were better in Perth and Adelaide where their planned two-week seasons became nine. They opened in Melbourne in the Comedy

Theatre on 21 December, 1946, played 857 performances, and finally closed on 6 January, 1949.

The company's origins as a war concert party were made explicitly visible with the performers and band appearing in battledress in the first half of the show. "Songs of the Māori Battalion" was also performed in uniform in the second half.[20] They named their revues after significant campaigns during the war: Alamein, Benghazi, and Tripoli. This shifted their focus from pre-war civvy street during the war, towards a romanticised nostalgia for the war period itself. A review in the *Melbourne Sun* opined that they "far surpassed international acts of this type recently seen here."[21] Further milestones included the transfer to Sydney's Empire Theatre on 2 February, 1949 and a tour of New Zealand in 1952, but by mid-1953 it became "obvious that we would either have to disband or venture overseas."[22] Vaughan flew to London to investigate prospects, but concluded that "the cost of this, plus touring our wives and children around the provinces with only the possibility of getting into London, seem to me to be impractical."[23] The Concert Party disbanded in 1954, with many members, now married to Australian wives, settling in Australia. Vaughan would later become the director of Canberra Theatre Company (where we will meet him again in Chapter V). While memories of the Concert Party lingered with the New Zealand public (and would later be the subject of a 1982 play by Maurice Shadbolt), the members of the Concert Party did not make an ongoing contribution to New Zealand's theatrical landscape, one reason why theatre historians have not featured them in the conventional development of New Zealand's drama.

It is crucial however to recognise the Kiwi Concert Party as they were the pinnacle representative of New Zealand performance in the decade following WWII. While The Kiwis appealed to a nationalist patriotism, and were always clearly identified as New Zealanders, they could also be claimed by their Australian hosts in a spirit of Anzac brotherhood. Māori waiata was the only distinct nationalist point of difference that they had as a *Kiwi* Concert Party, but with no Māori members of the company, it was an appropriation that highlighted the ongoing effects of colonisation and cultural segregation. When the Party performed the songs to the Māori Battalion during the war, Rex assumed that "hardly any of them [Māori] could speak their own language."[24] Otherwise, the company revived traditions of pre-war, largely British performance, such as a scene from Noel Coward's 1930 play *Private Lives* performed during their Australian revues. The tokenistic acknowledgement of New Zealand's indigenous culture contrasts with the lack of the Anglo-New Zealander's own distinctive regionalist culture; instead, they borrowed from the Māori, English, and Americans. During the 1953 tour, a reviewer for the *NZ Truth* criticised The Kiwis for being "content to imitate all the overseas

patterns," stating that "even their policeman is a burlesque London 'bobby'," and was disappointed about the show's "lack of New Zealand character."[25] What this character would look like, the reviewer did not say, but it was significant that they believed there was one: the company "could go so much further if they had a script writer who could give these young New Zealanders the material to put their country on the stage."[26] The *NZ Truth* reviewer was the minority view; Burns argues that The Kiwis' "popularity implies that a large body of New Zealanders saw no contradiction in presenting a troupe that drew their material from 'overseas patterns' as a source of national pride."[27] Indeed, many New Zealanders would have seen The Kiwis as representing a national character precisely because it was imitating these overseas, specifically British, patterns. The Kiwi Concert Party demonstrated nostalgia for, and continuity with, the colonial past, but as we will see in the following chapter, the anonymous *NZ Truth* reviewer's cultural nationalist call to see their "country on the stage" became a passionate project for dramatists Bruce Mason and Paul Maunder of Amamus.

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[1] Tony Rex, "The Kiwis: The Story of The Kiwi Concert Party October 1940 to January 1954," n.d., MS-Papers-5735, Rex, Tony, fl 1940-1988: Papers Relating to the Kiwi Concert Party, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, 67-68.

[2] Ibid., 114.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 0.

[5] Ibid., 21.

[6] Christopher Burns, "Parading Kiwis: New Zealand Soldier Concert Parties, 1916-1954" (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 2012), 43.

[7] Rex, 8.

[8] Burns, 52.

[9] Terry Vaughan, *Whistle as You Go: The Story of the Kiwi Concert Party* (Auckland: Random House Ltd, 1995), 23.

[10] Rex, 59.

[11] Vaughan, 24.

[12] Burns, 143.

[13] Ibid., 24.

[14] Vaughan, 21.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 94.

[17] Vaughan, 69.

[18] Ibid., 70.

[19] Ibid., 69.

[20] Ibid., 71.

[21] Ibid., 72.

[22] Rex., 110.

[23] Ibid., 112.

[24] Ibid., 76.

[25] "Kiwis Home Again," *NZ Truth*, Jul. 8 1953, 4.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Burns, 21.

Chapter II

Towards Cultural Maturity: Bruce Mason and Amamus

In a lecture, entitled "Kiwi Abroad," Bruce Mason made the case that New Zealand's remoteness gave overseas trips a "peculiar urgency and poignancy":

> We move out into history with a sense of joyful purpose: the weightlessness which comes from living in a country without a visible and tangible past will soon be filled by the gravity of tradition. Europeans bear the weight of the past without effort – they do not know it is there, perhaps; it sits on their imaginations like air pressure, ruffles the mind frictionless, like wind on the face, but to us there is no air, no wind: simply this negative weight.[1]

Mason was asserting the belief that New Zealanders did not feel they had a history that could match the old world, and indeed it was a "negative weight" – the absence of history – that was weighing them down. Mason moved into history when he became the first performer to represent New Zealand at the 1963 Edinburgh Fringe with his self-financed tour of *The End of the Golden Weather* (1959). His mission was to answer the weight of European history with a "tangible" history of his own. "This is Te Parenga: my heritage, my world" says *Golden Weather*'s narrator. (32) The Edinburgh International Festival began in 1947 "to celebrate and enrich European cultural life in the wake of the Second World War"[2] and "to bring together audiences and artists from around the world."[3] As such, it epitomises internationalism, bringing together nations through cultural co-operation. The Festival Fringe also originated in 1947 when eight companies, that were not included in the official programme, performed over the same period. Mason was the first of many subsequent New Zealand theatre makers who have toured to the Edinburgh Fringe.

Promoted with the tagline "a voyage into a New Zealand childhood," *Golden Weather* is "a loss-of-innocence, rite-of-passage, and coming of age play."[4] Mason's 'Boy' narrator gains a burgeoning sense of maturity over a summer during the 1930s at Te Parenga, Mason's fictional placeholder for his own childhood connection with Auckland's Takapuna beach. As George Parker states in his Doctoral thesis on solo performance in New Zealand, "as part of a relatively young culture searching for its own stories, going back to childhood took on a special significance, Mason's personal history coming to stand in for a collective cultural history."[5] Just as the boy develops a firmer sense of his own identity, Mason is interested in New Zealand realising its own national identity. John Smythe describes the play as a "microcosm of Pākehā New Zealand society between the wars."[6] Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins argue that post-

colonial dramas in settler societies "are often concerned with establishing authenticity for a society dislocated from the imperial centre and, simultaneously, alienated from the local land and indigenous culture."[7] Mason's *Golden Weather* was intended to suggest that the country had moved out of its colonial phase, and now had a culture unique to itself, if still tentative and maturing, like the young protagonist of Mason's play. Mason concluded his "Kiwi Abroad" lecture with the hope that:

> this peripheral time, this feeling of being stranded in a hostile ocean, seems to be of the nineteenth century. There is no inherent reason, none that I can think of, why insights from this part of the world should not be as valid and viable as from anywhere else.[8]

Parker rightfully emphasises the importance *Golden Weather* played in identity formation within New Zealand, but is dismissive of the significance of Mason's Fringe trip. However, as the first tour to the Fringe by a New Zealander, and taken in the context of Mason's larger efforts to gain overseas validity and visibility, the regionalist Pākehā identity the play attempts to display to the Fringe audience marks a crucial moment in New Zealand theatre history.

Exporting *Golden Weather*

Bruce Mason's *The End of The Golden Weather* was a pioneering work, not only for its 'overseas experience', but first and foremost, for its articulation of a New Zealand experience. Frustrated by the lack of theatre infrastructure and audiences for local work, Mason took a do-it-yourself approach. Mason had seen English actor Emlyn Williams on a tour where the actor performed readings from the works of Charles Dickens and Dylan Thomas. This was typical of solo performance in this era, in which "high-profile actors [presented] anthologised excerpts from world famous writers."[9] Mason wrote to Williams for advice, and received a patronising response. Mason paraphrased it thus: "yet here, in the back-yard of the world, you little you, dare to do all this and write your own text!"[10] Mason borrowed Williams' form of the "English tradition of literary Recital,"[11] and adapted two of his earlier published stories to evoke the New Zealand beachside summer through the eyes of a 12-year-old boy and his gradual loss of innocence. Mason summarised his impulse in terms of cultural maturation:

> It took me 25 years to acquire the skills and gather the nerve to step out from the symbolic bush onto a bare stage and perform *Golden Weather* for the first time. At last I was in direct communion with the folk on the lawn. It was an act of desperation for which I had to summon all my resources; it was also liberation, maturity and manhood.[12]

The play was taken on a national tour in March 1960 with support from the Community Arts Service, where it was received "everywhere with astonishment and delight, and more importantly, with a shock of recognition. Every New Zealander found himself in it somewhere."[13] The programme for a later season claimed the positive reviews dispelled "once and for all the old saying that New Zealanders only praise the artist from over the waters."[14] When Mason visited Rotorua, the local paper urged locals to attend his performance: "the community as a whole has the choice of backing him to the hilt, or settling back into a cultural desert."[15] *Weather* marked a profound moment for the country's theatre and culture, and "managed to speak to a local audience about the experience of being a New Zealander."[16] When it reached 150 performances, *Weather* was deemed "the most performed theatrical work in New Zealand history, with the exception of *My Fair Lady*."[17]

Apparent local acceptance was not enough for Mason. He also craved overseas acceptance, so financed his tour to Edinburgh. Mason identified "a pricking sense of inferiority when we place ourselves beside the best that was thought, said, painted, sounded, built, in Europe" due to "the argument that nothing we may have to say can make any possible impact on the world at large, because we are so insignificant."[18] *Golden Weather* was Mason's attempt to counter this perception. Yet, Mason's odyssey was also driven by his own need for cultural validation, for the old culture to approve of the new. In order for New Zealand artists to have a distinct identity, they first need to be recognised by others as possessing one. Local audiences were not enough; overseas was the place to find yourself.

Mason described his "Edinburgh jaunt" as a "scarifying experience"; if he was unknown in Tuatapere in 1960, he said, "how much less known in Edinburgh in 1963!"[19] Mason's Fringe season was far from ideal. His venue, Regent Hall, Abbeymount, was described as being "way out on the far, far Fringe,"[20] and Mason found the distance a "serious disadvantage."[21] *Golden Weather* was one of 20 shows at the Fringe that year which began at 11pm, after the buses had stopped and Edinburgh's lights went out, which limited his audiences.[22] The 11pm start time also meant he could only perform the first half of his play. With the loss of the extended narrative of the boy befriending Firpo in "The Made Man" section, the focus became snapshots of New Zealand life: the characters the boy encounters on the beach ("Sunday at Te Parenga"), Christmas celebrations ("Christmas at Te Parenga"), as well as Te Parenga's reaction to the 1932 Queen Street riots ("The Night of the Riots"). The British critics praised Mason and his play, whereas in New Zealand, in an example of cultural cringe devaluing local work, *Golden Weather* was compared negatively to Dylan Thomas's radio drama *Under Milkwood* (1954), set in a small Welsh village. The British critics did not

have these hang-ups, and comparisons with Thomas were invoked favourably. For example, "his observation of people and places is acute, bringing justifiable comparison with Dylan Thomas,"[23] and another said Mason "joined the ranks of those rare people like Dylan Thomas and Emlyn Williams who by the sheer force of their personality and their power of evocation hold an audience enthralled for a whole evening."[24] The comparison to Williams must have been satisfying to Mason after his earlier dismissal by the performer.

When Mason toured *Golden Weather* to Edinburgh, he was concerned that the play's "provincial locale would have only a parochial appeal," but found "that, like some wines, my work "travels."[25] One reason for *Golden Weather*'s ability to travel was the shared cultural heritage. The audience are asked to "consider, if you, will Te Parenga," which the narrator describes in detail (31). The imagined conception of New Zealand becomes a mutual enterprise between Mason and the audience, a combination of the text's imagery and the audience's preconceptions of the antipodes. The prologues frames the colonial history:

> It's only a hundred years since men dressed as chimneys, in top hats and black stove-pipes, women dressed as great bells, tiny feet as clappers, stepped ashore at Te Parenga from a broad-bellied, wind-billowed ship. They brought with them […] a thousand years of history, a shoal of shibboleths, taboos and prohibitions and the memory of a six-months' voyage. They threw them all together in a heap and stepped ashore to slash the bush, banish the natives and pray silently far into the night. They left some pohutukawas, and Rangitoto was beyond their reach. (32)

The implication is an identity still in development as the settlers continue to sort through the heap.

Touring provokes questions about the extent that the New Zealand experience matches national experiences elsewhere in the world. As seen through British eyes in Edinburgh, New Zealand of 1963 had barely diverged, it was not foreign, but familiar. The critical responses reveal Francois Jullien's concept of 'the common' in action, what audiences perceive they share in common with the national identity displayed in a production. One reviewer found equivalence: "his sketches on a Christmas Day at home, and riots during the depression are particularly moving, amusing and at the same time somehow worrying – adults don't seem to have changed much since 1932-33,"[26] while another said, "you snigger and feel again the embarrassment of those juvenile days – the times when adults laughed at you, the times nothing would go right, the times you simpered a stern voice. Mr Mason remembers those frustrations and illustrates them with clarity."[27] When the British are invited to "voyage into the past, to that territory of the heart we call childhood" (31), New Zealand the nation is equated with the state of immaturity. Just as the play is seen "through the eyes of a 12-year-old boy as he

becomes aware of the harshness of the adult world,"[28] New Zealand becomes the 12-year-old next to Scotland and England, but part of the same provincial family. It was less a case of what Edinburgh audiences believed they shared with New Zealand, than what they believed New Zealand shared with their national culture.

While the critics emphasised provincial continuity, as a performer Mason did notice regional differences between the reactions of the Scots and Kiwis, which supported his sense of the unique conditions that were contributing to an evolving New Zealand identity. "They laughed in different places, at different things," recalled Mason.[29] Mason gave the example of the Christmas meal at Te Parenga, in the which he had described a "landscape shimmering in summer heat, with people buckling down to celebrate the season with windows flecked with cotton wool for snow and gargantuan meals, turkey, pudding, fit for the freezing temperature of Europe."[30] Where this might pass New Zealand audiences by in silence, it "convulsed the Scottish."[31] The irony of the situation was apparent only to the Edinburgh audience when it was taken out of the local context. In New Zealand, "audiences laughed at what was familiar," said Mason, overseas, it was "at what was exotic."[32]

One critic hoped Mason would "not be allowed to return to New Zealand without giving a London season."[33] Mason performed a "try-out" season at the Mayfair Theatre, and this resulted in the offer of a longer booking as soon as an appropriate venue became available. "But this might have taken six months," reflected Mason, "and in the meantime, what?"[34] With his wife and family at home, Mason decided not to wait. Before leaving for Edinburgh, *The Rotorua Post* worried that Mason would not "come back, like many a talented New Zealander before him."[35] But for Mason, his Fringe and short London season were success enough: "I returned home the next day, without regret."[36] He had voyaged into uncharted territory for the New Zealand performer, and confirmed that British audiences could make a connection with a play set in New Zealand. Upon returning, Mason used the trip to promote himself in an article in the *NZ Listener* in November 1963. Mason increased his status back home having 'made it' overseas. He saw the value in remaining dedicated to a New Zealand career, where he could be a big fish in a small pond, rather than a small fish "way out on the far, far Fringe." However, overseas performance of his work remained alluring, as demonstrated by the Australian production of *Blood of the Lamb* and the unsuccessful 1978 Edinburgh application. Mason continued to perform *Golden Weather* in New Zealand, often in repertoire with his other solo plays, and internationally, where he would also present lectures on New Zealand and its drama. *Golden Weather*'s initial overseas showcase was an important stage in the theatre's maturity. While it was not quite the start of the 'Golden Weather' for New Zealand theatre overseas (the

following case study of Amamus' *Gallipoli* tour did not take place until 1975), many subsequent solo plays from New Zealand have toured to Edinburgh and beyond.

The Amamus Polish Campaign

For Amamus Theatre's premiere performance of *Gallipoli*, at Wellington's Unity Theatre on the 13 September 1974, they described themselves as "New Zealand's only experimental theatre group."[37] This was not strictly true. New Zealand also had the Living Theatre Troupe and Theatre Action, though neither was active at that moment. For Amamus, their statement must have felt like the truth. Amamus was "the premiere exponent of the experimental theatre"[38] by default. The artists felt they did not have peers within New Zealand they could measure their work against. When Amamus' founder Paul Maunder appealed to the Arts Council to fund a tour of *Gallipoli* to Poland, he stated that "one of the difficulties of working in NZ is the lack of framework of theatre of a similar nature by which to criticise oneself."[39] From Amamus' point of view New Zealand was isolating for the company, removed from international developments in experimental theatre. *Gallipoli* was funded, and during October and November 1975 toured to the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, the Fifth International Student Festival of the Open Theatre, Wrocław, Poland, and subsequently to the Polish University cities of Szczeczin, Gdańsk and Łódź. Through their work and subject matter Amamus were searching for local identity; through their tour they were searching for their place within a larger international experimental community.

Maunder attended drama school in Sydney and film school in London (in 1968), where he claimed he was able to measure his ability against the other students and "drop the false Kiwi humility."[40] He returned to New Zealand for a position at the National Film Unit. Amamus, formed in 1971 by Maunder and several young actors, represented a new generation of New Zealand theatre makers. They were "determined to work with New Zealand material but found few plays to choose from," so aimed to create their own as a collective.[41] Maunder stated in publicity for the British press that "most New Zealanders of artistic talent have pursued their careers in Europe" but recently "a stirring of cultural nationalism has been felt and many artists now prefer to work and live in New Zealand to attempt to discover their own identity."[42] He echoed Mason's comments at the Drama conference, arguing for the distinctiveness of New Zealand's national identity, as the "elements that have infiltrated the

New Zealand version of Western culture give it vitality not found in the mainstream European tradition."[43] What kind of national identity emerges from this search?

The group's first play, *I Rode my Horse down the Road* (1971), drew from their "personal recollections of growing up in New Zealand," including "surreptitious smokes in the toilets at school" and Fathers who spent "every night at the boozer."[44] This was a far more cynical impression of childhood than Mason's *Golden Weather*. There was some irony with *Golden Weather* being so intensely interested in New Zealand's national voice that Mason's well-mannered accent was very similar to the British colonisers. Amamus set themselves apart with their Kiwi vernacular in accent and content. Edmond says their shows were "obsessively about the kind of familiar national themes, events and myths that have haunted New Zealand literature: childhood, the Depression, suburbia, the sensitive artist figure, left-wing politics and so on."[45] Their work moved through significant events in New Zealand history, from the Depression to the 1951 Waterfront lockout dispute. While *Gallipoli* continued this thematic interest, in form it moved away from the documentary elements of these earlier plays, as "Maunder began to feel it was too easy and superficial a means of cultural discovery."[46] Instead, *Gallipoli* sought to emulate Polish director Grotowski's theories of poor theatre, which advocated stripping away all that is non-essential in theatre to focus on the relationship between the actor and the audience. Once again, we see the borrowing of overseas forms in order to display the New Zealand identity, but unlike Mason's literary recital, Amamus were searching beyond the traditional forms of their colonisers.

The exposure to Grotowski's ideas changed the direction of Amamus. Maunder recalled that when he read Grotowski's *Towards A Poor Theatre* (1968), a compendium of Grotowski's and others' writings, he "found the ideas expressed articulated my own, deep impulses."[47] Maunder met Grotowski during the director's visit to Wellington in 1973. The New Zealand theatre community gathered for a one-day seminar at Victoria University on 7 August, 1973 to hear Grotowski speak. In an echo of Kenneth Tynan's comments at the International Drama conference 10 years earlier, Bruce Mason's report of the event noted that when designer Raymond Boyce observed that "if a bomb were to fall on this building now, New Zealand drama might never recover," Mervyn Thompson replied that "New Zealand drama might have a chance."[48] The seminar was bought to an abrupt halt when Grotowski became agitated by Paul Maunder's question of what he would do if all the members of his Theatre Laboratory were killed in a plane crash. Undeterred, Amamus went to Sydney in May 1974 to view Grotowski's touring production of *Apocalypsis cum Figuris* (1968), a production which was to be highly influential in the development of *Gallipoli*. Both shows were of a similar length (45

minutes), and invited their audiences to meet the cast following the performance. More significantly, *Gallipoli* used a similar framing device to *Apocalypsis*. As Murray Edmond explains, both feature "a group of contemporary people (drunk in *Apocalypsis*, stoned in *Gallipoli*) [who] set out to have some fun by re-enacting an old tale (the New Testament and the Second Coming)" for the Polish Theatre Laboratory, the Gallipoli campaign for Amamus.[49] One actor is chosen as a scape-goat; in *Gallipoli*'s case this is a character named Kiwi, whose name signifies his construction as a New Zealand everyman. The rest of the cast become Turkish soldiers, and then, as Turks, play various New Zealand characters such as Father, Mother, and Mate.

Gallipoli was intended to be the first play in a trilogy, which would "explore the cultural past, present, and possible future of a group of New Zealanders attempting to find three images, from which could come one view of maturity."[50] On their tour, following their presentation of *Gallipoli*, they also performed *The Half Dance of Mary M* (1975), described in their programme as a "a self-contained fragment" set in "present day New Zealand" in which "a woman considers the past events of a relationship and comes to terms with her own individuality."[51] This fragment was later incorporated into what became the second part of their trilogy, *Valita* (1976), with a post-apocalyptical version of *Oedipus* (1977) completing the trilogy. *Gallipoli*'s sole set feature was a white calico tent, whose walls created an intimate square space that both the performers and audience (usually a maximum of 40) shared. There was one prop, a .303 rifle, and the cast wore street clothes. Edmond described the effect as "ragged theatre" – a far more literal version of "poor theatre" than Grotowski had intended.[52]

Amamus was a polarising company for New Zealand audiences. The more they had embraced Grotowski, the "smaller and smaller" their audience had become.[53] The *Evening Post* critic Christine Kraus observed that though "poor theatre" had partially been accepted in other countries, "New Zealand audiences often find the approach alien, threatening."[54] She explained that people had told her that they found the play "embarrassing, elitist," and she noted that "people either recoil completely from the intensity, or go away extremely moved, prompted to think about their own experience by the experience that the group has shared."[55] *Spleen*, the magazine of the recently formed Red Mole Enterprises, gloated that the play was received with "suspicion, dismissal and complete bewilderment."[56] Maunder himself described the experience as a "collision with roots" that "struck a chord with local audiences, though not universally."[57] He placed the fault with the audiences: "a poor theatre performance – poor that is, in technological gimmickry – has the intensity of ritual and often some audience members are unwilling to enter that space."[58] Bruce Mason, who might have been receptive to the

company's nationalist interest, wrote that "it said little to me on first hearing."[59] George Webby said that the play "does not move or amuse the viewer […] the mind boggles at how these works were actually received in Poland where much post-war experimental theatre was born."[60] On the page, *Gallipoli* reads as clunky polemic, and the critics do have a point. In any case, it is likely that *Gallipoli*'s form, which did not borrow from colonial theatre traditions, would have been highly alienating.

Though *Gallipoli* "inevitably constituted an attack on mainstream theatre," Maunder observed that Amamus was "sufficiently reputable to gain funding."[61] In his letter to the Arts Council, Maunder made the case that the invitation to perform at the International Student Festival of the Open Theatre (issued following Grotowski's 1973 visit and Amamus' Sydney trip) was a unique opportunity for New Zealand experimental theatre to "perform an indigenous play in an international environment," as the opportunity to "see and meet other groups would be a stimulation not often gained in this corner of the world," and "to be able to present a contemporary piece of NZ drama in this setting would be a small but perhaps significant step towards cultural maturity."[62] Invited groups had accommodation, travel and living expenses paid for them within Poland, but had to fund their own international travel. While four of seven members had agreed to meet their own costs, the financial situations of the other three were such that Maunder requested funding of $2,655 to cover the cost of their return airfares. This was jointly met by the Arts Council and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This funding was significant because it recognised the value of international performance as a step "towards cultural maturity."

In London they "made contact with a number of expatriates, many of whom were surprised that such a product had emanated from their native home,"[63] while in Wrocław, Amamus, for the first time, "found the excitement and support of being in the midst of people who shared their ideology of open theatre, of the meeting between actor and audience."[64] There were 20 companies involved in the Wrocław festival, mostly from Eastern and Western Europe, featuring several well-known experimental companies, including Poland's The Theatre of the Eighth Day.[65] The International Student Festival of the Open Theatre was a biannual festival held since 1967, described by the festival director Bogusław Litwiniec as "one of the most important meetings of the new theatrical avant-garde in the world."[66] At the Festival, Amamus played to much larger audiences than they were used to, "performing to 300 at a time" in a large, eighteenth century room.[67] These numbers suggested curiosity from the Polish audiences towards the New Zealanders, evidence of a cosmopolitan desire to "be familiar with people […] that sit outside one's local or national settings."[68] Maunder, however, did not feel entirely

understood by the audiences, and did not gain the validation for their national identity that he was seeking. He reported a "certain lack of understanding from the Poles of the nature of New Zealand's cultural problems."[69] One Polish critic singled out Amamus as representing the "evil Grotowski had done to many young artists of the theatre who accepted his ideas uncritically or at second hand, treating his means and methods as an end in itself."[70] The review vindicated New Zealand critics, who had less exposure to the ideas of open theatre the company employed. The critic continued:

> The young theatre of New Zealand demonstrated manifestly what happens when an effort is made to reconcile several of the basic gimmicks developed by Grotowski with literary material that is incompatible with this form. In fact, the text seemed more interesting than the method in the hands of the New Zealanders, for it dealt with the rising consciousness of national identity among the people of a "young country" such as New Zealand.[71]

Throughout the tour, Maunder continued to rehearse *Gallipoli*, which put a "considerable strain on company members."[72] Edmond speculates that "perhaps, in continuing to rehearse Gallipoli harder and harder while touring and performing, he was trying to toughen up the piece, to make it less naïve."[73]

Amamus' National Identity

In her *Evening Post* review, Christine Kraus wrote that in 1975 "questions of national identity first explored by the writers of the 1930's do not seem so important any more, though they remain unresolved."[74] Amamus would have disagreed that these unresolved issues were unimportant: their company was built around their search for a national identity. Amamus reflected the vision of cultural nationalism under Prime Minister Norman Kirk (1972-1975), through which "Pākehā New Zealand began to find new confidence in its own identity and a desire to re-examine its history."[75] Amamus described *Gallipoli* as a continuation of their "exploration of New Zealand's past as a means of finding a present identity."[76]

In the recent discourse surrounding the 2015 Gallipoli Centennial, the Gallipoli campaign was widely presented as a coming-of-age moment for the New Zealand nation. Felicity Barnes explains that:

> War, especially the First World War, has become almost inextricably linked with narratives of an independent national identity. In numerous histories, the deadly shores of Gallipoli and the mud of the Western Front are not only scenes of staggering mortality but also of a kind of redemptive rebirth. Away from home, and amongst the

> British, it has been claimed, soldiers found themselves to be something distinct: they had become New Zealanders.[77]

This was not the prevailing attitude when Amamus made their show. Even in *Once on Chunuk Bair* (1983) playwright Maurice Shadbolt attempted to re-gild a "legend tarnished by the decay of an imperial ideal."[78] Shadbolt wrote *Chunuk Bair* in a period when "Gallipoli [had] been virtually censored from our literature" and the Anzacs had begun "to seem an embarrassing relic of the colonial past."[79] Amamus' *Gallipoli* was ahead of its time in that it advocated for a "redemptive rebirth" before this became a largely uncritically accepted narrative of nationalist cultural development.

But *Gallipoli* was also very much of its time. One legacy of WWI, according to Paul Moon, was to open up a "small space between New Zealand and Britain." Moon continues:

> It was barely noticeable at the time and only widened very gradually, but it did give cause for the country to reflect (and later question) the nature of its close connection with Britain […]. The war helped in that longer process of New Zealand beginning to see its role increasingly as a South Pacific nation and less as an appendage of Britain.[80]

When Amamus made *Gallipoli*, New Zealand was reassessing its relationship with Britain following that country's entry into the European Common Market in 1973. Moon describes this as "traumatic" and a major turning point in New Zealand's history.[81] David Capie describes how the move "struck the country like a physical blow" and "the prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s was replaced with a deteriorating balance of payments, high inflation and unemployment."[82] With the New Zealand nation abandoned by the motherland, *Gallipoli* was a resonant vehicle to reassess the construction of an identity influenced by, but independent of, Britain.

Early in the play Kiwi's Mother stands in for the colonial mother country, as scenes from early childhood transform into scenes from the Gallipoli landing. She tells her son:

> This is my garden, this is your home, this is your country, I have made it for you. I have come to this place, I have prepared it for you […]. You will climb that tree, you will know that mountain – Te Kaimanawa […]. We came from the sea, I have known the sounds of another land […], you are the inheritor. (2)

The reference to Te Kaimanawa is the only acknowledgement of the indigenous people and a pre-existing history of the land, but the tangata whenua themselves are physically absent in her version of history, and in the play's drama (just as Māori are largely absent from Mason's Te Parenga in *Golden Weather*). Kiwi inherits a country that has already been prepared for him. The mother states that "this beach is our bed" (2), linking the threshold crossing of British colonisation with the New Zealanders crossing the threshold of the Turkish beach under a

British campaign. The stage directions indicate that, following the Gallipoli landing, "she turns on him, begins to emasculate him" (2). The Mother is a rather heavy-handed representation of mother Britain as an emasculating and dominating figure. In order for the young Kiwi to form his own identity, he must cut the apron strings and reject colonial Britain.

This prepares the way for the Father, who represents a pioneer mentality of dominating and civilising the wild land. Scenes from later childhood are paralleled with the military operation. He tells Kiwi:

> This is my garden. I've made this, with my hands. I walked here when it was nothing, I chopped the trees, I reduced them, I burnt them. Fire, it's a bloody terror. I planted it, I built this house, I made it with my hands. We had nothing – came here with nothing. (2)

The Father emphasises a gendered New Zealand identity of masculine do-it-yourself ingenuity and mastering the natural resources of the land.

The next sequences, which explore mate-ship and marriage, add further emphasis to the formation of a nationalist-masculinity. Friendship between men is described as follows: "To share a fire / To share your tucker […]. On the town / Whistle at the sheilas" (4). Kiwi's first loss of innocence occurs when, encouraged by his Father, he kills a Turk in hand-to-hand combat. Kiwi discovers: "I am guilty. I have something to bear. I have something to carry with me. I am guilty. I have something to remember" (6). For the first time, overseas at Gallipoli, Kiwi find himself "part of things" (6). Kiwi's meeting with the Woman character "evokes a meeting at a dance and subsequent courtship" (6). They imagine their future relationship:

> Woman: We would not talk much, we would not discuss – not with our heads. We would stand together, silently, of an evening.
> Kiwi: Roll a smoke, put my feet up - look at a paper.
> Woman: There will be arguments, disagreements, silences, even a tragedy – a dead child, a flood, a fire, but we will be solid – it is a life of some worth.
> Kiwi: Build a house, with me hands, you can help decorate. I'll have me own shed, where I can put things in order… where I can potter. (6)

In this critical portrayal of their union, male and female roles and spaces are separated. It is the man who is building the home and the nation, but it comes at the cost of a connection with his wife.

Their wedding takes place as "Turks load their guns" and shells fire down (6). Kiwi, now alone, finds a "mutilated statue of Eros," and is then discovered by a Turkish Priest. The Priest narrates the stories of Eros and Greek and Trojan mythology: "Achilles, Ulysses, Paris, Priam. All the heroes – they fought here – they clambered over these shores. Where is Achilles,

where is Ulysses now" (7). The Priest speaks to how myths of the past can construct present identities and imagined communities:

> Gradually we invent our past […]. So we begin to resemble ourselves, but how many years, how much slavery […]. But gradually we speak, we have stories, we raise our heads, we celebrate ourselves, our poets speak, they are produced by the sword. (8)

The Priest concludes his speech by telling Kiwi that he is "without a past, without a history" and invites him to join them, to "swap your grave, this way is easier" (9).

The stage directions indicate that "the Kiwi is tempted – then rejects [the Priest]" (9). Kiwi responds with "bullshit" (9). In a copy of the script annotated by the actor playing the Kiwi character, two verses of a song are crossed out, clearly redundant as the swear word says it all (9). But what, exactly, is the Kiwi rejecting? Kraus believed it was the "tempting security of a people with a past."[83] Cathy Wylie went further:

> Although Kiwi loses his life, he gains an identity through the fighting […] and ultimately triumphs over the Turks by rejecting a paternalistic offer of salvation through civilisation with a resounding "bullshit." Not because he is a crude barbarian, arrogant because of his insecurity, displaced All Black, but because he knows himself well enough by now to know that he should not crawl to a decadent culture for his life to be given meaning.[84]

However, perhaps we should not read Kiwi's "bullshit" as a triumph. Kiwi is able to reject the Turkish offer because Gallipoli has now given Kiwi, and the nation he signifies, their own national myth. Kiwi is resolute that "there's no relics, there's nothing buried here, nothing but death, flies and shit," but he does note a change – "I have guilt," and "I have a story to tell" (9). Amamus placed Gallipoli as the site of New Zealand's loss of innocence, its cauldron of cultural maturity. The play demonstrated a need to match New Zealand identity with Western mythology, as the company elaborated in publicity material, "for the New Zealanders it was a first testing in battle; its sons fought bravely and distinguished themselves in the land of Troy, Homer and the heroes of the past" and "the campaign became a symbol of our nationhood."[85] Amamus' Kiwi undergoes a version of Barnes' "redemptive rebirth"; he arrives at Gallipoli as a colonial boy, he dies as a mature New Zealander.

Barnes goes on to critique this narrative of cultural maturation, and argues New Zealand's identity formation is more subtle than British-New Zealand alterity. In championing *Gallipoli* as the making of the New Zealand identity, Amamus' play does not allow complexities. The first issue is that it largely ignores the multi-national force of Gallipoli. The Turkish Priest accuses Kiwi of being a sheep, a pawn in a war led by Britain:

> When the coated shepherd lifts his stick
> You are back among the flock in no time
> And almost proudly you run to the slaughterhouse. (8)

Is this also included in Kiwi's "bullshit"? In the play the Kiwi's death becomes a noble sacrifice, but this criticism by the Priest cries out for an answer. Another issue is the way the play uncritically supports settler-invader amnesia, privileging a foreign battlefield over New Zealand as a battlefield from the period of the Land Wars (1835-72), an amnesia which continues to feature in its absence from contemporary Anzac discourse. In focussing on a proto-New Zealander, Amamus construct a narrow and highly masculinised Pākehā (or Anglo-New Zealand) identity. Just as Māori do not feature in the Mother's story, nor is there space for the Māori soldiers of Gallipoli. Maunder reflected in 2013 that "we were certainly nationalist in searching for the local, and we were avant-garde in being critical of the conventional theatre experience and in not being dependent on the absent writer," but insightfully concluded that it was "the rebellion of the adolescent."[86]

Murray Edmond argues that the "trip broke new ground for New Zealand" and Amamus' tour was "one of the first and probably most daring."[87] The tour had fulfilled the company's desire to get closer to the action. Performance at an experimental venue in London allowed them to place their diverging New Zealand identity against their British 'mother,' and connect with expat audiences. Poland allowed them to share their work in the home of their experimental practices. Maunder was stimulated by seeing a performance from a Polish Group with comparable style and maturity to Amamus' own, and later commented, "to be able to see oneself as in a mirror with fresh eyes is something often longed for but seldom possible."[88] But what Amamus had not gained was validation of their representation of New Zealand's cultural maturity. Instead, the pilgrimage to Amamus' spiritual home provided a profound shock. In presenting their work as part of their quest to realise a regionalist national identity, the tour had had the effect of making the company less certain about their own identity. Maunder returned uneasy, feeling their search was somewhat naïve in the face of the Polish experience of continuing conquest and oppression, which had included hosting the Nazi death camps.[89] Maunder perceived New Zealand history to be inconsequential in comparison, playing into Mason's paradigm of "negative weight." The challenge to Amamus' self-identity resulted in *Valita*, in which a naïve Kiwi is confronted by a cynical Pole. Maunder credited the *Gallipoli* tour with giving the group stimulus, but noted "our task will be to hold onto this strength, to retain this vitality in our more placid theatrical environment."[90] Maunder further reflected that:

> Finally, the other problem which confronts me and I think everyone at the moment is the business of being a New Zealander and part of a young developing culture, etc. Sometimes self-consciousness descends and even a certain hypocrisy. Eventually of course we'll be able to relax and the problem will disappear.[91]

Both Mason and Amamus bought into a nationalist paradigm, where "being a New Zealander" was a defining aspect of their work. Their plays sought to showcase New Zealand reaching towards cultural maturity through coming-of-age narratives (implicitly linking the attainment of manhood with nationhood), but overseas, the critical response to *Weather* highlighted New Zealand's relative immaturity (a child, like Mason's narrator, next to Britain), while Amamus was awed by the weight of Polish history. The overall effect of these overseas tours was to make notions of a regionalist New Zealand identity less, not more, secure, while the next significant touring story would fundamentally challenge the importance of touring national identities.

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[2] "About the Edinburgh Festival Fringe," *Edinburgh Festival Fringe*, 2017, http://www.edfringe.com/learn/about

[3] "Our Mission and History," *Edinburgh International Festival*, http://www.eif.co.uk/about-us/our-mission-and-history

[4] John Smythe, *The Plays of Bruce Mason* (Wellington: Victoria University Press and Playmarket, 2015), 104.

[5] George Parker, "Actor Alone: Solo Performance in New Zealand" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2008), 64.

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[7] Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 113.

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[11] Parker, 47.

[12] Mason, "Jottings on the Character and Spirit of Downstage," MS, 1967, Carton 5 Box 1 Folder 5, BMP, 4.

[13] *The End of the Golden Weather* Programme, n.d., 1959-65 Scrapbook, Carton 5 Box 2, BMP.

[14] Ibid.

[15] "Bruce Mason – Crisis for Culture," *Rotorua Post*, Jul. 8 1961, 1959-65 Scrapbook, BMP.

[16] Parker, 62.

[17] "The 'Golden Weather' Marathon," unidentified newspaper, n.d., 1959-65 Scrapbook, BMP.

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[21] Mason, "Edinburgh 1963," *NZ Listener*, Nov. 1 1963, 1959-65 Scrapbook, BMP.

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[52] Edmond, 200.

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[54] Kraus.

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[57] Maunder, 55.

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[91] "Alternative Theatre."

Chapter III

Red Mole: Touring till the End

When in 1988 Sally Rodwell and Alan Brunton, the founding and remaining members of experimental travelling troupe Red Mole Enterprises, returned to New Zealand after nearly a decade of international exile, they wondered, "is it time to admit that the dream was only ever a deceptive nostalgia for a past that never was?"[1] On an initial glance, Red Mole lived the OE dream. The company relocated to New York City in December 1978, toured to London, toured North America, and moved to New Mexico. At their high point, by Easter 1979, the Red Mole community had expanded to include 25 Kiwis connected with the company, all living together in the twelfth floor of the Consulate hotel in New York.[2] When Brunton and Rodwell finally decided to return to New Zealand, they purchased their plane ticket while resident in Amsterdam.

While the "deceptive nostalgia for a past that never was" could be applied to both *The End of the Golden Weather*'s evocation of a past New Zealand childhood, and Amamus' dramatisation of the Gallipoli myth, in Red Mole's case the nostalgia was not for their home country. Red Mole was uninterested in displaying and dramatising New Zealand during their overseas adventures. Their work looked beyond the nation, towards the international. Their first work in New York City, *Goin' To Djibouti* (1979), had a geopolitical focus on American and Cuban revolutionary interventions in Africa. Murray Edmond argues that Red Mole's nationality had exotic currency in NYC, while "Red Mole in New York took on a mythic status at home."[3] They would trade off their country of origin to the extent that it could provide an exotic narrative to capture audience interest, as experimental outsiders who had arrived in New York. Exemplified by their decade of mostly permanent exile from their home country, Red Mole removed themselves from the nationalist project of the 1960s-80s concerned with creating a distinctly New Zealand identity through the theatre by playwrights like Bruce Mason, Roger Hall, and Greg McGee. Red Mole chased another deceptive nostalgia: the bohemian dream of the travelling theatre troupe forever on the move, the anarchic American avant-garde a world away from New Zealand in both geography and attitude.

Red Mole's origin story has gained mythic status in its telling and re-telling in programmes, press articles, and other written ephemera in order to fire the imaginations of audiences across New Zealand, America, England, Amsterdam, and Australia. New Zealanders Brunton and Rodwell had a "chance meeting" in Laos in 1973 according to one chronology.[4]

In another, it was Kuta Beach in Bali.[5] A third returns them to Laos, specifically at an "opium den behind the Shell franchise in Luang Prabang."[6] This inconsistency alerted me that the Brunton and Rodwell archives that I was consulting might also provide a deceptive nostalgia for a past that never was. Therefore, I sought an interview with Deborah Hunt, who joined the Moles aged 19 in 1975, for an alternative perspective on the Red Mole story. Hunt's origin story was that "Red Mole was invented in Luang Prabang in 1974" by Hunt and Rodwell.[7] Brunton, a poet, was making the slow journey back to New Zealand after four years in India and Europe. Rodwell, one of the early and central members of the Living Theatre Troupe, had left New Zealand to travel the 'Far East.' According to Murray Edmond the reality is even more prosaic: Brunton and Rodwell had met several years earlier in New Zealand, and their reunion was not by chance.[8] After meeting again overseas, Brunton and Rodwell, who became a couple, "traded beads and blankets as they studied shadow puppetry and dance in Indonesia, Thailand and Laos."[9] They returned to New Zealand in 1974 with the ambition of establishing a theatre company to produce "experimental drama, political satire [and] street theatre."[10]

According to a Red Mole poster, the aim of the company was:

> to communicate with the people, to restore human affiliations. It combines the ironic stance of vaudeville with the itinerant humor of the puppet show. It is populist. It is also very funny. There is nothing quite like it.[11]

While Red Mole's self-narrative was of incomparable uniqueness, an oft-used slogan was that "someday all theatre will be like this,"[12] an ironical brag that highlighted how far removed they were from mainstream and commercial theatrical fare, but also the fervent belief in their mission. The company was founded with five principles:

1. to preserve romance
2. to escape programmed behaviour by remaining erratic
3. to preserve the unclear and inexplicit idioms of everyday speech
4. to abhor the domination of any person over any other
5. to expend energy[13]

Red Mole influences included the Dadaists, André Breton, Bertolt Brecht, Karl Valentin, and Karl Kraus. The group was to be "nomadic, ideological, demotic, momentary and equivocal."[14] They would constantly be on the road, in search of the next audience to confront.[15] They would "recognise that the theatrical experiment is itself transitory," and they would therefore remain "experimental and eclectic."[16] In practice, this meant that Red Mole never kept a work in repertoire for long. When they went to NYC in 1979, they started again from scratch. Their early staged works were late night revues and improvised comedies.[17] They grew, picking up

collaborators and notoriety. Deborah Hunt, lady of "street marches and guerrilla theatre,"[18] with expertise in mask and puppetry, left Theatre Action to join the Moles, and became the third pillar of the company. She described the Moles process as "anarchic": "a collection of individuals who enjoyed theatrical and creative freedom without a director or hierarchy; although as time passed the scenarios moved from being largely collective creations to scripts written by Alan Brunton."[19] Other Red Mole figures included John Davies, singer and mime artist, Martin Edmond, Jan Preston, Jean McAllister and clown Ian Prior. By 1977 the Moles were the opening act for rock groups, and leased Carmen Rupe's strip club in Wellington. They staged eight different productions there and moved to Auckland at the end of that year.[20]

Red Mole's New Zealand work showed a contradictory interest in national identity, as if they were unable to make up their minds. In *Crazy in the Streets* (1978), critic Simon Wilson found "resonances from Sargeson and Maurice Gee," and a "feeling of small town isolation."[21] Michele Leggott's first experience of a Red Mole show, at the Ngaio Marsh Theatre, was notable for its "real N.Z. humour (down to Watties Baked Beans, and the Chch Labour exchange in Worcester St)."[22] *Ghost Rite* (1978), however, "contained nothing specifically local as a can of baked beans […] a deliberate part of Red Mole strategy," according to Murray Edmond.[23] Edmond is nevertheless able to read markers of identity in the work as it "insists on a sense of crisis which can readily be identified both with New Zealand society, the total entrapment of the Muldoon years, and with the growing theatrical and artistic isolation of Red Mole themselves."[24] For the documentary *Red Mole on the Road*, following their final tour of New Zealand in 1978 before their decision to leave for New York, the Moles revealed to the cameras their interest in their own version of nationalism. Hunt rejected continuing colonial ties with England, and said the country "shouldn't have any traditional ties with anywhere else."[25] Like the regionalists, Hunt saw New Zealand as an "original." She said:

> In terms of our theatre we're not interested in imports […], that has no relevance to the NZ character, the landscape, the humour or its history. [New Zealand is] the place Red Mole was born in, it's the place Red Mole cut its teeth on, and it's a place that Red Mole loves […]. Our job is to explore that whole other eccentric New Zealand.[26]

While the Moles were not interested in mainstream identities of New Zealand, the documentary comments reveal a desire to help New Zealanders gain a truer appreciation for the country they live in, through Red Mole's theatricality. Red Mole's tours attempted to establish the company's own imagined community; Brunton saw the Moles as a "group of evangelicals" with a mission "to convert the natives to another way of life."[27] Brunton explained the use of satire in Red Mole's work as revealing a "gap between what people think this country is, what

people might think is happening in this country, what the reality is."[28] Brunton also foreshadowed what they would seek to do on their overseas tours: "If you can entertain people in their own terms, in their own ground, in their own marketplaces, you change their heads."[29] Murray Edmond reads *Ghost Rite* as the Moles foreshadowing their international exile, "as Red Mole prepared to leave their little island and head toward apocalyptic New York, home was being prepared to become a prelapsarian paradise available for recovery in the future."[30] In 1978 two paths were being explored by the Moles: remain as prophets at home, or go into exile and find belonging elsewhere. Red Mole chose exile, leaving the local behind and embracing internationalism.

While going to America might have seemed "a strange decision at first glance for a group of holistic theatrical anarchists," Red Mole argued it was "one of the few countries which not only encourages the nomad, the travelling salesman of ideology, but actually protects his right to function in the erratic way he sees fit."[31] The company was pulled towards the overseas apocalyptic-paradise promised by America. Edmond notes the thematic continuity in Red Mole's work around images of paradise and apocalypse. Red Mole often used a quotation by Dadaist Hugo Ball that "somewhere, perhaps, there is a little island in the South Pacific that is still untouched, that has not yet been invaded by our anxiety. How long could that last before that too could be a thing of the past."[32] Edmond argues that the Mole's image of paradise was constructed as part of apocalypse; rather than something that has been lost, paradise has not yet been attained.[33] For Red Mole, New York City presented a state of simultaneous paradise and apocalypse. As a thriving home for alternative performance, Red Mole might finally break into a theatrical paradise that New Zealand was unable to provide, but the grey, crime-filled metropolis also evoked the end of days. Brunton situated the desire to leave in terms of overseas travel being a rite of passage for most New Zealanders, and told a reporter that "we came to the United States because in New Zealand you run into ocean wherever you go [...], we felt we needed to try a bigger scene."[34] The Red Mole history recorded that:

> the road in New Zealand goes in a short circle. The performers found themselves responsible for a set of stock characters in predictable situations. The popularity of the group had begun to restrict its freedom and there were divisive temptations.[35]

In my interview with Deborah Hunt, she noted reasons for leaving as the lack of "institutional support" in New Zealand, and the notion that in NYC there "were more of our own kind of restless creatives. We were right."[36] What did the Moles discover about themselves during their long OE?

Goin' to Djibouti via New York

Red Mole's arrival in America is told with romantic fervour. Alan Brunton, Deborah Hunt, and Sally Rodwell arrived in New York in December 1978 from Mexico City via Washington driving a '69 Buick Le Sabre, "yanked together with electrical flex, the wind whipping the eyes outside the Central Luncheonette at Broadway and 33rd St."[37] John Davies hitchhiked from San Antonio after visiting Mexico City. Their first work made for NYC, *Goin' to Djibouti* at the Westbeth Theatre, featured "masks, puppets, erotic dance, music, stilt walkers, and magic," ran for over two hours, and included 25 costume changes and many song and dance routines.[38] *Goin' to Djibouti* was also the last show Red Mole performed in New Zealand before travelling to the States. However, while they shared the same name and poster, they "bore no relation to each other at all."[39] The New Zealand version was "essentially another set of cabaret items," whereas the New York version was created in order to re-use the title, and Barry Linton's iconic poster, which featured a struggling band of entertainers against a desert landscape.[40] Edmond argues that "the title was also able to remain as a figurative statement of the company's position – the arrival in New York meant that, even if Djibouti had not yet been reached, the journey was well on the way."[41]

The four Moles had two weeks to create their show. Brunton assembled the script while the others "went out scavenging the streets for materials, set about making masks and props, got publicity together and pasted up posters."[42] Hunt recalls the experience as a "battle," and that they would find masks, puppets, and props "mysteriously glued to the workbenches. The management and technical crew of the Westbeth seemed to be hell bent on our production not coming to fruition."[43] A *Villager* profile described the company as "New Zealand's one and only touring company" and a "70s group with a 60s consciousness."[44] They had "come to New York to see what America's avant-garde is up to: Bread and Puppet Theatre, Charles Ludlum, The San Francisco Mime Troupe, and Mabou Mimes"[45] (a similar impulse for Amamus visiting Poland as the home of Grotowksi). Red Mole's appearance at the Westbeth theatre was "completely spontaneous," commissioned by the theatre, so the story told to media goes, "on the grounds of their strange garb."[46] The Westbeth Theatre, a cavernous space, was once a film-studio.[47] As one of 300 off-off-Broadway venues, it was an achievement for Red Mole to have attracted six critics from New York's press, curious about Red Mole's promotional claims and exotic New Zealand origins. A large New Zealand audience came to see the work, but the Moles reported that the American audience members were the most enthusiastic and "came back again and again, sitting in the front row."[48]

Perhaps the New Zealanders were puzzled as to why a New Zealand company had come to New York with a show that did not have anything to say about life back home. As one critic stated, “although this is the New Zealand troupe’s first venture into New York, their play has nothing to do with life in the far Pacific.”[49] The Moles instead looked to the Ethiopian civil war for their subject matter, claiming that in their version of the dramatic mirror, “watching the present confrontations in Africa will tell us a great deal about ourselves.”[50] The show was fragmentary, and was understood “mostly from the programme notes” rather than the performed narrative.[51] *Goin’ to Djibouti*’s narrative through-line concerns a female Cuban soldier who joins the conflict in Ethiopia. She has a love affair with an Eritrean, but later finds their love is unable to endure because revolutionary principles always come first. The various locations in the play include Angola, Ethiopia, Zanzibar, a Chinese railway, and an English planter’s house in Rhodesia.

Critic Terry Curtis Fox’s description of the show, “incongruous bit following incongruous bit,” is accurate. [52] The opening song is a religious mass held during a middle-class cocktail party, which recasts the three wise men visiting the baby Jesus as “Confucius, Buddha and the Great Wazoo” (2). We then meet Fidel Castro who speaks in front of a photograph of the corpse of Che Guevera, predicting Guevera’s death will inspire many to continue his cause. The Cuban country girl enters, and the stage directions continue:

> Peking Opera style she sees the light in the sky (a hologram of a flaming torch Statue of Liberty style) […]. A conch sounds. To Africa! To Africa! (3)

Her Cuban culture is performatively unstable, evoking instead Chinese, Pacific and American spaces. The journey to Africa is conveyed through a:

> shadow play of ships and aeroplanes going to Africa. Figures swing on vines, mad Maasai warriors from Edgar Rice Burroughs dance and sing in front of scenes of Biafra, Sahelian states, Uganda, the Queen of England in Kenya, African leaders and imperialists. (4)

A Madhatter, who “has gone very native,” is accompanied by “three whirling desert ladies in a timeless dance,” and an *Alice in Wonderland* tea-party is re-enacted with the Cuban revolutionary (4). *Goin’ to Djibouti* presents a montage and pastiche of Western ideas of the cultural icons of the African continent.

The ultimate incongruity was that it was New Zealanders telling this story, and feeding back those particular images to the New Yorkers. Red Mole’s interest was in international forces of war and revolution, which happened *elsewhere*, not in quiet New Zealand. NYC allowed Red Mole to get closer to the perceived action. As Edmond argues:

> The American *Djibouti*, with its geography which stretched from Cuba to Eritrea, its evocations and mockeries of faiths (Communism, Rastifarianism, Christianity) and its meditation upon the apocalyptic change and liberation of revolution, proposed everything that lay beyond the small town, the "enormous other" (EO), always known to New Zealanders in reverse form as OE.[53]

Goin' to Djibouti delivers a message of the inherent absurdity of all sides, and the impurity of revolutionary ideals, rather than any explicitly stated political position. For reviewer Noel Carroll, the show "anarchically celebrates a general revulsion toward all politics as hypocritical, deceptive and self-interested."[54] The opaqueness of Red Mole's purpose, more in love with its imagery than its message, was problematic for Fox:

> Red Mole's methods are, unfortunately, either borrowed or obscure. Much of the methodology seems to come from European radical art – highly intellectual, dissociative forms which require an artistic rigor the troupe does not possess. (Never mind that the use by a colonial society of European forms of radical thought to discuss a Third World problem is cultural imperialism of a very refined degree.)[55]

Fox was the only critic to question the ethnic representation of the African and Cuban characters by the New Zealanders, an omission by the other critics that Murray Edmond finds "puzzling."[56] He speculates that either Red Mole's novelty gave them immunity, or that the critics realised that naturalistic representation was irrelevant due to the show's absurdist style.[57] The content and the performers were not of NYC. For New Yorkers, exotic New Zealanders were performing another form of exotica.

The question of how and where to place the "performance group from New Zealand"[58] provoked a range of answers from the critics. Carroll used up a store of adjectives to begin to adequately describe the group:

> Part Mardi Gras, part vaudeville – masquerade, mime, tap dancing, Jesus-jumping, mumming, calypsos, tangos, shadow puppetry, and one liners combine in an unrelenting series of satires and parodies expressive of a lively cynicism toward virtually everything.[59]

Another critic described the troupe as "very British indeed," but contradictorily, with a "style all of its own."[60] One way critics tried to understand Red Mole was in comparison with the American Bread and Puppet Theatre and the San Fransisco Mime Troupe, but reviewers drew opposing conclusions. For one, Red Mole combined the best elements of these companies with a "sparkle and sauciness of their own. They are hardly N[ew] Zealand lambs!"[61] However, Tish Dace argued that the Moles were less savvy than their US counterparts, and that "if Red Mole exhibits the same degree of expertise at political subversion which they demonstrate with respect to theatrical talent, then the government of New Zealand has nothing to fear from

them."[62] Dace concluded that, since Moles are blind, the company's name was well chosen, as "their lack of artistic sophistication suggests they have developed without seeing other fine avant-garde groups or without benefitting from the chance to observe others' experiments […]. The day that all theatre becomes like this is the day I get myself Home Box Office."[63] Edmond argues that "in New York being from New Zealand had more currency than being from New York" and, though the Moles had been "alienated at home, they became ethnic overseas, but without losing their alienation" and therefore "doubled their value."[64] Conversely, their New Zealand origins could also be seen as a problem because they had not been exposed to what Americans perceived as their more sophisticated avant-garde. Though in a vastly different context, as we have already seen with Mason and Amamus, New Zealand was seen as a culturally immature country.

Red Mole's second new work for NYC, *The Last Days of Mankind* (1979), was promoted as "a collection of tales of terror and imagination from New York."[65] The Theatre for the New City (TNC), another off-off Broadway theatre, gave the Moles their venue rent free for a season from 5 to 22 April, 1979, and in return the Moles had offered to put carpet down in the foyer. (Hunt admitted, "I don't think any of us had carpeted before.")[66] The agreement was to split the net box office 50/50 after TNC subtracted costs for flyers, programmes, advertising, and box office. Making *Mankind* was profoundly uneconomical. In a letter to the Arts Council, Mole had estimated their "minimum weekly living costs in New York (scene of highest inflation in USA) amount to approximately 120 for each individual."[67] The gross receipts of *Mankind* were $748, the TNC expenses were $454.92, and minus an advance of $293.08, Red Mole's final income was $121.54.[68]

Borrowing their title from Karl Kraus' 1919 epic drama, in *The Last Days of Mankind* the Moles promised a "brooding, strategic analysis of the present state of the species."[69] During rehearsals, the Three Mile Island partial nuclear meltdown occurred in Pennsylvania, and so the play "was completed within the absurdity of any attempt to evacuate the entire population of New York to safer atmosphere."[70] The first act contains a jumble of divergent episodes. The occasional narrator, Ordinary Vernon, announces that "tonight, we tour Megalopolis, registering tales of madness in this dirty air we breathe, terror and imagination in this mutating universe, this tawdry cosmos, where the human being is the most lethal mutation of all" (2). *Mankind* reflects back and parodies icons of New York: nighthawks, a late-night diner, a topless bar, and street people who complain that "everybody's moving in from the suburbs" (11). As with *Goin' to Djibouti*, *Mankind*'s concerns are internationalist: the passing of the Shah of Iran is lamented, and there are anxieties about nuclear weapons in the hands of

communists and revolutionaries. Towards the end of the first act, the Lord Galaxy's Travelling Players – who are said to have travelled throughout the galaxy – are introduced. The second act takes place on the last amateur night at the Wild West Apocalypse saloon, the last night of all nights. There are a variety of acts and songs, including a singing cowboy from Nashville. In the audio tape recording of *Mankind* in the Brunton and Rodwell archive at the University of Auckland, the incoherency and lack of logic between incidents is made all the more difficult to follow without the imagery of live performance. Their first two works for New York show Red Mole embracing the international world (even galaxy), and being invigorated by their contact with the Enormous Other.

Goin' to London: What Identity?

In order to stay afloat in New York and subsidise their art, the Moles took on various employment:

> Jan Preston worked as a topless waitress, Sally and Deborah as topless dancers […]. Martin Edmond found a job as a writer for six weeks where he was one of a team of writers producing one tome of pornography per week.[71]

While the New York lifestyle was tough to maintain, Murray Edmond calls their decision to leave America for England a difficult one to understand, as "logic suggests that the more sensible move would have been to stay and build on the ground already gained."[72] The *New Zealand News* reported that Red Mole's reasons for decamping from New York to London were that "the pace of American life became too exhausting and by April the heat in the city was suffocating, so the Moles and their band packed up and came to London."[73] Edmond believes that the possibility of appearing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe was the deciding factor, and "the desire to keep the journey going was the strongest force in the company."[74] This concurs with Hunt's recollection: they "left because there was an idea of work, and because we always left to go somewhere new."[75] Red Mole planned to take their "*Last Days* opus to Europe," and Dianne Robson, who had previously expressed an interest in acting as their agent, proposed the Moles tour to the 1979 Edinburgh Fringe.[76] While in New York, Michael Volkerling, the Director of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, also encouraged Red Mole to submit a proposal to attend the Fringe.

In what Brunton called a "bizarre episode," Red Mole's application was pushed under the door of Volkerling's New York Hilton suite at 4am on a Sunday morning. "Nothing will

ever be heard about this particular application again," wrote Brunton dramatically.[77] However, this application was an important moment in Red Mole's journey and what would come after. In targeting Edinburgh and Arts Council money, Red Mole was placed in competition with another New Zealand company based overseas, Heartache and Sorrow, who had also sought funding to perform at the Fringe. Heartache and Sorrow was founded by a group of 15 New Zealanders living overseas, following the presentation in Holland of *The Heartache and Sorrow Show* and *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* (1978), created by Cathy Downes. Heartache and Sorrow was supported by a London venue, Action Space, who allowed the company to perform and rehearse there in the lead-up to a season at the Edinburgh Fringe. The company did not remain in London, and its emergence was short-lived. Many of its figures, including Jean Betts, Stuart Devenie, Lorae Parry, and Downes returned to have substantial performance careers in New Zealand.

Heartache and Sorrow and Red Mole defined a contrast in representing and performing values of national identity. Heartache and Sorrow's flagship work, *The Case of Katherine Mansfield*, used the writing of New Zealand's preeminent expat literary figure to reflect on her life and also featured her stories of New Zealand life, such as *At The Bay* (1922). Heartache and Sorrow fitted within an acceptable nationalist paradigm, even though the members, as Mansfield had been, were based overseas (as were the Moles). In Red Mole's request for Arts Council support, it was convenient at this stage to appeal to a nationalistic cause. The application made the point that not only was Red Mole unique in terms of New Zealand companies, but also in terms of American companies. Red Mole stated that Americans were amazed by the longevity of the Mole collective's life. (Though we must take this as hyperbole, as both Bread and Puppet Theatre and San Francisco Mimes were older.) They had "not met a single American or European group working in a similar way to Red Mole, that is able to survive without assistance in the form of government grants (federal, state and city)."[78] Red Mole was at this stage contemplating an ambitious tour of New York, London, Paris, and Amsterdam, with a projected loss of revenue of $20,000. The Moles believed that "we can make a good impression in Europe as we have already done here, and that our work is publicising widely the idea of an avant-garde art existing in New Zealand, as well as the country itself."[79] The application finished by stating that "New Zealand is included in all our publicity material"[80] (this was more to do with effective marketing than national pride.) Dianne Robson, who was now primarily representing Heartache and Sorrow, spoke of both groups' proposed Fringe seasons as the opportunity to expose New Zealand theatre to a wide international audience: "a lot of people here aren't even aware that professional theatre even exists in New

Zealand."[81] Robson hoped that the visibility of the two New Zealand groups would "make people aware [of] New Zealand theatrical talent generally."[82]

The Arts Council rejected Heartache and Sorrow and Red Mole's applications. However, the Arts Minister did approve $10,000 from Lottery Board funding for the purpose of supporting New Zealand representation at the Edinburgh Fringe. In a letter to Robson explaining the conditions, the $10,000 was allocated to Heartache and Sorrow on the basis that they had acted as Red Mole's agents with Festival organisers. The Arts Minister directed that, since Heartache and Sorrow had requested £3,732, this was the maximum that they should receive and that "as a minimum the balance of $10,000 granted should be made available to Red Mole."[83] (On 8 August, 1979 when the letter was dated, the exchange rate for the £3,732 would have been NZ$8157.41, leaving little for the Moles.)[84] Instead of taking responsibility for the distribution of the funding, the Ministry gave Heartache and Sorrow the decision making responsibility, which put them in an impossible bind. Robson's idealistic comments fell away to pragmatic funding realities. She stated that "the grant is just not enough to take both groups to Edinburgh, [if] both groups use the grant to go the festival, they will both be out of pocket."[85] The Minister's letter acknowledged that the sum granted may not be sufficient to allow both groups to attend the Fringe, and therefore also allowed the remaining funds to be used by Red Mole to support a "programme of activity" in London to "ensure that the group receives exposure comparable to that which will be achieved at the Festival."[86] Official support was reluctant, and by prioritising Heartache and Sorrow, devalued the Moles.

Publicly it was reported that the two companies were "working very hard towards coming to an amicable agreement, but it was very difficult when both companies have been so hungry for so long for financial assistance."[87] Red Mole felt the decision was "a political move against them, designed "to rap Red Mole over the knuckles" because of their non-nationalistic agenda.[88] Privately, Brunton wrote that:

> the Arts Council is obviously closed to us and I feel like I'm in a dark room. I know that leaving NZ can be construed as an act of treachery […]. But do I have to repent so much? There must be some way I can get some fucking money.[89]

The on-the-road idealism was becoming constrained by the needs of personal happiness: "Sally wants to be comfortable and happy! I feel responsible sometimes for the present state of affairs," lamented Brunton.[90] The Moles arrived in Britain in June of 1979. With no venues available, they planned to rent a circus tent for their Edinburgh season, confident at that stage that their Arts Council application would be supported. Brunton reported that after an initial indication by Heartache and Sorrow that they would give the Moles $1600 of the funding, this

was then lowered to $800, and Heartache and Sorrow demanded Red Mole's programme "meet with their approval."[91] With the deadline to pay for the deposit passed, and still without financial assistance, Red Mole cancelled their Fringe appearance. Heartache and Sorrow meanwhile were enabled "to prepare for Edinburgh full-time with financial security."[92]

Heartache and Sorrow went on to present five works at the 1979 Edinburgh Fringe and were recognised by *The Scotsman* with a prize for overall excellence and originality for making "one of the most exciting contributions to the Fringe," only the second time in the then 30-year history of the Festival this had been awarded to a group.[93] Two works, *Songs to Uncle Scrim* (1976) by Mervyn Thompson and *Crossfire* (1975) by Jennifer Compton, were pre-existing works by New Zealand playwrights. *Scrim* tracked political and social changes in New Zealand from 1929-45 through a vaudeville-cabaret song cycle, while *Crossfire* examined how feminism affected the lives of Australian women in 1910 and 1975 (Compton had emigrated to Australia). *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* was joined by two new works: *Sweetcorn* (1979) by Downes, Jane Waddell, and pianist Michael Houston and *Hair of the Dog* (1979) by the company. *Sweetcorn* was a country-and-western cabaret that satirised an American Deep South philosophy that women's fulfilment could only come through heartache and sorrow, and featured popular country songs including 'Stand by Your Man' and 'Jolene.'[94] *Hair of the Dog*, which began Sorrow's programme at 11:30am, was set during a "chaotic" morning radio station broadcast in Gore and was reported to have left British audiences "stranded by the profusion of New Zealand references,"[95] evidence that supported the idea of a distinct New Zealand regionalist identity. Though not all plays were New Zealand-related, the company's programme had a more visible nationalistic flavour than that which Red Mole would have offered. Considering Creative New Zealand supported six theatre productions for the 2014 NZ at Edinburgh Fringe season, the presentation of five works from just one company is an instance unlikely to be repeated.

Following the Arts Council decision, there was a change in tone in Red Mole's London publicity: "Out from the blue yonder comes Red Mole Enterprises. In exile from a repressive regime in New Zealand, this group of errant players and puppeteers has temporarily come to rest in London."[96] Another press report stated that the then 12 members of Red Mole were "engaged in a debate about the wisdom of a return to New Zealand" having "rejected nationalism and the restrictions of domestic drama in favour of romance and a nomadic existence."[97] A third reported that "despite the large numbers clamouring to get into their gigs, they have yet to receive a cent from the NZ Arts Council."[98] While the Moles were prepared to represent themselves as ambassadors of the nation when applying for funding, when this

was unsuccessful, they used their outsider status to continue to fuel their own myth and gain further publicity.

Without the Fringe appearance, Red Mole was "stuck in London for three months."[99] The company went to Sheffield to perform *The Last Days of Mankind* at the Commonwealth Youth Festival, then returned to London for an Oval House season. The Moles organised a three-week season of a new work, *Blood in the Cracks* (1979), in London. "Without finance," Brunton recorded, *Blood in the Cracks* "attempts to showcase Red Mole's talents for the marketplace."[100] Red Mole was offered a fortnight season at the Albany Empire in Deptford, "a venue with a European reputation," a "top-billing theatre show" in Amsterdam's Festival of Fools, as well as an invitation to perform at the "prestigious" Half Moon Theatre in London later that year, but was unable to take up these offers.[101] Brunton observed that it was "obvious to Red Mole that the work in London is gaining as much notice in theatrical circles as would have ten days in a tent on a golf links somewhere in Edinburgh. And so, Red Mole exists…"[102] Brunton wrote one more time to Volkerling at the end of the London sojourn:

> After three months in London, we find we already have something of a reputation […]. Incredible as it may seem, we have recently had to begin turning down work. Our presence in London, coupled with that of Heartache and Sorrow (which has an impressive number of boosters in the press), means that one cannot escape the words New Zealand in theatre guides and the weekly guides to entertainment.[103]

Murray Edmond argues that "generally speaking the period in London lacked focus, with too many venues, too many different pieces of work, too much waiting and not enough publicity or critical response."[104] However, it is clear that Red Mole had the potential to capitalise on their London shows for further touring opportunities in Europe, if they had funding support. The Arts Council remained unresponsive to Brunton's arguments. The Moles would have to continue, as they always had done, to find a way to survive entirely through their own means.

Numbered Days in Paradise: An American Tour 1979

Red Mole returned to NYC and Theatre for the New City where they continued their internationalist concerns with a new show, *Dead Fingers Walk* (1979). Red Mole promoted *Dead Fingers Walk* as a "grand guignol rip through the headlines, an animated cabaret for survivors […], a bizarre souvenir of Europe."[105] By now, Red Mole had history, and *Dead Fingers Walk* was generally judged to be inferior to their previous New York shows. As one

critic put it in their three-star review, it "does not contain the strong political message of past efforts."[106] Another reviewer had Red Mole fatigue, and made the point that they "remained too hidden behind [their] plethora of forms." [107] The review ended with the prediction: "Middle America may not be ready."[108]

Or were they? Red Mole wanted to find out. They embarked on what they called 'An American Tour,' and, characteristically, made a new work for the road, which returned to Red Mole's core themes. This was *Numbered Days in Paradise* (1979), whose title combined "the apocalyptic and paradisal themes in one phrase."[109] The show was created in three days: "old sketches were resurrected, junk was assembled from the local neighbourhood."[110] *Paradise* was their "record of our impressions and experience in the USA."[111] The Mole's days in the avant-garde paradise were numbered, which they emphasised in their promotion:

> Red Mole has been in Philadelphia, Washington and Baltimore this month. From New York City the group heads to Tennessee, Texas and New Mexico before returning to their native land. You are invited to take these last opportunities to judge Red Mole's work for yourself."[112]

With a new manager, New Yorker Nance Shatzkin, to assist with bookings, Red Mole's itinerary between September, 1979 and 19 January, 1980, performing *Dead Fingers Walk*, then *Numbered Days in Paradise*, included Clinton, New Jersey; Knoxville, Tennessee; San Antonio and Austin, Texas; Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico; and Los Angeles, California.

Red Mole nodded to their country of origin with the inclusion in *Paradise* of "a stoned-out housewife" character from New Zealand who feels at home in LA. A "hostile" emcee tells the Americans that their country is "so much more consequential than our country" and "we're glad to be under your nuclear umbrella,"[113] but the main focus is the wider apocalyptic international landscape. In regional America, Red Mole was seen to have "more to say about our national and local politics, economics and social structures than do our own entertainers."[114] Another reviewer believed that the way that Red Mole dealt with the ideas in *Paradise* "puts them head and shoulders above much of what has been done in theatre in Santa Fe."[115] The *Los Angeles Times* noted that they were "apparently more influenced by American vaudeville and politics than by sheep."[116] Red Mole's incisive commentary on American society was welcomed.

Brunton measured the journey through tune-ups to the Buick: "plates from Hollywood, California […]; new petrol pump in Concordia, Mexico; new brakes and master cylinder in Jackson, Mississippi; new timing chain in Nashville, Tennessee; carburettor in New York and

a new transmission pump."[117] The economics of the road were brutal. The Moles income of $1012 from New York, Knoxville, San Antonio, and Austin matched their expenditure travelling from New York to Albuquerque. Only $90, to be shared between the nine actors, was paid from one of their engagements.[118] To get enough money for their basic needs the group had to stop and busk each day.[119] Brunton gave his reason for Red Mole's return to New Zealand in 1980 as "economic survival."[120] They had new shows they could return with, and Brunton also desired to reaffirm their "grass roots support and just to find where we came from."[121] More realistically, the offer from the Students' Arts Council to pay the airfare to New Zealand was too good an offer to pass up.[122] The Buick and Pontiac were sold. "Got a big ocean to cross," wrote Brunton.[123]

The End of the Road

Through 1980 Red Mole went back on the road in New Zealand. After their time in New York, the Moles took on a "mythic status at home."[124] Edmond explains that "in New York they were wandering players from 'a small island in the South Pacific' – in New Zealand they are wandering heroes from the big, bad, seductive Apple," and, having made it there, were able to enhance their reputation with New Zealand audiences.[125] Red Mole toured *Numbered Days in Paradise*, and made a new work, *The Red Mole Version* (1980), which was "full of images of and references to escape and exile."[126] Though well received by local audiences, planned appearances at the Adelaide Festival and South Pacific Arts Festival in New Guinea did not eventuate, and not being invited to the latter was a "major blow."[127] With the continued lack of institutional support, the Moles became disillusioned and felt that returning had been a mistake.[128]

Red Mole returned to NYC in February 1981, marking an end to the group's long period on the road. They came with a "different intention […] a determination to dig in, to put down roots, almost to swap one home for another."[129] The Mole's return coincided with manager Nance Shatzkin's discovery of the Pyramid, a former burlesque club in Times Square in New York, which Red Mole worked to renovate as a 70-seat theatre venue. Shatzkin and the Moles took a year's lease, with the option to extend up to seven years.[130] At that time Times Square was considered a "no-no" venue, but Red Mole would "stand out on Broadway with our music and masks and drag people down to see us."[131] They expanded and split *The Red Mole Version*

into *The Early Show* and *The Late Show*. Red Mole had a desire that the Pyramid Theatre could become "a resource that other New Zealanders can use."[132] Rodwell expressed at the time that:

> We are doing what the Arts Council should have done many years ago, [NYC is] a very important city for New Zealand performers and visual artists and musicians to come to, because the very best in the world sooner or later ends up here. It's your only chance to see and hear those things and perform amongst people who are trying to do what you're trying to do.[133]

Rodwell's nationalistic vision of New Zealanders helping other artists on their New York OE went unrealised when, three months later, the venue was sold and Red Mole's operations ground to a halt. (Brunton recorded that at this time: "Rodwell goes barmaiding, Hunt goes proofreading and Brunton, Davies and Prior form a construction company.")[134] It was not until October 1982 that Red Mole produced a new show, *Childhood of a Saint*, which opened at a Puerto Rican Community Arts Center on 9th Street. A lack of funds meant the group had to turn down an invitation to perform at the Pepsico Festival at Purchase College, an "agonising decision […], Red Mole will remain underground."[135]

In 1983, the Moles began to "fracture" with various members on day and night work shifts.[136] *2 Quacks on Io* (1983) was created with New York artist Cara Perlman and photographer Nan Goldin. In 1984, the Moles made a journey back to the New Mexico networks and circuit glimpsed during the 1979 An American Tour.[137] Their new show, *Dreamings End* (1984), toured to Texas and New Mexico. It was then remounted in New York "with vast backdrops by Kristoff Kohlhoffer in a vast space with a vast rent."[138] The title was prophetic. This marked the last show with John Davies, who had tired of "the years of constant touring, and the efforts required to raise a budget for each production."[139] After becoming profoundly moved watching a Japanese Noh play at the Lincoln Centre, he went to study in Japan in July 1984.[140] With Hunt's husband, Rafael Guerrero, a Puerto Rican poet, Hunt, Rodwell (both pregnant) and Brunton performed cabaret in small towns throughout New Mexico. The following year the Moles gained work on a community theatre project for six months called *Circu Sfumato* (1985). Hunt and Guerrero then permanently split from Red Mole due to what Brunton coyly wrote were "doctrinal differences."[141] Hunt's retrospective version of events was that "it became obvious that we were not going to rejoin Red Mole and that Sally and Allan did not want to go South."[142] Hunt moved to Mexico, where she and Guerrero were establishing a performance circuit, and later Puerto Rico, where she continued to work with mask and puppetry forms.[143]

In 1986, the two remaining Moles created *Lost Chants for the Living*, which examined violence in the American way of life. It was performed in Santa Fe, Austin, and New York and

televised for Austin's Access Channel. *Playtime* (1986) was then presented in Austin, and was "designed to answer that burning existential question, 'Why carry on?'"[144] With a troupe of two plus one small child, this was a question of some urgency. The narrative echoed Red Mole's reduced fortunes: "*Playtime* is a cabaret set in a circus tent after the animals have deserted and the management has declared bankruptcy."[145] It was the end of the road for Red Mole's American dream. Brunton later reflected that "we either had to enter the American dream or else leave […], we finally could not make that decision to become Americans."[146] Red Mole left for Amsterdam in 1987 on an invitation to help create a new venue for the English Speaking Theatre of Amsterdam (ESTA), somewhat ironic as this company had been established by Heartache and Sorrow's Cathy Downes. There, the pair performed *Playtime* for three months. Having earned enough money to return to New Zealand, Brunton and Rodwell created one final show for ESTA, *Hour of Justice*, "their response to Europe," which debuted in early 1988.[147] Set in present day Amsterdam, it followed a couple determined to commit suicide. It was performed for a month to an audience that seemed to include "every New Zealander loose in Europe."[148]

Rodwell felt the "pull to come back to our own country."[149] Brunton told a New Zealand reporter that "New Zealand is a beautiful, less spoiled place than the rest of the world" and liked that "everyone is left pretty much to themselves there."[150] New Zealand was once again, in Brunton's homesick mind, that untouched South Pacific island paradise from Hugo Ball's quotation. Red Mole landed in Wellington on 22 February, 1988. Brunton and Rodwell revised *Hour of Justice* for "Pacific realities,"[151] re-setting the play in a motel room in Paraparaumu, and mixing international references ("Chernobyl, algal bloom in Scandinavia, and the chemical spill in the Rhine") with the local ("the Rainbow Warrior, and post office closures.")[152] We see here an attempt to adapt back to New Zealand, to add markers of national identity that the Moles had mostly rejected in their overseas output. The programme noted their return to New Zealand "after a few years in the outer world, which was interesting, but it is a lot cleaner here."[153] It was at this point that the Moles were provoked to wonder, "Is it time to admit that the dream was only ever a deceptive nostalgia for a past that never was?"[154]

A critic recorded their "homecoming debut" thus:

> Memories are keen and curiosity drew the crowd to the modest Newtown Community Theatre. Red Mole at this stage are acting more like gophers: popping their heads up after a long sojourn away and taking a cautious sniff.[155]

New Zealand, and its theatre, had changed. Rodwell credited Red Mole for some of this. Since they and other groups and taken an "eccentric approach," New Zealand theatre was no longer

the English repertory style it had been when Red Mole was first formed, but a theatre in its own right.[156] Edmond notes that the Moles lengthy absence meant they were "isolated from a transformed New Zealand" and "when you become your concept so utterly, your concept can become a trap."[157] David Eggleton, writing on the Red Mole show *The Book of Life* (1990), observed that "today the Red Mole message seems less urgent, perhaps because a lot of what they prophesied in their big, freewheeling apocalyptic extravaganzas – the degraded universal landscape of schlock and kitsch, media, society – has now arrived."[158] This is the problem of landing, of coming back from another world. Hunt believes that they were "never forgiven for leaving and for leaving as long as we did; although it is essential for all islanders to travel beyond the watery horizon."[159] Travel may have been essential, but Red Mole could never be the same Red Mole again.

Brunton and Rodwell settled in Island Bay, Wellington, where the Moles were based for the next 15 years.[160] There was still the odd excursion. *The Book of Life* marked Red Mole's entry into Australia at the Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney, in 1990, and it also played at the 1992 Adelaide International Festival of the Arts. *The Book of Life* juxtaposes geopolitical posturing in the Pacific and the Middle East: "US warships sail to intimidate Palau and Micronesia, the Japanese turn Hawai'i into a commodity fetish, while far off Kurdistan bleeds under the boot heel of Saddam Hussein."[161] Eggleton predicted that "as long as the cargo cult container loads of cultural bric-a-brac continue to wash up on the beaches of Aotearoa expect Red Mole to be down there dealing with them."[162] But Red Mole's productivity and popularity would never match its early years in New Zealand, or its subsequent period in America. Edmond contrasts their "exposure and popularity" in New Zealand when they appeared as the opening act for rock band Split Enz in their 1977 national tour with their performance of *Just Them Walking* in Auckland in 1992 when only "19 people showed up, mostly relatives and ex-members of Red Mole."[163] With *The Navigators* (1993), which satirised the invasion of East Timor by Indonesian troops, the spread of Christianity across the Pacific, and pollution in the Pacific Ocean,[164] they made a pilgrimage back to important locations on Red Mole's Overseas Experience: Amsterdam, New York, Austin, and Santa Fe.[165] Rodwell and Hunt reunited in New Zealand in the aptly named *Reunion Project* in 1994, and continued their association through various Magdalena Festival events.[166] In 2001 Brunton reworked *The Excursion* (1982) in a post-cold war landscape for Hunt's theatre troupe in Puerto Rico,[167] where Hunt still continues to make theatre. Red Mole's internationalist concerns remained until the end. Brunton and Rodwell were on tour as Red Mole in Norway and Holland when Brunton died

unexpectedly in Amsterdam in 2002. Their founding principles had been proven: “the theatrical experiment is itself transitory,” but also, forever.

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[2] Murray Edmond" "Old Comrades of the Future: A History of Experimental Theatre in New Zealand, 1962-1982" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Auckland, 1996), 346.

[3] Ibid., 358.

[4] RME, "New Zealand's Legendary Travelling Troupe," n.d., 1/16, BRP.

[5] RME, "Lost Chants for the Living: Biographical Information," n.d, 2/28, BRP.

[6] RME, "Let's Go," MS, 1984, 8/11/2, BRP.

[7] Interview with Deborah Hunt, email, Feb. 2 2017.

[8] Feedback from Murray Edmond, email, Jul. 6 2017.

[9] RME, "Lost Chants for the Living: Biographical Information."

[10] RME, "New Zealand's Legendary Travelling Troupe."

[11] Red Mole Enterprises Poster, n.d., 1/16, BRP.

[12] Phil Gifford, "Mole in a Hole," *NZ Listener*, Jun. 7 1980, 31.

[13] RME, "An Alternative time," MS, n.d., 2/38/1, BRP.

[14] RME, "Let's Go."

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

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[18] Sarah Harding, "Kiwi Fringe Troupe Entertain from Laos to the States," *Australasian Express*, Aug. 10 1979, 1/16, BRP.

[19] Interview with Hunt

[20] RME, "New Zealand's Legendary Travelling Troupe."

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[23] Ibid., 344.

[24] Ibid.

[25] "Red Mole on the Road," 1979, accessed at *NZ On Screen*, http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/red-mole-on-the-road-1979

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Edmond, 343-344.

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[32] Edmond, 319.

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[35] RME, "Let's Go."

[36] Interview with Hunt.

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[38] Merle Ginsberg, "Red Mole Enterprises Wants to Change the World," *The Villager*, Jan. 22 1979, 1/16, BRP.

[39] Edmond, 356.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 357.

[42] Ibid., 359.

[43] Interview with Hunt.

[44] Ginsberg.

[45] Ibid.

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[48] Barbara Hunt, "Red Mole Surfaces for London Performances," *New Zealand News UK*, Jul. 19 1979, 1/16, BRP.

[49] Terry Curtis Fox, "Tunnelling Under," *Village Voice*, Jan. 15 1979, 8/3, BRP.

[50] John S. Patterson, "Africa Revisited," unidentified newspaper, c.1979, 8/3, BRP.

[51] Noel Carroll, "Colonial Capers," *Concepts in Performance*, c.1979, 8/3, BRP.

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[53] Edmond, 358.

[54] Carroll.

[55] Fox.

[56] Edmond, 362.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Carroll.

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[65] "Theatre for the New City," *TNC News*, n.d., 1/16, BRP.

[66] Interview with Hunt.

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[68] TNC Box Office Record, 1979, 1/16, BRP.

[69] RME, *The Last Days of Mankind* Media Release, c.1979, 8/11/1, BRP.

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[74] Edmond, 364.

[75] Interview with Hunt.

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[80] Ibid.

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[156] Jones.

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[158] David Eggleton, "Red Mole and the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," unidentified newspaper, n.d., 8/11/2, BRP.

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Chapter IV

Downstage on the World Stage

Between 1990 and 1991 Wellington's Downstage theatre embarked on back-to-back international tours. The two plays, *Hedda Gabler* (1990) and *Michael James Manaia* (1991), both directed by Downstage's artistic director Colin McColl, were radically different representations of New Zealand theatre and identity. *Hedda Gabler* transported Henrik Ibsen's classic 1891 text to 1950s Wellington. This production debuted at Downstage in February 1990, and was one of two international productions invited to play at the inaugural Ibsen Festival in Oslo in September that same year. The production also toured to the Edinburgh International Festival (August/September, 1990), the Covent Garden International Festival London (September, 1990), and subsequently the Festival of Sydney (January, 1991). Having toured a New Zealand interpretation of a European classic, McColl believed that "taking a New Zealand play, unknown by European audiences, must be the second step" for Downstage.[1] McColl chose *Michael James Manaia* (1991) by John Broughton, performed by Jim Moriarty, who had played Lovborg in *Hedda Gabler*. This brutal solo work examined Manaia's societal alienation as a mixed-race Māori/Pākehā, heightened by his experiences as a soldier in the Vietnam War. Downstage's *Michael James Manaia* played at the Traverse Theatre at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1991. A two-week season at London's Covent Garden following the Fringe had also been announced; however, "prior commitments"[2] meant this did not eventuate, and no further international seasons of the Downstage production resulted (Downstage's interpretation of an established Ibsen text proving more programmable in the Festival market than a new NZ text.)

Echoes of Red Mole and Amamus' isolation repeat in McColl's assessment of New Zealand theatre as it entered the 1990s:

> the range of theatre, the new writing, what's happening in Māori and South Pacific theatre, the whole spectrum of it in New Zealand is very exciting. But we are a tiny country, so far away from the rest of the world, and just miss out on the stimulus of the international connection.[3]

Downstage's tours were an attempt to gain an international connection, and showcase the type and quality of theatre produced in New Zealand. The considerable critical discussion surrounding the *Hedda Gabler* tour allows us to test Ric Knowles' contention that "remounting productions at international festivals that emerged from particular cultural contexts or were

designed for specific local audiences changes the cultural work that they perform and the ways in which they are read."[4] How did the cosmopolitan process of audiences reflexively observing and interpreting work from a non-local company function in relation to *Hedda Gabler*'s and *Michael James Manaia*'s overseas performance contexts?

New Zealand via Norway

"Ibsen is Universal!" declared the programme of the inaugural Ibsen Festival in Oslo in September 1990. The Oslo programme immediately contradicted its own sentiment in a quotation by Ibsen: "anyone who wishes to understand me fully must know Norway."[5] As a seminal text of modernist realism in the Western canon, Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* possesses name recognition. Ric Knowles advises that festival performances "tend to be based on classics or other sources that already have transcultural authority or resonance, and then to be similarly received and celebrated in most festival contexts."[6] Downstage presented international festival audiences a version of *Hedda Gabler* which offered an alternative interpretative experience from an alternative cultural perspective. Colin McColl may not have known Norway, but he believed he knew New Zealand, appropriating the Ibsen text to reveal the gendered culture of 1950s New Zealand. McColl noted that 1950s Wellington was the same size as Oslo when Ibsen wrote *Hedda Gabler*,[7] and drew a connection between "a society and an era as provincial, conservative and suffocating as Ibsen's nineteenth century Norway" as Kiwi women in the 1950s were "confined to the home and encouraged to be good wives and mothers."[8] This was the same territory that Stella Jones had explored in her 1957 play *The Tree*, which spoke to her own place and time. McColl's historical positioning attempts to show how far New Zealand had progressed since that time (though it is debatable whether international audiences would have made this distinction), and captures the historical desire to cast off a provincialist identity.

Notes in the production's programme used literary figures James K. Baxter and Katherine Mansfield to make the case for the link between Wellington and Norway. Baxter is quoted discussing the pressures of the "Calvinist ethos which underlies our determinedly secular culture," alongside Mansfield's belief that "it is the hopelessly inspired doctrine that love is the only thing in the world, taught, hammered into women, from generation to generation, which hampers us so cruelly."[9] McColl wrote that these latter words "might well echo Hedda's sentiments, but not her deeds."[10] In an interview to British media, McColl said that he found "Ibsen's plays speak to us in New Zealand perhaps even more than they speak to

people in Britain because we live in small, relatively isolated communities."[11] He provided the anecdote that New Zealanders, who had grown up in the 1950s and who saw the Wellington production, told him, "I knew that Woman!"[12] McColl himself remembered "seeing women just like [Hedda] at the Heretaunga Golf Club."[13] This raises the question, did international audiences see the same woman?

More radical than the localisation and periodisation of the play were McColl's interventions in its temporality and determinism. While the dialogue, a literal translation of the Norwegian text, largely remained intact, McColl would replay key sequences with different inflections and actions. For example:

> As Lovborg was about to exit, Hedda crossed to the desk drawer, and gave him the manuscript, then caught herself, froze the scene, and replaced it with a pistol. Lovborg exited, and [Catherine Wilkin as Hedda], almost playfully, began by crumpling up the pages of the manuscript into balls. She then lit herself a cigarette. Then, staring at the lighter, she burned the first page [...]. Until finally, screaming unintelligibly, she was rushing around the room burning pages, as a recording of her voice whispered the line, "I'm burning your child, Eliot Lovborg."[14]

Some reviewers noticed associations with the blue walls of the set and the "oppression of the sea, society and Calvinistic New Zealand,"[15] but most went along with the interpretation, suggested by the production's programme, that the setting was a film studio of Hedda Gabler's mind. One account noted that Catherine Wilkin's Gabler controlled and changed the acting styles of the ensemble throughout the play: when Wilkin "played her as manic-depressive," the other characters followed her lead."[16] Many critics discussed the opening moments of the show, which began with Hedda's suicide, which focussed the audience's attention on the causalities of her action.

This discussion first provides an overview of the tour, then analyses how *Hedda Gabler* was read in each location. Downstage's international tour of *Hedda Gabler* began at St Bride's Theatre for the Edinburgh International Festival with six evening performances and two matinees from 27 August to 1 September, 1990. *Hedda Gabler* complemented that year's programming interest in work from diverse countries. Kenneth Branagh's productions of *The Dream* (from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*) and *King Lear* were the headliners, but the Festival also included an Indian Kathakali version of *King Lear*. Australia was represented by Belvoir Street Theatre with a "Greek-Australian drama" directed by Mike Leigh. The Festival also featured the Korean National Theatre as well as "the most important season of contemporary Japanese theatre ever seen in Britain."[17] *Hedda Gabler* appears in a smaller box at the bottom of the brochure, "New Zealand's leading theatre company mark their

first visit to Britain with an Ibsen classic."[18] *Hedda Gabler* was already sold out five weeks before opening.[19] The cast and crew arrived in Edinburgh five days before the performance: they had dealt with a cast member's family bereavement, had to replace their injured stage manager, and were suffering from "a virulent flu bug which had people collapsing in rehearsal."[20] *The Guardian*'s Joyce McMillan recorded the opening night response:

> There was restlessness, snorting and some loud tut-tutting from well-fed citizens who like their classics safe, sanitised […] but the muttering was overwhelmed by a huge final roar of approval from an audience who stayed with Colin McColl's brave, dangerous production every inch of the way, and recognised that in Catherine Wilkin, they were watching a Hedda of a lifetime, the most exciting, challenging and courageous to appear in Britain for years.[21]

It was a highly successful season, though Downstage's season would have sold out before opening on the basis of the text's classic status, rather than the company's reputation or national origin.

The company travelled on to Norway, where *Hedda* played for only two performances during the Ibsen Festival, in a "small auditorium."[22] A local critic chastised the festival for underpromotion and for programming the production "in the middle of the week which made it possible for only a small number of people to attend."[23] The Festival Director, Trove Lewen, said that audiences "stamped their feet, shouted and went mad at the end of both the performances" and believed that "they could have played here for another week and still sold out every night."[24] The company then moved to London, where initial audiences were small, but by the end of the two-week season positive word-of-mouth ensured the company played to capacity houses. Critic Hugo Williams posited that "one thing is for sure: anyone attempting *Hedda Gabler* from now on is going to have to reckon with Downstage Theatre's revolutionary new version."[25] Downstage's production was seen as the new definitive version of the text which future British productions would be compared to.

Following the London season, the company arrived back in Wellington to find an invitation to perform at the Festival of Sydney due to their Edinburgh success. Catherine Wilkin was considered a draw-card for an Australian audience as she was well known for her role in television show *The Flying Doctors* (1986-1992). The company had sold their props and set in London as it was not financially viable for these to be shipped back to New Zealand, so an appeal was made to Downstage patrons to help them restock for the Sydney season. Sydney critics agreed that the production brought "new life pulsing through an old classic."[26] The New Zealand setting was "a masterstroke that lends immediacy and familiarity to the action,

underscores the universality of the play and detracts from it not one iota."[27] Notably, the critics did not draw connections to the applicability of the play's setting to Australia of the 1950s.

At the Edinburgh International Festival, while the critical response to the success of the "double takes" of scenes was divided,[28] the critical discourse revered the timelessness of Ibsen's text, downplaying any significance of the New Zealand setting. "In the process very little changes" wrote one critic, "the updating of the setting does not pigeonhole *Hedda Gabler* in the 50s but upholds and enhances the play's ageless and universal struggle against a world where the only thing one is free to do beautifully is to die."[29] For another, "the only very noticeable New Zealand influence is a prominent portrait of the general who is obviously in a New Zealand outfit."[30] Joyce McMillan found national equivalence through "that perversion of energy and fear of creativity [that] is still rampant in bourgeois society all over the world – certainly in post-Calvinist cultures like New Zealand and Scotland."[31] Charles Osborne saw the value of the periodisation through New Zealand's cultural time-lag: "provincial antipodean society even in 1990 could provide a rough parallel with Ibsen's Norway."[32] However, he did not believe the production revealed a specific New Zealand identity, as "anyone hoping to make the acquaintance of Sheila Gabler and Bruce Tesman will be disappointed."[33] Osborne concluded "that there is little sense that these people are living and existing in any particular society" and they "could just as easily be in Perth, Western Australia, or Pocatello, Idaho."[34] Rather than reflecting a strong sense of place and time, in Edinburgh the production took on a sense of placelessness and was read in its context in the Western canon as a transcendent humanist work.

This contrasted with the reception in Norway. Here the cosmopolitan process was complicated because, while audiences were interpreting the "images of others,"[35] there was also dissonance created in that a non-local culture was being represented through a canonical Norwegian play. There was symbolic resonance in the square outside the theatre: "there's a grim statue of the old man himself bedecked with a fresh wreath of honour for the Ibsen Festival. Behind him the New Zealand flag was flying from the ramparts of the theatre during our stay."[36] Some critics recycled the language of universalism: "what is left is the universal in Ibsen's play […], a study in rising madness behind a well-bred surface,"[37] but more acute was the expression of a feeling of difference that the production had provoked. One perspective was that "this version had more irony than we had seen before. Many people liked the way that small sequences within the play were stopped and played again in a different way."[38] Another critic said that Downstage "turned the whole play upside down compared with the usual Norwegian version."[39] A third described it as "something that will linger long after the doors

of the Festival are closed – how new Ibsen can be."[40] Jim Moriarty's characterisation of Lovborg was one means by which the play had been turned upside down. With a "dark and dandyish appearance" he is described as being "sensual" and a type recognised from TV shows "*Dallas*" or "*Falcon Crest*."[41] Some critics argued that the New Zealanders presented a better production than the 'culturally authentic' productions from the Norwegians. This is a reimagining that can only come through the exclusive position of a cultural outsider. One claimed that, alongside the other international production, a Swedish version of *Peer Gynt*, Downstage's *Hedda Gabler* was better than the headlining *A Doll's House* directed by Ingmar Bergman.[42] Downstage's production was called by one critic "the most original Ibsen performance I have ever seen."[43] Whereas the Festival programme stated, "Ibsen was able – like the Greek tragedians – to elevate his characters to universal validity," as they "belonged at once to the past, the present, and the future," in Oslo the New Zealanders, rather than demonstrating universalism, made the Norwegian's own play foreign.

The decision to cast Māori actor Jim Moriarty in the role of Lovborg, and to emphasise this identity by translating some of his lines into Te Reo, had particular resonance for New Zealand's feedback loop, but this resonance was largely absent from the international critical discourse surrounding the play. It was Moriarty's request to play the character as Māori, and this became a comment on the expectation that Māori writers in the 1950s were not expected to succeed in literature.[44] (From 1955 the magazine *Te Ao Hou* published short stories from Māori, but it was not until 1973 that Witi Ihimaera became the first published Māori novelist.)[45] Only two Sydney reviewers mentioned the significance of Moriarty's casting. One of these reviewers, Rosemary Neill, wrote perceptively that the casting "adds a potent dimension to the fact that Hedda's society appropriates Lovborg as an outsider" and it "helps us understand why a 50s Hedda might suppress her strong feelings for Lovborg, and marry Tesman, whose touch she cannot bear."[46] In reviews where critics were perhaps not as familiar with the New Zealand context, the casting did not receive comment or analysis. This meaning, or marker of identity intended to stimulate the local feedback loop, did not travel from New Zealand to Britain and Norway. In the cosmopolitan encounter between performance and audience, the potential resonance remained outside "the common" space. Even in Oslo where the play was admired as an exoticised version of their familiar cultural product, the cultural difference *within* the work remained obscure.

Downstage's *Hedda Gabler* was simultaneously a production that had something to say about Ibsen's text, and something to say about the insular New Zealand identity in the 1950s (expressed with far more nuance in Stella Jones's *The Tree*, analysed in Chapter VII) and the

legacy of this at the beginning of the 1990s. For its international presentation, the production operated as a way of representing and educating overseas audiences about New Zealand history and culture through the familiar reference point of Ibsen's text that many audience members, especially at the Oslo Festival, were already literate with, "to show our skills in something audiences knew."[47] *Hedda Gabler* could also showcase the quality of theatre emerging from New Zealand. One of the outcomes McColl reported was an increase in the actors' sense of self-worth and credibility: "it was a particular thrill seeing our New Zealand actors pitch themselves against some of the best in the world and come to realise just how good their own work is."[48] However, New Zealand press reports re-established colonial paradigms. *NZ News UK* reported "Hedda production slated at Edinburgh,"[49] which McColl argued was a slanted article as it selectively featured the worst review, and ignored the positive notices. McColl concluded:

> more than anything else, the parochialism of it upset us all [...], this 'knocking you down to size' all has something to do with the strong puritanical streak in our New Zealand character [...], 'don't get too big for your boots' [...], the very thing that stifled Hedda Gabler and pushed her over the brink![50]

Overseas press did largely champion the production, even in Oslo at the expense of the work of local companies in the Festival. Downstage's *Hedda Gabler* acted as a cultural ambassador for New Zealand theatre with the values of both quality and risk-taking. With the goodwill generated by the *Hedda Gabler* tour, the choice of the follow-up was crucial.

Michael James Manaia

The solo play *Michael James Manaia* by John Broughton (Ngai Tahu; Ngati Kahungunu) presents a New Zealand-Māori identity of dispossession, ambivalence, and violence. While *Hedda Gabler*'s image was of a stifling 1950s New Zealand society, the classic status of Ibsen's text gave it distance. *Manaia*, though dealing primarily with the Vietnam era, was played with a force of cultural immediacy (and debuted concurrently with New Zealand's involvement in the first Gulf War). Broughton's play explores cyclical Māori family violence and an ugly colonial legacy. Manaia has a troubled upbringing, his best friend Mattie dies of pneumonia, he joins the army, is sent to Vietnam, and returns an even more troubled man. The play's ending can leave an audience reeling. After his son is born with radical disfigurement due to Manaia's exposure to Agent Orange, he rips off the baby's head. New Zealand's

involvement in Vietnam can be understood as part of the nation's search for a replacement mother for Britain, as it sought a greater alliance with America. George Parker sees Vietnam as the site for the return of colonial anxiety, through the threat of "advancing American imperialism,"[51] and Manaia identifies with both the Western allies and the Vietcong, which "brings to a head the conflict between coloniser and colonised."[52] *Manaia* makes a strong statement about New Zealand's regionalist identity based on the country's ongoing colonial trauma.

Mei-Lin Te-Puea Hansen credits Broughton's *Manaia* for raising "the profile of Māori theatre."[53] For Hansen, "the burgeoning of Māori drama is one of the most conspicuous and important developments in New Zealand theatre since 1990,"[54] and Broughton would be followed by playwrights such as Briar Grace-Smith and Hone Kouka. It was significant that *Manaia* debuted at Downstage in February 1991, as much of the activity of Māori theatre in the previous decades had occurred in non-mainstream venues. (The Downstage production's audience occupancy over its twenty show season was a disappointing 37.7%.[55]) The Māori protest movement from the 1970s, exemplified by the Land March in 1975 (the same year as The Treaty of Waitangi Act) and the 1977 Bastion Point occupation, also produced Māori writers and artists who were reconsidering what it meant to be Māori[56] and used theatrical forms to "work through significant social and political issues affecting Māori and Pakeha."[57] Figures included Rore Hapipi, who created the Te Ika a Maui company with *Manaia* performer Jim Moriarty (which staged Hapipi's landmark *Death of the Land* in 1976), as well as Harry Dansey, the Maranga Mai collective, Selywn Maru and Don Selwyn. Broughton, a dentist, lecturer at the University of Otago, and member of the New Zealand Army Territorials, did not directly emerge from this lineage of Māori theatrical performance, but took a playwriting course led by Roger Hall in 1989, through which Broughton developed his first plays *Te Hara* and *Te Hokinga Mai* (the latter also had a Vietnam theme).

Broughton's playwriting was motivated by a goal to "to improve the health – in the widest sense – of Māori people."[58] He consciously synthesised Māori concepts in his dramaturgy. For *Manaia*, Broughton was influenced by whaikorero (traditional oratory)[59] and "tapu cleansing mechanisms" were "built into the script" to safeguard the spiritual health of audiences in the encounter with Hine Nui Te Po, the Goddess of Death.[60] Further, the "communal idea of marae" was central to the performance.[61] The elements of Māori practice in the production were mediated by Pākehā director Colin McColl, particularly his interpretative decision to stage the play as if Manaia was participating in institutionalised group therapy. The creative tension between the dramaturgy, direction, and performance in the play's

debut at Downstage, a Pākehā controlled venue, mirrored the central character's own identity conflict. Nevertheless, the play was influential in Jim Moriarty's development of his conception of Theatre Marae which he hoped would "unite Pakeha unfamiliar with Māori protocol and Māori alienated by European theatrical traditions into a new audience for the performing arts."[62] Through performing *Michael James Manaia*, the Edinburgh tour was an opportunity for Jim Moriarty to test how this could work in an international context.

Manaia was suited for overseas travel in that it was already written with a 'foreign' culture in mind. John Broughton's work was written to allow a mainstream Anglo-New Zealand audience access to a Māori point of view. Manaia, played by Moriarty, asks his audience if they know what "Ngati" means, and explains it is like "son of" (17). Manaia's narration assumes his audience has cultural ignorance of Te Reo and Te Ao Māori (a criticism of mainstream New Zealand's engagement with Māori), and this enables a non-New Zealand audience to also be educated when the work is toured. As Manaia says after explaining 'Ngati,' "Bet ya didn't know that, aye boy" (17). When Manaia recounts his whakapapa (genealogy), he speaks in Te Reo then translates into English (37). As a "bloody mongrel," Manaia feels an ambivalent identification towards both his father's Māori side, and his mother's side from the "Old Country" (17). Manaia recalls that, when they lined up to see the Queen, it was getting the day off school that meant the most to him; the Monarch's arrival was a let-down: "after all that fuss and huha, she was just a person. An ordinary looking person" (22). Manaia's Māori perspective defamiliarises the colonised British culture in New Zealand, and thus the British audience's culture too. Manaia feels estranged by the funeral of his Pākehā grandmother in a "little service in the church," where "the minister was half pissed an' couldn't even remember her name" (24). Manaia is unable to mark her death in a culturally meaningful way: "no farewells, no poroporoaki, no nothing" (24). He is alienated from the dominant culture but largely disempowered from Māori expression.

Manaia hints towards the shock ending of the play when he declares, "Fuck man. It wasn't my fault. I didn't want to be like this" (81). While told in Manaia's own words, with his limited self-awareness, the audience can understand Manaia is a victim of the colonial system. Manaia describes the "fucking smug, supercilious" look on his father's face when he used to beat him: "that I-fucking-told-you-so look through those bloodshot Johnny Walker eyes of yours" (42). Later, after Manaia's own war experiences, he realises the violent cyclical link with his father's own experiences in WWII: "No wonder you used to beat us with the horsewhip, through those whiskey mad rages of yours. You lost your mates too and you could

never talk about it. You could never talk about it" (86). That sublimated trauma of war is channelled into family violence.

When Manaia first joins the army, he glories in the potential violence: "I was gonna get in there an' I was gonna kill, kill, kill" (59). Whereas Amamus saw warfare as marking maturity, Broughton positions war as infantilising. Manaia discovers that in the army "you didn't have to do a bloody thing. It was all done for you," which initially suits him (60). But when he is sent to Vietnam – "A real God damn'd war. With a real God damn'd enemy" – his confidence is replaced by fear (71). Manaia is "scared shitless" when a fellow grunt stands on a land mine and his legs are blown off, and recognises that this could have been him (76). Frenzied, he begins chanting: "Maui-potiki. I will fight death" (76). He begins a mute Ka Mate haka as an act of defiance, but the silence underscores his failed attempt to restore his strength and mana, and he is traumatised by his experience in Vietnam. Post-war, Manaia's wife, Lizzie, has four miscarriages until a son is born. With a hole for a nose, gaping mouth, and tiny hands, Manaia disassociates from reality and believes the infant to be "a gingerbread man" (10). Manaia is unable to take responsibility for his infanticide. While it does not excuse his act, an audience would be able to understand Manaia's victimisation and alienation. He is a creation of New Zealand's colonial legacy, estranged from the dominant culture, and unable to fully express his indigenous identity, a victim of generational violence at the hands of his father, and New Zealand's involvement in international wars.

When reading *Manaia* for markers of New Zealandness, it is clear that the play, as George Parker states, "is not just another story about a Vietnam Veteran."[63] The unresolvable conflict of Manaia's bicultural identity directly informs the character's actions and the potential resonances of the play for local audiences. In Edinburgh, the meanings of the play became broadened in order to further accommodate the overseas audience. The poster for the Traverse Theatre season at Edinburgh overrides the play's local specificity with the statement that "he is all our fathers, uncles, brothers and cousins who've taken part in a war in a foreign land and come home battle-scarred and haunted by demons."[64] This marketing also shifted the framing of the play from Vietnam-specific to all wars fought by New Zealand and British allies throughout the twentieth century. It invited the audience into a cosmopolitan zone where they could make the play relevant to their own history, context, and personal family history. *The Scotsman* critic recognised that "there must be almost as many stories of displaced trauma as there are surviving combatants."[65] In invoking the principle of relevance, overseas performance had the potential to destabilise the specific Aotearoa/New Zealand regionalist elements of the play's identity.

In a promotional article, Jim Moriarty discussed how the play, counter to its content, was an opportunity for audiences to get "a hint of what is evolving slowly in New Zealand," which he calls "a celebration of Māori identity."[66] Elements of tikanga were employed to frame the performance, with a karanga as the audience arrived, and an invitation "to have a korero" following the performance.[67] The Vietnam genre was "all the rage" in the 1990s,[68] and the New Zealand-Māori identity offered a distinct point of difference compared with other international plays and media that used the Vietnam War as their subject. The *Scotland on Sunday* critic recognised the specificity of the play, "the strange confluence of Maori and British culture," and their description of the "brusque, soft-centred antipodean character" implied they felt some distance from the culture and character represented.[69] However, the review ultimately framed the play as a "microcosm" of Vietnam, overshadowing the New Zealand colonial context: "the senseless brutality of that conflict, the physical pain, the psychological trauma, and the final horror of chemical warfare whose greatest violence is reserved for ensuing generations."[70] Joyce McMillan acknowledged that Broughton and Moriarty's half-European, half-Māori ancestry "brings whole new worlds of imagery and body language to bear on the story of men brutalised by war, and drawn to war because they are brutalised," but, however, ultimately found that it "simply retraces ground already well covered in great post-Vietnam plays like Emily Mann's *Still Life*, one of the festival hits of 1984."[71] The play covers much more scope than just Vietnam; however, McMillan's review exemplified how, overseas, it could be subsumed into a narrower subject. Without the force of local cultural resonance, this play was primarily received as a Vietnam War story.

[1] Colin McColl, “Report,” c.1991, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, Downstage Theatre Company (Wellington): Records. 1964-2013 [DTCR], Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

[2] “Tree Blossoms in the Sacred Grove,” *New Zealand Herald*, Nov. 22 1991, Client File: John Broughton [CFJB]

[3] Frances Martin, “From Norway to New Zealand... via Edinburgh,” *TNT*, Issue 366, 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[4] Ric Knowles, *Reading the Material Theatre*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2004) 181.

[5] The Ibsen Stage Festival Norway Programme, 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[6] Knowles, 183.

[7] Alison Smith, Transcript of Tuesday Review, *BBC Radio Scotland*, Aug. 28 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[8] *Hedda Gabler* Sydney Festival Programme, 1991, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Smith.

[12] Martin.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Account of *Hedda Gabler*, unidentified, c.1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[15] Tony Snape, “Edinburgh International Festival *Hedda Gabler*,” *The Stage and Television Today*, Sep. 13 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[16] Account of *Hedda Gabler.*

[17] Edinburgh International Festival Programme, 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[18] Ibid.

[19] McColl.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Joyce McMillan, “Pursued by Demons,” *The Guardian*, Aug. 29 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[22] “Ibsen Festival, Norway – Reviews,” 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Wayne Brittenden, “Norwegians Wild for Downstage’s Ibsen,” *The Dominion*, Sep. 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[25] Hugo Williams, “Down-Under Hedda is Beautifully Done,” unidentified newspaper, c.1991, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[26] Bob Evans, “Brave Direction Sees New Life Pulsing Through an Old Classic,” unidentified newspaper, c.1991, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[27] Frank Gauntlett, "Hedda 'bove the Rest," *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, Jan. 5 1991, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[28] Allen Wright, "Beyond the Emotional Brink," *The Scotsman*, Aug. 28 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[29] Julie Morrice, "Hedda Gabler," *The Glasgow Herald*, Aug. 28 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[30] Smith.

[31] McMillan.

[32] Charles Osborne, "A Kiwi Hedda Gabler," *The Daily Telegraph,* Aug. 29 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Gavin Kendall, Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbiš, *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism: Globalization, Identity, Culture and Government* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 19.

[36] McColl.

[37] "Hedda Gabler from New Zealand Turns Ibsen Upside Down," English translation by Erling Sliper of an unidentified Norwegian review, Sep. 11 1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[38] Brittenden.

[39] Halvor Tjermos, "Klassekampen," English translation by Erling Sliper, c.1990 MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[40] Tone Bratelli, "Hedda," English translation by Erling Sliper, c.1990, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[41] Ibid.

[42] "Ibsen Festival, Norway – Reviews."

[43] Ibid.

[44] Martin.

[45] Jeffrey Paparoa Holman, "Māori Fiction – Ngā Tuhinga Paki - Development of Māori fiction," *Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, Oct. 22 2014, http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/maori-fiction-nga-tuhinga-paki/page-2

[46] Rosemary Neill, "Just Why did Hedda Die?" unidentified newspaper, c.1991, MS-Papers-8874-09:12, DTCR.

[47] McColl.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] George Parker, "Actor Alone: Solo Performance in New Zealand" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2008), 143.

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[52] Ibid., 148.

[53] Mei-Lin Te-Puea Hansen, "Maori Drama" in *The Columbia Encyclopedia of Modern Drama (Vol. 2)*, eds. G. H. Cody and E. Sprinchorn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 963.

[54] Ibid.

[55] John Smythe, *Downstage Upfront* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 323.

[56] Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Group, 2004), 484.

[57] Parker, 127.

[58] Andrea Hotere, "John Broughton: Drama's Gentle Dentist," *North & South*, n.d., 85, CFJB.

[59] Parker, 42.

[60] Hotere, 91.

[61] Parker, 42.

[62] "Tree Blossoms in the Sacred Grove."

[63] Parker, 115.

[64] Ibid., 122.

[65] Colin Donald, "Vietnam in Powerful Perspective," *The Scotsman*, Aug. 15 1991, CFJB.

[66] Carol Archie, "Every Marae is a Theatre," *NZ Listener*, Aug. 26 1991, CFJB.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Parker, 147.

[69] Unidentified review, *Scotland on Sunday*, Aug. 18, 1991, CFJB.

[70] Ibid.

[71] McMillan, "What's Wrong with Men," *The Guardian*, Aug. 16 1991, CFJB.

Conclusion (to Part One)

The productions presented in Part One span half a century of significant change in New Zealand theatre and society. With the exception of the Kiwi Concert Party, what links the case studies in this first part is their attempt to move away from New Zealand's colonial legacy. While the Kiwi Concert Party was content to play within a provincial colonial paradigm, the other touring productions sought to find for themselves an alternative post-colonial identity ("we are no longer a British colony"), and then to further consolidate this by performing overseas. Mason, Amamus, and Downstage made a regionalist or particularist argument for New Zealand national identity, replacing colonial identity by projecting a culturally distinct local identity. *The End of the Golden Weather*, *Gallipoli* and *Michael James Manaia* all associated the construction of regional identity with masculine narratives. *Manaia* offers a negative mirror to *Gallipoli*'s treatment of nationality and masculinity; the Kiwi's attainment of manhood and a distinct national identity contrasts with Manaia's disrupted development and brutalisation from his Father, infantilisation through warfare, and the death of the next generation. Only *Hedda Gabler*, via Ibsen's text and Colin McColl's direction, considered in depth the relationship of regionality with the feminine, by examining Gabler's actions within the context of a stifling provincial and patriarchal 1950s New Zealand society. Overall, these cases revealed the way New Zealand identity, built on fantasy and imaginings, was fragile and insecure, because of its very need to emphasise how unique the identity was.

Red Mole also rejected a colonial identity, but their way of doing so was to reject the local also, and embrace the international. Though Deborah Hunt told me that the Moles "never forgot where we came from," they "were also fascinated by events in the rest of the world."[1] The Moles displaced anxieties about national identity by drawing from other international identities and conflicts, such as the Cubans in Africa in *Goin' to Djoubiti*. They employed their country of origin where it could enhance their outsider-narrative and attract curious audiences, but their political and aesthetic aims did not include an interest in New Zealand nationality in their overseas works. Red Mole wanted to change the world, not just New Zealand. There is some irony that, in attempting to move beyond a provincial colonial identity, Mason, Amamus, Red Mole, and Downstage all arrived in London, eager to show the motherland how different they now were.

But just what sort of "imagined community" were these productions constructing and displaying to the overseas audience? These dramas reveal an anxiety of Pākehā to demonstrate

they belong to their New Zealand home, thus the attempt to establish their naturalised national identity and the utilisation of self-referential markers of belonging. The relationship between Pākehā and Māori identities is a challenging aspect of the New Zealand fantasy being projected to overseas audiences in these works. For the Kiwi Concert Party, Māori waiata was one of the few explicit acknowledgements that they were the *New Zealand* Entertainment division, though they were performed by Anglo-New Zealand company members. Other works by Bruce Mason, like *The Pohutakawa Tree*, are intensely anxious about the interaction between Māori and Pākehā, however the protagonist of *Golden Weather* is barely aware of Māori culture. In choosing *Gallipoli* as the moment New Zealand broke away from its colonial identity, Amamus' insistence on regional identity came with an absence of the indigenous. *Gallipoli* cast the colonial conflict as the settler versus the emasculating British Mother, which was resolved once the settler had forged their own distinct identity. Red Mole meanwhile repressed the colonial situation and this anxiety by leaving New Zealand. Downstage's *Hedda Gabler* acknowledged the friction between Māori and Pākehā by casting Jim Moriarty, but this went largely unnoticed by overseas eyes.

Michael James Manaia brought these bicultural tensions in identity formation to the forefront of its drama: Manaia is self-destructive, unable to synthesise his dual Māori and Pākehā identities. This is the anxiety that runs through the settler-invader's attempt to establish an identity distinct from the colonisers: the dislocation of the indigenous population remains a troubling aspect of this identity that resists integration. The interaction between Māori and Pākehā is the most critical of the "influences that can be found in this country and nowhere else,"[2] that can be used under a regionalist frame to differentiate New Zealand identity, but the articulation of a dominant Pākehā, or Anglo-New Zealand, identity, as in *Golden Weather* and *Gallipoli*, silences the indigenous, which reinforces colonial identity-anxiety and guilt. In trying to move away from the colonial, Amamus remained in a colonial bind. By rejecting the local altogether, Red Mole was able to escape this trap, but it made their landing and return to New Zealand all the more difficult. At the end of this international period of New Zealand theatre's OE, *Michael James Manaia* finally acknowledged the deeper fractures of New Zealand/Aotearoa's identity formation. It was a powerful statement about New Zealand's unique national identity having been influenced by still unresolved colonial trauma, but ironically, in showcasing this internationally, its force was lessened when the meanings were redefined by the overseas audience. This is the contradiction of New Zealand theatre's search for identity overseas: the anxiety about establishing identity and legitimacy takes the New Zealand theatre maker overseas, but in overseas performance the regionalist identity is

provincialised as the overseas audience, through their cosmopolitan engagement, generally find their own experience-in-common within the play. This is a problem that we will see extended in Part Two, which examines how overseas productions have adapted New Zealand plays to accord with their own needs.

[1] Interview with Deborah Hunt, email, Feb. 2 2017.

[2] Kendrick Smithyman, *A Way of Saying: A Study of New Zealand Poetry* (Auckland: Collins, 1965), 34.

PART TWO: ADAPTING NATIONALITIES

Introduction: Placing New Zealand

In *Playmarket 40*, Mark Amery states that *Skin Tight* (1994) by Gary Henderson is "the most produced New Zealand play internationally."[1] In *Skin Tight*, rural battlers Tom and Elizabeth reflect on their life on the South Canterbury plains and engage in visceral, physical fights as they negotiate the differing narratives of a life spent together. Playmarket's licencing records, covering 1997-2014, list 25 international productions of *Skin Tight*.[2] By comparison, there were 18 local licences issued over the same period.[3] Of the international licences, nine were produced in the UK, four in Australia, one in South Africa, but unusually for plays from New Zealand, it is in the US that *Skin Tight* has proved most popular with 11 productions by companies in New York, Minnesota, Connecticut, San Francisco, Cincinnati, and elsewhere. Amery's ranking of *Skin Tight*, however, is factually incorrect. While it may be the New Zealand script that has been licenced by Playmarket the most times to international companies, it is *Ladies Night* (1987) by Stephen Sinclair and Anthony McCarten that should rightfully be recognised as "the most produced New Zealand play internationally." Commercially popular in New Zealand and overseas, four working class Kiwi blokes become stripper act the Raging Rhinos. Unlike "pumped up foreigners with their silicon inflated biceps," the Rhinos give their punters "the real thing […], genuine prime Kiwi beefcake" (50). Playmarket's data lists eight productions of *Ladies Night* in Australia, but does not account for productions in the Northern Hemisphere which are licenced by a separate agent. Co-writer Sinclair estimates 28 further productions in countries including England, Italy, Russia, Greece, Scandinavia, Iceland, Poland, the Ukraine, Belarus, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Canada (performed in both French and English) and an illegal unlicensed production in Costa Rica.[4] In France, *Ladies Night* won the Molière Award for best stage comedy of 2001, and it "had an on-going life in Germany for almost 20 years."[5] *Ladies Night* should be rightfully recognised as the most widely travelled play from New Zealand, and with performances in at least eight different languages, the most translated.

One potential reason that Amery may have failed to take account of *Ladies Night* is its apparent lack of serious purpose. Low-brow and populist, *Ladies Night* represents a different type of theatre to the poeticism of *Skin Tight*. A second reason is that the categorisation of

Ladies Night as a New Zealand play is problematised by its history of overseas productions. Any production performed by companies outside of New Zealand has "always been adapted to the country where it plays."[6] Kiwi beefcake become Deutschland Muskelprotze and so on in an endless line-up of country-specific strippers. In the Manchester version of the sequel, *Ladies Night 2: Raging On*, one character, performing a drag routine, says he can "speak 20 languages and can't say no in any of them" (2). *Ladies Night* and its sequel wear cultural drag so convincingly, international audiences would not realise they were originally set in New Zealand. *Skin Tight*'s South Canterbury hills, in contrast, travel with the play in productions across Australia, Britain and the US. The sense of place is crucial in the play, and Amery argues that *Skin Tight* as a New Zealand play has "one of the strongest evocations of Pākehā grounding in the land."[7] (Michael King's conception of Pākehā was someone "who identifies as intimately with this land, as intensively and as strongly, as anybody Māori.")[8] *Skin Tight* provides a case where plays with a strong New Zealand identity can appeal to theatre companies in other parts of the world. *Ladies Night* makes a counterclaim; in order to achieve commercial success, companies will replace a New Zealand context with their own. As a populist comedy *Ladies Night* is less tied to place, and by exchanging cultural references, the male strippers become generalised archetypes of masculinity. It is a national "imitation without an origin."[9] As a serious work about the couple's relationship, *Skin Tight*'s Tom and Elizabeth are harder to uproot without major rewrites. In *Skin Tight* markers of New Zealand identity have been retained in performances by overseas companies. In *Ladies Night* New Zealand identity is displaced and replaced with another.

New Zealand plays performed by international companies have often been adapted under this commercial pressure in the belief that localising the script will make it more relevant to their audiences, and therefore do better at the box office. The 1979 West End production of *Middle-Age Spread* (1977), by British born playwright and New Zealand immigrant Roger Hall, is the most notable example. In this production, Hall exchanged the original play's Wellington Deputy Principal with a London Deputy Headmaster. The prestige of performance at London's West End was privileged over retaining the representation of New Zealand society. New Zealand playwright Stuart Hoar, in the 2012 *Playmarket Annual,* notes that this cultural privileging remains a factor in the international experience of contemporary New Zealand theatre: "while in New Zealand we happily accept plays set elsewhere, I think it's equally true that the rest of the world doesn't have that same comfortable feeling with NZ plays."[10] Hoar asks, "if the price to pay for getting a London production was to change the setting from Ekatahuna to Luton would you do it?" and answers for himself in the affirmative.[11] In order to

gain production on the international commercial stages, New Zealand playwrights across the eras have made a number of substitutions: Merton Hodge substituted Dunedin with Edinburgh in *The Wind and the Rain* (1933), Richard O'Brien substituted Hamilton with Midwest America in *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973), Roger Hall substituted Wellington with London in *Middle-Age Spread*, and Stephen Sinclair and Anthony McCarten have approved multiple relocations for *Ladies Night*. In this context, *Skin Tight*'s retention of its South Canterbury setting is exceptional. Playmarket's second and third most licensed plays to international companies, *Chook Chook* by Fiona Farrell and *Ophelia Thinks Harder* by Jean Betts (both of which debuted in 1994, the same year as *Skin Tight*) have respectively a westernised non-specific cultural context and a known Shakespearean setting. The lack of a clearly identifiable national origin increases their potential appeal to overseas production and aids easy assimilation into different cultural contexts, albeit within the Anglo-world.

The West End adaptation of Hall's *Spread* was derided by nationalist playwright Bruce Mason. Linking Hall with the history of Merton Hodge, on the occasion of a 1981 Downstage Theatre revival of *The Wind and the Rain*, Mason wrote in his review that:

> Hodge wrote his plays in England, in an idiom and context which nowhere betrayed his origin. Hall wrote his in New Zealand, but when they played abroad the context had to be changed […]. The truth – the melancholy truth – is that the world does not want to know us, when our plays go abroad, they cannot travel true to label.[12]

Mason speaks to New Zealand theatre's prevailing anxiety around identity formation. As discussed in Part One, there was an attempt to display a distinct New Zealand identity in touring works. When substitutions of locality are made, the New Zealand identity is devalued by the playwright, and invalidated by overseas companies. Mason sees a Faustian choice for the playwright: your work is worthy to be played on overseas commercial stages, but only when markers of New Zealand identity are removed. As noted on page 33, Mason refused a proposed production of *Birds in the Wilderness* (1958) that would have transposed the setting to Northern Ireland. Mason attacked the "baneful practice" of transporting theme and setting to another country, "implying that, say, English audiences lack the ability to project themselves imaginatively into the South Pacific."[13]

Middle-Age Spread was not the only play by Roger Hall that was adapted for an overseas market. *Glide Time* (1976) became *Flexi Time* for Australian productions. Hall has remained popular in Australia, and according to the Playmarket license records, his plays received 25 different productions in Australia between 1997-2014, the most for any client playwright. Two of these are for *Flexi Time*, but otherwise his plays are the original New

Zealand scripts, including six productions of *Footrot Flats* (1983), *Social Climbers* (1995) at five productions, and three for *Four Flat Whites in Italy* (2009). Substitutions are not always demanded. These plays, alongside Gary Henderson's *Skin Tight*, demonstrate the ability of some New Zealand plays to travel "true to label" on the contemporary world-stage. Yet, even within Mason's period, Mason's "melancholy truth" was exaggerated. Earlier examples of New Zealand plays produced overseas, such as *The Tree* (1957) by Stella Jones, performed in Bristol 1957, and *The Wide Open Cage* (1961) by James K. Baxter in New York in 1963, support the case for the retention of a specific New Zealand context in performances by international companies. To further complicate Mason's conclusion, Robert Lord also had several plays produced in America, but it was his New Zealand set plays *Well Hung* (1974, revised as *Country Cops* in 1985) and *Bert and Maisy* (1983), rather than his American plays, which gained notable programming success.

Part Two, thus, examines a range of examples of significant productions performed by international companies. New Zealand plays go through a process of cultural adaptation when they are interpreted and performed by these companies. Chapter IV presented this process in reverse with Downstage adapting Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* to comment on New Zealand society. Such changes of national setting, including *Ladies Night* and the West End production of Roger Hall's *Middle-Age Spread*, are explicit modifications. This is the subject of Chapter V, "Writing New Zealand Away," which investigates the cases of playwrights Merton Hodge, Richard O'Brien and Roger Hall who have written or rewritten their work for overseas contexts, and how markers of New Zealandness are variously read or made invisible in the work. The questions posed in Chapter V are then extended by examining the American career of Robert Lord in Chapter VI. What do his attempts at adapting his writing for the US market reveal about the expression and reception of national identity in his dramas? Finally, Chapter VII uses *The Tree* and *Skin Tight* as case studies in order to answer the question: why were their New Zealand settings retained? This chapter also demonstrates that true to label plays nevertheless go through an adaptive process in performance by overseas companies.

In all cases, international companies choose to emphasise aspects of the play they perceive will resonate with their ideal local audience, and this adaptation is completed when the performed text meets the real audience. Certain meanings and identity markers are received and understood. Some may match the play's original context, but when placed in front of a non-New Zealand audience, the possibility for different meanings and points of identification occurs, based on the perception of what is held in common. The commercial, cultural, and social factors that go into deciding which play to put on are numerous and resist simplification,

but the cultural, artistic, and economic assumptions that prompt a New Zealand company to programme a local New Zealand work will differ from an overseas company programming the same work, who desire product that will appeal to their immediate social and cultural context. Part Two therefore asks, what do the plays mean for international companies and their audiences?

[1] Mark Amery, "Pakeha and Palagi: New Zealand European Playwriting 1998-2012," *Playmarket 40*, ed. Laurie Atkinson (Wellington: Playmarket, 2013), 101.

[2] "Completed International Productions 1997-2014," Data provided by Playmarket, 2014.

[3] "Skin Tight in NZ," Data provided by Playmarket, 2015.

[4] Stephen Sinclair, personal email, Dec. 9 2014.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7]Amery, 101.

[8] Michael King, *Being Pakeha Now: Reflections and Recollections of a White Native* (Auckland: Penguin, 2004), 239.

[9] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 175.

[10] Stuart Hoar, "Substitute Luton for Eketahuna," *Playmarket Annual*, no. 47 (2012), 26.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Quoted in John Smythe, *Downstage Upfront* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 226.

[13] Bruce Mason, "Preface," *Blood of the Lamb* (Wellington: Price Milburn/Victoria University Press, 1981), 9.

Chapter V

Writing New Zealand Away: From Merton Hodge to Roger Hall

In 1931 New Zealander Merton Hodge, aged 28, gained passage as a ship doctor, and moved to England. In 1964, aged 23, Richard O'Brien, whose family had moved to New Zealand from England when he was nine, returned to live and work in London. Making the opposite trip to the others in 1955, Roger Hall, aged 19, travelled from England to settle in New Zealand. In Britain, Hodge wrote *The Wind and the Rain*, which played for three years from 1933 on the London West End at St Martin's Theatre (closing on its one-thousandth performance after setting a new record for the number of West End performances for a play) and was also produced in America, Europe, Australia, and toured to New Zealand.[1] In Britain, O'Brien wrote *The Rocky Horror Show* which debuted at the Royal Court in 1973, and it continues to be a cult hit worldwide. (O'Brien returned as a narrator for a 2015 West End production, which was filmed and screened to theatres across Europe.)[2] In New Zealand, Hall succeeded in writing plays for New Zealand audiences, and has come to be celebrated as the most commercially successful New Zealand playwright, though unfairly disregarded with disdain by advocates of 'serious' writing.

Hodge and O'Brien wrote *away* from New Zealand, and though their New Zealand experiences arguably informed their works, they did not consciously write New Zealand *into* their work. Hall wrote for New Zealanders, but in his most notable overseas production, the West End version *of Middle-Age Spread*, he wrote New Zealand *out* of the work. The stories of these playwrights reveal varying processes of cultural adaptation to work within the pressures of commercial theatre centres. These cases are then compared with Gary Henderson's *Mo & Jess Kill Susie* (1996), which two companies in Canada adapted for their locality.

The Wind and the Rain and *The Rocky Horror Show*

Neither Merton Hodge nor Richard O'Brien are conventionally claimed as New Zealand playwrights because their major works were written for and performed by overseas companies. New Zealand theatre historiography generally includes Merton Hodge within a paradigm of overseas success, contradictorily claiming him as New Zealand playwright by not claiming

him; that is, his inclusion and mention in the historiography elevates him as a part of the New Zealand's theatre history, but all commentators emphasise that *The Wind and the Rain,* centred on the experiences of a group of university students in Edinburgh, does not count as a New Zealand play. For John Thomson, it is "hardly a New Zealand play, though the New Zealand author's success was duly lauded in his home papers."[3] Peter Harcourt argues that "we have to see it as 'the one that got away' – a New Zealand play only by proxy."[4]

These New Zealand histories make a half-claim on *The Wind and the Rain* based on the assertion that the content of the play was inspired by Hodge's own university days rather than his British experience. Hodge studied medicine in Dunedin and it was there he became involved with satirical student revues as an actor, director, and writer. Howard McNaughton claims it was "inevitable" that Hodge, having developed a taste for Noel Coward and John Van Druten in New Zealand, "should set his sights on the London stage."[5] The first trial run of *Rain* (under the title *As it Was in the Beginning*) occurred with the assistance of London theatre contacts Hodge had made in Auckland by going backstage during J.C. Williamson international touring shows. Staking a claim on *Rain* as a New Zealand play, by relating the author's biography and his Dunedin university experience to the content of the play, is complex. Thomson contends that Hodge learnt his craft in New Zealand, his skills "undoubtedly […] sharpened on Otago University capping concerts," and tenuously suggests that the subject matter, "the life of a group of medical students in lodgings in Edinburgh," enclosed "nothing which could not have been learnt in Dunedin."[6] Thomson does not take into account Hodge's first-hand experience as an Edinburgh student doing postgraduate study after leaving New Zealand, nor the perception, as Hodge told *The Manchester Evening News*, that Dunedin at that time was "almost entirely Scottish."[7] Harcourt puts forward the case that "the 'Edinburgh' scenes were probably based not so much on Merton's brief sojourn in the Scottish original as on his five years in its New Zealand namesake," and that the essence of the play, "its whole spirit of camaraderie and ebullience," can "only have come from Merton's own days at Otago."[8] These historians are reading markers of New Zealand identity back into the play.

While it is the biographical experiences of Hodge that forms the "proxy" claim, it is notable that the New Zealand theatre historiography has not laid similar claim to *The Rocky Horror Show* by Richard O'Brien, except for Murray Edmond who argues that *Rocky Horror* should "erupt into the canon of New Zealand drama."[9] In 1973 *Rocky Horror* opened at London's Royal Court, with its creator in the role of servant Riff-Raff. Set in Midwest USA in the 1950s, clean-cut couple Brad and Janet are initiated into the home of mad transvestite scientist Dr Frank-N-Furter, who introduces them to the pleasures of the flesh. The cult film

followed in 1975, and the show has continued to be produced world-wide. It has been regularly revived in New Zealand, famously with former National Prime Minister Robert Muldoon in the role of narrator in 1986. O'Brien only gained his New Zealand citizenship in 2010, which is perhaps one reason why the New Zealand relationship has not been previously emphasised. The show's high camp yet low-brow alternative cultural status may be another.

In *Rocky Horror: From Concept to Cult*, Scott Michaels and David Evans contend that *Rocky* "could never have been created and developed from anyone from the British theatrical tradition [and] those most intimately involved with the nascent *Rocky* [...] were all children of the colonies."[10] Amongst the fishnet stockings and heels, can we find O'Brien's coming-of-age in New Zealand hidden within the show? Edmond acknowledges that *Rocky Horror* was written in London and that there are "no direct New Zealand references," but claims O'Brien under the same criteria that New Zealand literature has claimed Katherine Mansfield, as "in each case the exile was self-selected."[11] Edmond reads *Rocky Horror* as the "psychic experience of growing up in New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s," just as *Rain* has been read as the psychic experience of Hodge's New Zealand university studies. Such a reading is productive for *Rocky Horror*, and accords with O'Brien's own reminiscences. When I interviewed O'Brien ahead of a 2010 New Zealand tour of *Rocky Horror*, he confirmed that 'Eddie's Song' was written using "lots of images" from his "teenage youth" in New Zealand.[12] The American B-Movies referenced in 'Science Fiction Double Feature' reflect O'Brien's experience of visiting Hamilton's Embassy Theatre and watching their late night double feature sessions. It was also at the Embassy that O'Brien saw his first female impersonator act; "Frank-N-Furter and the double features came out of [Hamilton's] Embassy Theatre," O'Brien recalled.[13] Edmond argues that *Rocky* "turns out to be uncannily autobiographical and can be read as a text which dramatises Kiwi dreams of 'overseas experience'."[14] The protagonists Brad and Janet are analogues of small-town New Zealanders who venture overseas, where they can give themselves "over to absolute pleasure" and experience "erotic nightmares beyond any measure / and sensual daydreams to treasure forever" (28-29). The "psychic" claim for O'Brien has merit, and cannot be proven or disproven for Hodge.

It is useful to place these playwrights as part of an international theatre industry in which London was the cultural centre. Hodge was one of many expatriate New Zealanders, including playwrights and actors, drawn to the metropolis. The 1966 *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand* lists several "expatriates who achieved success in the theatre overseas," such as Arthur H. Adams whose *Mrs Pretty and the Premier* was produced in London in 1916. While Susan Lilian Wilson sees Hodge as a "representative of a world-wide movement of artists who were

willing to eradicate their cultural heritage from their work in order to become assimilated into the dominant cultural 'centre',"[15] Felicity Barnes argues that London was claimed under "cultural co-ownership" as New Zealand's cultural capital.[16] Thus, far from eradicating his cultural heritage, Hodge was in fact pursuing it. New Zealanders' "long attachment to London" meant it had become a "familiar" and "natural" part of New Zealand culture.[17] Britain has been the traditional destination for New Zealanders on their OE; as Nigel McCarter states, "almost all travellers headed for Britain," especially London, with its "sense of familiarity" acting as a "powerful magnet."[18] While O'Brien's New Zealand in the 1960s was a different place from the one Hodge left in the 1930s, for both teenagers desiring to work in the theatre industry, with no local training institutions, London was the place to go. After Hodge received production interest for *The Wind and the* Rain, he wrote that he "knew now, London was home."[19] Whether Hodge wanted to write about Dunedin, or write about Edinburgh is moot; for a prospective playwright in London in the 1930s the only choice was to write what the cultural centre would recognise.

It was notable that Hodge did include a New Zealand character within the play, who reflected Hodge's own position as an outsider. This character, Anne Hargreaves, says of her heritage: "I'm that awful thing…a colonial [from] New Zealand […]. I don't expect you've ever heard of it outside a butter advertisement!" (47) The dialogue is a witty national self-deprecation by Hodge. For the "awful" colonial to succeed, Hodge had to appropriate the context of the coloniser. Such adaptation presents a challenge to notions of a unique regionalist identity. If the local and special influences of Hodge's New Zealand experience, which the historians John Thompson and Peter Harcourt are eager to emphasise, could so easily be transported to an Edinburgh context, the originating identity is destabilised and de-specialised. Hodge is a New Zealand writer in Britain, unable to write a New Zealand play. *The Wind and the Rain* is British in appearance, but at a stretch, can be read as a hybrid of cultural influences.

O'Brien is more complicated: Britain was his country of origin, New Zealand the incubator, and a globalised counter-culture the new culture of choice. *Rocky Horror* is a rock and roll pastiche, but it is also a cultural pastiche, incorporating a range of cultural influences in such a way that nationalistic borders are blurred. Reflecting the globalised B-movies screened at Hamilton's Embassy Theatre, *Rocky Horror* at first glance seems to hold a greater allegiance to American popular culture than New Zealand culture, let alone British culture. Edmond notes that "Brad and Janet are from small-town anywhere, especially small-town colonial anywhere with its bland and complacent surface of history-less normality."[20] New Zealand and America's Midwest are psychically linked by the colonial heritage of British

settlement. As James Belich notes, the American West and a "fragmented 'British West,'" were created by settlers migrating from "the two Anglo metropolises" of London and New York.[21] O'Brien said that "a lot of my teenage angst, and small town New Zealand [experience] is not dissimilar to the Midwest of America."[22] In this frame, O'Brien's teenage experience is allegorised, cultural adaptation displacing Hamilton with a larger, generalised Midwest American location. It is likely that this process was subconscious for O'Brien, supported by his interview remarks that it was only relatively recently that he recalled that he had seen his first drag act in Hamilton.[23] It is debatable whether O'Brien would have had more freedom than Hodge to set his work in New Zealand. However, the cultural dominance of Britain, paired with competing pull of American pop-culture, meant that when creating theatre in London, an overt New Zealand context was not considered. More persuasive however is the sense that in *Rocky Horror*, with the show's focus on otherness and championing of non-mainstream sexuality, O'Brien left behind and rejected New Zealand provincialism to embrace the "absolute pleasure" of his overseas London life.

If *Rain* was a product of the binary cultures of a provincial New Zealand and Britain, O'Brien sits between a multiplicity of cultures. *Rocky* is a transgendered, transnational theatrical work, mixing mainstream New Zealand, British and American cultural influences with glam-rock counter-cultures. Both *The Wind and the Rain* and *The Rocky Horror Show* have a place in the New Zealand theatre canon, but are pushed to the edges, as their cultural identities are hybrid and unfixed. They are of New Zealand, but they are also of other places, an imitation of national identities without an origin. Hodge and O'Brien adapted and channelled their personal psychic experiences of New Zealand in order to write and work in the theatre industry in the cultural centre of London.

Roger Hall's Adaptations

As evidenced with Hodge and O'Brien, New Zealand and Britain's colonial legacy has meant that, for many New Zealand playwrights, production in London has been viewed as the pinnacle of international theatrical success. Roger Hall's *Middle-Age Spread* made it to the West End in 1979 and ran for 18 months. The trade-off for commercial production was the request by the UK director Robert Kidd to change the play's setting to England. This meant that it was not a visible example of a play from New Zealand, but passed as a British one. The prestige of a West End production was seen by Hall's British agent, Jenne Casarotto, as a way

to promote Hall's work to markets outside of New Zealand and Australia, "if that works, it's just the beginning,"[24] though the reality did not match the promise. The newly adapted *Middle-Age Spread* began an out of town try-out in Brighton and was subsequently booked for The Lyric Theatre in the West End. *Middle-Age Spread* won Comedy of the Year at the Society of West End Theatres Awards (now known as the Olivier Awards).

A comparison of the original version of *Middle-Age Spread* and the British adaptation reveals the challenge that the dual commercial and colonising power of the London centre represents to the display of a regionalist New Zealand identity. *Middle-Age Spread*, as I will demonstrate, was seen to be speaking directly to a distinct New Zealand experience. In the UK adaptation, the New Zealand identifiers that make the play local and special under a nationalist interpretation are absorbed by the British centre to show how alike and indistinguishable New Zealand is from Britain, a province of the Anglo centre. At the same time, this adaptation does uncover some distinct ways the countries can be differentiated. When viewed as a struggle for regionalist or nationalist self-definition, the London production of *Middle-Age Spread* represents a capitulation towards the provincialist desire for the validating power of the superior cultural centre.

Hall wrote that he would "dearly love to see a London production [of *Spread*], if only for the pleasure of my parents living there (then I'd really have "made it!)."[25] Roger Hall's father recommended Hall, who was born in Essex, England, emigrate to either New Zealand or Australia for two years to avoid national service. While the New Zealand passage was 10 pounds cheaper, what swayed Hall was that "my parents and I thought it would be more English," a view emphasised by a New Zealand House official who boasted, "New Zealanders were more English than the English."[26] On arrival in Wellington, Hall found it "a small town" and that "everything seemed new or impermanent."[27] His cultural difference was accentuated in his experience of watching Bruce Mason's performance of *The End of the Golden Weather*, which described a childhood "unfamiliar" to Hall. [28] While Hall's ultimate ambition was to write for the BBC,[29] like Hodge he became involved in theatre through university revues in New Zealand. Hall self-identifies as English, but as "most definitely" a New Zealand writer,[30] and summarises, "all my writing had been done here, my craft had been learned here, and the plays were peopled with New Zealanders."[31] Hall's identification as a New Zealander came under pressure in his competing national loyalties that the West End production of *Middle-Age Spread* represented. To be staged in the metropolitan centre, Hall would need to momentarily disown his adopted nationality and revert to the identity of his own mother country. The "centre of the Empire" was positioned as superior, New Zealand, the colonial inferior.

Flexi-Flats

Before we continue with *Middle-Age Spread*, it must be noted that it was not the first time that Hall's work had been adapted for international performance due to commercial pressures. Hall's satire of the inefficient public service, *Glide Time* (1976) was localised for Australia and renamed *Flex-Time* in its first Australian production in 1978, then *Flexi Time* in subsequent productions. *Footrot Flats: The Musical*, a collaboration between A.K. Grant (lyrics), Philip Norman (music), and Hall (book), based on the NZ comic strips by Murray Ball, starring farm dog 'Dog' and his owner Wal Footrot, was also edited for the Australian market.

It was Terry Vaughan, the producer of the Kiwi Concert Party, and now head of the Canberra Theatre Company, who decided that *Glide Time* needed to be adapted to "suit Australian conditions."[32] Hall was uninvolved with the adaptation – all Vaughan had to do was substitute New Zealand place and brand names for Australian ones.[33] Instead of "Wellington, I hate you, I loathe you," the new opening line became "Canberra, I hate you, I loathe you," (2) which would have provoked laughs of recognition from the Australian audience. The Canberra Theatre Company invited other theatre managers to the production,[34] and through the joint promotion of the Victorian and South Australian Arts Councils, *Flexi Time* played in Adelaide in July 1979, toured South Australia in August, and Victoria in September. The play has regularly been revived in Australia, including the Ensemble Theatre's 48-show season in Sydney in 1997. In the Ensemble Theatre's programme they claimed that the play had a specific Australian relevance, "as it holds the mirror to the way we were… and maybe some of us still are."[35] The 1970s public service culture was analogous enough that, by exchanging place and brand names, the play could seem as if it were written wholly for the Australian experience.

Lyricist Alan Grant took charge of the *Footrot Flats* adaptation. While the New Zealand farm setting of the comic strip was retained, lyrics were edited to produce a homogenised "mid-Tasman" scenario by "changing specifically New Zealand references which might not be picked up by Australian audiences."[36] For example, environmental features like references to "fiords and glaciers" were cut as "they are not prominent features of Australian topography."[37] Hall sent through only half a page of notes, suggesting nine cuts or substitutions: "wrestling TV" instead of popular New Zealand television programme *Country Calendar* (1966-), and tennis player John McEnroe instead of All Black Graham Thorne.[38] The changes reveal an insecurity about alienating Australian audiences with New Zealand references they might not understand. It is based on the assumption that the more Australians recognise the scenario, the

more commercially popular it will become, but *Footrot Flats*' fantasy of rural Kiwi life was already recognisable in Australia, evidenced by the syndication of Murray Ball's cartoons in 57 Australian newspapers in March 1984.[39] Colin Hubert panned the Australian production but praised the comic strips: "Murray Ball drew NZ farm life in such a way that it was immediately comprehensible to readers even here in Australia."[40] Bob Evans rightfully found the production to be inferior to the strips, and warned that the cartoon fans "will find it bitterly disappointing […], not an entertainment, an embarrassment."[41] (Dave Dobbyn's score to the 1987 *Footrot Flat*'s cartoon film far surpasses the songs in the stage musical.) The popularity of the comic strips demonstrated that the kiwi-rural world was already identifiable in Australia, and arguably rendered the trans-Tasman adaptation, which underestimated Australian audiences' ability to recognise different topographical features, entirely redundant.

Hall demonstrated his willingness to allow requests to adapt his plays in order to secure their production in Australia. The companies themselves believed a New Zealand play that looked like an Australian play would be more commercially acceptable to their audiences. In the case of the trans-Tasman *Footrot Flats*, it proved a box office success. In August 1984, following the first Western Australia season, *Footrot Flats* was named the "most financially successful New Zealand play staged in Australia."[42] (Though the tour would become infamous for its Australian producer failing to pay approximately $38,000 worth of royalties owed to the authors.)[43] By its 250th performance in Canberra, it was reported to have grossed AUS$1 million.[44]

Middle-Age Spread

In New Zealand, *Middle-Age Spread* was identified as a breakthrough populist New Zealand play, dealing with topical national, social, and political issues. The frame of the play is a dinner party hosted by Wellington couple Colin and Elizabeth, intercut with flashbacks taking place over a number of months which reveal an affair between Colin, a deputy school principal, and Judy, a relief teacher. Hall's plays *Glide Time* and *Middle-Age Spread* were characterised as a distinctly new, popular and representative type of New Zealand theatre in which New Zealanders were laughing at "themselves," and could now "support local drama without any sense of 'cultural cringe'."[45] According to Ian Gordon in the "Foreword" to *Middle-Age Spread*, "Roger Hall can comment wryly on our society," and "can present his audiences with a mirror of themselves to delight and entertain."[46] Hall's biography *Bums on Seats* records one counter-narrative when the playwright overheard an audience member in Dunedin who said,

"what a pity they couldn't have opened with a nice English play."[47] While this was an expression of cultural cringe and a reminder that not everyone embraced the nationalism of Roger Hall's new play, it neatly emphasised how un-English *Spread* was perceived to be.

In *Bums on Seats*, Hall offers his own answer as to why *Glide Time* took off: "it was the first time a New Zealand audience could truly recognise themselves on stage."[48] This is a bold claim from Hall. Elsewhere Hall has acknowledged his debt to Bruce Mason, and Joseph Musaphia, but Mason commented that he should "add the names of Robert Lord and Gordon Dryland […] in preparing the theatrical ground in which his […] plays are flourishing."[49] Let us also add Mervyn Thompson, James K. Baxter, Stella Jones, Dean Parker, Peter Bland, and companies like Red Mole, Amamus, and Theatre Action, who should also be credited for their contributions to the emergence of a homegrown theatre. Hall "did not spring on us, without visible forebears, like Athene from the skull of Zeus," as Mason put it.[50] Hall is not entitled to claim to be the first to offer recognition in New Zealand, but can claim strong commercial success. The important point is that Hall was recognised for dramatising a uniquely New Zealand point of view, which is problematised when *Middle-Age Spread* is rewritten for the West End production, and exchanged for a British point of view.

It is vital to note, however, that the play's broad genre, a comedy of manners, is a longstanding and widely practised European genre, and that *Spread* also plays within the traditions of British farce. It is a model borrowed from overseas. British critic Michael Billington found in *Middle-Age Spread* "all the ingredients of the standard West End play: a dinner party setting, a menopausal hero, a feeling that there must be more to life than domestic comfort and a steady job."[51] Jerry C. Jaffe believes that, despite *Middle-Age Spread* being received as "one of the first truly New Zealand plays," it is arguably "largely British in its qualities."[52] But Bruce Mason borrowed the "English tradition of literary recital"[53] for *The End of the Golden Weather*, and it is how the form was adapted for local conditions that the playwrights should be judged on. Hall used an existing model, its form effectively already a standard West End play, populated it with markers of New Zealandness, and stimulated the feedback loop of identification for New Zealand audiences.

A sense of New Zealandness is invoked early in *Middle-Age Spread*, when Elizabeth, with a view to impressing her guests, takes a large book about New Zealand art off the shelf and "casually" places it on the table (12). This invites a laugh of recognition from its audience, as Elizabeth hopes to project an image of cultural sophistication to her guests, but is ignorant of the subject matter. Her literary selection is juxtaposed with the off-stage sound of a toilet flush, an aural clue perhaps as to the esteem New Zealand art might be held in by some sections

of anti-intellectual society. Colin's contrarian friend Reg does not hold back when he later examines the tome:

> Reg: What a load of rubbish New Zealand art is … all this landscape!! Why doesn't anyone paint interiors or portraits.
> *He tosses the book contemptuously on the table.* (17)

By these actions New Zealand's cultural products, and the value that society places on creative expression, are interrogated. This invites comparison with the play itself as an example of New Zealand art, and its own value for New Zealanders.

Roger Hall's original understanding was that any West End production of *Spread* would be set in New Zealand. A year before the eventual production, Hall had written to his British agent, Jenne Casarotto, with the suggestion that casting a full production of New Zealand actors "might well be a promotional gambit."[54] Casarotto had mentioned "possibly minor rewrites for the British production,"[55] but as recently as 26 April, 1979, Hall had asked that his advice regarding the New Zealand accent be passed onto the director.[56] This changed on 6 June when Hall and director Robert Kidd had a long phone call in which the request was made to rewrite the play for the British audience. The reason Kidd offered was casting pragmatism: he did not feel the British public could accept the headline star, Richard Briers, known as the quintessentially English TV star of *Marriage Lines* (1961-1966) and *The Good Life* (1975-1978) as any other nationality. The request "made sense" to Hall, as "it happens to many plays, especially those from either side of the Atlantic […], if I wanted a play on the West End this would be the compromise I'd have to make."[57] This had also occurred with *Footrot Flats* and *Glide Time* for Australian production, but the difference here was Hall undertook to rewrite *Spread* himself. Hall wrote to Kidd:

> Many thanks for your long phone call last night, and your thoughtful approach to the whole issue. As I said, one of my main anxieties about changing the setting was that you might not be happy about it […], there'd be nothing worse than directing a play in which you felt the writer had sold out. I will be starting work on the alterations immediately. By the way, what is the local equivalent of the Jaycees?[58]

On 12 June, Hall sent a series of suggested changes to Kidd, ranging from word exchanges to rewritten scenes, and stressed it was "important to get it exactly right."[59] Kidd in turned thanked Hall: "It's such a pleasant surprise to come across an author who can re-write. In my experience they get worse! But your alterations were first rate."[60] The original play was rewritten so the content could match the form. Hall's compliance valued London as a commercial and cultural centre, so it was no issue changing the nationality of his characters in order to get the work produced.

Comparing the published editions of the New Zealand (Victoria University Press 1978, hereafter VUP) and British (Samuel French 1980, hereafter SF) versions of *Middle-Age Spread*, though some minor New Zealand-specific references were excised or exchanged, the majority of the text is in fact retained. The New Zealand art book is replaced by *Raising Daisy Rothschild*, a 1979 book by Betty Leslie-Melville about raising a baby giraffe. This change loses the New Zealand nationalistic consciousness, yet does not say anything about Britain; Hall uses it instead as a way Reg can tease his wife (SF 5). Reflecting the colonially inherited British culture still prevalent within the period, Hall had to change little across both versions: both countries have a Mr Whippy; both discuss building a Wombles Adventure Playground (from the 1973 British children's television programme); and the men read W. E. Johns' *Biggles* as children. New Zealand in the period was dominated by British cultural imports; it was "not unusual" for an episode of the *The Wombles* to out-rate every American show on both channels.[61] Hall reported that at the read-through there was just one New Zealand detail that he left in that baffled the actors: "what on earth was a Jaycee?"[62] (presumably not having received an earlier answer from Kidd). This has been changed to the "rotary club" in the published UK play, which would have also worked in New Zealand (SF 15). In the majority of cases, the New Zealand dialogue is simply recolonised by the English accent.

Middle-Age Spread deals with relevant political issues for both countries in the period, though mostly on a surface level for comic effect. Hall's dinner party offers a range of political subject positions that the New Zealand audience could identify with or reject. *Spread* captures an internal debate in the period 1968-1976 looking beyond Muldoon's interventionism and anticipating the policies of Rogernomics. Robert encapsulates the changing thinking around political orthodoxy in the country:

> Robert: Now I think people are realising that you CAN'T always rely on the State for a handout – the State can't afford it – and that the way out of our mess is knuckling down to a bit of hard work. (VUP 58)

The conversation on New Zealand politics is necessarily translated into a discussion of Thatcherite Britain. However, after listing their respective countries' faults, both versions agree that "you wouldn't want to live anywhere else" (VUP 59; SF 29). The lack of difference in the two versions problematises the regionalist claim that Hall holds up the antipodean mirror and reveals New Zealanders to themselves. Many self-referential markers of identity that New Zealand audiences would recognise from the play could also be recognised by the British audience.

Other than the difference in political parties, the main changes that were made in *Middle-Age Spread* relate to the perception of New Zealand and British national identities in association with the rest of the world. When discussing the "Grand Tour," in both versions Reg talks of the clichés of the "Spanish Steps and getting one's undies stolen in Greek camping grounds" (VUP 40; SF 18); however, Judy's response when Reg asks her if she went travelling is quite different. In New Zealand, she says, "No. I really wish I had, though" (VUP 40). In Britain, she says, "Costa Brava, eight days. It was where I met Robert actually" (SF 18). This is a major yet necessary change in Judy's characterisation. Judy in New Zealand has never travelled, which influences her burning motivation to "save up" and leave the country. In the British version Judy can "take off" whenever she wishes. The stakes are therefore lower. Overseas experience holds a lure for the Wellington-locked characters of Colin and Judy in New Zealand. The Grand Tour – or OE – is expressed in the New Zealand version of the play as an essential rite of passage for the New Zealander. Judy discusses with Colin her to desire to travel overseas:

> Judy: I'm going to go overseas. I've decided and I'm saving up and I'm going. Just as soon as I've got enough.
> Colin: Where?
> Judy: Europe and Asia… do what Theroux did in the book – go round everywhere by train. I'm determined I'll do it.
> Colin: I've never been.
> Judy: Where? Europe?
> Colin: Anywhere. By the time I'd taken four years to get my degree and done a bit of teaching to earn some money, I was married and Jane was born. I should have gone. I really should have gone. God, is that the time? (VUP 52-53)

Europe is something far away from "here." One has to work and save up to get far over "there." Colin has settled into his middle-age spread without ever having travelled; his partner in the affair, Judy, represents the dream of travel in youth that he never experienced. For the British, overseas is just over the channel, the continent is accessible and something you do in sporadic bursts.

The changes to *Middle-Age Spread* are commercial cultural adaptations with a colonial premise. The West End as institution demands product, therefore a British context is privileged over a commercially and culturally inferior New Zealand. *Middle-Age Spread* had become a British play, for a British audience, with any sense of New Zealandness written out. Press articles even removed Hall's New Zealand life from his biographical details, and instead moved Hall "back to his home in North London."[63] The *Daily Mail*'s review claimed, "Mr Hall, an Englishman resident in New Zealand, has an accurate ear for social absurdities (the audience

roared their recognition time and again)."[64] *The Financial Times*'s critic Michael Coveney found echoes of British playwright Alan Ayckbourn and suspected that "Mr Hall's extremely adroit examination of middle-aged mores chimes exactly with Thatcherite expectations in the stalls."[65] *The Guardian*'s Michael Billington, however, found the play's "topographical vagueness" to be a weakness.[66] He perceptively argued that:

> written for a New Zealand audience, it has clearly been doctored for an English one and I wasn't entirely convinced […]. I couldn't work out what the once idealistic Colin was doing hitched to a hard-faced Thatcher-loving wife: I felt the Thatcher references had been bunged in to replace something that was once local and plausible.[67]

Billington was the outlier with this view, but his review reveals a potential dissonance within the British audience's feedback loop.

New Zealand is entirely absent in the UK version of *Middle-Age Spread*. To use Judith Butler's gender identity framework, the West End production could be viewed as performing a British "drag" of the original. As an imitation "which effectively displaced the meaning of the original," it could indeed be seen to "imitate the myth of originality itself."[68] In the New Zealand version, Hall's stage directions indicate there is a Robin White print on Judy's wall (33), a now recognisable icon of Kiwiana, and then part of the romantic Nationalism movement of the 1970s. The placement of the print is a visual identifier of the way the New Zealand consciousness provides the background of the play; it is inherent to the play's meaning in the local New Zealand context. Changing the location of the text transforms its meaning. The identified differences between the original and its British adaptation did uncover lines of division between the societies, indicative of the coloniser-colony relationship. The New Zealanders seek to travel and prove themselves against the world. It is the same drive for validation and approval that allowed the need for *Middle-Age Spread* to be adapted into a British context to be uncritically accepted by its author. International production, especially in London, the historical centre of empire, represented a validating force and pinnacle goal for the 'New Zealand play', even if it necessitated entirely removing the New Zealand context in order to achieve it. Provincialism valued the British adaptation and allowed the majority of the play to be transferred intact from New Zealand to Britain, but the ability to distinguish a New Zealand version of the play, and New Zealand's absence in the British, no longer "local and plausible" as Billington put it, upheld regionalist differentiation. The West End script supported a specific New Zealand cultural identity, in terms of the identity markers that could not be transported into the British setting, but then simultaneously destroyed this cultural identity by replacing these markers with British markers.

Following a "widespread drop in business throughout the West End,"[69] *Middle-Age Spread* closed at the end of 1980, and went on to tour the English provinces for a year.[70] Hall next targeted a Broadway run of the play, and this time actively rewrote it with an American setting for the market, but it proved difficult to raise the required capital, and the eventual American production was not on Broadway, but a six-week run at a "small theatre" in Washington DC in 1983.[71] *The Washington Times*' assessment was that the play was "weak, contrived," and "ultimately no better than those coy sex farces that keep London's tourists amused."[72] The negative critical response ended any further hopes of a Broadway production. Hall was involved in two further major attempts by British companies to produce his works on the West End. *Multiple Choice* (1984) was bought by Triumph Productions, a London production company, for a try-out season in Guildford in October 1984. Hall again rewrote a "substantial" portion of the play for the English production.[73] Triumph Productions had a box office draw card in headliner Susannah York but failed to make it to the West End. Roger Hall's *Love off the Shelf* (1986) played a seven-week season at Nuffield Theatre in Southampton to nearly 18,000 people from December 1987 to January 1988, the longest run of any production at the venue. A West End season was anticipated, but did not eventuate.[74] *The Independent*'s review said that it would "have to have either much better songs or no songs at all" in order to gain a West End transfer.[75] Hall's London run of *Middle-Age Spread* was a singular achievement, one he was unable to repeat. The only other New Zealand play to reach performance in the commercial West End theatre district in the years since *Middle-Age Spread* was Stephen Sinclair and Anthony McCarten's *Ladies Night* in 1989, which was also notably adapted with a UK setting.

Margin to Margin: *Mo & Jess Kill Susie*

The Canadian experience of Gary Henderson's *Mo & Jess Kill Susie* (1996), provides a vastly different example of adaptation compared to the preceding cases in this chapter. Northern Light Theatre, who presented the play in Edmonton in 2008, and Harley Dog Productions, who presented it in Toronto in 2013, adapted the script into their own cultural context. Māori characters Mo and Jess became indigenous Canadians in these productions. Henderson approved the adaptation but was uninvolved in the changes.

The relocation of *Mo & Jess* to a Canadian cultural context is not explained by the commercial cultural adaptation process that influenced *Middle-Age Spread*'s West End version. Instead, this Canadian appropriation demonstrates a post-colonial concern. Theatre that originates from one ex-colony is translated by another ex-colony. *Mo & Jess*' New Zealand context examines tensions in the myth of bicultural harmony between Māori and Pākehā. Set four years in the future from when it was originally written in 1996, Mo and Jess are two Māori activists, part of an unidentified protest movement resisting land seizures. They have abducted Susie, a Pākehā policewoman, as a hostage, a trump card in the protestors' showdown with police on the waterfront. Mo and Jess await a phone call which may order them to release, or kill, their hostage. Set in a claustrophobic room in an empty building, as the play unfolds we learn about the characters' backgrounds and reasons for being in the room. There are several New Zealand specific references, including the 1995 Moutoa Gardens protest, a 79-day occupation in Whanganui, which the characters cite as an impetus for more radical protests: "Moutoa changed things" (69).

When the Northern Light Company produced *Mo & Jess* in Edmonton in 2008, their stated goal, as explained on their website, was to "introduce a play that is unheard of in our region, and to show the similarities in culture."[76] The choice to present an adapted version undermines this intention. Performing the original version of the script might have allowed the cultural specificity of the New Zealand context to work as a distancing effect, which may have provoked recognition of a Canadian cultural history through audience comparison. Instead, any similarities are simultaneously upheld and removed when cultural specificity of one kind is replaced by another. Northern Light Theatre, in the words of a Canadian reviewer, "effectively altered" the play "to make it sound and feel more Albertan."[77] The company emphasised the experience-in-common between Canada and New Zealand on their website: "the situations of the Māori and Aboriginal peoples are amazingly comparable, and, while the play could just as easily be performed by three Caucasian actresses, the racial aspect brings a specificity that makes another, larger statement."[78] The adaptation attempted to universalise the similarities of the political experience of First Nation peoples by translating the New Zealand context into the Canadian context. However, the Canadian audience was presented with only a specific Canadian experience that overwrote the New Zealand point of view. This process reduced Henderson's commentary on specific New Zealand issues: the history of Māori land rights and protest, and the expression of a Pākehā fear that these factors could lead to a potential violent response. The suggestion that the play could "just as easily" be performed by Caucasian

characters further challenged the play's New Zealand specificity, and would substantially change the subtext of the play.

The second Canadian production, presented at the Toronto Fringe 2013 by Harley Dog Productions, an independent theatre company in Toronto, did not mention the play's New Zealand origin in its marketing. Instead, it was promoted as culturally specific and relevant to the Canadian context: "Set in present day Ontario, *Mo & Jess Kill Susie* is more relevant than ever."[79] With this frame, one review described the play as "a story of two First Nations women and their bound, gagged white hostage" that addressed "the difficult topic of Canada's treatment of our Native citizens, and asks if it is possible to break the cycles of violence we find ourselves part of unwittingly."[80] The claim of "our Native citizens" expressed the extent to which the recontextualised play was perceived to represent and reflect a Canadian consciousness.

Marc Maufort finds similarities in Australian, Canadian, and New Zealand drama because the nations represent "prominent instances of settler-invader colonies of the former British empire which share a number of historical, political, cultural and even literary characteristics."[81] Of note in this discussion, Maufort finds "contentious internal polarities between First Nations aborigines, various marginal ethnic groups and the mainstream."[82] This partly explains the ease with which the political situation in *Mo & Jess* can be transported to the Canadian setting. In *Mo & Jess* the stakes of the dramatic situation overwhelm the political and social background. A review of the Northern Light production said:

> you glean, via his small adjustments, that Mo and Jess are Canadian aboriginals, instead of Māori. You gather that a protest, one to do with aboriginal poverty and desperation, has gone wrong outside in an armed standoff with police. The play and the production sketch those things in, and it is enough.[83]

Henderson's details of the protest movement are also relatively generalised in the original version too. This allows for a cultural adaptation with few rewrites; Henderson's text can transfer from one cultural zone to another because the audience is given space to fill a political and cultural subjectivity into Henderson's generalised contextual vacuum. The Canadian adaptations, however, remove the possibility of the audiences' agency to question if the Māori/Pākehā relationship represented in *Mo & Jess* is analogous to the Aboriginal Canadian/Canadian relationship, or if there are differences in each country. Instead, it is the Canadian producers that had decided that the cultural contexts were equivalent. The Canadian adjustments of *Mo & Jess* both generalised and specified, narrowing possible meanings.

Mo and Jess are marginal characters fighting a mainstream force. Maufort argues that marginality is used in New Zealand and Canadian Drama "as a site of resistance against the legacy of Empire."[84] The general positions of the two nations as settler-invader colonies, both sharing an "acute sense of social and intellectual inferiority towards the centre of the Empire,"[85] open general commonalities of experience. As with the West End *Middle-Age Spread*, a New Zealand consciousness is removed. However, in this case it is not through a dominant culture consuming a minority culture. Instead, in this version a post-colonial process of cultural adaptation takes place: a minority culture in Canada finds mutual expression through another minority culture in New Zealand.

[1] Peter Harcourt, *A Dramatic Appearance: New Zealand Theatre, 1920-1970* (Wellington: Methuen, 1978), 45-46.

[2] Dominic Cavendish, "*The Rocky Horror Show*, Playhouse Theatre, Review: 'Fresh, Subversive, Essential'," *The Telegraph*, Sep. 16 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/the-rocky-horror-show-playhouse-theatre-review/

[3] John Thomson, *New Zealand Drama, 1930-1980: An Illustrated History* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1984), 22.

[4] Harcourt, 46.

[5] Howard McNaughton, "Drama," in *The Oxford History of New Zealand Literature in English*, ed. Terry Sturm (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991), 286.

[6] Thomson, 22.

[7] Merton Hodge, "Suggested Outline for 'I Went For A Walk'," MS, c.1944-1945, Misc-MS-1543, Merton Hodge Papers, Hocken Collections, University of Otago Library, Dunedin, 173.

[8] Harcourt, 44.

[9] Murray Edmond, "How Gothic is S/he?: Three New Zealand Dramas," *Australasian Drama Studies*, no. 44 (Apr. 2004), 117.

[10] Scott Michaels and David Evans, *Rocky Horror: From Concept to Cult* (London: Sanctuary, 2002), 25.

[11] Edmond, 117.

[12] James Wenley, "Extended Interview: Rocky Horror's Richard O'Brien," *Theatre Scenes*, Jan. 30 2011, http://www.theatrescenes.co.nz/extended-interview-rocky-horror%E2%80%99s-richard-o%E2%80%99brien/

[13] Ibid.

[14] Edmond, 116.

[15] Susan Lilian Williams, "Metamorphosis at 'The Margin': Bruce Mason, James K. Baxter, Mervyn Thompson, Renée and Robert Lord, Five Playwrights who have Helped Change the Face of New Zealand Drama" (Doctoral Thesis, Massey University [Palmerston North], 2006), 24.

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[17] Ibid., 3.

[18] Nigel McCarter, *The Big OE: Tales from New Zealand Travelers* (Auckland: Tandem Press, 2001), 11.

[19] Hodge, 124.

[20] Edmond, 116.

[21] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939* (Oxford: University Press, 2009), 70.

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[22] Wenley.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Jenne Casarotto to Roger Hall, Apr. 11 1979, MS-1442/004, Roger Hall Papers [RHP], Hocken Collections.

[25] Roger Hall to Hilary Linstead, Oct. 16 1978, MS-1442/004, RHP.

[26] Hall, *Bums on Seats: The Backstage Story* (Auckland: Viking, 1998), 44.

[27] Ibid., 47.

[28] Ibid., 57.

[29] Ibid., 118.

[30] Ibid., 131.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Hall to Hilary Linstead, Oct. 27 1978, MS-1442/004, RHP.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] *Flexi Time* Ensemble Theatre Programme, 1997, Client File: Roger Hall [CFRH], Playmarket, Wellington.

[36] Alan Grant, "Notes for John Manford re amended 'Footrot Flats' lyrics," n.d., 2001-013-12/2, Papers re Footrot Flats, [PFF] Alexander Turnbull, Wellington.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Hall, "Footrot Flats Alterations for Australia," Apr. 30 1984, 2001-013-12/2, PFF.

[39] "Footrot Flats Syndication in Australia," Mar. 1984, CFRH.

[40] Colin Hubert, *On the Street Magazine*, Apr. 8 1985, CFRH.

[41] Bob Evans, "Footrot Flats – The Musical Bogs Down in Banality," *Sydney Morning Herald*, Apr. 1985, CFRH.

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[46] Ian Gordon, "Foreword," in *Middle-Age Spread*, Roger Hall (Wellington: Price Milburn for Victoria University Press, 1978), 6.

[47] Hall, *Bums on Seats*, 146.

[48] Ibid., 130.

[49] Bruce Mason, *Every Kind of Weather* (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 280.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Michael Billington, "Middle-Age Spread," *The Guardian*, c.1979, MS-1614/012, RHP.

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[52] Jerry C. Jaffe, "Loop/I/-ness in the New Zealand Performance of Identity (or, Id Entity)," *Australasian Drama Studies*, no. 55 (Oct 2009), 6.

[53] George Parker, "Actor Alone: Solo Performance in New Zealand" (Doctoral Thesis, University of Canterbury, 2008), 47.

[54] Hall to Casaretto, Oct. 2 1978, MS-1442/004, RHP.

[55] Casaretto to Roger Hall, Apr. 11 1979.

[56] Hall to Casaretto, Apr. 26 1979, MS-1442/004, RHP.

[57] Hall, *Bums on Seats*, 148.

[58] Hall to Robert Kidd, Jun. 6 1979, MS-1442/004, RHP.

[59] Hall to Casaretto, Jun. 12 1979, MS-1442/004, RHP.

[60] Robert Kidd to Hall, Jul. 23 1979, MS-1442/002, RHP.

[61] Barnes, 259.

[62] Hall, *Bums on Seats*, 150.

[63] "Mid-Life Blues Studied," *SMH Metro*, n.d., MS-1614/012, RHP.

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[65] Michael Coveney, "Middle-Age Spread," *Financial Times*, Oct. 21 1979, MS-1614/012, RHP.

[66] Billington.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 176.

[69] Casarotto to Hall, Aug. 29 1980, MS-1442/002, RHP.

[70] Hall, *Bums on Seats*, 156.

[71] "Act Diary," *Act*, vol. 8, no. 3, (Jun. 1983), 35.

[72] "Hall's Play Bombs in US," *NZPA*, May. 19 1983, RHP.

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[74] Nigel Stannard to Hall, c.1988, MS-1442/004, RHP.

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[82] Ibid., 19.

[83] Edmonton Journal, "Hostage Drama Crackles with Tension," *Canada.com,* Sep. 14 2008, http://www.canada.com/story.html?id=fb17cf5a-4809-4656-8ed1-099708db7154

[84] Maufort, 19.

[85] Ibid.

Chapter VI

The Travelling Playwright: Robert Lord

In *The Travelling Squirrel* (1987), playwright Robert Lord, looking to make his big break in New York, created a satiric play about a novelist, Bart, searching for fame and fortune in the Big Apple. Bart has spent five years working on his opus, a prose poem, which is rejected as "turgid and short" by literary agent Terry (153). But Terry seizes on another of Bart's ideas – a series of adventures about Roger, an artist and squirrel. As Hilary Halba puts it, "Lord, the struggling playwright in New York" wrote a play about a "struggling novelist in New York, who writes about Roger the Squirrel, a Sciuridae painter, struggling to get a break."[1] With substantial pre-release hype Bart is welcomed to "the big time" and feted at society parties, however his marriage becomes strained, and when the Roger story is published it is a "complete flop" (196). Bart knows his prose poem is "good," and Roger, "deep down inside," also "knows he's very good," but nobody else recognises it (138; 140). Terry advises that Roger needs "a little more edge" (186), but, when Bart incorporates this note, it contributes to the story's rejection. *The Travelling Squirrel* depicts a glittering New York City that promises success but is hostile to artistic integrity. It is the dream and the nightmare of NYC, the promise, and the personal failure.

Phillip Mann cautions that "it would be a mistake to equate Lord with Bart" as "the play is not to be seen as autobiographical in a literal way."[2] But just as the Roger stories are a distortion of Bart's experience (Roger gains notoriety at the same time Bart does), we can read echoes of Robert Lord's New York through Bart's. In the character list, Bart's occupation is given as "type-setter," the same position that Lord held for much of his time in New York. We can glimpse Lord in Bart's description of Roger, who "slaves away behind the counter of the Gourmet Nut Shop […]. It's only when he comes home and locks himself away in his studio that he becomes truly alive" (140). Lord would slave away on a word processor for eight-hour overnight shifts five days a week, setting type, finishing at 4am.[3] Only then would he spend an hour on his personal writing before going to bed, rising again around 2:30pm. Bart is invited to try an "eight-week introductory course in real estate" (157), another occupation Lord used to support himself in New York. Lord wryly reflected on that experience, "I was trying to sell things people didn't want to buy… now I write things people don't want to see."[4] Terry tells Bart that New York "is full of assholes with manuscripts in their hip pockets" (150). Lord

understood all too well that the numbers were against him: "you line up to photocopy your play and there's a queue of 50 playwrights doing the same thing."[5] These parallels are appealing to make, but are limited in conveying Lord's experience. Exchange Bart with Lord and you would have a very different story.

If someone were to write a play about Robert Lord in the USA – *The Travelling Playwright* – it might be far more absurd than even *The Travelling Squirrel*. In 1974, aged 29, Lord arrived in America on a Queen Elizabeth II Arts travel grant, and decided to stay. His first significant return was in 1987 to become Otago University's Burns Fellow. He went back to America to become an American citizen in 1989, then returned to Dunedin to become the Fortune's writer in residence, where he stayed until his death on 7 January, 1992 of an HIV-related illness. A 1984 newspaper profile of Lord tactfully reported that life in NYC for the expatriate playwright had its "ups and downs," and Lord was low on money "most of the time."[6] Lord at that time was adamant about seeing New York through: "there are certain things I would like to happen… like success… so I think I'll stay for the duration."[7] As well as type and real estate, Lord worked for an airline consultant firm in New York and wrote several soap opera episodes, "pure hackwork," according to Lord.[8] The travelling playwright had some limited success such as US productions of *Well Hung* (later *Country Cops*), and *Bert and Maisy*, as will be detailed in the discussion to follow, but mostly frustrations. One absurd episode involved the Summer Circuit regional touring production of *Country Cops* in 1986: a list of "possible offensive dialogue" was drawn up which found double entendre in phrases the playwright "thought quite innocent"; the lead actor, a TV star, refused to do a New Zealand accent; Lord was repeatedly given the wrong time for rehearsals; on opening night Lord had to pay for his own tickets, and his biography was omitted from the programme.[9] Another series of frustrations involved the development of *The Travelling Squirrel*, which was stuck in an endless cycle of workshops and readings "everywhere from here to San Diego."[10] On the "Squirrel Saga," Lord wrote that the play "has had more readings than I care to number. It has been twice under option for off-Broadway production but promised productions have never eventuated."[11] One reading of *The Travelling Squirrel* for "money people" coincided with the US attack on Libya. "My play also bombed," Lord ruefully noted.[12]

Before he left for America, Lord's early New Zealand work did not contain the sort of overt national identity construction seen in Bruce Mason's or Amamus' work. His first play, *It Isn't Cricket* (1971), was a minimalist work focussing on the interactions of six characters through fragmentary scenes that gave few indications of their specific time and place. Mason,

in his review of the 1979 New Zealand production of Robert Lord's *High as a Kite* (1978), stated:

> My problem with the plays of Robert Lord has often been locale: I don't know where I am. *Meeting Place* (1973) was set in featureless limbo; *Well Hung* (1974) owed everything to French farce; *Heroes and Butterflies* (1977) took place in a Ruritanian Never-Never.[13]

Mason's comment is not a wholly fair representation of the kind of plays that these are, imbued as they are by Absurdism. *Meeting Place* withholds its context, the writer's note offering only that "the word 'tramping' may be altered to 'hiking' and the word 'plaits' to 'braids'," as if it was only these two words that placed the play in a New Zealand context (0). *Meeting Place* is a work of unease revolving around the shallow connections of two men and two women. Lord said that *Meeting Place* "is set in no particular place;"[14] like Beckett and Ionesco, Lord's absurdism desocialises the setting and makes it ambiguous. It is still possible to read self-referential markers of New Zealand identity in the work via the feedback loop if a director and audience are looking for them. Of course, these plays by Lord are less explicit about locale than Mason's plays. The first speech of *Meeting Place* notes changes in the landscape – "notice how the land dries out quicker now" – and evokes a childhood "living by the sea" (1). The character Paul repeats a desire to go tramping and complains how he feels "so hemmed in and dry here," that he wants "to get out and find a whole new world" (8). These are some of the elements that can potentially be understood as referencing a New Zealander's desire for overseas experience, or escape. It might be possible to see 'land and nature' as part of the fantasy of New Zealand identity.

In *Well Hung*, there is an echo of the Crewe murders of 1970, and the police incompetence recalls the disputed case against suspect Arthur Allan Thomas, who would be pardoned in 1979. Set in a small-town police station, an out-of-towner detective has arrived to investigate a double murder of a farming couple. (Another marker of New Zealand identity might be our fetish for gruesome murders.) Phillip Mann argues it "is as firmly rooted in New Zealand as the paintings of Robin White,"[15] whose artwork featured in the NZ *Middle-Age Spread* but was removed from the UK version. While Mason dismissed Lord's early plays, he did not find the same problem with *High as a Kite*, which "connects us directly with New York." Mason imagined that if *High as a Kite* was presented on or off-Broadway "a New Zealander's sly commentary on New York mating rituals [would] be received with respect, laced with discomfort."[16] While Mason's criticisms do not completely hold up, the feeling that "I don't know where I am," was a problem that beset Robert Lord throughout his career in

America. Robert Lord's own narrative is that in his first five years in the US he struggled to write within an American vernacular, found creative expression with a New Zealand theme through *Bert and Maisy*, and then was acclimatised enough to write his American plays. However, as I will demonstrate, it was a much more complicated journey for the travelling playwright. This chapter gives an account of Lord's long OE in America, then analyses how Lord wrote New Zealand *into* and *out* of his work in an attempt to find a formula that would resonate with American audiences.

American Career

Lord was born in Rotorua on 18 July, 1946, but like Richard O'Brien his formative childhood and early teenage years were spent in Hamilton, where he was tuned to 'The Goons' and serials on "the radio, the crystal set, the wireless, and then, wonder of wonders, 'the transistor'."[17] He gained a BA from Victoria University and a Diploma from Teacher's College, but when Victoria University introduced a drama course for the first time in 1970 led by Phillip Mann, he returned to participate despite already having his degree. At Downstage in the early 1970s he worked as a publicist and assistant editor of *ACT Magazine*, and his first play, *It Isn't Cricket*, had a rehearsed reading at the theatre in 1971. In 1973 *It Isn't Cricket* was presented at the first Australian National Playwrights conference, which "introduced Lord to North American initiatives in developing new writers for the stage."[18] Though he spent much of his career in the US, Lord's significant contributions to New Zealand theatre were his co-founding of Playmarket in 1973 with Judy Russell, Ian Fraser, and Nonnita Rees and promotion of the American workshop system for new plays, bringing directors, dramaturges, and actors together in the development process. Rees credits Lord for providing the "impetus" for the establishment of Playmarket due to his belief that without development and agency infrastructure "playwrights would not have a meaningful part in theatre-making for New Zealand audiences."[19] Lord's research travel grant from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council took him first to Britain, then to the 1974 Eugene O'Neill Playwrights conference run in Waterford, Connecticut, a major annual conference to workshop new writing. Lord was encouraged to make the US his new home after Providence's Repertory Company produced a season of *Well Hung* in 1974. Lord's US trip was well timed: Trinity's director Adrian Hall stated that if Lord had not been in America on the grant then it would have been unlikely that

the company, which dealt primarily in new American work, would have produced the play.[20] Lord was actively involved throughout rehearsals, "his first encounter with the process of continuing to work on the script while the actors rehearsed their lines."[21]

Encouraged by the production of *Well Hung*, Lord decided, as he put it, to become "a New Zealander living in New York, coming from a little wee place to great big country, a farm boy come to town."[22] Hilary Halba notes that 1970s NYC was "a city bigger, more exciting and more dangerous by far than any in New Zealand [...], it featured peepshows, adult cinemas and pickpockets,"[23] conditions that would later attract Red Mole. Lord established legal residence, and gained his green card. He signed with an American agent, Gilbert Parker, who negotiated for New York's New Phoenix Repertory Company to produce Lord's *Meeting Place* in 1975. Lord left New Zealand just prior to that moment when Roger Hall's *Glide Time* demonstrated a commercial demand for populist New Zealand plays. Nonnita Rees has said that when they founded Playmarket in 1973 there was "still a widespread belief that [...] audiences would not come to see New Zealand plays."[24] Lord, about to turn 30, did not see any continuing prospects in New Zealand. For him, New Zealand was hampered by "its smallness" as "we'll always be a small pond."[25] Robert Lord held an ambivalent attitude towards his home country while resident in America. In one interview, Lord lit up a Marlboro and gave the one-liner: "New Zealand just wasn't big enough for me."[26] He expressed to media that "opportunity is scarce for playwrights in a land of 3 million people and four theaters,"[27] and that if he "wanted to make a living from writing I had to go overseas."[28]

Lord discovered that opportunity was scarce even in a city of millions and an entire theatre district. He credited New York for raising his "personal standards," and the opportunity to be exposed to "an enormous array of influences that just don't exist in my country."[29] Lord would later admit that his "initial reaction to the enormousness of the country was to latch on to things I found familiar," which "was something of a delusion."[30] Lord continued:

> For all the similar colonial beginnings, the not dissimilar language, and the shared fantasies of the Hollywood dream-machine, we are not the same people. But bright-eyed, bushy-tailed and probably as annoying as an opossum I started pouring out "American" plays. Though initially confused when these works did not overwhelm the free world, I eventually realised that perhaps I was not the "American" I thought.[31]

Lord's first "American" play was *I'll Scream If I Want To* (later retitled *High as a Kite*), which was produced by the Provincetown Playhouse in 1976. Lord was invited to be playwright-in-residence during the rehearsal process. Lord was the top choice of "scores" of playwrights who submitted new plays to the Office for Advanced Drama Research, which subsidised "regional theaters to produce new works which may or may not go on to New York."[32] The play was

poorly received by critics who attacked it for its “lack of humanity.”[33] Red Mole did not try to make their American productions solely for Americans; they constructed their vision of an internationalist apocalyptic world, and they were secure in this avant-garde identity. Lord was insecure, attempting to fit as an American playwright by writing plays about North American society. Through *I’ll Scream If I Want To* Lord realised he was “not really familiar with the American psyche.”[34] Writing American settings and characters was “hard” and “didn’t seem natural.”[35] While Roger Hall could draw on his British heritage in making his cultural exchange in *Middle-Age Spread*, Lord was learning a new culture. Lord had not worried about societal recognition in his plays for New Zealand. It only became a problem once he got to America and consciously attempted to write for that society.

An important step for Lord finding belonging as a playwright in NYC was the invitation in 1978 to become a member of the New Dramatists, whose main activity was to workshop members’ plays. Each year there were roughly 400 applications for memberships, of which eight to ten were selected and offered a seven-year membership term. Membership was capped at 45 writers at a time. A 1983 reading of his new play *Bert and Maisy*, which Lord set in New Zealand, was observed by a journalist for a profile on the New Dramatists, “Broadway’s Best-Kept Secret.” The article explained:

> You’ve probably never heard of the playwright, unless you hail from his native New Zealand or happen to be hunting for a Manhattan apartment (Lord is also a licensed real estate agent). His play may one day light up a Broadway marquee; tonight, however, it is being presented to the public for free.[36]

The audience was a who’s who of Broadway. Lord even had one degree of separation with a young Kevin Bacon – the American film star was part of the cast reading *Bert and Maisy*. These public readings were an opportunity “to see the cream of America’s playwrights show their wares,” and for producers to “find hot new properties in which to invest.”[37] New Dramatists executive director Tom Dunn explained that New Dramatists’ scripts had been picked up by regional theatres, Broadway, and turned into television and feature films.[38] Unfortunately, Lord’s script was not to be granted that fate in America.

Lord had been writing what would become *Bert and Maisy* since 1979, but had struggled to “get it on anywhere,”[39] and had found that “theatres in the United States, understandably, did not rush to produce a low-keyed comedy of New Zealand manners.”[40] Lord worked on the play through New Dramatists’ workshops, “where it received many readings and underwent several revisions.”[41] The play was produced in New Zealand under the title *Unfamiliar Steps* at the Court in Christchurch in July 1983. (The New Dramatists reading, with

the new name, must have occurred shortly afterwards as the article was published in September that year.) After reading a favourable review of the Court production and being sent the script by Lord's agent, American director Bob Berlinger presented a reading of *Bert and Maisy* at San Diego's Old Globe's Play Discovery project in 1985, part of an "ongoing commitment to new works by American playwrights, allowing audiences to observe the work of new and established authors journey from the page to the stage."[42] At this reading audiences received a questionnaire, which asked them: "Would you come to see *Bert and Maisy* as a fully mounted production?"; "Would you bring a friend?"; "How did you respond to the New Zealand milieu of the play?"[43] The response to this reading and survey "was so positive that the work was immediately optioned for full production" from 30 November, 1985 through 12 January, 1986, and Lord was invited to be resident during the rehearsal period.[44] Air New Zealand and the New Zealand Consulate provided support for the season. Contrasting with the positive response from the reading, the critical response was lukewarm, with one commenting that "the Globe's artists, like any good American theater folk given a weak script, proceed to heighten the hysteria and try gamely to survive."[45]

Lord's next American milestone was the 1986 American tour of *Country Cops*, a revised version of *Well Hung*. *Country Cops* was toured around the Summer Stock Circuit with Conrad Bain, of television's *Diff'rent Strokes* (1978-1986) as the headlining star. After *Country Cops* premiered in New Zealand the previous year, Lord had promoted the play to different US companies, and readings had taken place at New Dramatists and at a Vermont Writers retreat.[46] "After years of readings, workshops and the occasional production," Lord saw the *Country Cops* tour as "a chance to make some money in the theatre."[47] Lord moved to part-time work in the type-shop in anticipation, and wrote, "I almost feel legit and imagine a life of full-time writing."[48] In its heyday, the circuit was made of a ring of 30 venues, but in 1986 consisted of just five (*Country Cops*' final itinerary lists four). Lord had a difficult experience with the production – it lost its director, Bain refused to do a New Zealand accent, and Lord generally felt mistreated by the company in terms of payment and recognition. Lord called the opening night a "disaster" after one of the actors left out a key line setting up the play's abortion plot point.[49] Lord's hopes for a full-time writing had been checked; at the end of his account of the tour he wrote: "Life in the world of type has never felt quite so comforting."[50]

Lord struggled to get his American plays programmed. *The Travelling Squirrel* went through endless workshops and was in a "permanent state of being rewritten, almost up to the time of Lord's death."[51] Lord hated the "usual" audience and cast discussions of the plays at such readings and described them as an "ordeal."[52] *China Wars* had workshop presentations in

NYC and San Diego in 1987, and finally a full production at Primary Stages in NYC opening 1 March, 1989, a venue Lord described as "one of the smallest theatres in creation."[53] A year later, *The Travelling Squirrel* finally made its NYC debut (having previously been performed as a three-week workshop production in Connecticut in 1987) at the Primary Stages, opening 23 February, 1990, with Lord himself as the director. This would prove to be Lord's final production in America. After 15 years living and writing in New York, Lord's American career had not travelled very far.

In an Artistic Statement dated June 1991, six months before his death, Lord, now living in Dunedin, reflected that he had "undergone a transition from writing primarily about New Zealand society (as in my plays *Country Cops* and *Bert and Maisy*) to writing comedies of manners about American life (as in *China Wars* and *The Travelling Squirrel*)."[54] He wrote:

> [My] immigrant situation from a country similar and very dissimilar to the United States has given me a number of disadvantages […]. I do not and cannot write plays in the American naturalist mode. My point of view is more ironic.[55]

Lord believed this placed him out of the "mainstream."[56] Jack Hoffsis, the Tony award-winning director, who directed a 1984 reading of *The Travelling Squirrel*, told Hilary Halba that he believed Americans did not respect the "miniaturism" which was a trademark in Lord's work: "[if] you don't honour the little and understand it as a gateway to the larger, Robert's plays are not going to be much to your liking."[57] Lord wrote in his Artistic Statement that he had been encouraged by the productions at Primary Stages that "there is an audience for my work."[58] Lord had supported himself with visits and residencies back in New Zealand, where his plays now held some critical and commercial currency, and he had also written for New Zealand television. Lord maintained that he "should be working in the theatre and in the United States" as he felt he had a "contribution to make to theatre" and had paid his dues. [59] He hoped for the "opportunity to go a step further."[60] It is clear that Lord entertained a return to America. Lord's career will always have this "what if" hanging over it – if he had lived longer, could he have taken a further step and finally cracked New York City?

Playwright Adaptation: New Zealand in New York

In *The Travelling Squirrel*, Roger finds it "good to be counted in instead of out" (181). Lord's career, both in New Zealand and North America, was the struggle to be "counted in." Lord had felt alienated in New Zealand, and failed to transition from a New Zealand playwright to an

American playwright. Like his accent, “half New Yorker and half New Zealander,”[61] Lord could not claim a sense of ease and belonging in either culture. In contrast, British expat Roger Hall, has been claimed and identified as a New Zealand playwright. Hall had imported a British model – the middle-class social comedy – populated this form with New Zealanders, and continued to replicate this successfully throughout his career. Lord was a magpie and innovator, ranging from the minimalism of *Meeting Place* to the social drama of *Joyful and Triumphant* (1992) that spanned decades. Lord’s work was a continuous process of testing, through rewrites and readings, attempting to find the drama that would connect with his desired American audience. But it was important for Lord that this was not at the expense of his artistic integrity; Lord did not produce plays that conformed to the style of American popular theatre, but remained outside of the American mainstream. Lord’s was an attempt to export himself as a writer, and adapt his writing for an American audience, but he ended up in a half-way place, neither here nor there.

Lord found it ironical that his most successful plays in America – *Well Hung* and *Bert and Maisy* – were the “most New Zealand.”[62] There had been some pressure from director Adrian Hall for *Well Hung*’s setting to be adapted to that of a small town American police station for the 1974 Trinity Square production. Lord initially agreed, but found the task of removing the “peculiarly New Zealand idioms” impossible.[63] It was agreed that the New Zealand setting would be retained, but, characteristically, Lord did some minor rewrites, which reportedly “universalised the characters without losing their essential New Zealand aspects.”[64] More accurately, the Trinity Square production had different resonances and emphases than were possible in New Zealand. As Lord put it, “when removed from the New Zealand climate, certain elements of the play changed.”[65] While Lord played down parallels with the Crewe case, as he claimed, “I know very little about them or the Thomas trial. My reading was confined to headlines,”[66] this would have been on the mind of a New Zealand audience, as it was “impossible to live in New Zealand and be unaware of the Arthur Allan Thomas trial and the controversy that surrounded it.”[67] This potential reading of the play is inaccessible to non-local audiences. The New Zealand caricatures are also read differently. Lord found New Zealand audiences strongly identified with Adam, the Hawkes Bay Gentleman Farmer, and Lynette, the “jokey suburban housewife.”[68] These stereotypes worked differently in America: “in Rhode Island there are no gentleman farmers and your American housewife character is different to the New Zealand version.”[69] For his American rewrite of *Middle-Age Spread*, Roger Hall was advised by his agent that “Broadway audiences are more likely to respond to a different type of suburban lady”[70] than how his character of Elizabeth was currently portrayed.

This perception of difference influenced Lord's rewrites of his play in order to "find new points of contact" for the audience to relate to. This was a minor cultural adaptation performed on the text: New Zealand markers are retained, but tweaked to emphasise what might be familiar to the ideal American audience. The resonance with the Crewe case is lost by placing the play in front of an American audience.

Lord was again pressured to adapt the play's setting for the American market for the 1986 tour of *Country Cops*. Just as Richard Briers had been a dominant influence on the British adaption of *Middle-Age Spread*, *Country Cop*'s contracted star, Conrad Bain, whose celebrity helped make the tour financially viable, insisted the play should be set in an "unspecified American locale."[71] Lord felt that the rhythm of the language was "distinctly not American," but agreed some changes could take place, such as exchanging "pinky bars" and "constable" to American equivalents.[72] The original director wanted to set the play in New Zealand and employ a dialect coach to work with the actors and left following this disagreement with Bain. The replacement negotiated a compromise: the supporting cast would use New Zealand accents, Bain would use his natural voice, and the production would not specify setting. Lord would not provide rewrites to make *Country Cops* an American play (as Hall made *Middle-Age Spread* a British one), but nor would signs of New Zealandness be emphasised in performance.

The 1974 production of *Well Hung*, and a later 1988 production of *Country Cops*, at the Dorset Theatre Festival in Vermont, both of which recognised the New Zealand rural context, were generally received more favourably than the half-dressed cultural drag of the 1986 *Country Cops* tour. The ambiguity of the 1986 production's setting was heavily attacked by the critics after the premiere. Lord described the response: "No one wants bad reviews but the ones I read the next day are beyond bad […]. No one has a kind word and everyone is confused by the accents."[73] Reviews reflected a geographical confusion; the play was understood in genre terms as a "British farce, a little bit Benny Hill."[74] Bain's character was described as a "publicity hungry British detective," but the reviewer noted that "within the first few minutes of dialogue" the British accent "mysteriously disappears."[75] The feedback loop was disrupted. The programme for the final stop of the tour, at the Westport Country Playhouse, gave the setting as "a police station in New Zealand where people speak in a variety of accents," but this would have done little for audience clarity.[76] In contrast, Lord had reported that the audience for the 1974 *Well Hung* had gained "quite a bit of enjoyment out of this 'new' language."[77] Edwin Stafford praised *Well Hung* as an excellent cultural export, arguing the play

should be added to the list of benefits from New Zealand, which included the "wonderful lamb and an equally wonderful part-Māori soprano, Kiri Te Kanawa."[78]

While many critics praised *Well Hung* because of its refreshing cultural context, there was also a notable critical response that devalued the work because of its New Zealand context, perceiving the play as an offensive (or just poorly written) work from an unsophisticated culture. Boston critic Elliot Norton dismissed what to him was an offensively titled farce as being behind the times of 1974: in Wellington, what were "old jokes" for the Americans, "have just gone into circulation."[79] Carolyn Clay said the "play itself is limp," and compared Lord to "a kind of sheepherder's George Feydeau."[80] The critical consensus of the 1988 Vermont production of *Country Cops* also reflected some of these criticisms of the *Well Hung* version of the play. Richard Asinof thought the characters were more suited to a television sit-com than a British farce and wished that Lord "would run it through the typewriter one more time,"[81] which must have been perplexing for Lord considering his substantial rewrites of the play across the years. Eleanor Koblenz argued the "British subjects 'down-under'" had yet to master the humour required by the British farce genre.[82] This was echoed by Jackie Demaline, who speculated the play's genre failure was due to "the half world separating mother country Great Britain, where sex farces are almost an art form, and tiny New Zealand, still in its artistic adolescence."[83] The final geographical and cultural confusion came when the play was listed in the Broadway Play Publishing catalogue, which described the play as a "loving spoof of the simple folk of this homeland [...], full of the amusing shenanigans that only a writer born with the sensibilities of the English could write."[84] For some Americans, a successful farce could only come from Britain. As for Lord, he was weary of being known as a New Zealand farm-boy in the big city: "were I lucky enough to have a play on or off-Broadway, I'd prefer it to be one of my others."[85]

Lord repeatedly expressed ambivalence towards his home country. An American profile of the playwright began: "Robert Lord is from New Zealand. Robert Lord doesn't want to talk about it."[86] Lord dismissed the fact that he was from New Zealand as "entirely irrelevant," but the journalist pressed, "it's part of who you are Robert. We need background."[87] Another article reported Lord "has little desire to return to New Zealand, and less desire to talk about it. It is clear he'd rather stay in New York, where he "has been granted sociological asylum."[88] But after his initial attempts to write for an American vernacular failed, Lord looked back to the New Zealand society he had escaped as his inspiration for *Bert and Maisy*. Lord credited this play with liberating him as a writer: "of course it was so simple after all my grappling, that it came flooding out in this great rush. I'd been so self-conscious about not

being American."[89] By returning to his familiar culture, Lord found that the "clichés started rolling."[90] America was diverse, but Lord expressed a regionalist belief that New Zealand was "unique because it is such a small contained culture."[91] In media interviews, however, Lord played down the New Zealand character of the play. In one he stated that "*Bert and Maisy* is not a play about a country but a play about a state of mind. It is the language and the rhythm that make it a play about New Zealand."[92] In another Lord said the play "isn't about New Zealand and it isn't about America. It's just about people."[93] Lord distributed his play to New Zealand companies, but found "an attitude about expatriates that makes it difficult, or perhaps awkward to return" and "had a hard time finding anyone interested in doing my play."[94] The Court produced a short season at the Southern Ballet Theatre, under the title of *Unfamiliar Steps*, in 1983. Lord was distressed by a "devastating review in the *Listener* which indicated I was out of touch with New Zealand tastes, interests and perceptions," and "it seemed that while I wasn't an American I had ceased, in some degree, to be a New Zealander."[95] Lord discovered, like Red Mole, that the return is difficult when both you, and your home country, have changed in your period away.

New Zealand under Muldoon in 1983 was indeed a markedly difference place to New Zealand in 1974, when Norman Kirk had died in office and Lord left New Zealand, so the *Listener*'s criticism was not unwarranted. Lord's "clichés" were from a New Zealand of a previous decade. Like a number of Robert Lord's plays, the status quo in *Bert and Maisy* is threatened by the arrival of an outsider, in this case Tom, a young "man of the world" (16), who is invited into the home of pensioner Bert after meeting him at the railway. Tom is welcomed to Bert's "castle" through the front door. Tom is strongly contrasted with Bert and his wife Maisy. Tom, a young liberal who drinks wine and coffee, is writing a book, has travelled within America and Europe by bike, and now intends to "tackle India" (11). Bert represents 'Old' New Zealand, nostalgic for a time before the "disaster" of progress, when "there was nothing round here but sheep and cows and chooks" (10). Maisy at first takes a puritanical view against Tom, as "the railway is no place for decent people" and "travel's not for responsible people" (37). Maisy's resistance eventually transforms to acceptance, and she and Bert begin to adopt Tom's predilections and worldview. A middle-aged couple – Grant and Shona – remain suspicious of Tom. For them, using the front door is a scandal, against the values of a New Zealand lifestyle where you can pop round to an always unlocked back door. Grant casts homophobic aspersions against Bert and Tom meeting at the railway: "don't think I don't know about railway stations […]. Men's rooms, mirrors […]. Sideways glances" (73-74). Grant continues to attack Tom as the type who travels, "up and leaving" his own parents,

returns drinking Beaujolais wine, and pretends he is "a cut above the rest of us" (83). The railway is negatively queered – as a representation of travel and escape it is perceived by Grant as opposing the values of stable (or puritanical, depending on your point-of-view) middle-class New Zealand society. Only undesirable people would wish to leave the New Zealand family home. Bert is haunted by an absent son who long ago left the family (a theme of exiled children that we will also observe in *The Tree* and *Skin Tight* in the following chapter). Lord's statement that this play is "just about people" is only half-true. The characters' social background informs their psychology. This is a play about people, but it is also significant that these people are New Zealanders.

Lord had stated that: "if you're in New Zealand because you choose to be, there is no better place. If you're stuck here and can't get out, then it is hell."[96] By settling in and seeking "sociological asylum" in New York, Lord seemed to be escaping this hell, and disowning his New Zealand connections. Through *Bert and Maisy*, Lord was reconnecting with his disowned identity by dramatising the very same puritanical New Zealand that he had rejected. Tom, the cosmopolitan figure, escapes the suburban hell with the declaration that he wants more from his life. Lord presents the possibility that Bert and Maisy might change their old-fashioned values permanently, but they are punished with the departure of the adopted-son figure, and the purchase of their "castle" by Grant and Shona. This is the triumph of Roger Hall's suburban middle-class. These themes reappear in cultural drag in *China Wars*. Here the domestic certainties of Dolly and Ken are shaken by the arrival of newly-marrieds Holly and Hall next door. While *China Wars* is a workable satire of suburban American pretention, it is also possible to read the play as an allegory for New Zealand society, as in small-town America standing in for small-country New Zealand in *The Rocky Horror Show*. Sprocket-on-Cog is characterised as "a town from another time. A quiet and dignified village" (15). From Dolly and Ken's perspective their previous neighbours, the Bakers, have done the unthinkable: left for a life on the road, leaving their precious china behind. Dolly proudly boasts that she has "never travelled" (15). Halba suggests, "we might speculate that the America of *China Wars* was not really America at all, but a representation of the repressive New Zealand social landscape from which Lord escaped to New York."[97] With Dolly and Ken we are back in the world of Bert and Maisy, suspicious of people like Lord, who have gone searching for something beyond the local. We are meant to pity them, just like Bert and Maisy, and Colin's unrealised travel dreams in *Middle-Age Spread*. Hall's play promotes travel as a virtue. Lord's plays do too, with the aim of attacking New Zealand society; in his satire, an acceptance of travel is an act of resistance against the puritanical, small-minded norm.

Lord believed that *Bert and Maisy* was stronger when performed in America. He wrote that in America "this very New Zealand play struck a chord in the hearts of the audience."[98] Contradicting his other statements on the play, Lord does acknowledge the play's New Zealand character in this instance, his changing identification underlining his ongoing uneasiness regarding his own relationship with his home country. Furthermore, the idea that this play struck a chord with the Americans contrasted with Lord's negative assessment of the reaction to the Court's Christchurch production. For New Zealand audiences, the characters are read as caricatures and rejected, because, "we're not like that" any more.[99] In America, "the same characters are just foreign enough to appeal to audiences,"[100] so audiences say, "why, they're just like us!"[101] Lord argued that when performed in New Zealand the play "has every cliché and looks almost absurd," but "the farther away from New Zealand you do it, the more realistic it becomes."[102] In other words, the dramatic mirror was too close and uncomfortable for New Zealanders, but set at a distance for the Americans, they could find their own resonances. (This was the option the Canadian adaptations of *Mo & Jess Kill Susie* did not allow their audiences.) San Diego critic Bill Hagen supported Lord's assessment and praised Lord's decision to end his attempt to "write American" and instead write about people, "and if the people happened to be New Zealanders, well, there was also something universally human about them in their foibles and small triumphs."[103] If New Zealand audiences found the characters clichéd, this is a fault of a dramaturgy, not the audience. Lord is not subtle with his broad-stroke characters. In America, these characters resist caricature because they are foreign, and the clichés do not hold the same cultural baggage as they do for audiences in New Zealand. Americans can claim likeness precisely because of their unlikeness.

Not all critics accepted that the characters were "just like us." One was suspicious of the suggestion that "this particular quintet of losers is to be taken as a statement on some universal human condition."[104] Another observed that the play followed the same format of other plays recently programmed at the Cassius Carter Centre Stage which begin "with a static household, on the verge of entropy, that someone jump-starts into new life."[105] In *Bert and Maisy*, "only the locale and the accents of the characters are different," and the reviewer was not convinced that "what takes place is very significant."[106] Other reviews suggested that *Bert and Maisy* owed more to American television than New Zealand drama: "one suspects that Lord devoted some of that American residency to watching American television. For despite their rounded New Zealand accents, the people of Lord's *Bert and Maisy* […] speak and act in the syntax of that most American of contemporary genres, the TV situation comedy,"[107] and William E. Fark compared the script to outdated TV shows of the 1950s like *Ozzie and Harriet*

and *The Life of Riley*.[108] It was difficult for these critics, and therefore some audiences, to know where to place the play. In America, like New Zealand, it could also seem outdated, but for reasons of genre.

While Lord's New Zealand plays gained the highest profile programming in America, in another irony, his American plays were often more successful in gaining New Zealand seasons than American ones. While *The Travelling Squirrel* was the exception that did not receive a fully staged production in New Zealand until 2015 by Circa Theatre, *China Wars* was produced in Wellington (1987) and Christchurch and Dunedin (1988), and *Glorious Ruins* (which had only received a workshop at Primary Stages in 1989), was produced in Wellington and Dunedin (1991) and Auckland and Christchurch (1992). In an instance that reversed Lord's experiences with adapting *Well Hung* and *Country Cops* for American audiences, Dunedin's Globe Theatre suggested he direct and adapt one of his 'American' plays for a New Zealand audience. This initially seemed like a "good idea," but one he rejected when he began "grappling with the cultural confusions."[109] This neatly sums up everything: while audiences could potentially find resonances in the representation of non-local societies, exchanging the societies was a problematic task. For Lord, New Zealand and America were worlds apart.

Halba observes that Lord's plays often "feature someone who belongs to neither one place nor another."[110] As much as Lord craved to be an insider in NYC, and as heavily as he involved himself in the New Dramatists and other companies, he remained an outsider. Lord's career remains in the in-between, a New Zealand playwright whose career is defined by his rejection of New Zealand. Lord wanted to be considered 'in,' but what made him unique was his status as a New Zealander, without which, he would be just another "asshole" in NYC with a play in their hip-pocket. The New Zealand context would help get a play programmed in America, but this was often met with a desire from the company for the same play to be Americanised. There were oddities back home, where plays written for American audiences were produced for New Zealand audiences. Lord was bitterly amused when the Film Commission turned down a proposal to make *Bert and Maisy* into a film because it doubted it would sell in the United States. Lord expressed his incredulity: "the play I wrote to bring me back in touch with my cultural reality could not be made into a film in my own country because it might not have commercial resonance in the culture I had written it to escape from."[111] In the meantime, of course, his New Zealand had changed too: "Auckland no longer looks like Auckland."[112] Lord's *Joyful and Triumphant*, produced by Circa Theatre posthumously in 1992, and subsequently toured to London in 1997, captures transformations in New Zealand society by following a family at Christmas from 1949-1989. Where *Bert and Maisy* represented

a rejection, *Joyful and Triumphant* represented a greater degree of acceptance of New Zealand by the writer, and indeed, marked a greater acceptance of the writer by New Zealanders. We finally knew where we were. Tragically, we do not know where else Lord, as an insider-outsider in both New Zealand and America, could have taken his dual audience.

[1] Hilary Halba, "Robert Lord's New York: Big and Small, Notes on Life and Art," *Australasian Drama Studies,* no. 60 (Apr. 2012), 37.

[2] Phillip Mann, "Introduction – The Travelling Squirrel," in *Three Plays Robert Lord* (Wellington: Playmarket, 2013), 122.

[3] "New Zealand Writer Brings Comedy to the Globe," unidentified newspaper, Nov. 24 1985, MS-1907/024, Robert Lord Papers [RLP], Hocken Collections, University of Otago Library, Dunedin.

[4] Michael Cordell, "A Kiwi From Manhattan Brings Sydney a Play," *SMH Metro*, Dec. 14 1984, MS-2438/018, RLP.

[5] Cordell.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Steven Schwadon, "'Cheeky' New Zealander Writes Plays," *Pronvincetown Advocate Summer Guide*, Aug. 19 1976, MS-2438/028, RLP.

[9] Robert Lord, "What I Did Last Summer," MS, n.d., MS-2438/058, RLP.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Lord, "Notes May 31st," 1979, MS-2438/058, RLP.

[12] Lord, "What I Did Last Summer."

[13] Bruce Mason, "Kiwi Presents Sly View of New York," *The Dominion*, Oct. 22 1979, MS-2438/028, RLP.

[14] "NZ Playwright Enjoying Life in New York," *Auckland Star*, May 1975, MS-2438/060, RLP.

[15] Mann, "Introduction" in *Three Plays Robert Lord*, 15.

[16] Mason.

[17] Lord, "Hamilton: Scenes from a Life," *Landfall*, vol. 45, no.4 (Dec. 1991), 402-406.

[18] Mann, "Introduction," 23.

[19] Nonnita Rees, "Retrospective Notes," *Playmarket 40*, ed. Laurie Atkinson (Wellington: Playmarket, 2013), 22.

[20] Judy Lessing, "New Zealand Play Staged in America," *NZ Herald*, Nov. 23 1974, MS-2438/060, RLP.

[21] Ibid.

[22] "New Zealand Writer Brings Comedy to the Globe."

[23] Halba, 34.

[24] Rees, "'Getting New Zealand Writing into Theatres': The Story of Playmarket," *Australasian Drama Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Oct. 1984), 23.

[25] Iona McNaughton, "Lord Home from the Big Apple," *Sunday Star Times*, Dec. 28 1986, MS-2438/157, RLP.

[26] William K. Gale, "Bye New Zealand, Hello Trinity," *Providence Sunday Journal*, Nov. 10 1974, MS-2438/060, RLP.

[27] "New Zealand Writer Brings Comedy to the Globe."

[28] Merrill Coke, "Ten Years on, Playwright Lord Returns," *Evening Post*, Dec 14. 1985, MS-2438/157, RLP.

[29] "NZ Playwright Enjoying Life in New York."

[30] Lord, "A Dramatic Distance," *NZ Listener*, Jul. 11 1987, MS-2438/157, RLP.

[31] Ibid.

[32] David Reed, "I'll Scream If… Premieres Monday," unidentified newspaper, n.d., MS-2438/028, RLP.

[33] Charles Boyle, "New Comedy Premieres at Provincetown Theatre," *Provincetown Advocate*, Aug. 26 1976, MS-2438/028, RLP.

[34] "Small Town Enzed," *Press*, Jul. 13 1983, MS-2438/018, RLP.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Paula Mann, "Broadway's Best-Kept Secret," *F.Y.I.*, Sep. 1983, MS-2438/157, RLP, 16.

[37] Ibid, 18.

[38] Ibid.

[39] William E. Fark, "Writer Has Fun with New Zealand Play," *North Country Magazine*, Dec. 19 1985, MS-1907/024, RLP.

[40] Lord, "Introduction," in *Bert and Maisy* (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1988), 5.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Charlene Baldridge, "They're Just like Us," in Old Globe Theatre *Bert and Maisy* Programme, Nov. 1985, MS-2441/074, RLP.

[43] "Reading Two: Bert and Maisy by Robert Lord," audience survey, c.1985, MS-2441/074, RLP.

[44] "Robert Lord's 'Bert and Maisy' to Receive US Premiere at Prestigious Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, California," Old Globe Theatre Media Release, Aug. 30 1985, MS-2441/074, RLP.

[45] Welton Jones, "'Bert and Maisy' Quickly Founders on Dramatic Shoals," *The San Diego Union*, Dec. 2 1985, MS-1907/024, RLP.

[46] Lord, "What I Did Last Summer."

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Robert Lord to Ethan [no surname provided], Jun. 17 1986, MS-2438/058, RLP.

[50] Lord, "What I Did Last Summer."

[51] Phillip Mann, "Introduction," 15.

[52] Lord, "What I Did Last Summer."

[53] Lord to Swoozie Kurtz, Dec. 20 1988, MS-2439/004, RLP.

[54] Lord, "Artistic Statement," MS, Jun. 1991, MS-2438/157, RLP.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Halba, 35.

[58] Lord, “Artistic Statement.”

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Cordell.

[62] Lord, “A Dramatic Distance.”

[63] Michele Y. Clad, “Hanging in There,” *NZ Listener*, Apr 5. 1975, MS-2438/060, RLP.

[64] Lessing.

[65] Clad.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Phillip Mann, “Introduction – Well Hung,” in *Three Plays Robert Lord,* 220.

[68] Clad.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Jenne Casaretto to Roger Hall, Sep. 25 1980, MS-1442/004, Roger Hall Papers, Hocken Collections.

[71] Lord, “Notes,” Jun. 5 1986, MS-2438/058, RLP.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Lord, “What I did Last Summer.”

[74] Mark Miller, “‘Country Cops’ Tickles a British Funnybone,” n.d., MS-2438/059, RLP.

[75] Robert Garrett, “‘Country Cops’ Plays for Non-Existent Laughs,” *The Boston Globe*, Jul. 9 1986, MS-2438/059, RLP.

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[77] Clad.

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[79] Elliot Norton, “New Farce at Trinity Fades in Second Act,” *Boston Herald*, Nov. 7 1974, MS-2438/060, RLP.

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[81] Richard Asinof, “‘County Cops’ Entertaining, but Characters are Weak,” *The Manchester Journal*, Aug. 10 1988, MS-2438/059, RLP.

[82] Eleanor Koblenz, “Dorset ‘Country Cops’ Reaches Farcical Low,” *Schenectady Gazette*, Aug. 10 1988, MS-2438/059, RLP.

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[83] Jackie Demaline, "Dorset's 'Country Cops' Needs Work," *The Times Union,* Aug. 19 1988, MS-2438/059, RLP.

[84] "Summer Catalog 1988," *Broadway Play Publishing Inc New York*, c.1988, MS-2439/031, RLP.

[85] Clad.

[86] William J. Sibley, "Playwright's Profile: Robert Lord," unidentified newspaper, n.d., MS-2438/157, RLP.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Schwadon.

[89] Baldridge.

[90] "Small Town Enzed."

[91] Ibid.

[92] Frances L. Bardacke, "Bert and Maisy," *San Diego Magazine*, Jan. 1986, MS-1907/024, RLP.

[93] Baldridge.

[94] Fark.

[95] Lord, "A Dramatic Distance."

[96] McNaughton.

[97] Halba, 17.

[98] Lord, "A Dramatic Distance."

[99] Baldridge.

[100] Fark.

[101] Baldridge.

[102] Fark.

[103] Bill Hagem, "Globe's 'Bert and Maisy' a Delicious Holiday Treat," unidentified newspaper, c.1985, MS-1907/024, RLP.

[104] Jones.

[105] Jeff Smith, "You Don't Say," *Reader*, Dec. 12 1985, MS-1907/024, RLP.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Thomas O'Connor, "An Indulgent 'Pygmalion', New Zealand Curiosity at the Globe," *The Orange County Register*, Dec. 11 1985, MS-1907/024, RLP.

[108] Fark, "'Bert and Maisy' is Like a 1950 Television Sitcom," *North County Magazine*, Dec. 5 1985, MS-1907/024, RLP.

[109] Lord, "A Dramatic Distance."

[110] Halba, 37.

[111] Lord, "A Dramatic Distance."

[112] Ibid.

Chapter VII

True to Label?

In this final chapter of Part Two, we move beyond explicit adaptation and consider cases of how New Zealand plays have been performed by overseas companies and retained their New Zealand settings. The Introduction to Part One mentioned some examples: *The Tree* (1957) by Stella Jones, *The Pohutukawa Tree* (1957) by Bruce Mason, and *The Wide Open Cage* (1959) by James K. Baxter. Another instance was the 'Oz Duz NZ' season of three New Zealand plays at Sydney's Stables Theatre in 1984. Concurrent with *Footrot Flats* breaking box office records in the commercial theatre, this was a significant not-for-profit initiative to showcase New Zealand works in Australia. The three plays selected offered quite different representations of life in New Zealand and the type of theatre produced in New Zealand during the period (albeit all written by male playwrights): the Australian premiere of *Foreskin's Lament* (1980) by Greg McGee, *Middle-Age Spread* (1977) by Roger Hall, and *Bert and Maisy* (1983) by Robert Lord. The Australian director of the plays, Aarne Neeme said:

> Our two cultures are similar yet distinct – we see each other at one remove. And it is this difference, the slightly distorting mirror, that may make us examine ourselves a little more closely, and thus perhaps more clearly.[1]

The three plays from New Zealand were intended to educate Australians about New Zealand society, but also provide a mirror to judge their own society.

This chapter focusses on two case studies of true to label plays (to borrow Bruce Mason's term), one from the International World, and one from the Global World, *The Tree* by Stella Jones and *Skin Tight* (1994) by Gary Henderson. Both display strong markers of New Zealandness. As suggested by Neeme's comments in the Oz Duz NZ example, the case studies will investigate how the New Zealand identity displayed in these plays served the needs of the overseas companies producing them, and how the dramatic mirror may have operated.

The Tree was premiered at Bristol's Little Theatre by the Rapier Players in 1957 and was also produced that year by Newcastle Repertory. Bristol's Rapier Players was an exception to "the usual type of repertory company" that, similar to the community companies in New Zealand, presented "only plays that have proved themselves in London."[2] The company manager explained it was their "duty to give unknown plays an airing," even though "they don't often make money."[3] The Newcastle production was staged in The Playhouse, which had

a capacity of 1,500 compared to the 500 seats of Bristol's Little Theatre.[4] Newcastle Repertory was "glad to be able to present a play by this new author."[5] For both, the novelty of presenting a play from New Zealand to their audiences drove their programming decision. Though the companies did not adapt the script or setting, the specific regionalist New Zealand identity of the plays was challenged by the needs of the Bristol and Newcastle companies and their audiences. Further, what is especially revealing about *The Tree*'s international experience is the New Zealand theatre community's response to the Bristol production.

In the case of *Skin Tight*, the play's two actor format (with a third actor who appears at the end), and the suggested staging of "a number of gym mats," (15) lends itself to flexibility and adaptability. What is not immediately clear is how the play's strong evocation of a Pākehā/Anglo-New Zealand sensibility could extend to the same thematic flexibility in overseas staging. In exploring *The Tree* and *Skin Tight* this chapter questions what the paradigms of portability are that allow both New Zealand plays to travel true to label, and complicate just how true to label they really are.

The Tree

The Tree was previously discussed in the Introduction to Part One (pages 32-33), performed in Bristol and Newcastle in 1957 without textual alterations. The play revolves around the Willis family grouping of ageing father Herbert, and – in a Chekhovian nod – three sisters: Lucy and Daisy who still live with their father, and black sheep Hilda who left 15 years earlier, aged 19, for overseas travel. New Zealander Alice Kemp (taking the name Alice Fraser as her stage name) played Lucy in the Bristol Rapier Players production. Kemp's biography finds echoes in the play; step-granddaughter of Prime Minister Peter Fraser, she left New Zealand for London aged 16 in 1934, trained at RADA in London, and returned to Wellington in 1977.[6] The drama of *The Tree* allegorises its own existence in a case of art imitating life. An important aspect of New Zealand identity developed in *The Tree* is the perennial pull New Zealanders feel for overseas travel and opportunities. This is further borne out in the generational conflict between mother Ada and eldest daughter Hilda during the flashback of Act Two. Ada reflects that she'd "have given years of my life" for a chance to travel, but it "never came" (32). Instead, she married Herbert, whom she criticises as being "well over fifty – and in the same job that you had when you married" (29). Ada is absent from the present time of the play, her early death only indirectly addressed. Stella Jones highlighted the societal tension involving New

Zealand's status as a small island nation, the crisis of identity formation and gender straitjacketing, and the lure of overseas opportunities and success.

Prior to the Rapier Players season, New Zealand companies exhibited little interest in *The Tree*. It was rejected by "numerous" local amateur theatres and also by the New Zealand Players.[7] There are different stories about these rejections. One article stated that Jones was "turned down by three New Zealand producers."[8] Jones is quoted: "all said they liked it and would like to stage it, but that was as far as it went."[9] Jones, who gave up any further attempts to have it produced in New Zealand, then sent it to a London agent who "immediately accepted it."[10] This differs from Jones's account in *NZ Truth*. There it is reported that she also submitted *The Tree* to the New Zealand Broadcasting Service, and was rejected with the message, "we cannot believe that this play would have any interest to New Zealand audiences."[11] Jones asked her British agent, Edith Ray Gregossen of Richard Marsh Limited, if she could submit *The Tree* to the Southland Centennial playwriting competition. Gregossen approved and stated: "in our view you ought to win."[12] The play, however, was placed runner-up in the 1956 competition, and was subsequently programmed by the Invercargill Repertory (who also programmed the winner, the poorly received *The Montgommeries of Glenholme* by Jean Black) for performances from 11 to 13 June, 1957, shortly after the Bristol season. No further local productions eventuated as a result of her placing in the competition, and it is in this period prior to the Bristol season that Jones presumably received further rejections. *The Tree*, despite its local relevance, or perhaps even because of its relevant home truths, was of little interest in a New Zealand theatre environment that favoured production of mostly English dramas over homegrown scripts. Jones would later feel vindicated following the New Zealand Players belated tour of the play through the North Island in 1959, when she "learned that our audiences are there, ready and waiting for us."[13]

The programming of *The Tree* by the New Zealand Players can be linked directly with the overseas recognition the Bristol production provided. Jones wrote that Stafford Byrne, the artistic director of the New Zealand Players, "had his copy of the play from Bristol."[14] It was noted elsewhere that Byrne "was more inclined to base his judgment on the English reviews and the recommendations of the English agents" than the Centennial competition or Invercargill production.[15] A New Zealand critic reviewing the Whitcombes published edition of *The Tree* concluded it was "a great pity […] that a play such as this must be done in England before anyone here is interested sufficiently to produce it […], the old, old story of the writer being without honour in their own country until recognised overseas."[16] The implication is that only through overseas, specifically British, recognition was a New Zealand play invested with

worth and value. Ten years after the Bristol debut of *The Tree*, in response to a questionnaire asking "What factors could help the theatre flourish in the next ten years?" Bruce Mason reflected that "a gigantic overseas success would be one way. Our people are still unsure of themselves artistically, looking not only for dramatic food but also taste and judgment from Elsewhere. If Elsewhere says it's good, then it must be."[17] Robert Lord also encountered this phenomenon. The San Diego programming of *Bert and Maisy* "was responsible for a new lease of life for the play Down Under,"[18] and led to subsequent New Zealand productions "at all the professional theatres in New Zealand," a radio version, and even "provided the starting-point for a seven-part television series."[19] America had said it was good, and New Zealand followed (despite *Bert and Maisy* having received some unenthusiastic reviews from American critics). In the case of *The Tree,* it is unlikely the New Zealand Players would have produced the play without the British productions. *The Tree* revealed the legitimising power that recognition from "Elsewhere" brought for New Zealand theatre in that period, in this instance, a consequence of the colonial paradigm.

What did England see in the play? It can be inferred that *The Tree* in the 1950s reflected the colonially inherited British values and lifestyle in New Zealand and represented a familiar society to that of Bristol's. This is a provincialist model that sees little difference between New Zealand and the 'mother country.' This does not mean that Bristol was substituted for an Auckland regional town as London would be for Wellington in Hall's *Spread*. Alice Kemp's casting could presumably have ensured a degree of New Zealand understanding. One contemporary article reported that it was "exciting to see on the English stage a play about a group of recognisable New Zealanders and their troubles."[20] While *The Tree* has much to say about social dynamics within New Zealand, and a pull to escape, it is possible that for the Rapier Players, and subsequently the Newcastle Repertory, the dramatic situation of the Willis family on the sleepy back porch reflected a similar relationship between the regions and the London metropolis.

The universality of *The Tree* has been repeatedly invoked. A review of the published text noted that "characters have a universality that makes them typical of people everywhere."[21] The Newcastle production emphasised that "although the play has a New Zealand background the theme is universal and will, we are sure, provide our audiences with an interesting theatrical evening."[22] Jones herself said that a "good play must deal with a universal theme which could be applicable to people almost anywhere in the world."[23] In the same article, the Bristol director said "the theme of the play might be called an inversion of the Cinderella story" and likened Hilda to an "ugly" Cinderella beside "her beautiful younger sisters" who "get all their mother's

love."[24] This is a rather a shallow reading of the text. *The Tree* deals with New Zealand's societal anxieties about gender roles and narrow horizons. The concerns of the women in *The Tree* are of post-war New Zealand women. In examining how the experience of women figured in relation to issues around national identity, *The Tree* stands apart from the regionalist texts examined in Part One which constructed a highly masculinised conception of New Zealand identity. Jones said, "the problems of women naturally concern me most, as I know most about them, and have experience, first-hand, of them."[25] Hilda can be associated with the way the war had raised the stakes for women's independence and mobility. Daisy and Lucy are associated with the post-war retreat to domesticity. With the money from Daisy's deceased husband, both sisters opt not to work and remain resident in the family home, supporting their father. *The Tree* speaks to the ambivalence surrounding a woman's post-war position balancing familial duty, career, and independence. Hilda achieves what her mother was unable to do, and in leaving both her family and the country, she rejects the expectations of her feminised social role and the puritanical aspects of New Zealand identity, but at the cost of an enduring connection with her family and origins. (Downstage's *Hedda Gabler* ended in tragedy for the title character, but in *The Tree* Hilda's decision to leave again at the end of the play and escape the sleepy back porch is presented as a victory for the character.) *The Tree*'s dramatic mirror offered a potentially uncomfortable reflection and feminised critique of New Zealand society in the 1950s. Overseas, the cultural specificity of this local New Zealand context is broadened to take on what are claimed as universalised elements, though these elements might more accurately be perceived to be in common: generational dysfunction within a family unit, and the pull from hinterlands towards capital centres.

The sense of suffocating isolation experienced by Hilda and her mother in *The Tree* was likely not to have played as strongly in England. Within a colonial paradigm, the themes of progress and settlement encapsulated in the question of whether Herbert will cut down the titular tree would also likely resonate less. The New Zealand situation was not an exact match with regional England, but could be recognised; it was enough of a match. The Newcastle producers had it both ways: they claimed their audiences could appreciate the play's universal themes, and also be given a "glimpse of life in New Zealand."[26] Life in New Zealand remains distinct and specialised against life in Newcastle. Through this implicit cultural adaptation, the New Zealand context is maintained while simultaneously offering the possibility of more generalised meanings for English audiences to discover. For the Bristol and Newcastle companies the New Zealand context was deemed fit to purpose and retained. The play has a

seriousness of thematic and dramatic intent, and the specificity of its national location is embedded in the text. Unlike *Ladies Night* for example, an exchange of location is not so easy to make. The New Zealand cultural context, however, accords with the cultural concerns of those producing and viewing the productions within the post-WWII international Western world.

The Tree was an early case where the New Zealand context was presented true to label, with no need to change the script or setting in order to fulfil the needs of the presenting companies. The British regional community context may have been a factor. There was less risk involved for an established repertory society who could play to their existing audiences, so the commercial imperative for cultural adaptation, that was later to be applied to *Middle-Age Spread*, was not a factor. The regionalist contextual identity however can still become destabilised and open to alternative readings; what the label might say in New Zealand can read slightly differently on the other side of the world.

Skin Tight's World Flight

Gary Henderson built *Skin Tight* with a number of cues and clues that a knowing New Zealand audience can identify, and identify with. It stimulates the New Zealand audience's feedback loop. The first clue is the names of central characters Tom and Elizabeth, names borrowed from Denis Glover's 1939 poem 'The Magpies.' Glover stages a narrative of settlement as ever present magpies, who chant "Quardle oodle ardle wardle doodle," witness Tom and Elizabeth work their farm, "while the pines grew overhead." Despite their toil, the farm is seized by the bank, Elizabeth dies, and Tom goes "light in the head," their New Zealand dream unfulfilled. In Skin Tight, Tom and Elizabeth similarly lose the farm, and Elizabeth approaches death, but while the poem views their stories from the detached vantage point of the magpies, Henderson positions the drama with the immediacy of Tom and Elizabeth's own experience. In doing so, Henderson experiments with the temporality of the drama. The bodies of the characters are in their "prime" (14), and Henderson has the couple engage in "brutal" fights where they "punch, kick, slap each other" (15) as a heightened expression of their complex relationship. Their minds are of their older selves, allowing them a longer view of their histories as they negotiate an agreed narrative of their lives together and attempt to delay the inevitability of Elizabeth's death. At the end of the play, Tom and Elizabeth make light of their situation:

> Elizabeth: Not me. My body. I'll be gone. Flying away with the magpies. Once around the farm for a last look, then away.
> Tom: Where to?
> Elizabeth: Somewhere only magpies know about.
> Tom: Oh! Oamaru! (39)

Invoking Glover and Janet Frame, it is a self-referential joke, about the obscurity of Oamaru, that undercuts the pathos and that the local audience in the know can appreciate.

Tom and Elizabeth symbolise the New Zealand experience-in-common, their "1940s or 1950s" dress style reminiscent of a nostalgic New Zealand yesteryear, changing the WWI context of Glover's poem to WWII. As represented in *Skin Tight*, mid-20th century New Zealand was a puritan country that did not talk about sex in polite company. Tom admits he had to get a book out of the library to educate himself on sexual matters, a "medical thing with lots of diagrams. And fingerprints" (19). Other markers, from the "races" (24), to a "swimming hole by the willows" (22), invoke an image of a rural New Zealand idyll. The play also addresses another experience that New Zealanders did not talk about: "the big boys' adventure," the Second World War (25). Elizabeth describes reuniting with Tom when he returned from war: "I ran to you, and it was the first time that I'd seen you cry. And I, deceived again, thought the horror was over" (26). The war's trauma leaves a psychic scar on the characters, and by extension, the nation. It was also during Tom's absence at the war that Elizabeth had an affair with another man, which Elizabeth finally confesses to during the action of the play. When Tom asks what kind of man he was, in a further specific cue for the ideal-local audience, Elizabeth replies, "a sheep shearer" (32). This challenges the comforting myth of the New Zealand rural paradise, which is challenged again when we learn Tom and Elizabeth's daughter is living in self-imposed exile in metropolitan London. Unlike Hilda in *The Tree*, Tom and Elizabeth's daughter does not return. Tom and Elizabeth represent a corroded New Zealand, whose reality does not match the myth that New Zealanders tell about themselves.

The way Tom and Elizabeth feel and relate to the land is the cue that potentially offers the strongest identification for the local audience. The New Zealand imagination can picture what Tom means by "one of those long South Canterbury summer twilights" (23), but what happens when Tom and Elizabeth are placed on foreign soil, and performed and viewed by non-New Zealanders? An overseas audience is unlikely to have the same imaginative frame of reference. Mark Amery claims that "producers elsewhere in the world equally sympathised with [the play's] connection to the land."[27] It is feasible that Tom and Elizabeth's connection with place could be understood in terms of audiences' and producers' feelings towards specific

relationships with place and landscapes of significance in their parts of the world. Johnny Oleksinski, a Chicago reviewer, imaginatively substituted Canterbury for "farmland reminiscent of Eugene O'Neill's rocky settings."[28] When the Shaky Isles Theatre Company (formed in 2006 by New Zealand expats living in London) produced *Skin Tight* in London in 2009, an actor from Newcastle played Tom with a Geordie accent. Director Stella Duffy found this worked "perfectly" for London audiences as there existed a stereotypical perception that people from Newcastle "know about the land."[29] Duffy informed me this choice did not work for some New Zealand expats, for whom the dissonance proved too distracting, though many NZ immigrants have British accents. Reviews from other productions in Britain, America, and Australia show that a connection with land and place was rarely a feature of the play that the critics chose to highlight, and Oleksinski's review is the only example of such transference. In the 2000 Sydney production, a reviewer commented that the references to the land produced a distancing effect, "raves about the land and the sound of magpies squawking really gives no palpable sense of time, place and history,"[30] ironic since these would be Australian magpies originally. A Bristol reviewer noted that "Tom in particular has some lyrical stuff about the countryside as a source of nutrition,"[31] but this placed the production in terms of a generalised, English expanse; it did not carry the same localised associations.

Time, place, and history is readily evoked for a New Zealand viewer when Tom discusses his feeling of being joined to a wider South Island terrain:

> Not just our farm, but this whole place. The plains. The Southern Alps…. Up through Burke's Pass to the big lakes. Tekapo. Pukaki. And the rivers. The Waitaki. The Rangitata. And the big Raikaia churning milky and rich through the gorge. Names that seemed to invoke something vast. That recalled me to who I was and where I belonged. (36)

This specifically recalls a South Island regionalism associated with Glover, Frame, Allen Curnow and Charles Brasch. Henderson develops this sense of the Pākehā's "grounding" in the land (as Amery put it) when Elizabeth imagines her aged body taking on the characteristics of the New Zealand landscape:

> Sooner or later your life becomes parched. Its rivers run thin. Its mountains have melted into the distance as blue and cool as memories. It gathers its cracked old skin and peers thirstily at the wall of black thunderheads coming from the south. (44)

Elizabeth evokes a view of her mortality, but by linking herself to the landscape, her body can live on. The characters of *Skin Tight* are bound with the land they come from. Overseas, the characters can become displaced from that land. Lyn Gardner, in her review of a London production, is one of the few critics to mention how the play constructed "a loamy sense of

place – New Zealand's Canterbury plains and surrounding mountains."[32] More often, the land becomes generic "rural farmland."[33] *Skin Tight*'s use of Glover's "Magpies" fits into Lorenzo Veracini's description of the typical "settler narrative of adaptation, struggles against a harsh environment, economic development and integration of migrants."[34] Overseas, settlement of the South Canterbury landscape stands in for settled land across the Anglo-world.

In New Zealand, *Skin Tight* can be as much a love story about this land and nation as it is a love story between two people. Gardner found the play constructed "an even stronger appreciation of a long but not always untroubled marriage," and it is this aspect of the play that overwhelmingly forms the main focus of the reviews.[35] A reviewer of the 2010 Cincinnati production explained that "the audience learns about the couple's history – from infidelity issues, to their relationship with their estranged daughter, even the little quirks that annoy each other,"[36] but this summary excluded the war, the couple's relationship to the farm and land, and the New Zealand national context. For Drew Foulcher, the director of this Cincinnati production, the "action and stage combat" in the play was the primary appeal.[37] Alan Becher, director of the Perth Theatre Company season, wrote in his programme note of the "passionate love that characters have for each other. Some of us, secretly may even see ourselves in Tom and Elizabeth, or wish we did."[38] Moira Blumenthal, who directed the South African and Australian premieres, described the play's appeal as "the structure and theatricality."[39] While these do not foreclose the possibility of sympathy to the play's connection with the land, other aspects are emphasised overseas.

The sense that *Skin Tight* operates beyond both national and temporal borders is a common response. The New Zealand context is entirely absent from some overseas reviews. Two British reviews of the same London production did not find the New Zealand setting or origins of the work an important enough aspect to even briefly mention or discuss.[40] *Skin Tight* is effectively absorbed into the British culture. Two Perth reviewers failed to mention New Zealand, [41] and one of them situated the show as "a love story outside conventional time frames."[42] A Cincinnati reviewer mentioned the "rural New Zealand" setting and "references to local places and mid-twentieth century events and featuring characters who speak with kiwi accents," but emphasised their belief that "*Skin Tight* really happens in a place of no time – or, rather, a timeless place," which the minimalist set reinforces.[43] Universality is claimed through the characters of Tom and Elizabeth, "two ordinary people […] with just enough detail left out to be any one of us."[44] One reviewer stated that the audience can "understand their universal commonalities,"[45] and another that the "the themes that run through this play are universal," listing these as "promises made and broken, the conflicts between parents and children, the

nature of betrayal and the value of constancy."[46] There is a strong cumulative sense from these reviews of the play provoking a profound emotional impact on its overseas audiences: the "raw, emotional portrayal of a very real, intimate relationship" that "reduced many in the audience to tears by the end of the show;"[47] a "genuinely moving work about the course of love over a lifetime […]. I found a little trace of something in my throat;"[48] "the production drew tears from many of the audience throughout the final scenes;"[49] and even this experience in the Sydney production:

> One audience member who perhaps had his own war scars tried to leave during a particularly emotive scene and passed out on his way, stalling the performance for a few minutes. The friend I was with, shed tears of joy and sadness for the show's finale.[50]

What the reviewers and these descriptions of the audience responses reveal is not universality, but the common-space, the markers of identity which the audience perceive that they share with the characters. Tom and Elizabeth's love story is the main marker that produces the connection for the audience. As an Exeter reviewer hyperbolically expressed, "what is love? […] Few have come as close to answering it as Gary Henderson […], exploring in an hour the entire spectrum of human emotion."[51] Of course, the raw and sensual love story of Tom and Elizabeth is at the centre of the *Skin Tight*'s narrative. Elizabeth ranks the myth they were sold of the War as a secondary deceit compared to the "biggest deceit of all," that "love would be an easy thing" (27). For a local, knowing audience, the New Zealand regional specific cues provide a context for understanding these characters – the parallel story of the Glover poem of Pākehā settlement – in addition to the potential catharsis the love story allows. Overseas, the New Zealand context (if it is even deemed important in the response) is a context only for these two characters to exist; as a Chicago reviewer expressed, "understanding the actual story becomes secondary to just being immersed in this tumultuous eroticism."[52]

Since it is not presented as a foreign touring production, overseas audiences do not necessarily come to *Skin Tight* with a cosmopolitan frame of mind (with the intention of learning about another culture). Instead, because it has been chosen by the producing company for their local audiences, it is perceived that the story could take place anywhere and is relevant everywhere, even though the text could not literally be re-set without substantial rewrites. Veracini argues that "in the consolidating settler 'Angloworld' […] the ultimate results of settler colonialism were thought to be inherently comparable, a matter of local variation on a common theme."[53] Overseas, *Skin Tight* is accepted within a similar frame where local or regional divergence and specific difference is limited. The universal message might be taken to be that people struggle everywhere, but this struggle is a settler's one. The symbolic layer

of cues and clues are either not read, or taken as normative, and instead it is the emotional journey that is foregrounded. *Skin Tight* is the second most produced New Zealand play because of its artistic merit, the simplicity of its staging, and its potential to produce a strong cathartic effect in local and overseas audiences. *Skin Tight* does not change, but its audiences do, identifying with some of the possible readings, but not recognising others. New Zealand, and the world, see different things.

[1] Oz Duz NZ Programme, 1984, MS-1907/024, Robert Lord Papers [RLP], Hocken Collections, University of Otago Library, Dunedin.

[2] Brian Bell, "Play Premiere," unidentified newspaper, c.1957, NZMS 1525, Jones, Stella Marjorie (nee Claridge), 1904-1991 Miscellaneous Papers [SJMP], Auckland Libraries.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Edith Ray Gregesson to Stella Jones, Aug. 1 1957, NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[5] Playhouse Newcastle *The Tree* Programme, Nov. 4 1957, NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[6] "Alice Fraser – Actor," *NZ on Screen*, n.d., http://www.nzonscreen.com/person/alice-fraser

[7] Howard McNaughton, *New Zealand Drama: A Bibliographic Guide* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1974), 76.

[8] "Hard Won Success for Playwright," unidentified newspaper, n.d., NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] "Writers Heckle Broadcasting Director," *NZ Truth*, Sep. 8 1959, NZMS 1525, SJMP, 22.

[12] Gregesson to Stella Jones, Mar. 10 1956, NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[13] "Talk," Transcript of NZBS broadcast on *Bookshelf*, Aug. 24 1960, NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[14] Stella Jones, "To the Editor," unidentified newspaper, n.d., NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[15] Margaret Kelly, "The Tree - Letter to the Editor," unidentified newspaper, n.d., NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[16] B.F. "The Tree," unidentified newspaper, n.d., NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[17] Bruce Mason, *Every Kind of Weather* (Auckland: Reed Methuen, 1986), 269.

[18] Robert Lord, "A Dramatic Distance," *NZ Listener*, Jul. 11 1987, MS-2438/157, RLP.

[19] Lord, "Introduction," in *Bert and Maisy* (Dunedin: University of Otago, 1988), 5.

[20] Bell.

[21] B.F.

[22] Playhouse Newcastle *The Tree* Programme.

[23] "Women's World: N.Z. Woman's Play to have its Premiere at Little Theatre, Bristol," *The Dominion*, Mar. 28 1957, NZMS 1525, SJMP.

[24] Ibid.

[25] John Dunmore, "Playwrights on Playwriting," *Theatre 60,* vol. 8 (1964), 31.

[26] Playhouse Newcastle *The Tree* Programme.

[27] Mark Amery, "Pakeha and Palagi: New Zealand European Playwriting 1998-2012," *Playmarket 40*, ed. Laurie Atkinson (Wellington: Playmarket, 2013), 101.

[28] Johnny Oleksinski, "Review: Skin Tight/Cor Theatre," *New City Stage*, Sep. 3 2012, Client File: Gary Henderson [CFGH], Playmarket, Wellington.

[29] Interview with Stella Duffy, London, Jul. 7 2015.

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[30] "Dance of Love and Hate," *Sydney Star Observer*, n.d., CFGH.

[31] Steve Wright, "Review Skin Tight," *Venue Magazine*, May 2005, CFGH.

[32] Lyn Gardner, "Skin Tight – Review," *The Guardian*, Jul. 22 2013, CFGH.

[33] Rick Pender, "Onstage: Skin Tight at Know Theatre," *City Beat*, Oct. 5 2010, CFGH.

[34] Lorenzo Veracini, "The Imagined Geographies of Settler Colonialism," in *Making Settler Colonial Space: Perspectives on Race, Place and Identity*, eds. Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 187.

[35] Gardner.

[36] Jill Siekman, "Know Theatre of Cincinnati's Skin Tight," *BWW Reviews*, Oct. 12 2010, http://www.broadwayworld.com/cincinnati/article/BWW-Reviews-Know-Theatre-of-Cincinnatis-SKIN-TIGHT-20101012

[37] Jenny Kessler, "Know Theatre's 'Skin Tight' Offers Passionate Look at Love," *UrbanCincy*, Oct. 14 2010, CFGH.

[38] Perth Theatre Company *Skin Tight* Programme, Mar. 2003, CFGH.

[39] Judy Adamson, "A Passion Play," *Sydney Morning Herald*, Nov. 24-30 2000, CFGH.

[40] Peter Brown, "Skin Tight Review," *London Theatre*, Jul. 18 2013; Honour Bayes, "Skin Tight," *The Stage*, Jul. 19 2013, CFGH.

[41] Martin Turner, "Passion Play," *Western Suburbs Weekly*, Mar. 25 2003; Sarah McNeill, "Love Story has Compelling Depth," *Post Newspapers*, Mar. 29 2003, CFGH.

[42] McNeill.

[43] Pender.

[44] Kessler.

[45] Oleksinski.

[46] Claire Arnold, "Skin Tight," unidentified newspaper, Jun. 2012, CFGH.

[47] Kessler.

[48] Helen Razer, "Erotic Play Hits the Spot," *Nat Age*, c.Feb. 2011, CFGH.

[49] Arnold.

[50] Miles Merrill, "Real Lives Given Beauty," *The Hub*, Dec. 7 2000, CFGH, 17.

[51] Arnold.

[52] Katy Walsh, "Skin Tight Review," unidentified newspaper, c.Sep. 2012, CFGH.

[53] Veracini, 187.

Conclusion (to Part Two)

The cases in Part Two have provided another angle to the problems associated with identity formation in New Zealand drama. The prestige and validating power of "Elsewhere" is sought, but in doing so the fantasy of New Zealand identity is made vulnerable for the needs of the producing company and their local audience. In order to work in London, Merton Hodge and Richard O'Brien translated their psychic experiences of New Zealand into a British or global cultural zone. Searching for markers of New Zealand identity in their plays is an exercise in restoring a dormant New Zealand context subsumed by dominant cultures. Roger Hall's *Middle-Age Spread* represents an explicit colonially orientated cultural adaptation, where Hall privileges the prestige of British culture and production over New Zealand's, writing the original identity out of the play and reverting to a British identity. Robert Lord in contrast struggled to fit either New Zealand or American identities. He attempted to adapt his writing for American society, but did not achieve much success with his plays set in America, and instead it was the New Zealand identities, that he had been attempting to escape from, that gained the most interest from American companies. Whereas Hall's case demonstrated how easily New Zealand culture could be exchanged for British, Lord's failed attempts at identity-transfer show a distinction between New Zealand and American cultures that he was unable to assimilate.

The cosmopolitan zone, in which audiences make a "a conscious attempt to be familiar with people, objects and places that sit outside one's local or national settings,"[1] is largely absent in the productions examined in Part Two. Whereas touring productions signal they are not of this place, non-New Zealand companies consciously place the work in a context that they believe will be accepted by their local audiences. The Canadian productions of *Mo & Jess Kill Susie* had the potential to construct a cosmopolitan zone, allowing audiences to draw connections and distinctions between Canada and New Zealand's colonial histories, but instead transplanted the action of the play to their local context, foreclosing this possibility. Explicit adaptation, by Hall in *Middle-Age Spread*, and the Canadian companies in *Mo & Jess*, more overtly guides, and limits, the way their audiences see the plays. It suggests an anxiety from the producing companies that a cosmopolitan transfer, in which their audiences interpret the cultural images of others, cannot occur without their help, such as Robert Kidd explaining that West End audiences would not accept Richard Briers as a Kiwi. The resulting cultural drag may create a dissonance for the audiences and a feeling that they are watching something that

was once “local and plausible,” as Michael Billington said about *Middle-Age Spread*,[2] and if done poorly, such as for the tour of Robert Lord’s *Country Cops*, may lead to a rejection of the work by the audience.

The commercial pressure of cultural adaptation has been persuasive in some instances, but outside of centres like London’s West End, Mason’s “melancholy truth” that “when our plays go abroad, they cannot travel true to label”[3] is more often a fiction. However, even when plays are presented true to label, an implicit process of cultural adaptation takes place, in which overseas companies and audiences emphasise certain aspects of the play over others in order to meet their own criteria for identification. In *Skin Tight*, Tom and Elizabeth’s relationship dominates overseas responses, and subtextual markers of New Zealand identity, such as a Pākehā conception of place, are not read by audiences overseas in the same way they potentially can be by a knowing local audience. However, there is potential for a wider range of meanings, or different meanings, to become available for overseas audiences. In cases of both explicit and implicit adaptation, it is not the New Zealand context itself that is the primary appeal for the international companies, but what the plays can say about their own contexts, thus the collapse of the cosmopolitan zone. As soon as it is produced by an overseas company, the “New Zealand” in any New Zealand play changes.

Mo & Jess Kill Susie is the only play I have discussed in Part Two that deals explicitly with Māori culture, though it is written by a Pākehā author, and it is significant that plays from Māori writers have not yet been taken up by companies in other parts of the world. One reason is that these could be perceived to be more difficult to ‘universalise’ in the Western hegemonic terms than the other plays discussed. It is likely that notions and processes of cultural adaptation would look different too if more companies outside the Anglo-world produced New Zealand scripts. As of 2017, it is largely companies in the Anglo-world that have found plays from New Zealand, or made plays from New Zealand, work to their purpose.

Part Two has explored how the New Zealand identity has, or has not, worked when drama is produced by overseas companies. The spectrum of possible meanings both expands and contracts, limiting or even absenting entirely the New Zealand context, but simultaneously allowing for other interpretations, meanings, and cultural identifications. This process is aided however by the cultural similarities or the perception of a local variation on a common theme between the Anglo-New Zealand mainstream and the cultures where the plays have been produced overseas, particularly in Britain, Australia, North America and Canada. In general, cultural equivalence is emphasised over local and special regionalist difference. In answer to “is this the real thing – a New Zealand play?” New Zealand critics such as myself will see

"influences that can be found in this country and nowhere else."[4] When overseas companies ask, "what does this play from New Zealand mean to us and our audiences?" they will see influences that can be found in their own home countries also.

[1] Gavin Kendall, Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbiš, *The Sociology of Cosmopolitanism: Globalization, Identity, Culture and Government* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 113.

[2] Michael Billington, "Middle-Age Spread," *The Guardian*, c.1979, MS-1614/012, Roger Hall Papers, Hocken Collections, University of Otago, Dunedin.

[3] Quoted in John Smythe, *Downstage Upfront* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2004), 226.

[4] Kendrick Smithyman, *A Way of Saying: A Study of New Zealand Poetry* (Auckland: Collins, 1965), 34.

PART THREE: TOURING THE GLOBAL WORLD

Introduction: New Zealand Goes Global

For the third part of this thesis, we return once again to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. From 1997 to 2003 a wave of New Zealand plays gained high-profile seasons at the Fringe. The first was Tim Balme's *The Ballad of Jimmy Costello* (1997), which had some distinct similarities with New Zealand's original Fringe pioneer. Like Bruce Mason's *The End of the Golden Weather* it was a solo written and performed by the author, "another 'man alone' […] searching for an identity,"[1] and told a story set in New Zealand's past. British producer Guy Masterson brought *Costello* to Edinburgh in 1997 and continued to showcase New Zealand work at subsequent Fringes: Gary Henderson's *Skin Tight* (1994) in 1998, Toa Fraser's *Bare* (1998) and Jacob Rajan's *Krishnan's Dairy* (1997) in 1999, followed by Fraser's *No 2* (1999) in 2000, and Stephen Papps and Stephen Sinclair's *Blowing It* (1999) in 2003. *Skin Tight*, *Krishnan's Dairy*, and *No 2* were all awarded prestigious Fringe First awards from *The Scotsman,* as well as *The Pickle King* (2002) by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis, which Indian Ink Theatre Company independently produced at the 2003 Fringe. *Costello*, *Skin Tight*, and *Blowing It* display a continuing interest in articulating Anglo-New Zealand/Pākehā identity. *Krishnan's Dairy*, *The Pickle King*, *No 2*, and *Bare* present a broader cultural picture, which includes the Indian diaspora, an entire Fijian family, and an urban, multicultural New Zealand. At the turn of the millennium, Edinburgh could view a plurality of Kiwi voices (however, despite the greater range of ethnic identities, the masculine hegemony remained, with an absence of work from female NZ playwrights produced by Masterson).

We now move from the International World into the Global World. The use of the latter term acknowledges a shift in how nation states operate under an intensification of globalisation. Darren O'Byrne and Alexander Hensby identify the current epoch, beginning with the collapse of the Soviet Union, as a "global age."[2] *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* situates 1990 as a "turning point" for New Zealand's foreign relations due to the end of the cold war,[3] alongside the country's integration into a "new worldwide empire" of global capital.[4] New Zealand's economic and political ties shifted, with an increased focus on the ascendant Asia-Pacific region, culminating in the 2008 New Zealand-China Free Trade Agreement.

Whereas internationalism describes the interactions between nation states, globalisation brings the "effective erasure of national boundaries for economic purposes."[5] Roland

Robertson's definition of globalisation is that it "refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole."[6] O'Byrne et al prefer the "process of becoming global" as a working definition.[7] This is not to claim that globalisation is unique to this era, and indeed, the case can be made for versions throughout history. What is important is how current globalising pressures challenge "the concept of the homogenous national society."[8] Kennedy outlines how "globalising processes increasingly undermine much of the discourse on the peculiarities of the nation and render it partly redundant."[9] The period is seen as one of "increasing diversification, of new hybrid forms emerging from the continuous interplay of difference."[10] This is a crucial concept for Part Three. If in the International World a major movement in New Zealand theatre sought to articulate a distinct regionalist national identity (while also acknowledging the counter-narrative of Red Mole), in the Global World these identities fragment and national boundaries are complicated (so Red Mole would appear to have been ahead of its time).

National identity can collapse due to homogenising globality, but it can also be consolidated and renewed as a resistance to this pressure. In *Theatre and Globalisation* Dan Rebellato puts forward the view that "the most significant thing about the theatre is that it is not global, but firmly, resistantly local," then immediately also offers the counter-argument, that it is "the most globalised expression of human culture there is."[11] This opposition, the global versus the local, plays out in different ways throughout Part Three, as the local attempts to become the global, yet often attempts to retain its locality. To borrow from O'Byrne, the case studies that follow investigate the 'process' of New Zealand theatre becoming global. How has globality influenced New Zealand theatre since the mid-1990s? The period is marked by an explosion of productions touring from New Zealand. This was helped considerably by Creative New Zealand (CNZ), the Government's national agency for the development of the arts formed in 1994 through an amalgamation of the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council and other arts bodies, which established overseas touring as a strategic priority for theatre. While much of the content in Part One chose itself because there was a limited range of theatre that toured in that period, in Part Three I have had to make more selective decisions as to what merits focus. This Introduction to Part Three firstly gives an account of the variety of touring activity that has occurred in this period, as a way of both introducing the case studies chosen for Part Three and to give a sense of what else was travelling in this period. This leads on to what exactly New Zealand identity might mean in the global world.

New and Old Markets

There are some strong continuities between the International and Global Worlds with regards to where New Zealand theatre has travelled, but also some challenges to these established routes. We have seen how Edinburgh was an important stop in the International World for Bruce Mason, Heartache and Sorrow, and Downstage, but tours to Edinburgh in the Global World have increased exponentially. The millennium cluster of Edinburgh plays looked like the breakthrough that New Zealand theatre had craved. The plays gained overseas attention and prestige, which helped them book further tours in other markets. The Fringe success of *Krishnan's Dairy* helped establish Indian Ink Theatre Company as a touring company overseas, and *Krishnan's Dairy* remains a lucrative part of the company's repertoire. The apparent success of the millennium plays has meant that from the late 1990s, the Edinburgh Fringe has been perceived as the most important destination for touring New Zealand theatre because it is the gateway for local productions to enter the global theatrical marketplace. An expanding number of productions travelled to Edinburgh, with considerable CNZ investment, culminating in the NZ at Edinburgh season in 2014.

The Edinburgh International Festival and Fringe were products of the International World, the attempt to promote harmonious foreign relations between nations. The Fringe now stands as the pinnacle representative of the global theatre market, featuring companies from around the world, and attended by tourists from around the world. The number of productions has ballooned since 1979 when Heartache and Sorrow's five works were up against a total of 700 plays.[12] In 2000, actor Ian Hughes wrote that "*Bare* is just another stage show competing with 1500 other shows in the fringe festival alone."[13] By 2014, the NZ at Edinburgh Fringe shows were up against 3000 other events. Anyone can enter (if you have the seed capital to fund yourself), but only the best, as deemed by the marketplace, will survive. As Ric Knowles says, festivals "function primarily as manifestations of a theatrical version of late-capitalist globalisation, postmodern marketplaces for the exchange, not so much of culture as of cultural capital."[14] Under the market system, the theatre is commoditised as a product. Audiences can consume and binge on an endless supply of content across each day of the Festival. Producers and presenters search for sellable product.

The financial model of the Edinburgh marketplace is particularly risky for New Zealand companies. Edinburgh is a loss leader. Companies enter the market with the strong likelihood of losing money, but take the risk in order for their work to be seen and sold on. Even with funding from CNZ to cover travel and freight, companies at the 2014 NZ at Edinburgh Fringe

season needed further funds to break even. A new development for the NZ at Edinburgh Fringe shows was to fundraise through the Arts Foundation Boosted website, a local version of the global crowdfunding technology pioneered by Kickstarter and Indiegogo. Campaigns targeted networks of friends and supporters to raise donations online. *Strange Resting Places* (2007) gained $22,000 from CNZ to assist with "flights, freight and landed costs," and successfully campaigned to raise a further $20,000 through Boosted to cover "marketing, publicity costs, meals, accommodation, venue hire, festival and artists fees."[15] *The Generation of Z* (2014) raised $22,245 using Boosted,[16] and a further $26,454 on Kickstarter, specifically targeting international interest in the project.[17] *The Factory* (2011), however, received only $530 pledged money out of a campaign target of $50,000.[18] Boosted type campaigns do not present an ongoing sustainable model for the financing of repeat Edinburgh seasons as networks are unwilling to donate indefinitely, and as *The Factory*'s case showed, it can be difficult to create urgency if potential donors know the company has already received government support and the tour is booked. Despite income from CNZ funding, ticket sales, and private donations, often artists still self-subsidise their seasons and take substantial fee cuts in order for their work to be seen in Edinburgh. The Fringe also presents highly restrictive market conditions. In 2014 *The Factory* had to cut 20 minutes from their show to fit the venue's designated running time and, therefore, the company, Kila Kokonut Krew, was unable to present the best version of their product.[19] *The Factory* played at Assembly from 31 July – 25 August, 2014 in a prime 7:30pm slot, but the Hall's 800-seat capacity was too large to fill, and they played to an average audience of 150-200.[20] With these financial challenges and artistic restrictions, it must be asked if the Fringe is indeed the correct market to target touring opportunities.

As in the International World, in the Global World Britain remains a desired market for New Zealand theatre. Despite the reduction of New Zealand and Britain's economic ties (by 2005 only 5% of New Zealand's exports were to Britain),[21] globalisation "sustained and even strengthened social and cultural ties between New Zealanders and Britons,"[22] and the British centre still holds considerable sway for the performance routes of New Zealand plays. In noting the tour of Witi Ihimaera's *Woman Far Walking* (2000) in Wales and Manchester in 2002, Diana Looser states that a trip to the UK is "the customary benchmark for successful New Zealand dramatic works."[23] In 2004 Massive Company were invited by London's Royal Court to present their show *The Sons of Charlie Paora* (2002), a collaboration between the company and English playwright Lennie James. *The Guardian* observed that "there is far more to New Zealand than a location for Lord of the Rings" and that the play, set in a South Auckland garage, represented New Zealand's "multiculturalism."[24] Another important moment in New Zealand

theatre in Britain was the 1997 Air New Zealand Season of Kiwi Theatre as part of the Festival of New Zealand Arts at London's Southwark Playhouse which featured *Joyful and Triumphant* (1992) by Robert Lord, *C'Mon Black* (1995) by Roger Hall (about a fan touring with the All Blacks in the 1995 World Cup), and Cathy Downes' *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* (1978) (originated for Heartache and Sorrow).[25] As the audiences were predominantly Kiwi expats,[26] the season offered a renewal of markers of New Zealand identity. This was also seen in the work of Shaky Isles Theatre, founded in 2006 to produce New Zealand theatre in London. Productions included *My Inner Orc* (2010) by Allen O'Leary, which examined the influence that Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* film trilogy (2001-2003), with its impressive New Zealand landscape settings, had on the international representation of New Zealand, and *Taniwha Thames* (2011), devised by the company, which spoke to the desire, and difficulty, of retaining an identity of home abroad. Though these examples show London and Britain have continued to be a "powerful magnet" for New Zealand theatre makers, there have been few breakthroughs since Roger Hall made it to the West End in 1979. Chapter XI, thus, examines immersive Zombie production *The Generation of Z*¸ which played for four months in London in 2015, the longest run in the city by a New Zealand theatrical work since *Middle-Age Spread*. New Zealand-produced works have rarely toured continental Europe, one exception being a tour of Gary Henderson's *Skin Tight* and *Mo & Jess Kill Susie*, which toured Romania, Germany, and Belgium in 2010.

There was little activity in the North American market following Robert Lord and Red Mole's American adventures in the 1980s, but in the last five years there has been a new generation of artists touring to the US. After signing with an American agent, Indian Ink Theatre Company have begun touring to America, including a tour of *Guru of Chai* (2010) (renamed *The Elephant Wrestler* for the American market) in 2014, and *Kiss the Fish* (2013) in 2015. In 2012-2013 Hackman's *Apollo 13: Mission Control* (2008), in which audiences participate in the 1970 space-mission, toured to three towns in Washington and North Carolina. In the tradition of Red Mole, a collective of New Zealand artists took over the La MaMa venue in New York's Lower East Side for three weeks in March 2015 for the New Zealand Performance Festival New York, sharing actors and crew over a selection of nine works curated by Sam Trubridge. These included the premiere of Arthur Meek's solo lecture *On the Conditions and Possibilities of Hillary Clinton Taking Me as Her Young Lover* (which had been adapted from his original 2008 version, centred around then New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark) and Eli Kent's *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* (2014).

Within the Asia-Pacific region, entry into the Australian market remains less accessible than the geographical and cultural closeness of the countries might promise. In recent years CNZ has supported New Zealand delegates to the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM), which promotes theatrical work to Australian venues and presenters. This strategy has shown some promise, with *The Factory* securing a tour of five Australian venues in 2014 after they pitched their work at the APAM earlier that year. Asia has become a market of increasing importance in the last decade, with Indian Ink Theatre Company and Red Leap Theatre the trailblazers. Indian Ink consider Singapore their "biggest international market."[27] They have repeatedly toured Singapore since 2004, which has allowed them to replicate their relationship with domestic audiences who get to know the company and return for their next show.[28] Red Leap Theatre was invited to bring *The Arrival*, adapted from the graphic novel by Shaun Tan, to two venues in South Korea in 2012. After presenters viewed their work in South Korea, there was a further co-commission to tour to the Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival in Taiwan and Macau's Cultural Centre. In 2014 Creative New Zealand began a three year 'Focus on Asia initiative' with $1.5 million in funding to present new work and develop audiences for New Zealand art, including theatre, in targeted Asian destinations.[29] Peter Wilson's The Little Dog Barking company has benefited, taking children's theatre puppetry shows *Paper Shaper* (2008) and *Duck, Death and the Tulip* (2013) to the Asian Pacific Puppet Festival held in Nanchong and Quanzhou, China in 2014 and 2015 respectively, and *Guji Guji* (2016) (adapted from the book of the same name by Taiwanese writer Chih-Yuan Chen) to Japan's Ricca Ricca Festival in 2016. Creative New Zealand's focus on Asia has the potential to lead to a sustained interest in New Zealand theatre by audiences in the region.

While the emphasis has generally been on promoting work in theatre markets that are larger than New Zealand, close Pacific neighbours Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji have received occasional visits, mostly motivated by New Zealand artists with links to these islands. Pacific Underground toured *Fresh off the Boat* (1993) by Oscar Kightley and Simon Small to Apia, Samoa, in 1994, and noted the difference between the characters New Zealand and Samoan audiences identified with. In contrast to New Zealand audiences, the Samoan audience identified with Charles, who arrives from Samoa to live with his Kiwi-Samoan relatives, and laughed at the New Zealand-born Samoans, as "they were the foreigners this time."[30] The Conch, founded by Nina Nawalowalo and Tom McCrory in 2002 to create "ground breaking NZ-Pacific theatre of the highest international production values,"[31] is one of the few companies to have consistently pursued connections across the Pacific, bringing *Vula* (2002) to Palau (2004), Guam (2004), and Fiji (2006); *Masi* (2012) to Fiji (2014); and partnered with

the Solomon Islands Planned Parenthood Association and the British Council for a theatre workshop project in the Solomon Islands (2013-2014). Hawai'i has been the most regularly visited Pacific destination for New Zealand work, which has included Witi Ihimaera's *Woman Far Walking* (2000) in 2001, Hone Kouka's *Waiora* (1996) in 1999 and *The Prophet* (2002) in 2006, Indian Ink's *Guru of Chai* (2010) in 2014 and Massive's *The Brave* (2012) in 2015. New Zealand work has also been produced within Hawai'i, such as Kumu Kahua Theatre productions of Albert Wendt's *The Songmaker's Chair* (2003) in 2006 and Victor Rodger's *My Name is Gary Cooper* (2007) in 2015.

Another important destination for New Zealand drama has been to the four-yearly Festival of Pacific Arts. With no ticket fees charged, it stands in opposition to highly commercial marketplaces such as Edinburgh. New Zealand has been involved since the beginning of the four yearly Festival in Suva, Fiji in 1972 (then known as the South Pacific Festival). At the 1976 Festival, held in Rotorua, New Zealand representatives included Theatre Action, with an exploration of clowning form,[32] Downstage's *Songs to Uncle Scrim* (1976) by Mervyn Thompson, and a performance of *Not Christmas, But Guy Fawkes* (1976) by Bruce Mason. As the Festival has evolved there has been a greater emphasis on markers of 'Pacificness.'[33] In recent festivals New Zealand has been represented by theatrical work that includes Briar Grace-Smith's *Ngā Pou Wahine* (1995) in Noumea in 2000, Ihimaera's *Woman Far Walking* and The Conch's *Vula* in Palau 2004, and Dianna Fuemana's *Falemalama* (2006) and Taki Rua's *Strange Resting Places* (2007) in American Samoa in 2008. There is a tension between representations of 'pre-contact' cultural traditions and Westernised forms. For the 2016 New Zealand delegation to Guam, Creative New Zealand supported a development season of Nathaniel Lee's new work *Fale Sa*, which deals with the creation legend of the Pacific and the coming of Christianity,[34] Māori devised urban comedy *Party with the Aunties* (2011) directed by Erina Daniels, alongside "clay artistry, waka navigation, tā moko, weaving, kapa haka, carving and traditional music."[35] Ian Gaskell argues that the festival's intention is to protect indigenous culture against the perceived threat of globalisation.[36] New Zealand's involvement in the festival has been a post-colonial attempt to move beyond the Anglo-world towards the Polynesian world, where Māori and Pacific New Zealanders can find common interest through a pan-Pacific regionalist identity.

The New Local

Globalising forces, changing migration patterns, and a promotion of multiculturalism have influenced the construction of broader identities for New Zealand theatre toured in the Global World. Anglo-New Zealand/Pākehā drama, which during the International period was the dominant representative of New Zealand written theatre internally and performed overseas, was concerned with establishing legitimacy. It revealed settler-invader complexes through the attempt to assert a naturalised national identity: like the Willis family on the back porch in Stella Jones's *The Tree*, Pākehā belonged in New Zealand. Demographic change and increased migration from Asia and the Pacific have seen a new wave of playwrights since the 1990s that brought "more global perspectives."[37] These playwrights also display a concern with establishing legitimacy in their new homeland, and their right to speak, but are often more willing to acknowledge their transnationalism. (Though transnationalism is usually applied to communities that emerge beyond the "colonial experience,"[38] Pākehā is also a highly transnational identity.)

Jacob Rajan and Toa Fraser, whose plays were successful at the Edinburgh Fringe, and will be discussed in Chapter IX, were celebrated as multicultural models for New Zealand theatre. Both can claim a range of transnational influences and identities. Rajan was born in Malaysia of Indian heritage and immigrated to New Zealand with his parents when he was four. Rajan became the first Indian graduate of New Zealand Drama School Toi Whakaari, and has reflected that "the fact that I am one of the few Indian actors and playwrights in this country has given me a unique voice."[39] *Krishnan's Dairy* was influenced by Rajan's cultural displacement, as "a boy raised in the west trying to understand his parents' relationship."[40] Fraser was born in London to a Fijian father and English mother, raised in Hampshire, and moved to New Zealand when he was fourteen. Growing up in England, Fraser felt "something was missing."[41] Fraser's idea of the Pacific had been very "impressionistic – bits and pieces of stories and pictures, things like that."[42] While England was real, "New Zealand was really built up for us as a mythological place."[43] Fraser moved to Mt Roskill, the setting of *No 2*, which was like "another planet."[44] When his family moved back to England three years later, Fraser remained.

In *Performing Aotearoa* Marc Maufort states the New Zealand identity is in transition as it evolves towards "twenty-first century globalisation."[45] New Zealand theatre increasingly "evades the rigid imperialistic, exclusively Pākehā discourses of the past to extend into a fruitful hybridisation of different races, classes and genders."[46] David O'Donnell argues

"Māori and Pasifika playwrights have made a major contribution to staking out a distinctive character for New Zealand theatre internationally."[47] While it is true that New Zealand theatre reflects a greater diversity, Maufort's "fruitful hybridisation" threatens to reinscribe a European fantasia of multiculturalism which overlooks ongoing power imbalances. Acknowledging Māori and Pacific influences supports the ongoing desire to create a distinctive New Zealand identity, though tokenism becomes a danger. As noted in the Introduction (page 2), the diversity that was reflected in the productions supported by Creative New Zealand for the NZ at Edinburgh season is not consistently reflected on New Zealand's main stages. The global face is different to the local reality.

Touring Māori-centric drama overseas has been a way to assert cultural mana, to educate, and to gain acknowledgement from overseas audiences. Marianne Schultz's *Performing Indigenous Culture on Stage and Screen* highlights instances of Māori performance overseas in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.[48] However, from 1945 to today there have been relatively few plays toured overseas that present a Māori worldview. This is a noteworthy absence, as even more so than plays from a Pākehā perspective, Māori theatre offers a stronger point of exotic cultural difference that can be sold to overseas audiences within the Anglo-world, and, alternatively, offers points of identification for other indigenous cultures. Māori theatre has been preoccupied with establishing visibility and recognition for its own place within New Zealand, but in the few instances when Māori work has travelled, the response has provided inspiration and strength for the playwrights.

In 1997 *Waiora* by Hone Kouka (Ngati Porou, Ngati Raukawa, Ngati Kahunguna), which had debuted at the New Zealand International Festival in 1996, was invited to the Brighton Festival in England, where the season sold-out prior to opening. With a touring entourage of 18, Kouka had not considered *Waiora* to be financially viable to travel prior to this invitation. This was a resonant choice of play for an international tour to Britain. Kouka described the play's story as being about "those who leave their home" and "not just a Māori story, but an immigrant's story […], something that so many New Zealanders might be able to relate to […], all of us who have travelled from somewhere else."[49] However, the migrants in the play's context are internal migrants: a Māori whanau who moved from their rural tribal home to an urban area and experience cultural estrangement as they attempt to conform to the Pākehā world. The directors of the Brighton Festival had seen the play while scouting in Wellington. They told Kouka that "the play had opened their eyes to the effect of English colonialism on the land and the local people."[50] *Waiora* was one of four plays to play at the Brighton Festival alongside two English works and a play from Israel which also dealt with the

theme of displacement.[51] A glossary of Te Reo concepts was offered to audiences to "help them understand the power and spirituality behind the play."[52] Brighton critic Roger Love recorded a "prolonged ovation, much of it standing," and a profound experience of chills "over the whole of my back, across my neck, and spreading to my sides."[53] He attributed this reaction to the "the blistering power of this play's climax, which combines intense human and spiritual emotions with Māori song and ceremony."[54] A second account recorded that the "evocative Māori waiata/haka […] stunned capacity festival audiences."[55] The Brighton audience's encounter with unfamiliar elements of waiata and tikanga contributed to their elevated response to the play. According to Kouka, the Brighton audience responded to the play's "uniqueness," and it made him "realise that we still haven't been completely accepted by New Zealanders."[56] *Waiora* was offered a European tour following Brighton, but this was turned down in favour of a New Zealand regional tour.[57] The production did venture overseas one further time, on a Hawaiian Islands tour in 1999. Whereas the Brighton tour was described by Kouka as showing the "results of colonization to the colonisers," the Hawaiian tour was an opportunity to make connections with their "cousins": "like us, the Hawaiian people were colonised and the effects have been similar."[58] *Waiora* in Hawai'i appealed to a perceived indigenous experience-in-common; as stated by a representative of the 'Ilio'ulaokalani Foundation, which had sponsored the tour, the situations in *Waiora* had "a commonality with the history of Hawaiians […], we share the same social problems in adapting to a Western culture."[59] Kouka returned to Hawai'i in 2006 with *The Prophet* (2002), the third play in the *Waiora* trilogy; Kouka found the response to be "overwhelming," confirming "the need for Māori to drive and create Māori work."[60]

Briar Grace-Smith (Ngāpuhi) has had productions of her plays *Nga Pou Wahine* (1995) toured in Sydney and Ireland in 1997 and *Purapurawhetū* (1997) at the International Women's Conference in Athens in 2000. Grace-Smith's main memory of the latter performance was of a Greek taxi driver who came to the performance and wept, despite not understanding English.[61] Miria George's (Te Arawa; Ngati Awa; Rarotonga & Atiu, Cook Islands) *And What Remains* (2005) played in Cambridge, England in 2007, a play that imagines the last Māori in New Zealand preparing to fly out of a hostile country. Taki Rua Theatre (and later Cuba Creative) have toured *Strange Resting Places* extensively, a play by Italian-born Kiwi Paolo Rotondo and Rob Mokaraka (Ngapuhi; Tuhoe) inspired by the Māori Battalion's experience in Italy during WWII. The play mixes commedia dell'arte routines with Māori whaikorero and waiata to create a "Maui-esque mischief comedy."[62] The Māori soldiers find cultural equivalence between an Italian monastery and their wharenui, as both spaces record their

respective culture's whakapapa (family and tribal history). This becomes a source of conflict when the soldiers are ordered to bomb the monastery. In the play's conclusion, the Māori soldier Anaru is accidentally shot and his body remains in Italy, registering the global resonances of Māori stories. Taki Rua also revived *Michael James Manaia* and toured to the Melbourne Festival, Australia in 2012, where it was received with the status of a national classic: "a key text in New Zealand theatre"[63] and "part of a wave of important Māori plays redefining New Zealand's theatre."[64] Notably, it was not the Vietnam context that dominated responses (as we saw in Chapter IV), but issues of masculinity, reflecting a contemporary focus on gender politics. One reviewer commented on the "specifically masculine pride" which "perhaps led to an obscuring of the long-term psychological effects of war,"[65] while another stated that "Broughton is less concerned with the colonial encounter than with masculine inheritance and the fallout that follows men's silence across generations."[66] As evidenced with this latter comment, there again appeared to be a lack of recognition of how the contextual legacy of colonialism impacted the central character. The highest profile Māori production to date is Ngākau Toa's *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* (2012), an adaptation into Te Reo of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, set in precolonial Aotearoa, which opened the London Globe Theatre's Globe to Globe Festival in 2012 on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday. This is examined in the coming chapter as a case study of the meanings and receptions of a Māori work toured to the Global World.

Diana Looser notes that from the early 1990s there has been a "a flourishing of work by a wide variety of Pasifika artists [...], some of which has toured back to the artists' respective home islands and further afield."[67] After taking *Fresh off the Boat* to Samoa, Pacific Underground performed the play in Brisbane in 1995 where they met an Australian company Zeal, with whom they collaborated on a co-production of *Tatau: Rites of Passage* (1996), which played in Auckland and Sydney, connecting the Pacific diaspora.[68] As well as their Pacific destinations, The Conch have toured *Vula* to Australia and Holland, and sold out their ten-day season at London's Barbican Centre in 2008.[69] Makerita Urale's *Frangipani Perfume* (1997), the "first Pacific play to be written by a woman writer for an all-female cast,"[70] travelled to Canada, Australia, and the UK. Dianna Fuemana has been another influential Pasifika practitioner, who was driven to take her work overseas because she perceived that the "pool is bigger and ideas around 'what theatre is' are more vast than small-town Auckland with all its 'white' British – and American-produced plays."[71] A playwright and performer, she has toured her solo *Mapaki* (1999) to America and Greece, *The Packer* (2003) to Edinburgh and Australia, and *Falemalama* premiered at Pangea World Theatre in Minneapolis in 2006.[72] In the Global

World, Pacific exoticism has currency. Red Mole had already discovered how they could use their New Zealand origins to create exotic interest for audiences. Overseas, works "of cultural difference circulate as valuable commodities."[73]

It is appropriate at this point to mention Lemi Ponifasio's Mau Company, who make avant-garde work using Pasifika practices, for the high end International Festival touring circuit, such as *I AM* for the 2014 Edinburgh International Festival. Though their performance is hybrid, they are more usually considered a dance company and sit outside the genre scope of this study. They are worth acknowledging as a product of the global Festival system. Ric Knowles warns that there are dangers in "nomadism" and "losing touch with place" through extensive touring on the festival circuit.[74] This criticism might apply to Mau, which, while ostensibly drawing from the culture of New Zealand and the South Pacific, is most often produced in the European-America axis, and though one of our most successful international performance exports, the company is not well known within New Zealand.

It is Indian Ink Theatre Company who are the most successful international touring company based in New Zealand, having visited Australia, Singapore, UK, Germany, US mainland and Hawai'i, Canada, and India. Their first three touring works, *Krishnan's Dairy* (1997), *The Candlestickmaker* (2000) and *The Pickle King* (2002), were concerned with the immigrant experience and dual Indian-Kiwi identities. (From *The Candlestickmaker* on, Jacob Rajan co-authored the Indian Ink plays with Justin Lewis.) Synthesising cultures is an important part not only of the content, but also of the form of their dramas, borrowing Italian commedia mask traditions (and later, Balinese) and adapting these for their own purposes. As they have continued, they have removed the New Zealand anchors in their work, so their latest two touring works, *Guru of Chai* (2010) and *Kiss the Fish* (2013), feature no New Zealand characters, settings, or references. The implications of this evolution are considered in Chapter X. *The Generation of Z*, which provides the final case study of Part Three, is another work made for the global market that is disinterested in representing New Zealand identities.

As we enter the Global World, identities are in flux. While New Zealand continues to negotiate its bicultural colonial legacy, it is also trying out a multicultural identity, while globalising forces further complicate national concepts. What constitutes New Zealand identity is continually challenged, with a range of voices emerging with a stake in what New Zealand represents, and who gets to speak for it. These are the pressure points as we begin the case studies for Part Three.

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[64] Andrew Fuhrmann, "Michael James Manaia," *Time Out Melbourne*, Oct. 29 2012, CFJB.

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[67] Looser, 59.

[68] Ibid., 1.

[69] "Vula." *The Conch*, n.d., http://www.theconch.co.nz/projects/past/vula

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Chapter VIII

Touring Mana: *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira*

At the curtain call of Ngākau Toa's *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* (*The Māori Troilus and Cressida*), Māori audience members in attendance at the London's Globe began their own mihi and haka to honour the performers. Dominic Dromgoole, the artistic director of the Globe, described the moment: 60 Māori in the audience pounded "out a combative rhythm straight at the stage […], the audience was thrilled and terrified, caught in the no man's land between two groups of mammoth Māori rehearsing an old tribal war rite."[1] It was a shared display of cultural pride between the performers and the Māori audience, and a moment of theatrical spectacle for the overseas audience, many of whom would have only known the ritual from the haka performed at All Blacks games. The mihi recognised the significance of a Māori group performing this text in the land of their historic colonisers. Like Downstage's production of *Hedda Gabler*, Ngākau Toa adapted a text from the Western canon as a means by which to display their culture back to an overseas audience. Ngākau Toa had claimed the Globe as a Māori space, and Shakespeare was speaking Te Reo.

Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira opened the Globe to Globe Festival in 2012 on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday. The Globe to Globe Festival coincided with London hosting the Olympic Games that year and was part of the World Shakespeare Festival, organised for the UK's Cultural Olympiad program of cultural events. The Globe to Globe Festival was intended to celebrate Shakespeare as a global treasure, with productions of all 37 of Shakespeare's plays in 37 different languages, performed by companies from around the world. The Festival promoted values of global togetherness through the arts, but it did so by using the text of Shakespeare in translation, rather than inviting the representative companies to offer a work from their own homelands to be performed on the Globe stage. There has been a long history of non-English adaptations of Shakespeare, and "among the many post-colonial reworkings of canonical texts, Shakespeare's plays figure prominently as targets of counter-discourse."[2] In New Zealand, Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* had previously been adapted as a text by Pei te Hurinui Jones in 1945, later used for Don Selwyn's 2002 film *The Māori Merchant of Venice*. In approaching their adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida* (written circa 1602) after receiving the invitation from the Globe, the company, led by director Rachel House and producer and actor Rawiri Paratene (one of the lead performers in the *Waiora* touring production), travelled into

their own past, relocating Shakespeare's version of the Fall of Troy to a pre-colonial Māori setting, establishing a strong counter-discourse. Two iwi, Kariki (the Greeks) and Toroi (the Trojans) are in conflict. Te Haumihiata Mason translated the work first into modern English, then Te Reo Māori, and finally formal Māori and "saturated" the text with allusions to Māori mythology."[3] The production was highly physicalised, with kapa haka integrated throughout the stage action, and at times used in place of Shakespeare's text.

The Globe's promotional description emphasised that the production would "incorporate many aspects of Māori culture," featuring the "best Māori actors," and the "best composers and choreographers of Aotearoa."[4] New Zealand Funding bodies supported the company in the context of the regeneration of Māori language and culture, with financial support from Te Puni Kokiri (the Ministry of Māori development) and Te Waka Toi (the Māori arts board of Creative New Zealand).[5] Chris Finlayson, New Zealand's Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage and Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, stated that the production was "a great opportunity to demonstrate the strength of Māori theatre performance and to showcase Te Reo Māori."[6] The project was promoted institutionally as a national cultural export to a premiere arts venue, where overseas performance would grant cultural legitimacy. This could be viewed positively as a win for both nationalism and globalisation.

Despite this positive public relations spin, the company still faced a significant financial burden in order to feature at the festival as the funding from these institutions was not enough to cover all production costs. The payment of wages was delayed, and it was announced late in the rehearsal process that Rachel House would have to stay in New Zealand as they did not have the funding to cover her travel and accommodation.[7] Rawiri Paratene fronted a crowdfunding campaign asking for individual donations,[8] and a fundraising performance was held at the Auckland Town Hall (which I attended), before leaving for London. Paratene acknowledged that though there were "whanau out there with real needs," he asked proud New Zealanders to donate as they would "fly our flag strongly" and would "represent New Zealand."[9] Paratene's nationalistic appeal constructed the production as a representative of a united, bicultural country. In practice, however, the politics of the representation within the work, and the processes of reception when the production played overseas, complicated this national inclusivity. The Globe performances of *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* negotiated complex issues of universalism, exoticism, and colonialism, within a larger frame of globalisation, as this chapter will demonstrate.

Universalism

The Globe to Globe Festival held up Shakespeare as a universal-humanist figure, in that the words and themes of his plays could be translated into any language and remain relevant, and in turn, remain accessible for London audiences viewing, and hearing, these translations. Ngākau Toa's marketing described Shakespeare's plays as if they were written in a transcendent proto-language: "Shakespeare is the language which brings us together better than any other, and which reminds us of our almost infinite difference, and of our strange and humbling commonality."[10] There is paradox here: infinite difference reveals commonality. This concept was reflected in reviews that located universal elements in a production that transcended cultural difference. Auckland reviewer Paul Simei-Barton claimed the production was a "remarkable testimony to the transcendent quality of Shakespeare's writing that is somehow able to speak across time and culture"[11] and London's Dominic Cavendish wrote that "across the language barrier came hurtling, with ease, the universal aspects of the story and its tragicomic richness."[12] House also identified universal aspects: "there are tones and expressions and emotions that are easily identifiable because they are so universal."[13]

What the identification of universalism does not fully take into account is the translation process whereby an Elizabethan dramatisation of an ancient Greek myth is absorbed and reconstructed in a Māori context. Te Haumihiata Mason had already cut and reduced the text during its translation, which together with the rehearsal process, emphasised what was culturally similar (or to put it another way, what was held in common between the text and the company) and discarded differences. The language of Shakespeare's poetry and classical Māori were equated through their mixture of high speech and bawdy; as Paratene put it, "it's got all the different forms of language that Shakespeare uses."[14] Equivalence was found between the hand-to-hand close combat of the play and Māori warfare, "with lots of jeers and war chants."[15] The Trojan story was interpreted through the cultural lens of utu; actor Waihoroi Shortland said, "they weren't there to claim land, but to take revenge," so it was "easy to give the story a Māori landscape."[16] House believed the story fitted "with Māori culture like a glove," and went so far as to say, "it basically feels like one of our own stories, having explored the themes and given it our own interpretation."[17] This confluence was such that Shortland expressed, "we'd often forget this was a story from another country. It was embraced and treated entirely as Māori taonga."[18] There was an element of necessity in that, having been given the play, the company needed to make it work for them. Apparent cultural similarities were used as access points to enable the company to interpret the story in their own context to the extent that they

imagined they were telling their own culture's story, not Shakespeare's story. The apparent transcendent universalism that both the company and commentators discovered was an act of cultural translation that revealed the common space: what the company thought their culture shared with Shakespeare's text, and what the commentators and audiences perceived that they shared in common with the company's text and performance. It was still Shakespeare, but as this discussion will demonstrate, remade into a Māori image.

Exoticism

A universalised conception of the production was one prominent part of the discourse surrounding the Globe presentation of the work, but the production was also paradoxically framed in a discourse of knowing exoticism. House expressed the desire to "show the sexiness of our culture" and suspected that "people will freak out about the tattooed bums."[19] Her prediction proved correct, as the stylised costumes became the object of an anthropological gaze by London reviewers. Blogger David Nice described warriors performing with "incredible vigour, all feathers, bare chests and tattooed buttocks and thighs."[20] *The Guardian*'s Andrew Dickson wrote the performers prowled "across the stage like prize-fighting cocks, clad in loincloths, feathers, tattoos and precious little else."[21] *The Daily Telegraph*'s Dominic Cavendish mentioned the "panoply of barely clothed men, their thighs tattooed" had "some of the finest tattooed buttocks on the planet."[22]

This critical reaction recalled the history of exotic representation of Māori onstage. In 1918 for instance, Māori were dubiously represented on the London stage as part of a Vaudeville revue *Buzz-Buzz* in which singer Gertie Lawrence sang "I've Lost my Heart in Māoriland" accompanied by a group of chorus-girls in costume appropriating traditional Māori dress. The song fetishizes a Māori girl, who makes the singer's heart fill with "feeling rare… when I see your body twist and twirl / While those tiny little poi-pois whirl."[23] The performance was a spectacle of otherness, the scenic backdrop "'improved' with touches of North American Indian totems, South Sea island lagoons and the Englishman's vaguely romantic notions of all those far-flung colonial territories that kept him supplied with meat, butter and troops in wartime."[24]

Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira was not *Buzz-Buzz*. The exotic gaze was anticipated, and the production self-consciously signified its cultural difference on the London stage. It was

working as far more than a spectacle of cultural otherness, with the costuming supporting the characterisations of Shakespeare's text. The play's European origins were acknowledged in the costuming of the female characters, with "bodices and full satin skirts worn by some of the women,"[25] which signified the way that the women were in bondage to the men, objects to be fought for and won, with Hērena (Helen) the ultimate prize. The men in this production were on full peacocking display, highlighting an important gender distinction in Shakespeare's text; war and battle were the ways men proved their sexual primacy. The company's visual spectacle was also used by the festival to promote itself in the media, and Catherine Silverstone notes that double page spreads published by British media "offered spectacular images of cultural otherness on the Globe's stage," which contrasted with the globe's conventional publicity images of "white actors in period costumes."[26] It is notable that while the production's costuming was highly stylised, and though its image of precolonial Māori society was effectively as historically inauthentic as the scenery of *Buzz-Buzz*, the design was received as culturally authentic. This is due not to the clothes themselves, but the performers wearing them, who were subject to an othering gaze which constructed their indigenous bodies as authentically real and different.

While reviewers were captured by the visual otherness, what was most significant about *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* was the way the production othered the drama of Shakespeare's play. Conventional scholarship categorises *Troilus and Cressida* as a problem play. It is believed to have not been performed in Shakespeare's lifetime, and is one of his least performed today. The critical response overwhelmingly expressed the notion that the company's production transcended the flaws of Shakespeare's problematic play. Two separate critics agreed that this was the best version of *Troilus* since a Royal Shakespeare Company production twenty-five years before that had set the play during the Crimean War.[27] As with the reaction to Downstage's *Hedda Gabler* in Norway, there was a belief that the production improved upon British versions of the same play. One critic identified the fight scenes as a strength of this version, "which are usually the point at which even the best of British productions buckle a bit."[28] The recontexualised Māori culture offered a new lens to view the gender politics in the play's drama: "here it's not only Troilus and Cressida who find it impossible to admit their true feelings for each other; all the men on stage seem doomed to act out honour codes that leave little room for anything other than sound and fury."[29] Cavendish's analysis is useful: "the production provides a way into a world removed from our own, which by its strangeness serves to comment on our own."[30] By othering the play with Māori cultural signs, non-Māori audiences are enabled to reconceptualise their notions of the merits of Shakespeare's play.

Ngākau Toa liberated the text from the confines of its language and British cultural context, allowing Globe audiences to re-discover the drama and revitalise both the Greek and Elizabethan contexts through the exotic Māori context.

House was also driven by a desire to make the work accessible to non-Reo speakers. Part of this strategy was an emphasis on the inherent sexual elements of the play. In the *The Road to the Globe* documentary, the Globe audience are shown responding enthusiastically to the innuendo of Paratene's Pandarus, as he rhythmically bangs two pieces of bone together and makes noises of sexual pleasure during an interaction between Toroihi (Troilus) and Kahira (Cressida). Stereotypes of modern gayness are used to characterise Aikiri (Achilles) and Patokihi (Patroclus), depictions that Silverstone criticises as "reductive representations."[31] She argues the performances could have drawn "attention to the cultural specificity of takatāpui," an indigenous concept of queerness.[32] This was unlikely to have translated, and the production made the best choice for its audience. In performance, these modern stereotypes operated to support House's strategy of employing sexualised non-language codes to enable audience recognition. Though the company may have appeared to Globe audiences as a culturally authentic other, they were also enacting modern and recognisable social roles in order to connect with the audience. House's direction was a canny modern reading of the text, emphasising that it is sexual desire that drives the action of the play, best exemplified by Pandarus's line, "hot blood, hot thoughts, and hot deeds" (3.1, 128-9). By emphasising the innuendo of the text, non-Reo speakers were enabled to feel like they were in on the joke.

The need to both honour Māori culture and Te Reo, and still provide an accessible performance was a tension in the company's work. While the Globe performance can be deemed to have successfully balanced these needs for the majority of their audience, especially those critics that identified transcendent universalism, there are some important counter-narratives from the London season where audiences were "doomed to spend large portions of this voyage around global Shakespeare somewhat at sea."[33] For Cavendish there were elements that "need little in the way of translation," but "others are far tougher to unpick."[34] The use of surtitles was criticised for not providing any of Shakespeare's original lines and the "baldest of scene-summaries."[35] While some stage action opened identification points for non-Reo speakers to follow what was going on, the Te Reo could exclude. Nice was bothered by his inability to follow key speeches, and argued that Shakespeare's language was the "biggest casualty," except for Te Reo speakers, who "understood the impressive Māori translation."[36] It is important to note that general audiences of Shakespeare in English may often find themselves "somewhat at sea" in attempting to follow the archaic language, with many English-language

productions just as incomprehensible at times. When I saw the production in Auckland, which provided no surtitles at all, as a non-Reo speaker I was able to discern enough of the action, and my own efforts of interpretation kept me doubly engaged. The decision not to include line by line translations was the correct one, as it would have drawn focus away from the action on stage. While the London reviews visually analysed the cultural experience, none of them attempt to describe the quality of Te Reo itself. It is a curious absence that suggests an anxiety of comprehension, with an emphasis on both exotic and assessable visual cues, neglecting the performer's oratory and vocalised emotion.

Colonialism and Cultural Mana

The most significant outcome of the production was the way Ngākau Toa used the Globe performance as a site to assert their cultural mana and champion tikanga Māori and Te Reo. Performance of Māori theatre on the global stage has not been common, and in order to present their cultural testimony, this company did so via a translation of another culture's story, just as Downstage did with *Hedda Gabler*. The parameters of the Globe to Globe Festival positioned London as a global cultural centre, and the company worked within the institutional framework of a dominant former-coloniser. This had been a willing collaboration, especially through Rawiri Paratene, whose dream as leader of the project was to "to walk onto that stage with a bunch of Māori."[37] He compared the theatre and its relationship between players and audience to the marae: "it's intimate and huge all at once and the minute you start talking above the people, your argument is lost."[38] While Ngākau Toa were resident, the Globe was occupied as a meeting place between peoples where Māori voices could be heard and acknowledged. While operating within a colonial paradigm, the work itself offered a site of resistance and opportunity to talk back to the former coloniser. By setting *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* prior to European contact, the production drew attention to this ongoing colonial legacy.

Silverstone notes that language regeneration was cited as a symbolic outcome of the performance, and Māori was one of the languages presented at the festival most in need of protection.[39] A promotion of an appreciation of Te Reo to an overseas audience was certainly a desired outcome in the Festival context, but the most important outcome was the internal education of the company. The majority of the performers were not fluent speakers of Te Reo, which raised "wider issues regarding the health of the language occluded by reviewers in the

UK."[40] Paratene's non-fluency was a significant issue for his process as an actor. He had to learn his lines parrot fashion, and due to his inability to think in Māori, he could not improvise if he lost his place as he could with Shakespearean text in English.[41] Shortland and Tweedie Waititi acted as mentors for the cast, improving their understanding and pronunciation of Te Reo.[42] Director Rachel House used her non-fluency to help clarify the storytelling for non-Reo speakers, and wanted "Māori like me to walk into the theatre and know what's going on even if they don't have Te Reo."[43] For non-speakers, the production could provide an incitement for education. Rawiri Paratene reflected that Te Reo's health remains in trouble, and felt it was their "duty to keep it alive."[44] Unlike other languages in the Festival which are in everyday use in their countries, Te Reo is a threatened language that was being spoken by actors not necessarily fluent in the language. Through *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* Ngākau Toa used the story and institutions of the colonising culture to regenerate their own cultural mana through performance.

Silverstone warned that Ngākau Toa's showcase of culture risked "being consumed as exotic, universal or an object of cultural tourism […], capable, variously, of both marginalising and homogenising difference."[45] There were connections made with universal transcendence in the performance's reception, but the confident assertion of Māori culture prevented the potential marginalisation of difference. The exotic gaze was a factor in the reception of the London season, evidenced through the focus on the theatricalised Māori costuming. The performance self-consciously played with representations of exoticness, but what drew the most attention was the cultural othering of the play itself. *Troilus and Cressida* is a bitter and ironic play that is underappreciated and rarely performed. Ngākau Toa were deemed to have surmounted the problems with Shakespeare's text and rejuvenated the play. The boldness of Rachel House's artistic vision made the production more than a vehicle for cultural tourism, it was an opportunity to see the performance as a definitive version of the play.

Silverstone argues that "displaced 'local' audiences are also capable of expanding the range of meanings that a geographically dislocated production might generate in international festival contexts."[46] This was evidenced in reactions to the curtain call, where the Māori in the audience responded to their performers with their own mihi. One critic recorded:

> There was an impromptu response at the end, too, as our neighbour-groundlings responded with their own earth-shaking tribute. At last we understood just how many audience members had been getting the verbal as well as the physical jokes; the Māori community in London must have joined the actors' devoted fans from New Zealand.[47]

Māori and non-Māori audiences were involved in an example of tikanga in practice, a living culture, on-stage and off. The company's imaginative relocation of *Troilus and Cressida* to a pre-contact setting pointed towards a future where more value would be placed on tikanga Māori and Te Reo as *global* taonga.

[1] Dominic Dromgoole, "Foreword," in *Shakespeare Beyond English: A Global Experiment*, eds. Susan Bennett and Christie Carson (Cambridge: University Press, 2013), xxiii.

[2] Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins, *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996), 19.

[3] Catherine Silverstone, "Festival Showcasing and Cultural Regeneration" in *Shakespeare Beyond English*, 36.

[4] "Troilus and Cressida," *Globe to Globe*, 2012, http://globetoglobe.shakespearesglobe.com/archive/2012/plays/troilus-and-cressida/english-19

[5] Silverstone, 38.

[6] Ibid., 36.

[7] *The Road to the Globe: The Māori Troilus and Cressida*, Monsoon Pictures International; NZ on Air, broadcast on Māori TV, Apr. 21 2013.

[8] "The Māori Troilus and Cressida Fundraiser Appeal," *YouTube*, Mar. 20 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3YsJLWZYPI

[9] Ibid.

[10] "Globe to Globe," *The Māori Troilus and Cressida Website*, May 10 2012, accessed via *Internet Archive* http://web.archive.org/web/20120510195520/http://themaoritroilusandcressida.com/

[11] Paul Simei-Barton, "Theatre Review: The Māori Troilus & Cressida, Town Hall," *NZ Herald*, Mar. 23 2012, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=10794079

[12] Dominic Cavendish, "Māori Troilus and Cressida, Shakespeare's Globe, Review,*" The Daily Telegraph*, Apr. 24 2012, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/9224440/Māori-Troilus-and-Cressida-Shakespeares-Globe-review.html

[13] Tim Masters, "Globe to Globe: Māori Troilus and Cressida Puts Haka into Shakespeare," *BBC*, Apr. 22 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-17769799

[14] AFP, "Māori Troupe Kicks off Shakespeare Fest," *NZ Herald*, Apr. 24 2012, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/entertainment/news/article.cfm?c_id=1501119&objectid=10801104

[15] *Te Tepu*, broadcast on Māori TV, Dec. 05 2012.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Sharu Delilkan, "Preview: Troilus and Cressida," *Theatre Scenes*, Apr. 6 2012, http://www.theatrescenes.co.nz/preview-troilus-and-cressida-auckland-town-hall-to-the-globe-theatre/

[20] David Nice, "Shakespeare's Māori Warriors," *I'll Think of Something Later*, Apr. 26 2012, http://davidnice.blogspot.co.nz/2012/04/shakespeares-Māori-warriors.html

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[21] Andrew Dickson, “Troilus and Cressida – Review,” *The Guardian*, Apr. 24 2012, http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/apr/24/troilus-cressida-review

[22] Cavendish.

[23] Peter Harcourt, *A Dramatic Appearance: New Zealand Theatre, 1920-1970* (Wellington: Methuen, 1978), 11.

[24] Ibid., 10.

[25] Silverstone, 36.

[26] Ibid., 40.

[27] Nice; Matt Wolf, “Globe to Globe: Troilus & Cressida, Shakespeare's Globe,” *The Arts Desk*, Apr. 24 2012, http://www.theartsdesk.com/theatre/globe-globe-troilus-cressida-shakespeares-globe

[28] Nice.

[29] Dickson.

[30] Cavendish.

[31] Silverstone, 41.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Dickson.

[34] Cavendish.

[35] Nice.

[36] Ibid.

[37] *The Road to the Globe*.

[38] Grant Smithies, “All the World’s a Stage for Rawiri,” *Sunday Star Times*, Apr. 23 2013, http://www.stuff.co.nz/entertainment/arts/8561153/All-the-worlds-a-stage-for-Rawiri

[39] Silverstone, 38.

[40] Ibid, 40.

[41] *The Road to the Globe*.

[42] *Te Tepu*.

[43] Delilkan.

[44] *The Road to the Globe*.

[45] Silverstone, 43.

[46] Ibid, 41.

[47] Nice.

Chapter IX

The Global Immigrant

In Red Leap Theatre's inventively physical and visual work *The Arrival* (2009), directed by Julie Nolan and Kate Parker, the protagonist-Traveller departs from his homeland, oppressed by black tentacles that circle above his home, and arrives in a new world looking for work in order to support his wife and daughter back in the old world. The Traveller learns the strange customs of the new world, and his integration is complete at the end of the show when his family join him to live in the new world. In *Performing Asian Transnationalisms*, Amanda Rogers writes that the concept of "transnationalism, with its evocation of cross-border movement away from a location of origin," is often viewed as containing a "tension between displacement and emplacement […], particularly through the notion of belonging to a home or homeland."[1] The displacement/emplacement tension is also performed in the adaptation process of *The Arrival* in which the 2006 graphic novel by Asian-Australian artist Shaun Tan is displaced and emplaced by a New Zealand company, Red Leap Theatre, in a theatrical medium. Rogers' definition of transnationalism is that an intensification of neo-liberal globalisation has resulted in an increased interaction of cultures, ideas, and products that extends beyond the boundaries of nation-states: "transnationalism describes this act of border-crossing […], allowing us to apprehend how the relationship between culture, people and place is reconfigured as national territories no longer automatically provide the main locus of identification and belonging."[2] For most of *The Arrival*, the Traveller, the migrant character, exists as a border figure, belonging neither to the old or new worlds. As a theatrical fable in which the setting is fantastic rather than specific, he is also a border figure in that he can represent multiple cultures and points of departure depending on the context of those receiving the narrative.

Though Nolan and Parker were largely faithful in using Tan's graphic novel as a story board for their theatrical images and storytelling, alternative meanings were constructed through the displacement of the text in performance. As a transcultural adaptation, the work is not made to align with the New Zealand identity specifically, but the programme notes do parallel the show with the image of New Zealand as a nation of travellers, both coming to and departing from the nation.[3] My own review of the 2012 Auckland production concurred: "*The Arrival*'s story of a Traveller (Jarod Rawiri) seeking out a new land, speaks to something of

our collective New Zealand experience."[4] This rhetoric of New Zealand as a land of immigrants is used to support acceptance of a multiculturalism, but can also be employed to limit notions of national citizenship; what constitutes a New Zealander, and when does a migrant become a New Zealander? This was a question Frank Sargeson asked in his 1940 short story "The Making of a New Zealander," in which the narrator meets a Dalmatian migrant who confides that he "was a New Zealander, but he knew he wasn't a New Zealander. And he knew he wasn't a Dalmatian anymore. He knew he wasn't anything anymore" (104). Though transnationalism is associated with the Global World, Sargeson's earlier text eloquently speaks to transnational confusion around the migrant's locus of national identification and belonging.

A striking development in New Zealand drama toured to the Global World has been the number of plays that deal with transnational immigration narratives. Diana Looser notes that Samoan theatre in New Zealand has been particularly focussed on the "immediate experience of migration," though this has shifted over time.[5] Pacific Underground's *Fresh off the Boat* (1993) by Oscar Kightley and Simon Small contrasted New Zealand-born Samoans with the displacement felt by newly arrived Charles, who in coming to New Zealand from the islands felt like he was "getting out of prison after twenty years" (62), but his new-found freedom leads to self-destructive choices and he becomes a financial drain on the family. In Makerita Urale's *Frangipani Perfume* (1997), three sisters hold low-paying jobs cleaning toilets and, "like many other Pacific Island plays, the immigration process is characterised by alienation and dysfunction, mourning the loss of tradition and finding dramatic conflict in the struggle to adjust to Palagi [the Samoan term for white New Zealander] society."[6] Kila Kokonut Krew's musical *The Factory* (2011) by Vela Manusaute is set in 1974 during a period of hostility to Pacific migration within New Zealand and anxiety about 'over-stayers,' and depicts the struggle against assimilation demanded by the factory's Palagi boss. Other transnational stories of immigration and arrival, such as Toa Fraser's *No 2* and Jacob Rajan's *Krishnan's Dairy*, dramatise migrant experiences. These dramas raise questions about belonging and identification with the New Zealand nation, and the position of being a New Zealander, but not being a New Zealander.

Transnational narratives offer the possibilities of hybrid identities, synthesising old and new homelands. Gilbert and Lo argue that "diasporic cultures that are ambivalently positioned between cultural homelands and current hostland […] tend to produce and enact signs of cultural hybridity," and theatrical performance can "index the tensions (and pleasures) of diasporic belonging."[7] These signs of cultural hybridity can challenge hegemonic notions of national identity. Multiculturalism and hybrid Kiwi-Samoan, Kiwi-Indian, or Kiwi-Chinese

identities are celebrated as positive values by an inclusive nation, but can "produce a sense of indifference to underlying issues of political and economic power."[8] Gilbert and Lo emphasise that hybridity reveals identity formation to be "a fluid and provisional process and offers an alternative organising category for a new politics of representation that is informed by an awareness of diaspora and its contradictory, ambivalent and generative potential."[9] The prominence of New Zealand's transnational immigration in the Global World highlights the processes of emplacement and displacement as an active site of contestation for identity formation. As Sargeson's story asked, at what point does your point of arrival, rather than your point of departure constitute your identity? This chapter investigates the shift towards transnationalism in the Global World, and how transnational dramas can acquire different meanings from those they have in New Zealand, when they travel to overseas destinations.

Transnational Narratives

Diana Looser states that the "Samoan corpus" reflects concerns common to other immigrant theatre, and lists these as "the challenges of adjusting to an alien, often unsympathetic host culture; racism and stereotypes; various relationships with the homeland; conflicts between first-generation and later-generation migrants; and personal and communal identity."[10] This is a useful list, as these concerns emerge in varying combinations, and in contextually and culturally specific ways, throughout the transnational immigrant narratives toured from Aotearoa/New Zealand in the Global World. For example, the Traveller's experience in *The Arrival* offers possibilities for identification, as the production enacts a series of common signifiers of the immigrant experience, including the search for work and new social bonds. The play particularly theatricalises the challenges of adjusting to an alien host culture. The Traveller immediately finds the new land disorientating, struggling to decode the signs of a new culture and language. Jazz plays as border controls do invasive checks. Immigrant officials cover the Traveller's eyes when he needs to see, and cover his ears when he needs to hear. One later gag shows the Traveller's confusion around what is the correct protocol for a hand-shake. Red Leap Theatre's image-based method, which uses movement and design (including puppetry) to tell the story, lends itself to the disorientation of encountering a new culture: at any moment the landscape may change or objects respond in an unexpected manner.

In *The Arrival*, the new world setting is a generic global world, and for the most part is given positive values, in contrast to the highly negative old world which is represented as a mono-chromatic, bleak, industrial style city. Cast members wave three long, jagged black flags over the buildings, an ominous motif that envelops the central character's home, while a foreboding soundtrack suggests buildings creaking on their foundations. The homeland is constructed as a place of threat and instability. On a balloon trip ride in the new world, the protagonist-Traveller and audience see this new land as a place of beauty. Cast members slowly push across the stage miniature buildings that are lit with a warm glow, and the music is gentle and soft. The positive portrayal of the new world as a haven gains further emphasis in a sequence where other stories of migration are enacted by the company. The first migrant had been exploited in her work as a chimney sweep, but she eventually leaves with the hope of finding better working conditions. In the second story, the immigrant escapes enormous exterminators (created through shadow puppetry) seeking to suck up people through giant 'vacuum cleaners.' In the third story, the migrant is a former soldier who escapes after a military slaughter. While these are suggestive of a refugee experience, what Red Leap Theatre's representation does not allow for are cultural customs that the Traveller and other migrants might continue to perform in the new world. With the arrival of the Traveller's family, his belonging in his new home is complete, and his connection with the old homeland is severed. *The Arrival*'s narrative is a trajectory of displacement leading to an eventual emplacement, and we see the assumption of an assimilated identity rather than one of ongoing hybridity. In the journey away from home towards not-home, there is a state of limbo, but not-home eventually becomes home. The transnational becomes the national and the old world is left behind.

Krishnan's Dairy by Jacob Rajan has a more nuanced representation of adjusting to a new homeland, the ongoing relationship with the old homeland, and the tensions between these two positions. These oppositional subject-positions are dramatised through the conflict between Gobi and Zina, who have immigrated to New Zealand and established a dairy. Gobi advocates conformity with the new society while his wife Zina insists on returning to India – "I'll never like it here," she declares (35). Zina tells their baby Apu the story of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, who married for love, whereas Gobi and Zina's Hindu marriage was an arranged one, and they have had to learn to love each other, highlighting not only religious but class issues. *Krishnan's Dairy*'s opening song acknowledges Gobi and Zina come from a different cultural framework than the Anglo-New Zealand mainstream: "They met on their wedding day – please suspend your judgment" (29). There is an assumption of difference built

into the text between the implied audience and the characters and their cultural practices. At the end of the play Gobi is killed during a robbery, which resonates with a history of violent crime against dairy owners in New Zealand. Shah Jahan constructs the Taj Mahal as a tomb to his deceased wife, whereas Zina continues to run the dairy as a living monument to her husband's memory and his wish for them to make a new life in New Zealand. Rajan summarises the play as "telling the immigrant's dream and nightmare" and "starting a new life, with a new opportunity, while longing for home."[11] Not-home also eventually becomes home, but *Krishnan's Dairy* dramatically shows that this transfer is accompanied by loss. The death of her husband forces Zina to give up dreaming of her past and embrace New Zealand as home and the Dairy as a shrine to the memory of Gobi.

George Parker questions the extent to which *Krishnan's Dairy* involves a unique immigrant-New Zealand identity and argues it reflects instead a generalised "global experience of the Indian migrant."[12] Parker claims that the global migration from the Indian subcontinent to the West and establishment of dairies, "is a phenomenon that *Krishnan's Dairy* depicts without specific reference to time or place."[13] In his programme note, director Justin Lewis observed that "the corner shop, drug store or Seven Eleven is an international phenomenon that contains elements universal to all cultures and also specific to the country or city in which they are found."[14] The Dairy, or its international equivalent, while linked into a global system as Lewis acknowledged, also reveals local tastes and product preferences, which Parker's argument does not take into account. The "Dairy" of the title does not necessarily translate outside of New Zealand, and this Kiwi-English term is one way the play is linked to its specific place. International reviews had to provide a translation. In Edinburgh, they were told that "Dairy is New Zealand-ese for corner shop,"[15] in Australia it was "milk bar,"[16] and in Singapore it was "provision shop."[17] For their performance in Edinburgh, the Indian Ink Theatre Company team had conversations about whether to change the name of the play to "Krishan's Corner Shop" and the currency from "dollars and cents to pounds and pence," but decided against making any changes because, as Rajan believed, "to muck around with [the cultural context of a show] destroys its soul."[18] Parker's criticism is overstated; the title and resistance to changing the play's context for overseas audiences affirms the play's locality in being about two Indian migrants in New Zealand.

The Factory depicts the challenges of integration with a host culture, and particularly in relation to stereotyping and racism. The musical was inspired by the story of playwright Vela Manusaute's father, who arrived in New Zealand from Niue in the 1970s, and worked at a bed factory. In the play the catalyst for Kavana and his daughter Losa's migration is a cyclone

that devastates their village in Samoa and kills Kavana's wife, and they move to New Zealand to work in a factory in order to send money home to their remaining family. Losa expresses her longing for her old home in the song 'Samoana,' in which the company's vibrant Pasifika costumes contrast strongly with the drab grey world of the Factory interior and their work uniforms. Losa deals with the loss of two mothers, "the memory of her mother," and "Samoa her mothertongue," but has begun to find "a new home in unfamiliar territory" (39). In 'Working in the Factory,' the workers sing that "if you're looking for paradise, it's right here," and repeatedly invoke a New Zealand dream of "milk and honey" (9). (This was the same promise that attracted Falemalama to move to New Zealand in Dianna Fuemana's play of the same name.) Richard Wilkinson, the factory owner, asserts an ideology of capitalist assimilation, promoting the values of 'English and Money' (15-16), anglicises the names of his Pacific workers, and forbids them from speaking their indigenous languages. 'What Do We Have' is the show's *West Side Story* (1957) 'America' moment, as the ensemble attempt to reconcile the disconnect between their dream and their reality: "We got a house but it's got no wall / We got no phone so how do we call?" (43) Mose, the union rep involved in the Polynesian Panther movement, is the channel for their discontent, and in 'How Come' (a spoken word set to music), he expresses his anger at the treatment of Pacific migrants:

> They opened the gates for us to come here. In our hundreds and thousands we left our paradise in search for the dream and here we are on this factory floor.
> They enticed us with their sweet candies and bright lights to this land to work and make them happy. I ask you my brothers and sisters, is this the dream?
> I say, they have cut my mother tongue. Re-educated me to speak the language of colonisation. But I long to speak the language of prosperity. (56)

It is an impactful political sermon, one of the most effective moments in the performance, that invites reflection about ongoing inequalities for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand. *The Factory* articulates the challenges of a making a new home as a minority in a new culture; as in *Krishnan's Dairy*, Niu Sila is the dream and the nightmare.

A recurring anxiety around identity in these immigrant dramas involves generational displacement: concerns about the children of migrants losing connection with their heritage. Hybridity is unbalanced in favour of the Anglo-New Zealand mainstream. Rajan's Gobi and Zina disagree over how they should raise their child, Apu. Gobi tells Apu English nursery rhymes, while Zina recalls the historical tale of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. Tien, the narrator of Dianna Fuemana's semi-biographical *Falemalama*, was not allowed to learn Samoan or Niuean as a child, and the act of sharing her mother's story allows her to reconnect with her heritage. In *Fresh off The Boat* the teenage characters "don't know anything about our

culture" (50). The character Samoa, named for his homeland, is obsessed with radical American figures like Malcom X, but when asked if he knows about Tamasese and the Mau, referencing the Samoan independence movement, he replies "I've heard of them – they were boxers in the sixties weren't they?" (55) The extent that this second generation have integrated in New Zealand is consolidated by contrasting the arrival of their uncle Charles from the Islands. In *Frangipani Perfume*, Pomu's ignorance about her heritage is highlighted through her mistaken notion of how Frangipani perfume is prepared. Pomu feels alienated from her Samoan heritage, and it is only when the "hidden mystery" of the traditional process for the creation of the perfume is revealed, that she can feel complete (35). In contrast, the second generation are absent in Toa Fraser's play *No 2,* as is the anxiety about losing touch with culture. Instead, we see the third generation, the grandchildren of Nana Maria, who came from Fiji to settle in New Zealand with her now deceased husband Joseph. Her grandchildren feel largely at ease in their hybrid Pacific-New Zealand identities.

No 2 recognises cultural identity to be fluid and subject to global cultural influences. Soul, who at the end of the play is named by Nanna Maria as her successor, claims to be "teaching realness" (72). The play, however, questions what is culturally real and authentic. Nana Maria wants singing, dancing and a big feast to mark her choice of successor to head the family and continue its traditions before she passes on, but when Father Francis asks Soul if naming a successor is a "Fijian tradition," he replies, "I don't know, it's just a Nanna thing, I think… she's trying to make it a real European thing" (75). The "Nanna thing" is an appropriation of Italian culture, mediated further by films like *The Godfather* (1972) (itself a story of an immigrant Italian family in America), to create her own myths and traditions. Hibiscus attacks Nanna Maria for "drinking kava out of a pudding bowl, no ceremony" and says "she's about as real as Celebrity Treasure Island" (72), a 1990s New Zealand reality TV programme filmed in Fiji. For ritual use in Fiji, young men prepared the kava, but as we are in Mt Roskill, the play suggests that traditions must adapt. Cultural identity is a narrative, and authenticity is a mirage. Similar to the way Rajan switched between different characters' masks in *Dairy*, actor Madeleine Sami adopted multiple personas to play the entire *No 2* family, destabilising fixed senses of identity and emphasising how we perform our identities; you create your own "realness."

Many of these immigration dramas end their narrative by emplacing the new home with positive values. In *The Arrival* the Traveller's homeland was one of oppression and hardship, the new world is of safety and prosperity. In *The Factory* the out-dated racist attitudes die with the death of the factory owner from a faulty electrical wire, due to his own negligence of health

and safety. It is up to the new generation to make a change, and the owner's son Edward, in partnership with Losa, vows to rebuild the values of the Factory. This conclusion is unrealistic for 1974, a typically clean musical theatre ending presenting an ideal vision of a relationship of equality between Pasifika and Anglo-New Zealand cultures. Like *The Factory*'s ending, *No 2* promotes Mt Roskill as a multicultural ideal. Maria's death at the end of the play represents a further displacement from the homeland left behind, but marks a revitalised sense of belonging for her grandchildren for whom New Zealand is home. At the end of *Krishnan's Dairy*, Zina's dairy has thrived, and we see teenaged Apu, played by Rajan sans mask with a Kiwi accent, pointing towards New Zealand's multicultural future.

Gilbert and Lo's point that hybridity can hold "a stabilising function and works to settle cultural differences" is borne out in these texts as they are ultimately narratives of successful immigration. Even in *The Factory*, *Krishnan's Dairy,* and *Frangipani Perfume*, which critique the position and treatment of migrants in society, cultural differences are settled in their conclusions. The period of displaced limbo has dramatic potential, but the narratives demonstrate the pressure this places on conceptions of identity, and the conclusions to the plays insist on resolving this conflict. Longing for a lost homeland is replaced by belonging in the new homeland. But they also challenge fixed notions of national identity by promoting the value that anyone from any culture has the right to belong in New Zealand, and in their own terms. The search for belonging, as expressed in these transnational texts, explicitly values locality over globality. The hybrid culture displayed in *No 2*, with its range of global transnational influences, could only have emerged through its specific locality of a Fijian family living in the Auckland suburb of Mt Roskill. But it also shows that identity is constantly hybridising, therefore reaffirming national identity as a fantasia.

Touring the Transnational

Rogers argues that performances "acquire multiple meanings as they move between localities, operating as forms of travelling culture that reflect and disrupt cultural expectations."[19] As works of cultural displacement, further questions of emplacement and displacement arise when these transnational works are toured outside of a New Zealand context. These stories can resonate in other locations throughout the Global World, through the perceived experience in common. This is not the same as universalism, though instances where universality is claimed

by productions and audiences reveals the perception of these connection points. Red Leap Theatre promoted *The Arrival* on the basis of what they called its universal narrative:

> Set in a fantastical time and place but is a universal story. Whether you are a refugee, migrant or have simply been on an OE you will appreciate what it like to be a fish out of water, to decipher strange languages, to navigate unfamiliar streets, to grapple with foreign customs.[20]

Invocations of universality were a noticeable trend when *The Arrival* played at the Sydney Festival in 2010. Jack Tiewes said it was "one of the best examples of truly *universal* theatre that I've seen in recent memory"[21] (his emphasis). Lynne Lancaster echoed that, "while seemingly fantastical, *The Arrival* is also eerily familiar to us in many ways. It's a universal story of hope, of humanity and overcoming hardship,"[22] and Emma Bell claimed that "actual words aren't needed because the message is a universal one."[23] As a fantastic allegory of global migration, rather than the depiction of a specific locality, *The Arrival* invites such response, yet it is not truly universal. A more accurate analysis is that its abstracted style opens itself to fluid readings and discoveries of cultural equivalence through Jullien's concept of the common, that which the subject perceives that they share with an other.

While the graphic novel is told without words, Red Leap Theatre's inclusion of language in the touring production becomes problematic. The wordless graphic novel, according to Tan, "plants the reader more firmly in the shoes of an immigrant character […] we must ourselves search for meaning."[24] For their production, Red Leap Theatre created a language for the people in the new world to speak, recoding the alphabet so that "hello" became "Goyye." Foreign gibberish, such as when delivered over a loudspeaker at border control, disorientates both the character and the audience. As an Australian critic wrote, "everyone in the audience is put in the same position as the protagonist, able only to infer intent and context without any understanding of the actual words."[25] The traveller speaks occasional English phrases ("I am here safe, I have a new friend, I miss you…"), which complicates the positioning of the audience. In New Zealand and Australia, the traveller is aligned with the mainstream local culture and language. It excludes migrants in the audience who came to the country with a first language other than English. For an Australian reviewer, the use of English "universalises the experience of being a foreigner in a new land so that anyone can understand what it would feel like to be lost amidst an foreign language and culture,"[26] but for Gord Sellar, an audience member in Seoul, it broke identification. Sellar felt that the inclusion of English "didn't add anything to the story" and "shook me out of the performance for a moment or two," though did acknowledge the "interesting reversal of it being an English-speaker who is a

refugee and immigrant in a strange land where he must struggle to learn the language."[27] Red Leap Theatre could have the traveller speak the local language of wherever they are performing, which would align the traveller with the dominant culture (as in New Zealand and Australia). However, Sellar's frustration attested to the potential disruption that the use of language had to the abstracted setting and the audience's ability to project their own meanings and resonances within this.

The space for audiences to draw equivalence in common with Gobi and Zina in *Krishnan's Dairy* is one reason that play has been so popular with overseas audiences for two decades, and is New Zealand's longest touring theatrical export. An Edinburgh review claimed that Gobi's life "might belong to Wishaw or Watford as much as to Wellington."[28] In a review for a season at Tasmania's inaugural Ten Days on the Island Festival another critic found local and global relevance in *Krishnan's Dairy*'s story:

> In New Zealand, a corner store often is owned by an Indian family. But their culture is as invisible to the general Kiwi population as the Hmong's is to most Tasmanians. Rajan wanted to make their culture visible, while lifting the veil on the difficulties all migrants face in adjusting to being outsiders.[29]

Krishnan's Dairy had opened a cosmopolitan space, which, by presenting the specific experiences of Indian immigrants in New Zealand, could draw attention to the local echoes in the play's touring locations.

The critical response to *No 2* in Edinburgh overseas meanwhile emphasised the Fijian aspect of the play over its wider transnational context. Max Szalwinksa called the play "a slice of Fijian life with a lot of spice."[30] Susannah Clapp exoticised the play as a "gentle Fiji romance" and "South Seas bubble" that "wires you directly into another culture's psyche."[31] Mark Brown said the play contained "utterly convincing characters, but also social types, moulded by the Fijian experiences of New Zealand and an increasingly globalised culture."[32] Actor Madeline Sami was routinely praised. Nick Thorpe acknowledged that one woman shows were "common enough in Edinburgh", but the point of difference was "only New Zealand-born Sami […] has ever succeeded in sending me away with the heart-warming memory of eight fully-nuanced characters."[33]

Sami spent two years after Edinburgh touring *No 2* to overseas destinations including Jamaica, Mexico, Australia, Holland and Fiji. The *Evening Post* reported: "from Jamaica to Israel, from Wellington to Edinburgh, audiences are queuing up and raving. Even the Aussies understand and love it."[34] "What better way to brand New Zealand around the world as a leader in cost-effective creativity, ingenuity and innovation?" asked John Smythe for the *National*

Business Review.[35] A two-show performance for the Festival Internacional Cervantino in Guanajuato, Mexico in October 2001 had major sponsorship and support from New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and the New Zealand Dairy Board. MFAT was interested in *No 2* as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy to increase political and business ties between the countries as part of their "Latin American strategy."[36] Sami reported that "*No 2*'s not a big money-spinner for any producer. It's a small, intimate show."[37] Even with the relatively low costs of a one actor play, *No 2* relied on subsidy and sponsorship to enable it to tour globally.

Playmarket's Client File for Toa Fraser, which contains reviews and media for the *No 2* tour, has a noticeable British bias in the collected material. This potentially reflects the greater number of print publications in London and Edinburgh reviewing theatre in this period compared to other destinations. In some instances, local reviews may not have been accessible to Playmarket, or the short length of the production's season in some locations may have meant the production did not gain a critical response. The archive does contain two translated reviews for *No 2*'s tour to Mexico's Festival Internacional Cervantino. Both reviewers praised Sami's ability to inhabit multiple characters, with one saying that "she did not require anything more than her body and facial expressions to win everyone over."[38] For the second reviewer, the production provided a contrast with "the magnitude of the Cervantino" and its "super-productions" or "the extravagant commercial theatre", reminding the writer that "theatre is purely and simply an audience, an actor and a story."[39] Neither of the reviews focussed on the particularism of the story or setting. This suggests that this performance, encouraged by the Festival context and one-actor format, was understandable and received within a universalist reading, but these reviews noticeably lacked the exoticism of the British response.

When *No 2* toured to London in 2003 reviewers identified particularism while also extending the family as universal figures. Sherdian Morley argued that Fraser "shows us, on the other side of the world, what it means to be a Fijian New Zealander through the eyes of just one family."[40] Madeleine North believed "Fraser has drawn a family who are at once uniquely Fijian-New Zealanders, and very much the average clan."[41] In press interviews, Sami agreed that the characters hold universal elements for audiences: "*No 2*'s always dragged along a nice cross-section of cultures and ages. People just understand the characters because there's a real universality about them."[42] Sami described herself as a pan-national "curried potato" (due to her Irish/Indo-Fijian heritage) and said that being a "person of the world" helped her engage with audiences worldwide[43]. One London reviewer claimed that the play's "nature resonates in all family situations of this type. Each character reminds you of someone you know."[44] The

play is explicitly proud of its specific Mt Roskill identity. However, it enables a wide range of overseas audiences to identify common equivalences.

In promoting the Edinburgh season of *The Factory*, producer Stacey Leilua said, "the migrant experience, coming to a new country in search of a better life is one that people all over the world can relate to […]. I think European audiences will love it – at the end of the day themes like family, love, and justice are universal."[45] This is arguable, as cultural perspectives on these concepts may differ. *The Factory* tells a very specific story in a very specific time and place, but uses a conventional musical theatre formula with the intention of appealing to a global audience. Rogers warns that "local specificity can […] become lost as performances become global in reach."[46] The development and production history of *The Factory* played out a tension between representing local specificity and emphasising 'universal' elements in the hopes of appealing to a global market. As a case study it illustrates how a production can reflect and disrupt cultural expectations as it travels between locations and acquires multiple meanings, and this aspect of transnational touring will provide the focus for the remainder of this chapter.

Retooling *The Factory*

The first season of *The Factory* in 2011, directed by Vela Manusaute and Anapela Polataivao and performed at the Mangere Arts Centre, was set in the present day, with the workers opposed by a Polynesian boss and his daughter. There was a subplot involving the show's heroine, Losa, and a fellow factory worker, but it was the community of workers that dominated the narrative. The themes here were of internal oppression, a culture exploiting their own migrant workers. Dramaturge Jonathan Alver encouraged radical changes for the 2013 Auckland Arts Festival season. It was now set in 1974, a period when demand for Pacific Island labour that had filled shortages after WWII had declined, and "tolerance towards migrant workers on temporary permits from Western Samoa, Tonga and Fiji came to an end."[47] By making the boss, Mr Wilkinson, a Palagi, a different racial and cultural tension was added. The boss's daughter was now a son, Edward, and the new *Romeo and Juliet* romantic plot between Edward and Losa was at the centre of the drama. Five new songs with a period disco vibe were added by *The Factory*'s composer Poulima Salima. Critics compared the play to well-known musical theatre works from the Western canon, for example, the "Pacific Les Mis" (due to its depiction of inequalities between social classes).[48] My own review of that season described the musical as

"*West Side Story* meets *Saturday Night Fever* with a Pasifika flavour."[49] It was a Pacific-New Zealand story, but told within a familiar Western musical theatre form and genre.

On its Australian tour *The Factory* was celebrated for its Pacific content and innovation as New Zealand's first-ever Pacific musical. One Australian critic, Stevie Zipper, deemed it "worthy of tours internationally," and believed the "deeply soulful" Pacific heritage would "spark deep interest in audiences who enjoy musicals that portray uniqueness and promote cultural diversity and history."[50] Another, Deborah Hawke, concluded her review with the statement that because "audiences in the region are so used to seeing American and European productions" it was "hard to believe that any musical produced from this neck of the woods could ever have popular appeal – I'm glad to be proved so wrong, and that the Pacific has found its voice."[51] *The Factory* was both new and familiar, and the critics were energised by the display of Pacific song and dance. The production also attracted strong interest from Pacific communities within Australia. Kila Kokonut Krew shared heartfelt feedback from an audience member in Canberra:

> We are the only fobs in our small country town, it was great connecting with our culture […]. Just like most islanders it was a true life story. My dad passed away in his factory job in Sydney when I was 18. He was always working for his 10 kids and I couldn't stop crying on my drive home […] thinking of the sacrifices he made to provide for us in NZ.[52]

The Factory's story found connection with diasporic audiences, an audience eager to see their histories represented back to them. The story of Samoans coming to New Zealand was enlarged to cover family histories of islanders coming to work in New Zealand and Australia. The Australia tour was a success, facilitating an outpouring of Pacific pride and diasporic ownership.

The reception once Kila Kokonut Krew reached Edinburgh could not have been more different. While articulation of a Pacific Island perspective was celebrated in Australia and New Zealand, in Edinburgh it was only of passing exotic curiosity to most critics. David Pollock found interest in *The Factory*'s "packaging of a slice of New Zealand's social history, which is doubtless largely unknown outside of the country itself."[53] Fiona Shepherd remarked that to "hear genuine Polynesian harmonies sung with such precision and resonance is a rare thing in the Northern hemisphere."[54] Kila Kokonut Krew was described as "authentically native" by Joe Spurgeon, who found it "undeniably compelling watching vast Polynesian frames hop, hurtle and high-kick round the stage to some magisterial ensemble singing."[55] The "authentically native" comment was not the only cultural blind spot displayed by the Edinburgh critics. Fiona Orr separated issues surrounding migration from the "more 'human' issues of

relationships and status,"[56] as if migration is only an ethnic issue. Michael Coveney, who had reviewed *Middle-Age Spread* favourably in 1979, gave *The Factory* a one-star review for *What's On Stage*. He invoked stereotyping in his description of the "bushy-haired menfolk" with the "threatening physical presence of the Samoan rugby team," and cultural ignorance in calling the fa'afafine character a "domestic servant in drag – a tranny nanny."[57] Coveney predicted that the "Samoan samba and the Polynesian polyphonies will not be gate-crashing the West End any time soon."[58] *The Factory* may have presented "a time, a place and a people we're unused to seeing on a British stage,"[59] as Pollock put it, but Coveney too easily dismissed a culture he did not understand, perpetuating the racial stereotyping that *The Factory* critiqued. *The Factory* did not find a home in Scotland. Critics did not make a cosmopolitan connection with Scotland's own history of oppression by the English.

The critics were largely aligned in their reaction that, rather than offering a unique cultural perspective, *The Factory* was too familiar, offering a tired example of formulaic musical theatre. Pollock labelled it "popcorn theatre," and said the "song and dance sequences never quite hit a height of invention so as to be extremely memorable after the fact."[60] *The Guardian's* Lyn Gardner's musical theatre comparison was not *Les Miserables* or *West Side Story*, but "*High School Musical* with added 70s and Polynesian vibes" (a maligned and shallow musical compared to the canonical greats) and she concluded her two-star review, "[*The Factory*] is innocuous to the point of blandness."[61] Spurgeon found it a "frankly machine-tooled and oddly westernised production."[62] This sentiment was echoed by Shepherd: "everyone throws themselves into the Western jazz hands tradition as enthusiastically as the characters embrace the capitalist lifestyle of their new home."[63] These critics identified legitimate weaknesses in the show that New Zealand and Australian critics were prepared to overlook because of the cultural significance of the production for the region; however, the response by the Edinburgh critics was also framed by Eurocentrism. *The Factory* offered an alternative Pacific perspective, but because the form was so familiar, and therefore not perceived to be culturally authentic, the critics dismissed it as a show they had seen before, and audiences did not turn up.

The reaction to the Edinburgh season shows the anxiety around the need to promote and shape *The Factory* as an accessible universal story was misplaced as it took attention away from the specificity that could have made *The Factory* unique. The conventional cross-cultural love narrative took focus away from the lives and stories of the other workers. Kila Kokonut Krew commodified their culture for global consumption, but it was not received in Edinburgh in the way the company expected. The adoption of a conventional musical theatre

genre narrative worked against them. In New Zealand and Australia this was not an issue, but in Edinburgh it exposed an expectation of exotic difference, which the too familiar and clichéd musical theatre format undercut.

Fiona Shepherd perceptively noted that “the relevancy of the [*The Factory*] comes not from its rather old-fashioned style and execution, but from the continuing prejudice faced by migrant workers around the world.”[64] *The Factory* and the other transnational texts discussed in this chapter display local and contextually specific permutations of a global migrant experience. They show the tensions generated by the movement between nations and cultures, and when the productions themselves move between locations. These transnational dramas are ultimately hopeful narratives, which, based to an extent more in idealism than reality, offer a final vision of a tolerant and accepting New Zealand homeland to overseas audiences. As observed with the overseas tours of *No 2*, *Krishnan’s Dairy*, and *The Arrival*, they have often been understood through the experience in common, wherein the specificity of the texts is enlarged by the audience framing their interpretation of the texts via the relevance to their own localities and experiences. *The Factory*’s Edinburgh tour was an example of when the cosmopolitan zone broke down: audiences and critics expected to encounter significant cultural difference, and they would have hoped to find within the difference some points of commonality. However, *The Factory*’s particularism was negated by the clichéd and highly recognisable musical theatre form and story, which precluded the impact of the cultural differences of the content and the potential cosmopolitan transfer.

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Chapter X

Indian Ink as New Zealand Inc.

At the end of Indian Ink Theatre Company's *Kiss the Fish* (2013), rice farmer Sidu prepares a bag of his rice as a parting gift for his teenage daughter Grace, who is leaving her tropical island home for California. Before he can give it to her, the bag falls from his jacket and the rice spills everywhere on the ground. Meekly he explains to Grace, "I thinking maybe you plant over there. Then maybe you won't forget us." Grace tells her father not to be silly, and adds that "you can't take foreign seeds into another country." She explains that "the conditions are different. It would probably just die over there… or mutate." Grace sees mutation as a negative phenomenon, as it could "change" and "grow into something you don't want" (172 inclusive). The ideas in this conversation are eminently applicable to Indian Ink's own travels. For close to 20 years the company has toured their "foreign seeds" into overseas countries. While the work shifts and changes, mutation in this scenario has a positive value, allowing the company to sustain themselves by exposing their work to overseas audiences.

What are the seeds for Indian Ink's longevity? First, there is the artistic partnership between Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis, collaborators since *Krishnan's Dairy*, who bonded over their shared interest in mask and their mutual training from Australasian director John Bolton, who was in turn trained by influential French mime and actor Jacques Lecoq. Rajan wrote *Krishnan's Dairy* and Lewis directed, and all subsequent Indian Ink plays were co-written between the two. As part of their process, Rajan and Lewis often begin with exploring masks and characters before they start the scripting. It takes on average two years to develop a show, a gestation period that few other New Zealand companies allow themselves or can financially afford. They work alongside Murray Edmond, the narrative guru of Indian Ink, who has been the dramaturge for all of their shows. Their company's work blends Western and Eastern influences. There is the use of Italian commedia mask traditions, and later masks from Balinese theatre and mask making traditions. They have continued to innovate, adding puppetry (*The Candlestickmaker*, 2000), multiple actors (*The Pickle King*, 2003), or reducing the principle of mask to become false teeth worn by the actor (*Guru of Chai*, 2010). Indian Ink's seeds are already foreign, borrowing from a range of forms and places, and growing these in the unique conditions of New Zealand, where funding, venue infrastructure and so on influence the work that is made. We have already seen in the previous chapter how their first work, *Krishnan's Dairy*, juxtaposed Indian migrants in New Zealand with the historic love story of Shah Jahan

and Mumtaz Mahal. Indian Ink are a New Zealand based company with a global focus: Indian Ink, via New Zealand Inc. (a term that likens the New Zealand Government's Foreign Affairs and Trade strategy to a "tightly organised business with a clear market strategy"),[1] exports ideas and stories for the world's consumption.

Being a touring company based in New Zealand has forced them to be nimble. Rajan has described the "pressures of being in a small country" as being "your audiences run out and your work starts repeating itself," which Indian Ink had attempted to avoid by study trips to Italy and Bali to refresh their forms.[2] In 2010 Indian Ink signed with an American agent, David Lieberman, the first time that a New Zealand company (as opposed to a playwright) had been signed to a major US agent.[3] On Lieberman's website, Indian Ink is profiled as a paradigm of global success:

> Indian Ink has become one of New Zealand's most successful touring theatre companies performing in every major New Zealand theatre and city since 1997; from intimate black boxes to 800+ Lyric theatres. Return seasons sell out before opening, and the company has broken box office records on the way to a total audience of more than 175,000 people. Indian Ink has toured internationally to great success and has won two Fringe First Awards from its two trips to Edinburgh.[4]

This chapter reveals a much more complex story behind these impressive facts and tracks Indian Ink's mutations: from the change in market destinations for their work, to how the identities expressed in the work have increasingly shifted away from a transnational New Zealand-Indian focus to a global orientation.

Touring the Trilogy

Indian Ink's touring capacity was built on their success with *Krishnan's Dairy* at Edinburgh. When I interviewed Lewis in November 2016, he stated Indian Ink had wanted to go to Edinburgh to:

> test our mettle in that big bear pit of a place. But we also had ambitions and dreams and aspirations of our work having a bigger, longer life. And of touring more internationally. We always saw Edinburgh as a marketplace where we could make more things happen from.[5]

Krishnan's Dairy received a number of positive reviews, the influential Fringe First award, and sold out its four-week season.[6] The reviews proved crucial for the future touring life of the show, as the reviews from United Kingdom publications carried "far more weight than any of

the New Zealand press or success."[7] While there was potential interest for a UK tour of *Krishnan's Dairy* following the 1999 Fringe, Indian Ink and their Fringe producer Guy Masterson subsequently parted ways. Rajan and Lewis next took a research trip to Italy to study commedia dell'arte in 1998, which informed the development of a new work, *The Candlestickmaker*, which debuted at the 2000 New Zealand International Festival.

Indian Ink returned to the Edinburgh Fringe with their third play, *The Pickle King*, in 2003, and again won a Fringe First Award. The company had hoped to use this as a springboard to enter the British market. Indian Ink had a "big ambitious goal of something commercial, of being on the West End."[8] Lewis recalled how they had a West End venue booked, the money lined up, but they walked away as it was "too big a risk."[9] Something that did come from the Fringe season was that *The Pickle King* was adapted into a tepid BBC radio drama using a British cast, which Lewis described as a "strange terrible thing."[10] Indian Ink began touring to Singapore from 2004, which became an important international market. In 2007 *The Pickle King* played at Singapore's DBS Arts Centre, performing three shows daily over 18 days.[11] Though initially attracted by the prestige of the London centre, Indian Ink in this period pivoted away to explore other markets, including Singapore, Australia, and Germany's Festival Theaterformen with *The Candlestickmaker* in 2006.

Bali and the American Turn

Murray Edmond writes that by 2002 Indian Ink "had a marketable set of material in repertoire and had established itself as a unique brand in theatre in Aotearoa/New Zealand, particularly in relation to its use of masks of several kinds."[12] Rajan and Lewis had speculated in interviews that their partnership would finish after they had completed their initial trilogy, however, they "renewed [their] vows,"[13] and in 2008 debuted a new play, *The Dentist's Chair*, inspired by the fact that a dentist had invented the electric chair. *The Dentist's Chair* was poorly received and was not toured overseas. Rajan's verdict was that because they had taken "the Indian flavour away," it was "a bit much for the audience to think, 'What happened to our lovely Indian characters?'"[14] Set in a kind of nowhere place, the lack of a precise setting for the play was also a problem. Following this artistic failure, Indian Ink entered a new phase in the life of the company. Going back to basics, a research trip to Bali influenced the development of their next two touring works, *Guru of Chai* (2010) and *Kiss the Fish* (2013), as well as a third, as

yet unperformed children's play, *The Smalls*, which Indian Ink refer to as their Balinese Trilogy. Lewis and Rajan spent two weeks in Bali where they trained in the art of Balinese masked dance with practitioner Nyoman Sukerta, who would become one of the models for Kutisar, the narrator of *Guru of Chai.*[15] Murray Edmond, in his introduction to the manuscript of 'The Balinese Trilogy' collection, references how Balinese theatre, through the writings of Antonin Artaud, became a mythic touchpoint for a global reforming theatre movement.[16] Theatre Action and Red Mole were other New Zealand theatre companies that had been influenced by Indonesian theatre. In Bali, Lewis had a similar reaction to his experience studying commedia in muma, with both places hamstrung by their traditions. He called Balinese mask a "preserved-in-aspic, dead tradition."[17] As a New Zealander, he felt free to "mess with stuff and make it up" and reinvent the form for a contemporary Western audience.[18] Bali and its culture had "a profound effect on the varying ways each of these plays was created."[19] For *Kiss the Fish*, Indian Ink used Wayan Tanguuh Bonres masks, some traditional, and some custom-made. Rajan said that the world of *Guru of Chai*, "although its set in India, has a strong connection to Bali."[20]

Lewis and Rajan had begun writing *Guru of Chai* in 2009, adapting the 'Punchkin' story, about a fakir and seven princesses, from Joseph Jacob's *Indian Fairy Tales* (1912). *Guru of Chai* was first performed in private homes, community halls, drama classrooms (including the University of Auckland Drama Studio, where I first encountered the play), and church auditoriums in 2010. It was then presented in professional theatres in New Zealand, Australia, and Singapore where it played to a collective audience of around 5000.[21] It would also become the first of Indian Ink's plays to tour in the American market, after Indian Ink signed with David Liebermann following a presentation of *Guru of Chai* at the Australian Performing Arts Market, held in Adelaide in February 2010. Rajan told a reporter that "Lieberman had the potential to expose Indian Ink to a vast new audience."[22] Lieberman currently represents 16 companies. Most clients are American, though there are two circus companies from Australia (Circa and Circus Oz) and one Italian group. Compared with companies offering "interactive performance media," and a "live action graphic novel,"[23] Indian Ink fits Leiberman's interest in innovative performance practice. Leiberman takes a commission for selling the work to programmers, and puts together the touring schedule. The show is bought for a set fee which means there is no financial risk to Indian Ink. Their US tour of *Guru of Chai* took them to Los Angeles in August, Virginia in September, and St Louis in November, 2011.

As Indian Ink had once set their sights on London's West End, the ultimate goal was now New York's Broadway. In 2012 Indian Ink began a crowdfunding campaign to raise

money for a showing of *Guru of Chai* in the Barrow Group's off-Broadway theatre to coincide with the Association of Performing Arts Producers arts market in January 2013. With a "top US agent" behind them, they told would-be backers that "once the hotshot producers and presenters see *Guru of Chai* live, they'll love it and we'll be on the road with tours throughout USA and elsewhere."[24] They requested $18,000 for airfares, venue hire, and accommodation. Rewards offered a taste of New York: for donations over $500, Rajan would send a personalised postcard from NYC, and the page advised to "keep this, depending on how our US tour goes, it may be worth a pretty penny in the future."[25] To accompany the campaign Indian Ink prepared an image of Times Square. Next to posters of Broadway blockbusters *Wicked*, *Jersey Boys*, *Shrek the Musical* and *Rock of Ages*, they had photoshopped three posters of Rajan as Kutisar overlooking Times Square, grinning through his bad teeth.

The outcomes from the New York showing did not match Indian Ink's hyperbole. Lieberman struggled to sell the show, and he and Indian Ink concluded that "two foreign words in one title was too much."[26] While *Krishnan's Dairy* remained *Krishnan's Dairy* overseas, the pragmatic decision was made to change *Guru of Chai's* title to *The Elephant Wrestler* for subsequent America tours. While potentially enticing (who is this wrestler and why would they battle elephants?), the replacement title is only tenuously connected with the actual content of the story (there is no person who wrestles elephants, though the Indian God Ganesh does appear briefly), but the commercial practicalities won out. Indian Ink has continued to make repeated short trips to America, and *Kiss the Fish* was taken to Minnesota and Kansas in 2015. In December 2016, however, Indian Ink's out of date profile on Lieberman's website still described *Kiss the Fish* as being in development (the profile was updated in early 2017).[27] The "Press" section on the profile links to just one New Zealand review. Unfortunately, Lieberman's website is not selling Indian Ink as effectively as it should. Though their American tours are an impressive achievement for the company, the closest they have got to Broadway so far remains the photoshopped billboard.

Global Identities

As their market focus was changing with the debut of *Guru of Chai*, so too was the work itself. The original trilogy had focussed on the transnational interplay of New Zealand and India, led by Rajan's fascination with his own Indian heritage. In *Krishnan's Dairy*, Gobi and Zina had

left India to come to New Zealand, and Rajan said the play was made by a "boy raised in the west trying to understand his parents' relationship."[28] In *The Candlestickmaker*, a New Zealand Indian student visits India, and in *The Pickle King*, Wellington's Empire Hotel attracts immigrants and exiles from India. While *The Dentist's Chair* infamously removed the Indian context, Indian Ink's subsequent work has removed the New Zealand context. *Guru of Chai* was set entirely in India with no New Zealand references, while *Kiss the Fish* was set on a geographically ambiguous tropical island.

In *The Pickle King*, George Reaper (the figure of death), who has been away from India for 21 years, says that "we are all more than just the product of our families, we also take on the flavour of those things around us. We are ingredients in a jar. Here I preserve the essence of the universal soul" (140). This quotation acknowledges identity as a confluence of past and present circumstances. It is a fitting metaphor for the early Indian Ink work, as the company mixed Indian and New Zealand identity markers, with the addition of Italian commedia mask traditions. Indian Ink's hybridised work (in content and form) attempted to provide something of a universal human experience for its audiences. Lewis and Rajan's foreword to the *Indian Ink Trilogy* gives an explanation of their work:

> We tell human stories. They are tales about love, happiness, facing your fears. It just so happens that the characters are mostly Indian and the situations and setting reflect that […]. Our job as theatre makers is to tell the stories, to throw a light on the dark corners of humanity and to lead the audience into a new and exotic world, the world of the plays.[29]

In our interview, Lewis summarised Indian Ink's work as telling a "compelling universal human story, and setting it in an interesting context and an interesting world."[30] When asked how important the company's New Zealand origin was for selling their work in overseas markets, Lewis replied:

> [the] fact that you come from a particular place may suggest that you have a particular worldview that infuses your work, which will be part of what makes what you do unique. So, in that way it's important, but it's important in terms of who we are and what it brings to the work. It doesn't mean anything in terms of people looking to buy the work.[31]

This runs counter to many other touring works, which have attempted to trade off their New Zealand origins (most notably the NZ at Edinburgh season). For Indian Ink, the story, not New Zealand, is their passport, but their specific place in the world has influenced the flavour of these stories. In comparing The *Candlestickmaker* and *The Pickle King* with *Guru of Chai* and *Kiss the Fish*, we can see how they have, like Red Mole, displaced New Zealand markers from

their work. As Indian Ink moved into new global markets, their work moved further away from an interest in representing Aotearoa/New Zealand the nation.

Staying and going is a primary opposition that runs through Indian Ink's work, and is a prominent theme in *The Candlestickmaker*. The Rajastani gypsy song that opens the play sounds a warning for the would-be traveller. The lyrics, translated, tell the narratee, "I told you not to leave for a foreign land" (64). The play's title is named after the American nickname of Dr Subramanyan Chandrasekhar, the Nobel prize-winning astrophysicist, who is due to arrive as the guest of Rohan, a retired professor in the same field. Sunil, a 19-year-old New Zealander, arrives instead. Sunil relies on the traveller's bible, *The Lonely Planet*, for his knowledge of India and its customs. After he refers to the text to thank Kalyani, Rohan's servant, with the gesture of namaste (71), she continues to refer to him as "Lonely Planet" to signal his outsider tourist status. Rajan played all of these characters, further developing from *Krishnan's Dairy* his skill in making rapid switches between masks. Rajan was joined by Kate Parker puppeteering a duck. The duck too has travelled; before interval it announces, "Darlings, I now sing you a song from my beautiful homeland, Hungary" (87). In an interview with Rajan, Lisa Warrington asked him "Were you the boy with his *Lonely Planet* Guide in *The Candlestickmaker*?" Rajan confirmed, "Yes, that particular play was definitely based on my own experience of being a young Indian New Zealander going back to his ancestral home."[32] Sunil, on his OE, becomes the conduit to invite the New Zealand audience into Rohan's home in Southern India. In a joke intended as a marker of identity for the local knowing audience, Rohan continually gets New Zealand confused with Australia. When Sunil says their national symbol is a kiwi bird, Rohan responds that he thought it was a kangaroo (73). This is a familiar slight that increases the New Zealand audience's identification with their nation through Sunil.

Rohan admires the sacrifice of Chandrasekhar who "left behind his dying mother" and "childhood sweetheart" (75) when he left India to pursue his studies. Kalyani takes a dismissive view: "Chandrasekhar a traitor, born in India, study in Engerland. Good study in Engerland. Come back teach Indians. No, go to America, become top shot professor, teach Americans" (79). Kalyani had a lover, a fisherman, who left her, and she has waited ever since for his return (we later learn she has been waiting for three centuries). Kalyani's arc is to accept that her fisherman will not return, kill the duck she had been looking after in the hopes of receiving good fortune, and finally to move on and travel. Deluded Rohan decides to go to America to follow in the footsteps of Chandrasekhar "and achieve my destiny" (98). Sunil continues on his OE, but now having gained an authentic piece of cultural experience, represented by Kalyani's gift of her red fish curry recipe. She tells him, "make it hot" (99), instead of the mild

version for the Western palette. Chandrasekhar finally arrives at the end of the play to find an empty house, the others having begun their travels, and he leaves to walk “between the heaven and the earth” (101). On the astrophysical level, the play also points out that eventually all of us will be going when the sun cools to oblivion, “everything will be extinguished [and] all that will remain will be the laws of physics” (75). It promotes travel over stasis, as a way to learn and personally grow.

In *The Pickle King* audiences are invited to the Empire Hotel, which is described as “your taste of the orient on Oriental Parade” (108). “Continually blasted by fierce winds” that Wellington is infamous for, the Empire “finds its latest reincarnation in a mock-Indian theme specialising in weddings and honeymoons” (106). The immediate impression is a hotel that is archaic and inauthentic, but we see that the hotel has established its own living culture, influenced by the people in charge (matriarch Ammachy and her niece Sasha) and the guests, who can adapt to, but also change this culture (as occurs with the arrival of George Reaper whom Sasha becomes convinced is a portent of death). The play criticises New Zealand’s immigration system and the discrimination faced by new migrants seeking employment, who are not considered for the fields they qualified for in their home country. The character Jojo, a heart surgeon, works as a night porter at the Empire because his medical degree has not been recognised by the New Zealand Medical Council. He says he came to New Zealand because he was told he had a “valuable contribution to make as part of a diverse, vibrant society and also in helping this country develop and strengthen its relationships with other parts of the world” (115), but his experience did not match this cosmopolitan rhetoric. A running joke concerns other qualified migrants working low paid jobs. In a review from the Edinburgh season, one critic noted that “Western societies, New Zealand included, continue to be suspicious of the professional qualifications of people from ‘less developed’ countries, forcing highly-qualified immigrants into the most unskilled, poorly paid work.”[33] *The Pickle King* gives a New Zealand context for these immigration issues, but allows audiences to judge the pertinence of this social commentary for their own local contexts.

Continuing Indian Ink’s thematic interest in staying/going, Jojo is determined to sit his New Zealand exams and find employment as a doctor, telling Sasha “I’ve come this far. I can’t go back now” (115). Sasha, who lost her parents and eyesight in a chemical accident in India, dreams of going back. So too would George Reaper, except he has not slept for 21 years, the same amount of time he has been exiled from India (we are led to believe he is the actual Reaper, but we later learn that he was responsible for the chemical disaster and haunted by this). George recognises that as a “child of the Raj” India has shaped who he is, “my values,

my spirituality" (131), but he also bears the "imprint of the multitude of things I have seen, heard, smelt, touched and tasted" (118). Indian Ink's first three plays all feature exotic tales of far off India, like the construction of the Taj Mahal in *Krishnan's Dairy*, or learning that in India Sasha was raised by gypsies and married to a dog in *The Pickle King*, but these were anchored with a New Zealand context. It gives local New Zealand audiences a familiar gateway to enter the stories, and by the end, like Sunil gaining the red curry recipe, they have gained their own "authentic" theatrical and cultural experience. But for overseas audiences, these markers would not have provided the same familiar resonance.

Indian Ink did not include these kinds of familiar New Zealand markers in *Guru of Chai* or *Kiss the Fish*. Edmond uses the 'Punchkin' fairytale, on which Guru is loosely based, to demonstrate the impossibility of fixed national stories. This was a transcultural story that had travelled "through many languages and cultures."[34] He argues that by taking the Indian fairy tale 'Punchkin' and creating *Guru of Chai*, Indian Ink repeated "a tradition that is literally thousands of years old and shared by many cultures."[35] *Guru of Chai* consciously engages with its audiences in the "here and now."[36] Kutisar, the chai seller and narrator, totters onto the stage, and through his prominent bad teeth announces that the Artistic Director of their venue has advised him:

> Kutisar, my audiences are all unhappy. Their lives are meaningless. They work hard, they have stress at work, but their work is meaningless. They fill their empty lives with foolish distractions. They drink coffee because they are tired. They go to the gym because they are fat. They buy things that have no use. They drink too much. They chitty chatty about nothing. Their marriages are going down the toilet. Their children are all on drugs. Kutisar, my audience is full of fat, useless, drunks – help them! (23)

In the script the example given is Janet Clark of the Theatre Royal, but this is changed from place to place to fit the specific context. This opening recognises the specific location of the performance, but unlike the plays of the original trilogy, it does not assume that its prime audience are New Zealanders. The audience are characterised humorously in this address, but this generic description of malaise is designed to be porous enough that they can find some resonances with their own various dissatisfactions in their lives. Edmond explains that "we, the audience, come to the Guru's presence as people come to a séance, in hope of hearing the truth."[37] The relationship established between the narrator and the audience plays into stereotypes of Westerners who look to Eastern gurus for spiritual enlightenment. This is made explicit with the introduction of Dave, the musician, whom Kutisar met in India. Instead of finding enlightenment, Dave found "vomiting and diarrhoea"; Kutisar says that they are

brothers and India is their common mother, though "Dave is adopted," he can never completely belong (24-25).

Having drawn attention to the audience's specific locality, *Guru of Chai* then invites the audience to imaginatively transport themselves to India. Kutisar describes the scene:

> Bangalore Railway Station, 6 am, 40 degrees. White gibas, brightly coloured saris, porters' blue uniforms, saffron robes – the holy man with the sandalwood paste. Early morning rush hour, trains: ka tak ka tak ka tak. Porters: "marra dee, marra." (26)

Rajan observed that "imaginatively, everyone has their own India […]. It's so lovely when people come up to me after [seeing *Guru of Chai*] and say, 'I know that railway station, I've been to that railway station.' Everyone has a different picture of all those people, the beggars, hawkers, priests."[38] The sprinkling of Indian terms, and the performance of the songs in Malayalam throughout the play gives a sense of exotic flavour. The mythological and the everyday collide: the elephant God Ganesh is present the first time Kusitar sees seven sisters singing at the train station where he has his stall. Significantly, then, the 'Punchkin' fairytale is transposed to a global contemporary India. Kutisar remarks how they have a "KFC in Bangalore" (39). Kutisar the chai seller is symbolic of local resistance to globalising homogenising forces. He memorably attacks Dave as a symbol of the West: "Dave is the West. I am the East. I give Dave yoga, mental and physical wellbeing, I give Dave spirituality. Dave give me Starbuck. Stupid, Dave!" (49) The play draws attention to how people worldwide are linked by forces of globalisation and standardising 'McDonaldisation.'

In *Kiss the Fish*, the narrator, the unnamed Fisherman, explicitly characterises his audiences as tourists, welcoming them to Karukam Island: "You can switch off your mobile phone now, just relax, no more stress, stress. You come to see the monkey, ah? Yah, plenty here" (111). As Edmond states, "the play is a guided tour in which The Fisherman takes us through the events that have led to the present state Karukam Island is in, with its abandoned resort and its small-scale eco-tourism."[39] The island is "Indian-esque,"[40] but never firmly placed. It was based on an experience Lewis had in Malaysia when he saw an abandoned resort that was "entirely occupied by monkeys."[41] In the play, developer Kingsley wants to make an "ecologically sustainable paradise" for "big travellers, large group bookings" (116), but he needs control of the spring on rice farmer Bapa's land. Bapa's son, Sidu is obsessed with Queen singer Freddie Mercury, and is surprised to learn that his cultural hero was also Indian. Harbourmaster Govind went to school with Freddy when he was called Farouk Bulsara (157). Jasmine, Sidu's ex-wife, arrives on the island as a satire of the tourist's ethnographic gaze. She raves:

> Wow, such a sense of community […]. I came here with all this anxiety and stress and it's gone, it's just, like, gone. Oh my gosh, I have no idea how long I've been here now […]. This is paradise. I think I've been travelling my whole life to find this place. I point my camera anywhere and it's, like, *National Geographic*. (150)

Jasmine is the anti-cosmopolitan traveller, but the audience are invited by the Fisherman to become cosmopolitan citizens, consciously attempting to become familiar with a non-local culture. While Jasmine looks with a superficial gaze, the Fisherman offers us understanding and access as a cultural insider, albeit to a hybrid culture from Indian Ink's fictional imagination.

Guru of Chai and *Kiss the Fish* are designed in theory to allow audiences of any place insider access to the world of their stories. When *Guru of Chai* was invited to Virginia, the company was asked to give a "cultural presentation" to explain the cultural context of the show to "an audience possibly less knowledgeable about New Zealand or India than some others."[42] Indian Ink declined, and it was reported that "the audience loved what they saw without a prior explanation."[43] This makes sense, as the local knowing audience for the work is assumed to be a generic Western one. *Kiss the Fish* has proven less transferable. Lewis explained to me that in America the work, "with its questions about modernising and tourism," plays as a "cultural curiosity" rather than something that resonates in the American context. Lewis said that in the "vast land that looks inward, they don't tend to think about tropical islands."[44]

The limits of *Guru of Chai*'s universalist experience were exposed when the play was toured to India. Rajan had been making imaginative trips to India in his performances since *Krishnan's Dairy*, and his work can be read as diasporic longing for the homeland. 18 March, 2014 was an important moment in Indian Ink history when Rajan performed in India for the first time. The tour was funded by Creative New Zealand, the Asia New Zealand Foundation, and Indian group Theatre Connekt. Rajan gave the following account of the experience:

> In sweltering 32°C heat, in a 600-seat theatre in Thrissur, we performed *Guru of Chai* to an audience seeing – for the first time – a prodigal son telling them a story […]. At the end they did something extraordinary. Our composer, David Ward, had written a song using an Indian raga. Suddenly the audience recognised the rhythm and started swaying in their seats and clapping along. They erupted at the curtain call. We were all draped with ceremonial shawls and blessed by a silver-haired, dignitary. It was strange but wonderful.[45]

Guru of Chai, which Lewis agreed was written for a non-Indian audience, "sat very differently in an Indian context" and despite the reception at the curtain call, "didn't resonate so well in some ways."[46] Corruption is one of the issues that backgrounds the play, but Indian Ink found that because "corruption is a real issue over there in a way we don't understand it here, that it

is endemic and it does affect people's lives in quite visceral ways," there was "longing amongst some people for that to be treated as a much more of a serious issue […] rather than being a vehicle for a love story."[47] The Indian culture had been made digestible for a Western audience, but some audiences in India found that the corruption in Indian society had been dealt with too flippantly. In 2016 Rajan returned to India with *Krishnan's Dairy*, which the New Zealand High Commission supported as a way of marketing New Zealand to India. An audience blogger identified the specificity of the ethnic group of Gobi and Zina as Malayali, lost on audiences unfamiliar with Indian communities, and named it number one of the "9 Must-Watch plays of all time for theatre-lovers in India."[48] *Guru of Chai* reflected an immediate image of Indian society that did not match audiences' lived reality. Similar to how Lord's *Bert and Maisy* played better in America than New Zealand, *Krishnan's Dairy* played better than *Guru of Chai* in India because audiences had greater distance from the theatrical mirror, and could better imagine themselves in the characters' positions.

Having established themselves as New Zealand's most successful touring theatre company in the Global World, Indian Ink are now entering a new phase in how they get their work performed overseas. They have partnered with California's South Coast Repertory Theatre to develop a new work, *Welcome to the Murder House*, that will be performed by that company. The title comes from one of the songs written for the failed *The Dentist's Chair*, which acted as a starting point for this new work. Taking the link from the earlier play about the dentist who invented the electric chair, they "plotted a completely different story" set in 1890s USA, about an Indian female scientist travelling through America.[49] With South Coast Indian Ink has an opportunity to create a show to specifically resonate with Americans, as well as work with higher production values and a larger sense of scale. Rajan and Lewis went to California to hold an initial workshop with the company, and Lewis reported that he and Rajan were "fascinated in terms of the cultural contexts and resonances that we don't understand."[50] Robert Lord provides a lesson in the problems one faces when writing for America, through the difficulty he encountered understanding the American psyche – a challenge Indian Ink will need to overcome in order for this project to succeed.

Indian Ink ran a crowdfunding campaign for the *Murder House* project on Boosted and raised $27,344 to fund workshop costs and collaborator fees.[51] In a video on the page, Lewis said that South Coast were "one of the biggest producers of new writing in the United States," and Rajan mentioned how "a number of South Coast Rep's commissions have transferred to Broadway."[52] Once again, Indian Ink sold the New York dream to its supporters in New Zealand. Like the fundraising campaign for *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira*, Indian Ink appealed to

New Zealanders' nationalistic pride. Funders would "help NZ theatre go global," the project "will be an international commission for a Kiwi company – the equivalent of an All Black win!" and "is a potential game changer for Indian Ink – it could open doors to the American (and world) market."[53] This was a New Zealand Inc. appeal, exporting Kiwi know-how to the globe. The type of collaboration envisioned between Indian Ink and South Coast is something new for New Zealand theatre's OE. We have seen how international companies have performed New Zealand work, and Robert Lord's experiences working closely with some of the companies that produced his work in America (and directing plays himself), is the closest comparison. But Indian Ink also want to involve their close collaborators on the project – designer John Verryt, dramaturge Murray Edmond, and musician Dave Ward. There is some irony that Indian Ink made an appeal to New Zealand's nationalist pride to fund a work that is to be made with identity markers for an American audience. For New Zealand theatre to go global in this case, it will be through Rajan and Lewis's skills and theatrical innovation, but New Zealand itself, like *Middle-Age Spread* on the West End, will be invisible. While the project is still ongoing at the time of writing, it continues Indian Ink's transformation into a global company.

Murray Edmond notes that Indian Ink's mask theatre:

> draws from French and Italian and Kiwi and Balinese training. It draws from Indian stories that are part of widely disseminated tales. Bali itself is a unique creation of cultural syncretism, which in turn has had a significant influence on the world of modern global theatre cultures. Jacob and Justin's plays take their place in this world.[54]

Through their plays Indian Ink's global influences from India, Europe, and the Pacific are shown to be mixing, hybridising, mutating. While their original trilogy was primarily made with a local New Zealand audience in mind, and the New Zealand context was therefore emphasised, in subsequent work toured to overseas markets the conscious exploration of the New Zealand context has gone. Lewis says that "for us the New Zealand component is not essential."[55] This in turn has been influenced by the commercial realities the company encountered in touring. While the company will appeal to New Zealand Inc. and nationalist paradigms in their local crowdfunding campaigns – the small New Zealand company making it big overseas – once they are there, their New Zealand origins are secondary to their product. Lewis believed that "no-one buys your show because you are the best company in New Zealand. They don't give a rats. They buy the work."[56] Indian Ink's New Zealand context infuses the work, but in their transformation into a global touring company their work has become uninterested in interrogating New Zealand (trans)national identity. This discussion of

Indian Ink's overseas journey has demonstrated the way that their work can resonate in different ways in different markets where, as Grace in *Kiss the Fish* says, "the conditions are different."

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Chapter XI

Cultural Apocalypse: *The Generation of Z* in London

In July 2015, I travelled to London to research and experience *The Generation of Z: Apocalypse*, the immersive theatre show which invites participants to imagine themselves as survivors of a Zombie apocalypse. The show was described to potential London audience members thus:

> It is 2015. London has fallen. The deadly Z virus is transforming the global population into a rabid horde of the infected […]. *The Generation of Z: Apocalypse* is the immersive live experience that puts you squarely into the dark heart of a zombie massacre. With chaos unfolding around you, prepare to be thrust into your very own action movie, where your choices directly influence the show's narrative and outcome.[1]

In this type of immersive theatre, the audience become spectator-participants within the story, both supporting characters and plot device. The story revolves around the audience as the group that the ARC (Armed Rescue Coalition) soldiers must keep alive long enough to rescue and complete their mission.

From the outside, *Generation*'s location, Dept. W, looked like any other building on the busy commercial street in Whitechapel – the doorway was neighboured by a Tesco Mart and a bar. Inside, the art department converted the venue into an abandoned military base over two levels. Before entry we were briefed to "make our voices heard," then entered a large basement. On the walls were multiple posters with the faces of missing persons, some posters featuring handprints in blood. When all the audience arrived, a steel gate was loudly closed by the usher. An audience member (an actor plant) began coughing up blood, and nearby spectators screamed. Each time I observed the show, the audience reacted by moving back to the corners of the room, isolating the plant in the centre of the space. Then the ARC team arrived: Sarge, their leader; the callow Rookie soldier; Moose, the gung-ho would-be hero; Frosty, the tough woman; Link, the coms expert. When a horde of Zombies arrived and began shaking the gate, the soldiers ordered the audience deeper into the complex. This split the audience into two groups, which were split again soon after. This meant an audience member experienced one of four possible storylines per performance: a quest to find the medical bay to save the injured rookie soldier; an encounter with the base's scientist, who purports to have a cure for the zombie virus, and is trying to protect his zombified wife; the rescue of a military officer from the base's prison; and the dilemma surrounding what to do about a pregnant audience plant, infected with the virus, who is about to give birth.

The Generation of Z: Apocalypse was a strange experience. There I was in London, participating in an imagined-zombie apocalypse, produced by a company from New Zealand. A number of the actors were New Zealand locals, but there was no explicit acknowledgement of *Generation*'s national origins. *Generation* was localised for each host city and the show hybridised the popular culture zeitgeist of Zombie media, for example US drama *The Walking Dead* (2010-), with a *Resident Evil* (1996-) video game format. From the International World through to globalisation, there has been a progressive replacement of colonial impositions by American popular culture, which this use of Zombie media represents. However, this shift has not been received passively. *Generation* is both New Zealand intellectual property and a consciously Western-global theatre product not limited by national borders. New Zealand identity has been placed at the margin in the hopes of gaining lucrative access to the overseas market by engaging with globally popular entertainment forms and stories. It signals a possible cultural apocalypse in which New Zealand identity in theatre is increasingly homogenised as it pursues globality.

Developing the Virus

Generation producer Charlie McDermott's interest in developing a work with an immersive form was influenced by *Apollo 13: Mission Control* (2008), which was created by New Zealanders Kip Chapman and Brad Knewstubb and toured to Australia and America, and the British company Punchdrunk Theatre's New York show *Sleep No More* (2011). Immersive theatre is a porous concept, used to describe often "diverse events that assimilate a variety of art forms and seek to exploit all that is experiential in performance."[2] Generally, the term is used to describe theatre that involves high levels of audience interactivity, mobility, and involvement, with events happening around them and to them. These participatory immersive principles are not new, and can be traced back through Grotowski, Artaud, or even further back to the Medieval Mystery Cycles and so on. What is of significance is how companies like Punchdrunk have recently commodified the form as a genre and marketed the interactivity for contemporary audiences. In Punchdrunk's productions the audience are free to roam in detailed and tactile spaces; in *Sleep No More* (2011, New York) they are in a 1930s hotel-like environment built over a number of levels inside a block of warehouses. Audience members are required to wear a beak shaped mask, which can be emboldening, giving a feeling of

anonymity as other audience members are prevented from scrutinising your facial responses. When I experienced *Sleep No More*, I had the agency to explore where I wanted, but I remained extremely passive, a voyeur who did not intervene. Punchdrunk has been criticised for privileging the experiential over the narrative, a dissatisfaction shared by McDermott. His goal was to combine the immersive form with a Hollywood plot structure, which he believed would result in a more fulfilling experience. Like the New Zealand theatre makers of *Apollo 13*, who used American culture as their subject, the creators of *Generation* did not seek to tell a New Zealand story.

Writers, David Van Horn and Simon London, and producers, Charlie McDermott and Beth Allen, debuted the first incarnation of the show, under the title *Apocalypse Z* in Auckland's Aotea Square in 2013 (Benjamin Farry later joined the writing team from the Edinburgh season). In this version, the audience experienced one storyline together. Despite its promise of interactivity, most of the show took place in a large shipping container with the traditional separation of the audience/performer relationship intact. For a 2014 Christchurch season (under the title *Zombie: Red Zone*, referencing the CBD exclusion zone put in place after the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake) they secured an abandoned warehouse and developed a new site-specific version of the show. They continued to innovate by having two storylines happening simultaneously.

The box office potential of *Generation* (and *Apollo 13*) is limited by the use of the immersive form. As the size of the audience that participates in the event increases, the more an individual audience member's experience of the work will be diluted because there are fewer opportunities for interactivity, and audience members are therefore less likely to recommend others to buy tickets. *Generation* pursued a commercial model and experimented with splitting audiences across multiple simultaneous storylines in order to have a larger capacity while maintaining an intimate interactive experience. The first stage of the company's international strategy was a three-week season at the 2014 Edinburgh Fringe, which had been "a dream […] since its conception."[3] They redeveloped their show for Edinburgh around a carpark performance space, and continued with the two-storyline approach.

Generation's London season was the first time the show had worked under a purely commercial model, without New Zealand Government subsidy. The objectives for the company was firstly to launch the brand in a global market and test its ability to run for more than a month overseas outside a Festival environment. The secondary objective was to continue to test and develop the work itself. The company was offered a sponsorship deal in which they could use the Whitechapel venue for free for nine months. While this was a considerable saving

of £200,000 from the company's half a million capitalisation, as a venue it presented some crucial disadvantages. The East London location was a geographic deterrent for potential audiences. The location restrictions meant they were unable to open a bar, which could subsidise losses in ticketing revenue. Critically, the artistic product was compromised. The lack of an outdoor area, which they had used in Christchurch and Edinburgh, meant that budgeted stunts, which included setting a performer on fire, had to be cut. At the end of the show they were forced to substantially reduce the length of the "Zombie Run" in which audiences were chased during a dash to safety.[4] The reduction of both of these elements reduced the uniqueness of the audience experience and the potential to generate word of mouth and media attention. During their four-month London run they played 200 shows to 17,000 audience members and broke even. In previous seasons, 30% of their audience returned to experience the show again; however, in London, despite there being four different storylines on offer, only 15% returned.[5] *Generation* was artistically and commercially compromised in its Whitechapel location.

Generation of NZ?

The Generation of Z was made with the intention of bringing the show to a global market. As indicated in the Introduction to this thesis, this was partly motivated by a disillusionment with the New Zealand's arts market, which McDermott called a "tiny, tiny, tiny speck of an industry in a market where your audience, the general population of New Zealand, do not value the arts in our culture."[6] This echoed the sentiments of Bill Pearson's 1952 essay "Fretful Sleepers," where Pearson said New Zealanders were unwilling "co-operate" or "speculate about themselves" through the arts.[7] *The Generation of Z* attempted to be freed from the perceived constraints of locality, by both targeting global performance opportunities and rejecting New Zealand locality in the content of the show. It was exportable theatrical product seeking an overseas paradise, where an endless horde of Zombie fans awaits. To what extent can the show be seen as *The Generation of NZ*, or does it cease to be Kiwi in being made for a global market?

Much of the theory of immersive theatre has focussed on the effect of the immersive work on the audience, but what is significant about *Generation* is the impact of the overseas audiences on the work itself. In immersive theatre who the audience are, where they come from, and the cultural reference points they bring with them, have an even greater potential to shape the meanings of the work performance to performance. *Generation* adapts to the cultural

context and place as site-specific work. In Edinburgh, the company created the conceit that they were a New Zealand contingent of soldiers working during an Edinburgh outbreak of the virus, but from London onwards the decision was made to completely re-localise the show for the host city. Unlike the Edinburgh season, the New Zealand connection was downplayed and mostly non-existent in marketing and PR. In London, it was a New Zealand show only in origin. It was about the specific London audience, imagining a scenario where they were trying to survive a Zombie apocalypse in Whitechapel. The audience, even more so than the story, localised the production. The show can mutate to the conditions of its host body, killing New Zealand locality.

While the Whitechapel location and audience localised *Generation* in a London context, the appeal to a global entertainment culture, represented by the Hollywood and gaming Zombie genre, also denationalised the show. Derek Walsh wrote that "when you grow up playing *Resident Evil* games and watching the films of George A. Romero, getting the opportunity to be thrown into a zombie apocalypse can be a dream come true – or a nightmare, as the case may be,"[8] while *Generation* also made Tom Millward recall his "teenage obsession" playing the video game *Resident Evil*: "As I wasted the days and nights away, spending far too many an hour bashing buttons on my PlayStation controller, I wondered what it would be like to actually be in that video game... and now I know!"[9] Audience responses on Twitter mirrored these experiences, such as "Taking part – and I use that expression intentionally – in @GenerationOfZ will be the closest I ever come to appearing in *The Walking Dead*,"[10] and "spent my night surviving a zombie apocalypse, honestly forgot about my own life."[11] Audience members framed their experience of *Generation* using entertainment products, and the show fulfilled role-play fantasies for its target audience.

For their respective London and American seasons, neither *Generation* nor *Apollo 13* used their New Zealand origin as a selling point. *Apollo 13* creator Kip Chapman said they "never once said [in America that] we were a Kiwi company."[12] *Generation*'s New Zealand origins were important behind the scenes, introducing concepts of whanau to the company ethos and a lack of hierarchy was emphasised in their working process.[13] Casting New Zealand actors was an important goal, though this came under strain with visa rules and local employment requirements. With *Generation* set up as a business in London, rather than a touring show, they were obligated to employ local actors. The London cast was a mixture of British and New Zealand actors. Creator-performers David Van Horn, Simon London, and Benjamin Farry all had British passports or hereditary visas. Director Michael Hurst had a British passport. Producer Charlie McDermott and Beth Allen acquired entrepreneur visas. The

company paid the visa for actor Matthew Sutherland, but could not afford further visas.[14] The desire to continue to employ New Zealand actors alongside British actors upheld *Generation* as a nationalistic enterprise, but the show did not seek to communicate something about New Zealand identity to its audiences. The New Zealand identity was made consciously invisible, and the audience's own individual experience was made paramount.

The Zombie Audience

Why is the figure of the Zombie so resonant in current global culture as a millennial monster? While the Zombie-creature can be traced to Haiti and colonial slavery, by the late 20th century Marina Warner argues it had become "an existential term, about mental and physical enslavement."[15] Eric Hamako identifies the 2001 film *28 Days Later* as being one of the first to "reimagine Zombies as angry […], infected with a virus, they are motivated by uncontrollable, animalistic rage,"[16] the type that *Generation* took its cue from in their depiction. Hamako argues this shift was "in part, influenced by contemporary Orientalism," in that "Zombie stories offer audience an opportunity to indulge in these Orientalist narratives without having to recognise the connection to real-life fears of a current Orientalised villain: Muslims."[17] As the London production was situated in Whitechapel, with a large Muslim population (highly visible as I walked to the performance location), there was some resonance with anxieties around home-grown Islamic terrorism. Anyone could be infected with the zombie virus, or radical extremism. This was a meaning and fear, however unwarranted, that the particular site made available, but is not one that would necessarily transfer to other locations, and was not a feature of the New Zealand seasons.

Warner says a Zombie "is a body which has been hollowed out, emptied of selfhood."[18] During the plot line where a father was anxious about having been separated from his daughter, I overheard audience members saying: "We'll get rid of him first." When the father brings his daughter, who had become infected with the virus, back to the group there were shouts of "kill them!" from the audience. Some also clapped when the father killed his Zombie daughter. Zombies can reveal desensitisation: they represent expendable life, and the audience were quick in *Generation* to call for their deaths to save themselves. The audience understood *Generation* as a live version of a video game where you kill to survive, and played along with the genre conventions of the simulation.

In this example, *Generation* revealed a fear and dehumanisation of the other, promoting the neoliberal ideology of individual self-interest over collective responsibility, and therefore removal of the cosmopolitan zone. Zombie lives do not matter. Adam Alston argues that "immersive theatre is particularly susceptible to co-optation by a neoliberal market given its compatibility with the growing experience industry."[19] He says "immersive theatre resembles adventure companies who remove the component of danger from what might otherwise be considered risky activity in order to render it marketable."[20] *Generation* enacted a fantasy video-game experience, simulating violence and fear of terrorist-style attack, but packaging this risk-taking in a safe format. Immersive theatre suggests real tactile experience, but its appeal, especially in *Generation*, is also its non-realness, that this would never happen in real life. At the end of the show "Zelfies" were encouraged, in which audience members took a photo with a Zombie actor, to post on social media as proof of their experience. On Twitter, *Generation* audiences boasted about almost dying of "heart failure,"[21] or doing a "little panic weewee during the final zombie run!"[22]

Theatre critic Matt Trueman states that the:

> desire to experience more fully is at the heart of immersive theatre, which can place us in situations that we are unlikely to encounter in our everyday lives […]. It stands to reason, then, that immersive theatre might be well-suited to tackle the extremities of human experience.[23]

While a Zombie apocalypse is a fantasy-scape, the concept opens reflections of what the individual might be capable of if attempting to survive a social breakdown. During the performance that I experienced the storyline where we attempted to save the life of a rookie solider, injured in an explosion, one of the participants was a qualified doctor, and took over the rookie's care. Treating the scenario as if the actor had experienced a real injury, he instructed the soldiers, as well as other audience members, as to what the best practice was, such as telling the commanding officer that "you need to apply pressure." In the medic bay, realistic looking prosthetics were stitched up by the audience-doctor and actors. The audience-doctor asked me to help them, and I held the rookie down during the operation. Another empathetic audience member consoled him, saying, "you did so well." The effort, however, was ultimately unsuccessful, and the rookie 'dies'.

The Zombie Apocalypse works well within the immersive form when it presents the audience with moral choices. *Generation* featured a moment where the cast exit and the audience believe they are alone, and respond to their apparent moment of agency by calling for death. In this storyline, an audience plant is pregnant, and her waters break. Her baby will also

be infected. Our solider-protector handed his gun to a hapless audience member and then left the room. "Do I kill her?" the gun holder asked, which set off a rather charged debate amongst the participants, with many advocating for this action. This audience member turned out to be a plant, but this was not initially obvious, and for a time it did seem like this character's fate had been put in our hands. Sometimes the audience surprised the creators. Charlie McDermott offered one example where an audience member was so convinced that the pregnant woman was having a miscarriage that she called the emergency services and they had to explain it was not real.[24] Actor Benjamin Farry said he had "been attacked by audience members" and observed "a woman lose control of her bladder" as well as "a teenage boy get overwhelmed and vomit on the floor."[25] These were extreme cases where the hyper-real immersive environment caused a physiological effect, but on a lesser scale I observed this multiple times during a performance where the audience screamed or rushed to get away from Zombie attacks.

A paradox of the immersive form is that it can often be more difficult to get immersed in the story than in a traditional theatre venue because of a heightened awareness of the contrivance of the theatrical event. When the rookie soldier died, some audience members responded with the pantomimic call, "he's still breathing!" *Esquire* writer Jacob Stolworthy was dissatisfied with the "sporadic sniggers and bursts of unwarranted applause from the faceless mob [that] threatened to derail the performance I saw – a shame considering there were moments I'd genuinely felt as badass as Rick Grimes (minus the sheriff's hat)."[26] Here other audience members had encroached on his fantasy role-play as *The Walking Dead's* hero. Rather than immersing an audience, the show can do the opposite, disrupting any suspension of disbelief.

Another potential issue with the form is the extent that the audience are allowed to influence the narrative. There is potential for the audiences to become Zombie audiences themselves, acting under the illusion of agency, while the actual narratives are tightly scripted and controlled. Despite claims that our choices can influence the show's outcome, when the audience were reunited at the end of the play, the same sequence of events played out each time. One critic complained that it was not "a particularly interactive show" as "for the most part you're ushered through the scenario like a theme park ride."[27] While the show had to deliver satisfying plot points, the creatives also needed to consider how audience choices made at the beginning of the show could potentially impact how it ends. Rather than empowering audience agency, the form can produce uncritical Zombie audiences, going through the motions of what the creators expect of them.

The audience were positioned as disposable bodies, Zombie-like, when Link and Frosty turned their guns on us, during the end sequence of the show, so we would not become infected (we were saved from being shot just in time by an evacuation team). While audience members had been calling for zombie-deaths throughout the show, now we were dehumanised. This was not the desensitisation of a video game, but a moment of simulation with the potential for critical thought: how would we really behave in such a scenario? Would we close our eyes and wait, or would we surge forward and attack? The irony is that the show ultimately devalued audience members as disposable consumer bodies. We were not individual agents, but passive zombie consumers of the same globalised cultural product. The familiarity of the Zombie genre was a key part of *Generation*'s marketing strategy and appeal, offering a live way to experience the Zombie media the audiences watch on their television and smartphone screens. The Zombies of *Generation* resonated as metaphors for terrorist anxieties, entertainment desensitisation and zombification of millennials, and ultimately of synthesising globalisation, where the same product is consumed everywhere and global sameness is emphasised over national distinctiveness.

[1] "The Show," *The Generation of Z*, 2015, http://www.thegenerationofz.com/#!the-show (now offline)

[2] Josephine Machon, *Immersive Theatres* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 22.

[3] Oliver Rosser, "The Generation of Z," *Boosted*, 2014, http://www.boosted.org.nz/projects/the-generation-of-z-edinburgh

[4] Interview with Charlie McDermott, London, Jul. 14 2015.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Bill Pearson, "Fretful Sleepers," *Landfall*, vol. 6, no.3 (Sept. 1952), 212.

[8] Derek Walsh, "Review: The Generation of Z," *Gay Times*, 2015, http://www.gaytimes.co.uk/Interact/Blogs.aspx?articleid=14750

[9] Tom Millward, "The Generation of Z: Apocalypse," *London Theatre*, Apr. 27 2015, http://www.londontheatre.co.uk/londontheatre/reviews/generationofz15.htm

[10] Dan Essex (_danessex), *Twitter* post, Jun. 27 2015. http://twitter.com/_danessex/status/614556386450649088

[11] Kayleigh (sickperalta), *Twitter* post, Jul. 2 2015. http://twitter.com/sickperalta/status/616352648967663616

[12] Interview with Kip Chapman, Auckland, Sep. 1 2015.

[13] Interview with McDermott.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Marina Warner, *Phantasmagoria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 359.

[16] Eric Hamako, "Zombie Orientals Ate my Brain! Orientalism in Contemporary Zombie Stories," in *Race, Oppression and the Zombie*, eds. Christoper M. Moreman and Cory James Rushton (USA: McFarland, 2011), 109.

[17] Ibid., 109-110.

[18] Warner, 357.

[19] Adam Alston, "Audience Participation and Neoliberal Value: Risk, Agency and Responsibility in Immersive Theatre," *Performance Research*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Jun. 2013), 3.

[20] Ibid.,13.

[21] Rhian (WONHOJW), *Twitter* post, Jul. 2 2015. http://twitter.com/WONHOJW/status/616345188777226240

[22] Dan Robles (ripplepuss), *Twitter* post, Jun. 29 2015. (Account locked)

[23] Quoted in Machon, 26.

[24] Interview with McDermott.

[25] Gemma Morris, "Swipe: The Tech Terrifying Theatre-Goers," *Sky News*, May 29 2015, http://news.sky.com/story/1492816/swipe-the-tech-terrifying-theatre-goers

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[26] Jacob Stolworthy, "What to do in London this Week: The Generation of Z," *Esquire*, May 26 2015, http://www.esquire.co.uk/culture/article/8361/would-you-survive-a-zombie-apocalypse/

[27] Ed Nights, "The Generation of Z @ Dept W," *The Grizzle Review*, May 21 2015, http://www.thegizzlereview.com/2015/05/the-generation-of-z-dept-w.html?spref=tw

Conclusion (to Part Three)

Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira and *The Generation of Z* stand apart as the poles of Part Three, exemplifying the two extremes of Dan Rebellato's quotation that theatre is respectively "firmly, resistantly local" and "the most globalised expression of human culture there is."[1] *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* proudly represented indigeneity and locality, while *The Generation of Z* embraced globalism. In the context of these poles, *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira*'s setting becomes particularly pertinent, imagining an unrecoverable precolonial and pre-globalisation Māori society. That this was a production of a Te Reo translation of a play by an Elizabethan English writer who is positioned as both a transcendent humanist figure and a globalised theatrical brand, adds further layers of complexity. The company worked within the dictates of the Globe to Globe Festival, which showcased global languages and cultures via the vehicle of Shakespeare's plays rather than equivalent national playwrights from each country. Nevertheless, Ngākau Toa remade the play for the company's own local context. Ngākau Toa's image of precontact Aotearoa was not of some prelapsarian paradise, but a highly complex society of competing iwi, on par with the ancient Greeks and Trojans. The Globe performance of *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* was therefore a highly visible expression of place and culture. This contrasts with *The Generation of Z*, whose creators did not promote the show's New Zealand origins in its marketing, and relocalised the play for the London market so markers of New Zealandness were absent from its content. *The Generation of Z* attempted to free itself from the restraints of locality to pursue the global marketplace for homogenous and ubiquitous Zombie media products.

What does New Zealand identity mean in the theatre toured to the Global World? The way the chapters are structured in Part Three offers a spectrum of possible answers between the firmly local and firmly global poles. After *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira*, in which Māori took ownership of their theatrical representation, the following chapter considers transnationalism in relation to migration dramas. Plays such as *Krishnan's Dairy* and *The Factory* reject monolithic identity and recognise the potential fluidity and hybridity of identity in relationship to national belonging. These dramas offer a powerful resistance to the globalising pressures of homogeneity from a pluralist range of perspectives. The plays of Indian Ink Theatre Company mark a further transition point on the spectrum. Though *Krishnan's Dairy* continues to tour as an ambassador for New Zealand, recent Indian Ink work has not carried explicit markers of New Zealandness. Justin Lewis said that their New Zealand context influenced what they made, but it was irrelevant to selling the company overseas. Indian Ink has positioned itself as a global

touring company, exporting, from their base in New Zealand, work for a range of geographic audiences. *The Generation of Z*'s placement at the end of Part Three represents the further extreme of making work for the global marketplace: work that emphasises global sameness over local distinctiveness.

In the New Zealand theatre toured to the Global World, anxieties persist around the formation of national identity. If, in the International World the dominant message was "this is our home," spoken by members of an Anglo-New Zealand majority insecure about proving the validity of their identities and the worth of New Zealand drama (or, "New Zealand is *not* our home" in the case of exiles Robert Lord and Red Mole) in the Global World, this has been replaced with the dominant question, "where is our home?" Both hybridity and an endless collage of global influences pose a challenge to attempts to create a coherent national identity and expose it for the fantasy that it is. Nevertheless, as we have seen with the migration narratives analysed in Chapter IX, having opened these questions the conclusions to the plays attempt to resolve them by expressing the desire to belong in the new local.

In the Global World an appeal to New Zealand identity can be utilised, as in the 2014 NZ at Edinburgh Fringe season, but also rejected as irrelevant or even a hindrance. It is a question of branding and what is perceived will sell the product. For the makers of *The Generation of Z*, they perceived that promoting their New Zealand origin would not achieve this. Though I have argued that *The Generation of Z* is uninterested in national culture, it is worth considering what sort of national culture *The Generation of Z* does represent – what *kind* of New Zealand play is it? It fits within a New Zealand identity that is largely associated in the global consciousness with Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* film trilogies, emphasising spectacle and technological (or theatrical) innovation. If *The Generation of Z* does display a New Zealand identity, it is one that is culture-less, history-less, a blank, a willing participant in the synthesising power of globalisation.

[1] Dan Rebellato, *Theatre & Globlalization* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 10.

CONCLUSION

The major question this thesis has asked is what it means for Aotearoa/New Zealand theatre to travel overseas. Travel involves the impulse for departure, the moment of the arrival, and the return. First then, departure: a desire for overseas performance has been a significant impulse in New Zealand's theatre and should no longer be overlooked. In New Zealand theatre's OE, overseas productions offer an opportunity for contestation in a wider market, and acquisition of status back home; artists can increase their brand value with New Zealand audiences if they have 'made it' overseas. While these are good reasons to attempt overseas productions, my major argument has been that it is the New Zealand theatre maker's search "for a distinctive and separate cultural identity"[1] that has motivated the departure overseas. This brings us to arrival. This thesis has been particularly interested in what a theatrical work means when it is performed in a specific time and place, and how overseas receptions of a work both mirror and depart from local resonances. The plays, playwrights, and companies are changed the moment that they arrive in their destination, and they are different upon returning. I titled this thesis 'Finding Ourselves,' but I could have also added 'Losing Ourselves,' or even, 'Remaking Ourselves,' such are the ways that the overseas journeys of New Zealand plays have unsettled identities. In answering this major question this study has provided a new understanding of how Overseas Experience has contributed to the development of New Zealand drama.

This thesis has pursued the question of how national identity in dramas can be read by local and non-local audiences, drawing on concepts from Benedict Anderson and Judith Butler, combined with theories of cosmopolitanism and Francois Jullien's conception of the common. It has demonstrated how Aotearoa/New Zealand is an "imagined community," and its national identity is an imitation without an origin, a "stylised repetition of acts."[2] Theatre is quite literally a site where identity is performed. The feedback loop, in which self-referential markers of national identity within a drama can be read by the ideal local and knowing audience, is one of the processes by which national identity is produced, consolidated, and naturalised. The identification and recognition of markers of New Zealandness in a play reinforces the audiences' sense of what New Zealandness is. Overseas performances, however, have the potential to shift and denaturalise these identities. Analysis of reviews and available audience responses has established that some markers are read, but others remain outside the feedback loop for non-local audiences. Overseas productions disrupt the feedback loop and make explicit the ways New Zealand identity is a fluid fantasy.

Theatre toured from New Zealand and performed to overseas audiences has the potential to create a cosmopolitan zone, in which a self-selected audience makes a conscious attempt to gain familiarity with the foreign and "interpret images of others."[3] The cosmopolitan audience desires to gain understanding of the other, but in order to understand, the audience have looked for their own reflections in the theatrical mirror, seeking points of resonance within their own cultural context. The cosmopolitan encounter with otherness is made safe and comprehensible by emphasising the ways the other is like the self. This has led to a central contradiction in New Zealand theatre's OE: though New Zealand theatre has largely been concerned with establishing its own identity and legitimacy through overseas performance (the New Zealander says: 'look how different we are'), overseas performance destabilises the identity because audiences adapt the work to become more like them (the overseas audience says: 'look how similar you are to me.') Far from being an ideal, the cosmopolitan zone can reinforce cultural assumptions, synthesising difference. Evocations of universality have been questioned throughout this thesis; the 'common' was used an alternative framework: the space in between the drama and the audience through which one body of cultural knowledge connects with another and what the subjective audience members perceive that they share with the other. My analysis has involved an examination of the paradigms of portability, what allows a work from one place to move to another, and what sort of common space is created between the performers and audience.

This strategy of reading markers of national identity is built on blanks. There is no inherent cultural identity, and there are no universal themes either. The settler-invader society of New Zealand has an acute insecurity about its own lack of identity, so is especially anxious to fill this blank. New Zealand drama especially exposes the Pākehā/Anglo-New Zealander desire to demonstrate their belonging with their New Zealand home, thus the attempt to establish the naturalised national identity and drama utilising self-referential markers of belonging. Repetition becomes a function of this identity formation through the repeated attempt to secure overseas performance to gain recognition and 'prove' the New Zealand identity. This repetition, intended to stabilise the identity, instead further reveals underlying anxieties.

This thesis has primarily focused on providing new scholarship on the case studies selected for this thesis, based heavily on my reading of the archival record. In offering an expansive overview of the theatrical OE, primarily from WWII to today, it has not been possible to consider all overseas productions in detail. With the range and variety of New Zealand theatre touring the Global World particularly, and indeed other performance genres,

there is much still to explore. Future scholarship could further complicate the strategy of analysis of the performance and interpretation of identity in New Zealand theatre performed overseas, by applying it to national dramas of other countries and encounters with non-local audiences. For instance, how might a British touring production resonate with a New Zealand audience today? Reviews have provided access to possible meanings made available during performance, but there would have been other possible identifications that the archival record did not capture. Further work could be undertaken to better understand how audiences in different locations respond to non-local productions, and how this accords and diverges with local responses. A future study might undertake qualitative surveys to assess how markers of national identity resonated in a particular play within New Zealand, and compare this with surveys of audience members when this play is toured to an overseas destination.

The thesis has used the organising categories 'International World' (1945-1991) and 'Global World' (1991-present) to explain New Zealand's negotiation of wider geopolitical shifts following WWII, and the terms have also proved insightful in explaining the development of the work that has travelled as part of New Zealand theatre's OE. In the International World we saw an interest in displaying the "imagined community" of one national to another national (*The End of the Golden Weather*, *Gallipoli*, *Hedda Gabler* and *Michael James Manaia*), the transference of work from one national to another national (Roger Hall, Robert Lord), as well as leaving behind the national altogether in pursuit of the international (Red Mole). The nation was perceived as a coherent unit which could be used to base an identity around. There are continuities in the Global World, but we also saw that the identities showcased overseas in New Zealand theatre were broadened with a greater acknowledgement of transnationalism and hybridity, which destabilised notions of nationality. In the International World the nation homogenised identity, but in the Global World globalising pressures carried out the homogenising, superseding the boundaries of the singular nation state.

Throughout, we have seen the tensions between desires to embrace and to reject a national identity in New Zealand theatre. In the International World, I established that there was a movement to tour works that displayed a unique Anglo-New Zealand identity that had diverged from the colonialist settler identity. The contradiction was that by looking overseas Mason and Amamus' travels involved an implicit rejection of the local. Both believed they were undervalued in their homes, and sought an understanding audience overseas. They were anxious about their constructed identities, and sought the validating power of "Elsewhere." We have seen this cycle continue with Māori theatre, feeling undervalued within New Zealand, Māori companies have also gone overseas. In this context, overseas tours become an act of

seeking recognition, to find communion with an understanding audience without local prejudices.

1979 was a key year in the International World: a New Zealand play, *Middle-Age Spread*, masquerading as a British play, was on the West End; Red Mole were stuck for months in London after making a splash in New York, where Robert Lord was trying to make a name for himself as a playwright. Only Heartache and Sorrow's season at the Edinburgh Fringe contained work with visible markers of New Zealandness, but the company also featured an Australian play and an American parody. New Zealand theatre was being produced overseas, but not with the regionalist identity that Bruce Mason had so passionately argued for. Theatre with New Zealand settings, characters and societal reflections had become more readily accepted by the end of the 1970s within New Zealand, which is one reason why the desire to project unique identity overseas lessened, and cultural adaptations of the work for international performance were accepted (to the extent that even *Footrot Flats* was adapted for Australia). It was not until 1990, as the International World transitioned to the Global World, that Downstage revived Mason's interests with *Hedda Gabler*, and it is significant that a New Zealandised version of a Western theatre classic was chosen to tour as a way of gaining overseas performance, before *Michael James Manaia* was able to follow and finally articulate a distinct (and challenging) regionalist version of New Zealand identity that had emerged because of the still unresolved fractures in the country's imagined 'bicultural' community.

Part One opened with Bruce Mason's address to the International Drama Conference in 1963 in which he stated that "New Zealanders with British and Scottish ancestry were slowly turning Polynesian" and predicted, "the effect of this is going to be our special contribution to art and theatre in particular."[4] In some ways this has been borne out. David O'Donnell has identified the contribution made by Māori and Pasifika playmaking, arguing that "New Zealand Pacific Island plays show the way towards the possibility of a unique, hybrid theatre tradition in the South Pacific."[5] This thesis's opening scene was the moment of the 2014 NZ at Edinburgh Fringe season, an image of New Zealand's globality. The season aimed to fulfil Mason's prediction. New Zealand was a site of "cultural alchemy," having made the journey from being the "Britain of the southern seas" to claiming a "powerful identity as a Pacific nation."[6]

The Introduction stated that this thesis would answer the question "how did we get there?" but now that we are there, we need to ask where we have arrived and what that means? We can now assess the outcomes of the attempt to sell New Zealand theatre to the globe through the 2014 Edinburgh Fringe. Of the NZ at Edinburgh plays, only two went on to further overseas

tours. Ironically, counter to the projection of Pacific-New Zealand identity, those two were *The Generation of Z* and the picture book adaptation, *Duck, Death and the Tulip*, both uninterested in displaying markers of New Zealand national identity. It was the end of the OE for *Black Faggot*, *On the Upside Down of the World*, and *The Factory*, and for the latter the Fringe season was so financially ruinous that the Kila Kokonut Krew company was liquidated.[7] The success of the millennium cluster of New Zealand plays at Edinburgh, many of which won Fringe First Awards, encouraged the perception of Edinburgh as the must-visit location for NZ touring productions and the gateway for the global marketplace. I would advise would-be tourers to be cautious. Fringe is a lottery, one of the few certainties being that shows will lose money. For example, Justin Lewis told me Indian Ink lost money both times they went to the Fringe, though, with the benefit of hindsight, it paid off for the company.[8] It is time for New Zealand theatre makers, and Creative New Zealand (who in 2017 again supported a branded NZ at Edinburgh season), to look beyond the Fringe as the platform for overseas touring and find more canny ways to gain attention from overseas producers. The immediate Asia-Pacific region remains an untapped market in which New Zealand theatre has the potential to be a leader.

Of course, there will continue to be exceptions that land in Edinburgh. *Daffodils* (2014) by Rochelle Bright, a musical love-story turned tragedy, told using popular New Zealand songs, was the latest to win a Fringe First Award in 2016. Against this acclaim, critic Michael Billington, who decades before perceptively noticed that the West End adaptation of *Middle-Age Spread* covered something that was "once local and plausible,"[9] gave *Daffodils* two out of five stars. His view was that *Daffodils* did not "travel well." [10] He suspected that though the show "intended to question the notion of New Zealand as a quiet place in which nothing too sensational ever happens, its final effect is to support rather than subvert the myth."[11] Billington's comments, dismissing the projected identity as a provincial one, speaks to the ongoing problems faced by New Zealand theatre makers desiring overseas performance, and anxieties about whether the work will be recognised and understood. These are the same problems that Mason addressed at the International Drama Conference where he refuted Kenneth Clark's position on nationality in art. Should New Zealand theatre makers attempt to speak an "international language," or should they, as Mason argued, proudly use their own accent and showcase their regionalist difference? *Daffodils* chose the former, but in this instance Billington did not strongly connect with the markers of identity in the work.

This brings us back to what New Zealand identity means in the global world. *Daffodils* seems to be a dying species in New Zealand theatre's current OE: a show with strong markers of New Zealandness, but with a traditional Anglo-New Zealand identity rather than hybrid

markers of transnationalism or Pacificness. A stronger current sees the embracing of a Pacific-New Zealand identity, such as at the 2014 NZ at Edinburgh Fringe season, which continued the impulse to display a regionalist identity to the world. Markers of Pacificness in New Zealand theatre are now employed to prove the distinct and divergent identity, because of the exotic currency these markers hold in the Anglo-market. However, in the Global World, where the continuous interplay of difference and globality destabilises notions of identity, the anxiety over national identity remains.

There is another current too, that is uninterested in displaying markers of New Zealand society. At the end of her thesis on the development of dramaturgy in New Zealand, Fiona Graham suggests that future theatre makers "will want to make work that moves beyond the familiar and national frontiers. New Zealand practitioners have fought hard to tell their own stories but now this work is established they can look outwards and make new connections."[12] We have seen this trend with Indian Ink Theatre Company, who do not feel beholden to tell stories of New Zealand but instead their stories travel to wherever their inspiration takes them. It is highly significant that for CNZ's second attempt at a NZ at Edinburgh promotion in 2017, despite CNZ's branding, a minority of the eight supported theatrical works displayed their national origins in their content, and only obliquely. Binge Culture Collective's participatory work *Whales* featured whales migrating from Aotearoa stranding in Edinburgh, and *Break Up (We Need to Talk)* saw New Zealanders ending their relationship while travelling in Scotland, however, in *Ancient Shrines and Half Truths* the company became local Edinburgh tour guides. In White Face Crew's *La Vie Dans un Marionette* and Barnie Duncan's *Juan Vesuvius: I Am Your Deejay*, the performers also pretended to represent other nationalities. Trick of the Light's puppetry work *The Road that Wasn't There* (which had premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2012) begins in New Zealand, though was explicitly written to be performed in Edinburgh so creators Hannah Smith and Ralph McCubbin Howell consciously included a "Scottish element."[13] The final two works had a strongly feminist orientation, Eleanor Bishop's *Jane Doe* and Julia Croft's *Power Ballad*, engaging with global debates around contemporary feminism. The majority of the works promoted the country's theatrical innovation, but not its national culture.[14]

New Zealand theatre was accused of cultural immaturity when it mostly produced plays imported from overseas. By tracking the OE we have glimpsed the nationalistic project within New Zealand that, increasingly from the mid-1970s, promoted home-grown writing and theatre. Does a shift to transnational storytelling, and rejection of the need to construct and transmit a New Zealand identity to overseas markets, mark a maturing of New Zealand theatre

makers in the global world? Does *The Generation of Z*, for example, mark a maturity with theatremakers having a global outlook and no longer needing to present New Zealand stories overseas in order to have their culture affirmed? There is some symmetry with *The Generation of Z* as my last case study, and The Kiwi Concert Party as my first. They complement each other as products of popular entertainment in their periods, British-style concert parties versus zombie media, the perfect travelling partners on their overseas experiences. Placing these cases together disrupts a progressive narrative where, after the battle for a national theatre has been 'won,' artists are free to move past "national frontiers," as the overseas journey of Red Mole prophesised. We can also link *The Generation of Z* with Roger Hall's *Middle-Age Spread*, where New Zealand identity is written out of the work. The cultural centre is privileged and any local identity is killed. This thesis has shown that, generally, the most commercially successful New Zealand productions overseas, from *The Rocky Horror Show* to *Middle-Age Spread* to *Ladies Night*, have been unengaged with New Zealand society. They, like *The Generation of Z*, spoke an international rather than regional language. Did Mason ultimately lose this debate?

The Generation of Z is a self-conscious attempt by New Zealand theatre makers to speak a *global* language in order to have commercial success in a larger overseas market. There remains a question whether creating globalised stories comes at the expense of local culture. If more New Zealand artists, or indeed theatre makers from other countries, take the model of making global entertainment products from global entertainment forms and narratives, then a potential outcome might be the further homogenisation of cultures. I have argued that New Zealand identity is a fantasy, but sometimes fantasy can be useful. It is my view that the global future of New Zealand theatre overseas relies on a re-commitment, if not to national identity, then to locality, informed by globality and transnational influences. Anyone can tell global stories that homogenise culture to represent everywhere and nowhere. Only New Zealanders will tell the stories of their imagined hybrid community. Aotearoa/New Zealand Theatre's OE continues.

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APPENDICES

i) A Timeline of Notable Events on New Zealand Theatre's Overseas Experience

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of productions, but is designed to convey a chronological overview of the activities discussed in this thesis. For a full list of productions mentioned in this thesis, see New Zealand Theatre Productions Performed Overseas on page 290.

1933
The Wind and the Rain by Merton Hodge opens in St Martin's Theatre, London and plays for 1000 performances.

1941
The Kiwi Concert Party, the New Zealand Defense Force's WWII Entertainment Division, is formed. Revue No.1 debuts on 1 May, 1941 in Maadi, Egypt.

1945
The Kiwi Concert Party plays its final wartime Revue on 6 November, 1945 outside Siena.

1946
The Kiwi Concert Party (now 'The Kiwis') tours to Australia. The Kiwis play in Queensland, Perth, Adelaide and open in the Comedy Theatre, Melbourne on 21 December, 1946 (where they perform until 6 January, 1949).

1949
The Canterbury Student Players tour to Australia with productions of Shakespeare's *Othello* and Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* directed by Ngaio Marsh.

1957
The Tree by Stella Jones is produced in the United Kingdom by both the Rapier Players in Bristol and the Newcastle Repertory.

1960
The Pohutukawa Tree by Bruce Mason is performed in Wales.

1962
The Wide Open Cage by James K. Baxter is produced at the off-Broadway Washington Square Theatre venue in NYC.

1963
The End of the Golden Weather, written and performed by Bruce Mason, plays in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

1972
Theatre Action's *Once Upon a Planet* is performed during NZ Trade Week in Suva, Fiji.

1973
The Rocky Horror Show by Richard O'Brien debuts at the Royal Court, London.

1974
Well Hung becomes Robert Lord's first play to be produced in the USA when it is performed by the Trinity Square Repertory Company, in Providence, Rhode Island, NY.

1975
Amamus tour *Gallipoli* to the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, the Fifth International Student Festival of the Open Theatre, Wroctaw, Poland, and subsequently to the Polish University cities of Szczeczin, Gdańsk and Łódź.

1979
Red Mole Enterprises perform their first work for NYC, *Goin' to Djibouti*, at the Westbeth Theatre in January. They debut *The Last Days of Mankind* in April, tour to the UK where they perform *The Last Days of Mankind* and debut *Blood in the Cracks* and *Dead Fingers Walk*. They return to NYC and embark on "An American Tour", taking *Numbered Days in Paradise* to various locations across the USA.

Heartache and Sorrow perform five works at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe: *Songs to Uncle Scrim* by Mervyn Thompson; *Crossfire* by Jennifer Compton; *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* by Catherine Downes; *Sweetcorn* by Downes, Jane Waddell, and Michael Houston; *Hair of the Dog* by the company.

Middle-Age Spread by Roger Hall opens in the London West End venue The Lyric Theatre.

1984
An Australian production of *Footrot Flats: The Musical* by Roger Hall, A.K. Grant and Phillip Norman begins its tour of Australia.

The 'Oz Duz NZ' three-month season of three New Zealand plays is presented at Stables Theatre, Sydney: *Foreskin's Lament* by Greg McGee, *Middle-Age Spread* by Roger Hall, and *Bert and Maisy* by Robert Lord.

1986
Robert Lord's *Country Cops* (a new version of *Well Hung*) tours the USA on the 'Summer Stock Circuit' to Massachusetts, Maine, Colorado and Connecticut.

1987
Red Mole Enterprises depart America for Amsterdam and present *Playtime* at the English Speaking Theatre of Amsterdam.

1990
Robert Lord directs his play *The Travelling Squirrel* at Primary Stages, his final production in NYC before his death.

Downstage's production of *Hedda Gabler*, directed by Colin McColl, tours to the Edinburgh International Festival, the Covent Garden International Festival in London, and the Ibsen Festival in Oslo.

1991
Downstage's *Hedda Gabler* tours to the Festival of Sydney and *Michael James Manaia* by John Broughton plays at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

1994
Pacific Underground tours *Fresh off the Boat* by Oscar Kightley and Simon Small to Apia, Samoa.

1997
The Air New Zealand Season of Kiwi Theatre, part of the Festival of New Zealand Arts at London's Southwark Playhouse, features *Joyful and Triumphant* by Robert Lord, *C'Mon Black* by Roger Hall and Catherine Downes' *The Case of Katherine Mansfield*.

Waiora by Hone Kouka plays a sold-out season at the Brighton Festival, UK.

The Ballad of Jimmy Costello by Tim Balme plays at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

1998
Skin Tight by Gary Henderson plays at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and wins a Fringe First award.

1999
Bare by Toa Fraser and *Krishnan's Dairy* by Jacob Rajan (Indian Ink Theatre Company) play at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (*Krishnan's Dairy* wins a Fringe First award).

2000
No 2 by Toa Fraser plays at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and wins a Fringe First award.

Dianna Fuemana's *Mapaki* and Briar Grace-Smith's *Purapurawhetū* play at the International Women's Conference in Athens, Greece.

2001
The French language production of *Ladies Night* by Stephen Sinclair and Anthony McCarten receives the Meilleure Pièce Comique Moliere Prize.

2003
The Pickle King by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis (Indian Ink Theatre Company) and *Blowing It* by Stephen Papps and Stephen Sinclair play at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe (*The Pickle King* wins a Fringe First award).

2004
Massive Company perform *The Sons of Charlie Paora* (2002) by Lennie James at the Royal Court, London, UK.

2006
Shaky Isles Theatre Company founded by Emma Deakin to produce New Zealand theatre in London.

Dianna Fuemana's *Falemalama* debuts at Pangea World Theatre, Minneapolis, USA.

2007
Miria George's *And What Remains* and Makerita Urale's *Frangipani Perfume* play at the Pasifika Styles Festival in Cambridge, UK.

2008
Mo & Jess Kill Susie by Gary Henderson is adapted and presented by Northern Light Theatre in Edmonton, Canada.

2010
Indian Ink Theatre Company signs with Agent David Lieberman to promote the company's work in the USA, beginning with a tour of *Guru of Chai* to Los Angeles, Virginia and St Louis.

Red Leap Theatre's *The Arrival* tours to Sydney and Hong Kong.

2012
Ngākau Toa's *Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira* opens the Globe to Globe Festival in London in 2012 on the anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday.

2013
Hackman's *Apollo 13: Mission Control* by Kip Chapman and Brad Knewstubb tours three towns in Washington and North Carolina, USA.

2014
Indian Ink Theatre Company perform in India for the first time when *Guru of Chai* is presented at the K.T. Muhammad Regional Theatre, Thrissur, Kerala.

The Factory by Vela Manusaute tours Australia.

Creative New Zealand's 'NZ at Edinburgh' supports a branded season of six theatrical NZ works at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe: *The Factory*, *Black Faggot* by Victor Rodger, *On the Upside Down of the World* by Arthur Meek, *Strange Resting Places* by Rob Mokaraka and Paolo Rotondo, *Duck, Death and the Tulip* by Peter Wilson, and *The Generation of Z* by David Van Horn, Simon London and Benjamin Farry. *Calypso Nights* by Barnie Duncan also features at the Fringe outside of the NZ at Edinburgh season.

2015
The New Zealand Performance Festival New York held at La MaMa, NYC in March, features nine NZ performance works curated by Sam Trubridge, including *On the Conditions and Possibilities of Hillary Clinton Taking Me as Her Young Lover* by Arthur Meek and *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* by Eli Kent.

Royale Productions' *The Generation of Z: Apocalypse* plays for three months in Whitechapel, London.

2016
Daffodils by Rochelle Bright plays at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and wins a Fringe First Award.

2017
Creative New Zealand supports a second 'NZ at Edinburgh' season at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

ii) New Zealand Theatre Productions Performed Overseas

Note: Productions are grouped in chronological order under the playwright's or, in some cases, the company's name (listed alphabetically). Dates, venues, directors and notable performers are provided when these are known. This is not a complete list of New Zealand theatre produced overseas, but is intended as a reference for the overseas productions mentioned within this thesis (primarily tours from New Zealand companies and productions by international companies).

Amamus
Gallipoli (1974) with *The Half Dance of Mary M* (Premiere), at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England, UK (7 to 11 October, 1975). Dir. Paul Maunder.
--- Poland Tour (1975): At Fifth International Festival of the Open Theatre, Wrocław (October); subsequently Szczeczin, Gdańsk and Łódź (October to November).

Balme, Tim
The Ballad of Jimmy Costello (1997), Tasman Ray and Guy Masterson, at Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (August, 1997). Dir. Simon Bennett, performed by Tim Balme.

Baxter, James K.
The Wide Open Cage (1959), International Drama Council, at Washington Square Theatre, NYC, USA (December, 1962). Dir. Robert Dahdah.

Betts, Jean
Ophelia Thinks Harder (1994): 15 Playmarket licensed international productions in USA, Australia and Singapore (as of 2014), including:
--- Aroha Productions at Samuel Beckett Theatre, NYC, USA (31 March to 11 April, 1999). Dir. Melinda Collie-Holmes.

Binge Culture Collective
Ancient Shrines and Half Truths (Premiere), at Summerhall, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (2 to 27 August, 2017).

Whales (2013), at Assembly George Square Theatre, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20 August, 2017).

Break Up (We Need to Talk) (2014), at Summerhall, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (7, 4, 21 August, 2017).

Bishop, Eleanor
Jane Doe (2016), Zanetti Productions, at Assembly George Square Studio Two, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (3 to 28 August, 2017). Dir. Eleanor Bishop. [Previously developed and performed in the USA.]

Bright, Rochelle
Daffodils (2014), Bullet Heart Collective, at Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (4 to 28 August, 2016). Dir. Dena Kennedy.

Broughton, John
Michael James Manaia (1991), Downstage, at Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (13 to 31 August, 1991). Dir. Colin McColl, performed by Jim Moriarty.
--- Taki Rua, at fortyfivedownstairs, Melbourne Festival, Melbourne, Australia (10 to 28 October, 2012). Dir. Nathaniel Lees, performed by Te Kohe Tuhaka.

Croft, Julia
Power Ballad (2017), Zanetti Productions, at Summerhall, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (2 to 27 August, 2017). Dir. Nisha Madhan, performed by Croft.

Daniels, Erina [Director]
Party with the Aunties (2011), devised with the cast, at Festival of Pacific Arts, Guam (May to June, 2016).

Downes, Catherine
The Case of Katherine Mansfield (1978), at Southwark Playhouse, Air New Zealand Season of Kiwi Theatre, Festival of New Zealand Arts, London, England, UK (15 July to 2 August, 1997). Performed by Downes.

(See also **Heartache and Sorrow** for other performances.)

Downstage
Hedda Gabler (1891) by Henrik Ibsen, Downstage, at St Bride's Theatre, Edinburgh International Festival, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (27 August to 1 September, 1990). Dir. Colin McColl, performers included Catherine Wilkin and Jim Moriarty.
--- National Theatre, Ibsen Festival, Oslo, Norway (4 to 5 September, 1990).
--- Jeannetta Cochrane Theatre, The Covent Garden International Festival, London, England, UK (10 to 23 September, 1990).
--- Seymour Centre, Festival of Sydney, Sydney, Australia (3 to 19 January, 1991).

(For *Michael James Manaia* see **Broughton, John**.)

Duncan, Barnie
Calypso Nights (2013), at Assembly Roxy, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (1 to 25 August, 2014). Performed by Duncan.

Juan Vesuvius: I Am Your Deejay (Premiere), at Assembly George Square Theatre: The Box, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (3 to 27 August, 2017). Performed by Duncan.

Farrell, Fiona
Chook Chook (1994), 16 Playmarket licensed international productions in the UK, Australia and Germany (as of 2014).

Fraser, Toa
Bare (1998), Guy Masterson & Real Productions, at Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (8 to 30 August, 1999). Dir. Michael Robinson, performed by Ian Hughes and Madeleine Sami. [Subsequently performed on a UK tour and in Australia and the USA.]

No 2, Guy Masterson & Companie Segundo, at Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (3 to 28 August, 2000). Dir. Catherine Boniface, performed by Madeleine Sami.
--- Cervantino Festival, Guanajuato, Mexico (13 to 14 October, 2001).
--- Kings Head Theatre, London, England, UK (4 February to 16 March, 2003).
[Also toured to Australia, USA, Canada, Netherlands and Israel.]

Fuemana, Dianna
Mapaki (1999), at International Woman's Conference, Athens University, Athens, Greece (2000). Dir. Hori Ahipene, performed by Fuemana.
--- Rooke Theatre, Mount Holyoke College, New World Theatre, Massachusetts, USA (30 November to 1 December, 2001). [Also toured to Hawai'i.]

The Packer (2003), at Garage, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (8 to 28 August, 2004). Dir. Jeremy Lindsay Taylor, performed by Jay Ryan. [Also toured to Australia in 2003, 2004, 2008 and the Hollywood Fringe, USA in 2010.]

Falemalama (Premiere), at Pangea World Theatre, Minneapolis, USA (16 November, 2006). Dir. Dipankar Mukherjee, performed by Fuemana.
--- Festival of Pacific Arts, Utulei, Pago Pago, American Samoa (July, 2008).
--- Niue Arts Festival, Niue (2009).
--- Planet Indigenous Festival, Toronto, Canada (2009).

George, Miria
And What Remains (2005), Tawata Productions at Playroom, Pasifika Styles Festival, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England, UK (31 May to 1 June, 2007). Dir. Hone Kouka.

Grace-Smith, Briar
Ngā Pou Wahine (1995), Taki Rua at The Festival of the Dreaming, Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia (September 1997). Dir. Tina Cook and Nancy Brunning, performed by Rachel House. [Also toured to Ireland in 1997]
--- Festival of Pacific Arts, Noumea, New Caledonia (October, 2000).

Purapurawhetū (1997), Taki Rua, at International Women's Conference, Athens University, Athens, Greece (2000). Dir. Catherine Downes, performers included Jim Moriarty. [Also toured to Canada]

Hackman
Apollo 13: Mission Control (2008) by Kip Chapman and Brad Knewstubb, at Sydney Opera House (March, 2010).
---- Australia Tour (2011): Powerhouse, World Theatre Festival, Brisbane (9 to 20 February); Studio Underground, State Theatre Centre, Perth International Festival, Perth, Australia (19 February to 7 March).
--- USA Tour (2012-2013): Tacoma Dome Exhibition Hall, Tacoma, Washington (21 to 30

December, 2012); Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, Washington (9 to 20 January, 2013); Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts, Winston-Salem, North Carolina (26 to January, 2013).

Hall, Roger
Flex-Time [Known as *Glide Time* (1976) in NZ], Canberra Theatre Trust at The Playhouse, Civic Square, Canberra, Australia (28 September to 21 October, 1978). Dir. John Tasker.
Flexi Time [renamed], Australia Tour (1979): Adelaide (July); South Australia (August); Victoria (September). Dir. Don Mackay.
--- Ensemble Theatre, Kirribilli, Sydney, Australia (25 August to 20 December, 1997). Dir. Crispin Taylor. [Plus other Australian productions.]

Middle-Age Spread (1977), at Lyric Theatre, London, England, UK (17 September, 1979 to late 1980). Dir. Robert Kidd, performers included Richard Briers and Paul Eddington. [Preceded by a try-out season at Theatre Royal, Brighton in 1979 and followed by a tour of UK provinces in 1981.]
--- Source Theatre Company, Washington D.C, USA (May, 1983).
--- Oz Duz NZ, Stables Theatre, Sydney, Australia (15 November to 9 December, 1984). Dir. Aarne Neeme. [Plus subsequent Australia tour and other Australian productions.]

With A.K. Grant and Phillip Norman, *Footrot Flats: The Musical*, John Manford and Associates, Australia Tour (1984 to 1985): Western Australia (1984), Numerous venues across South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory (January to November, 1985). Dir. Brian Debnam. [Plus other Australian productions.]

Multiple Choice, Triumph Productions, at Yvonne Arnuad Theatre, Guildford, England, UK. (opened 9 October, 1984). Dir. Lou Stein, performers included Susannah York.

Love Off the Shelf, Nuffield Theatre, Southampton, England, UK (December, 1987 to January, 1988).
--- Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough, England, UK (1993). Dir. Alan Ayckbourn.

C'Mon Black (1995), at Southwark Playhouse, Air New Zealand Season of Kiwi Theatre, Festival of New Zealand Arts, London, England, UK (13 July to 2 August, 1997). Dir. Danny Mulheron, performed by Grant Tilly. [Subsequently performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, 1997.]

Heartache and Sorrow
The Case of Katherine Mansfield (Premiere) by Catherine Downes, at Theater De Kikker, Utrecht, Holland (October, 1978).

The Heartache and Sorrow Show (Premiere), at Second International Women's Festival, Amsterdam, Netherlands (1978).

Heartache and Sorrow's Season at Netherbow Theatre, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (August, 1979). Presenting:
--- *Songs to Uncle Scrim* (1976) by Mervyn Thompson.
--- *Crossfire* (1975) by Jennifer Compton.
--- *The Case of Katherine Mansfield* (1978) by Catherine Downes.

--- *Sweetcorn* (1979) by Downes, Jane Waddell, and Michael Houston.
--- *Hair of the Dog* (1979) by the company.

[*The Case of Katherine Mansfield* also toured to Australia in 1980 and 1983, and Holland and NYC in 1983. *Sweetcorn* was toured to Nimrod, New South Wales, Australia in 1982.]

Henderson, Gary
Skin Tight (1994), Guy Masterson & Skin Tight International at Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (August, 1998). Dir. Gary Henderson, performed by Jed Brophy and Larissa Matheson.
Additionally, 25 Playmarket licensed international productions in USA, UK, Australia and South Africa (as of 2014), including:
--- Shaky Isles at Pleasance Theatre, London, England, UK (20 to 25 October, 2009). Dir. Stella Duffy.

Mo & Jess Kill Susie (1996), Northern Light Theatre, at Third Space Theatre, Edmonton, Canada (11 to 21 September, 2008). Dir. Trevor Schmidt.
--- Harley Dog Productions, at Trinity St. Paul's Church (Basement), Toronto Fringe Festival, Toronto, Canada (3 to 13 July, 2013). Dir. Brenley Charkow.

Skin Tight and *Mo & Jess Kill Susie* were toured by Quartet Theatre Company to Belgium, Germany and Romania (October to November, 2010). Dir. Hilary Halba (*Skin Tight*) / Bronwyn Tweddle (*Mo & Jess*).

Hodge, Merton
The Wind and the Rain at St Martin's Theatre, London, England, UK (18 October, 1933 to 1935). [Also produced in America, Europe, Australia.]

Ihimaera, Witi
Woman Far Walking (2000), at various venues, Hawai'i, USA (19 to 30 September, 2001).
--- Central Library, St Peters Square, Manchester, England, UK (June, 2002). [Also toured to Wales.]
--- Festival of Pacific Arts, Palau (July, 2004).

Indian Ink Theatre Company
Krishnan's Dairy (1997) by Jacob Rajan, Guy Masterson, at Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (August, 1999). Dir. Justin Lewis, performed by Rajan.
--- Peacock Theatre, 10 Days on the Island Festival, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia (30 March to 2 April, 2001). [Also toured to Australia in 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2012.]
--- Singapore Repertory Theatre, Singapore (2004). [Also toured to Singapore in 2006.]
--- India Tour (2016): Satyajit Ray Auditorium, Kolkota (11 to 12 November); Ranga Shankara, Bengaluru (16 November); Delhi International Arts Festival, New Delhi (18 to 19 November).

The Pickle King (2002) by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis, at Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (August, 2003). Dir. Lewis, performers included Rajan.
--- DBS Arts Centre, Singapore (30 January to 16 February, 2007).
[Also toured to Australia in 2008.]

The Candlestickmaker (2002) by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis, at DBS Arts Centre, Singapore (May, 2006). Dir. Lewis, performers included Rajan.
--- Festival Theaterformen, Germany (2006).
[Also toured to Australia in 2008 and 2009.]

Guru of Chai (2010) by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis, USA Tour (2011): Los Angeles (August); Virginia (September); St Louis (November). Dir. Lewis, performed by Rajan.
--- Barrow Group Theatre, NYC, USA (January, 2013). [Also toured to Singapore in 2010, Australia in 2010 and 2017 and Hawai'i in 2014. Toured mainland USA retitled *The Elephant Wrestler* in 2014 to 2015, and Vancouver, Canada in 2016.]
--- K.T. Muhammad Regional Theatre, Thrissur, Kerala, India (18 February, 2014).

Kiss the Fish (2013) by Jacob Rajan and Justin Lewis, USA Tour (2015): Minnesota and Kansas. Dir. Lewis, performers included Rajan.

Jones, Stella
The Tree (1957), The Rapier Players Ltd., at Little Theatre, Bristol, England, UK (8 to 20 April, 1957). Dir. Paul Smythe, performers included Alice Fraser.
--- Newcastle Repertory, at The Playhouse, Newcastle, England, UK (November, 1957).

Kent, Eli
All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever (2014), Playground Collective at Ellen Stewart Theatre, La MaMa, New Zealand Performance Festival New York, NYC, USA (26 to 27 March, 2015). [Subsequently performed at London's Vault Festival in 2016.]

Kouka, Hone
Waiora at Corn Exchange Theatre, Brighton Festival, England, UK (20 to 24 May, 1997). Dir. Murray Lynch, performers included Rawiri Paratene.
--- Hawaiian Islands Tour, USA (September, 1999): O'ahu, Kaua'I, Maui & Hawai'i: Kamehameha Schools; Leeward Community College; Kaua'I Community College; 'Iao Theatre, Wailuku; UH-Hilo Theater.

The Prophet (2002), Taki Rua at various venues, Hawai'i, USA (17 to 31 October, 2006). Dir. Nina Nawalowalo.

Lees, Nathaniel
Fale Sa (Premiere) at Padre Palemo Reserve, Festival of Pacific Arts, Guam (May, 2016). Dir. Lees.

Little Dog Barking
Duck, Death and the Tulip (2013) by Peter Wilson, at Main Hall, Summerhall, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (1 to 28 August, 2014). Dir. Nina Nawalowalo.
--- Asian Pacific Puppet Festival, Quanzhou, China (November, 2015).

Paper Shaper (2008), at Asian Pacific Puppet Festival, Nanchong, China (June, 2014). Dir. Peter Wilson.

Guji Guji (2016), Ricca Ricca Festival, Japan (July, 2016). Dir. Peter Wilson.

Lord, Robert
Well Hung (1974), at Trinity Square Repertory Company, Providence, Rhode Island, NY, USA (November, 1974). Dir. Adrian Hall. [Also produced in Australia in 1974, 1976 and 1979.]

Meeting Place, New Phoenix Repertory Company, at The Playhouse, NYC, USA (April, 1975). Dir. Michael Montel.

I'll Scream If I Want To, at Provincetown Playhouse, NYC, USA (August, 1976). Dir. Marshall Oglesby.

Bert and Maisy, Oz Duz NZ, at Stables Theatre, Sydney, Australia (13 December, 1984 to 6 January, 1985). Dir. Aarne Neeme.
--- Old Globe Theatre, at Cassius Carter Centre Stage, San Diego, California, USA (30 November, 1985 to 12 January, 1986). Dir. Robert Berlinger.

Country Cops (new version of *Well Hung*), USA Summer Stock Circuit Tour (1986): Cape Playhouse, Dennis, Massachusetts (7 to 12 July); Ogunquit Playhouse, Ogunquit, Maine (14 to 19 July); Elitchs' Theatre Company, Denver, Colorado (21 July to 2 August); Westport Country Playhouse, Wesport, Connecticut (4 to 9 August). Dir. Tony Tanner, performers included Conrad Bain.
--- Dorset Playhouse, Dorset Theatre Festival, Vermont, USA (4 to 20 August, 1988). Dir. John Morrison.

China Wars (1987), at Primary Stages, NYC, USA (2 to 9 March, 1989). Dir. Ethan Silverman.

The Travelling Squirrel, at Long Wharf Theatre, New Haven, Connecticut, USA (3 to 22 February, 1987). Dir. John Tillinger.
--- William Redfield Theater, Primary Stages, NYC, USA (23 February to 9 March, 1990). Dir. Robert Lord.

Joyful and Triumphant, Circa, at Southwark Playhouse, Air New Zealand Season of Kiwi Theatre, Festival of New Zealand Arts, London, UK (8 to 31 July, 1997). Dir. Susan Wilson. [Also productions in Australia.]

Manusaute, Vela
The Factory (2011), Kila Kokonut Krew, Australia Tour (2014): Adelaide Cabaret Festival, Adelaide (12 to 14 June); Riverside Theatre, Parramatta (18 to 21 June); Canberra Theatre Centre, Canberra (23 to 25 June); Merrigong Theatre, Wollongong (9 to 12 July); The Arts Centre, Gold Coast (15 to 16 July). Dir. Anapela Polataivao and Manusaute.
--- Assembly Hall, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (31 July to 25 August, 2014).

Massive Company
The Sons of Charlie Paora (2002) by Lennie James, at Royal Court Theatre Downstairs, London, England, UK (March, 2004). Dir. Sam Scott.

The Brave (2012): Hawaiian Islands Tour, USA (March, 2015): Maui, O'hau and Hawai'i. Dir. Sam Scott.

Mason, Bruce
Birds in the Wilderness (1958), at Lyric Theatre, London, England, UK (June 10, 1958).

The Pohutukawa Tree (1956), at Theatr Fach Llangefni, Wales, UK (11 to 13 October, 1960).

The End of the Golden Weather (1959), at Regent Hall, Abbeymount, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (August, 1963). [Subsequently performed in UK, USA, Australia.]

Blood of the Lamb (1980), Court Theatre, Australia Tour (1981).

McGee, Greg
Foreskin's Lament, Oz Duz NZ, at Stables Theatre, Sydney, Australia (18 October to 11 November, 1984). Dir. Aarne Neeme.

Meek, Arthur
On the Upside Down of the World (2011), Auckland Theatre Company, at Upstairs at the Roxy, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (30 July to 25 August, 2014). Dir. Colin McColl, performed by Laurel Devenie. [Previously performed at the United Solo Festival, NYC in 2013.]

On the Conditions and Possibilities of Hillary Clinton Taking Me as Her Young Lover (Premiere), at First Floor Theatre, La MaMa, New Zealand Performance Festival New York, NYC, USA (12 to 15 March, 2015). Dir. Geoff Pinfield, performed by Meek. [Subsequently performed at Joe's Pub at The Public Theatre, NYC and the 2016 Edinburgh Festival Fringe.]

Mokaraka, Rob
With Paolo Rotondo, *Strange Resting Places* (2007). Taki Rua at Dreaming Festival, Brisbane, Australia (June, 2008). Dir. Leo Gene Peters.
--- Festival of Pacific Arts, Pago Pago, American Samoa (July, 2008). [Taki Rua production also toured to London and Singapore.]
--- Cuba Creative, at Assembly George Square Studios, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (31 July to 25 August, 2014). Dir. Paolo Rotondo.

Ngākau Toa
Toroihi rāua ko Kāhira (The Māori Troilus and Cressida), translated by Te Haumihiata Mason from William Shakespeare (circa 1602), at Globe Theatre, Globe to Globe Festival, World Shakespeare Festival, Cultural Olympiad, London, England, UK (23 to 14 April, 2012). Dir. Rachel House, performers included Rawiri Paratene and Waihoroi Shortland.

O'Brien, Richard
The Rocky Horror Show (Premiere), at Royal Court, London, England, UK (19 June to 20 July, 1973). [Numerous subsequent productions worldwide.]

Pacific Underground
Fresh off the Boat (1993) by Oscar Kightley and Simon Small, at Apia, Samoa (1994). Dir. Nathaniel Lees. [Also toured to Brisbane, Australia in 1995.]

Tatau: Rites of Passage (1996), co-production with Zeal, at Pacific Wave Festival, Sydney (1996). Dir. Oscar Kightley and Stefo Nantsou.

Papps, Stephen
with Stephen Sinclair, *Blowing It* (1999), Company Gavin Robertson and Guy Masterson, Assembly Wildman Room, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (1 to 25 August, 2003). Performed by Papps. [Subsequently toured Australia and Europe.]

Red Leap Theatre
The Arrival (2009), at Carriageworks Bay 17, Sydney International Arts Festival, Sydney, Australia (10 to 17 January, 2010). Dir. Julie Nolan and Kate Parker, performers included Jarod Rawiri.
--- City Hall Theatre, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong (February, 2010).
--- South Korea Tour (2012): LG Arts Centre, Seoul (3 to 6 May); Busan International Performing Arts Festival, Busan (11 to 13 May, 2012).
--- Macau Cultural Centre, Macau (March, 2013).
--- Kaohsiung Spring Arts Festival, Taiwan (March, 2013).

Red Mole Enterprises
Goin' to Djibouti (Premiere), at Westbeth Theatre, NYC, USA (4 to 21 January, 1979).

The Last Days of Mankind (Premiere), at The Theatre for the New City, NYC, USA (5 to 22 April, 1979).
--- UK Tour (July, 1979): at Crucible Theatre, The Commonwealth Youth Festival, Sheffield (9, 11, 14 July); Oval House, London (25 to 19 July); Surrey Free Arts Festival, Guildford (July).

Blood in the Cracks (Premiere), at Theatre Space, London, England, UK (9 to 11 and 16 to 18 August, 1979).

Dead Fingers Walk (Premiere), at NZ House, London, England, UK (1979).
--- Theatre for the New City, NYC, USA (13 to 23 September, 1979). [Subsequently performed on Red Mole Enterprises' "An American Tour" to various USA locations.]

Numbered Days in Paradise (Premiere), "An American Tour" (October, 1979 to January, 1980): Labour Theatre, NY (October); Rikers Island Prison, NY (October); 10 Bleeker St, NY (October); Laurel Theatre, Knoxville, Tennessee (5 November); Mexican American Unity Council, San Antonio, Texas (10 to 11 November); Esther's Pool, Austin, Texas (15 November); Kimo Theatre, Albuquerque, New Mexico (22 November to 2 December); The Performing Space, Santa Fe, New Mexico (7 to 15 December); Wayfarer's Inn, Taos, New Mexico (11 December to 31 December); Odyssey Theatre, Los Angeles, California (7 to 19 January, 1980).

The Early Show and *The Late Show* (from *The Redmole Version*, 1980), at Pyramid Theatre, NYC, USA (July, 1981).

The Excursion (Premiere), at Theatre for the New City, NYC, USA (4 to 20 February, 1982).

Childhood of a Saint (Premiere), at El Bohio, NYC, USA (October, 1982).
--- New Assembly Theatre, NYC, USA (November, 1982).

2 Quacks on Io (Premiere), Inroads, NY, USA (1983).

Dreamings End (Premiere), Texas/New Mexico Tour, USA (1984): The Ritz and The Beach, Austin, Texas; University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Fine Arts Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Community Auditorium, Taos, New Mexico. [Subsequently performed at Ohio Theatre, NY, 1984.]

Circu Sfumato (Premiere), at Angladas Building, Taos, New Mexico, USA (1985).

Lost Chants for the Living (Premiere), at Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA (1986).
--- Austin Fifth Street Theatre, Austin, Texas, USA (30 to 31 May, 1986).
--- El Bohio, NY, USA (1986).

Playtime (Premiere), at Caravan of Dreams, Fort Worth, Texas, USA (1986).
--- Fifth Street Theatre, Austin, Texas, USA (1986).
--- Centre for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA (1986).
--- English Speaking Theatre of Amsterdam, De Stalhouderij, Amsterdam (1987).

Hour of Justice (Premiere), at English Speaking Theatre of Amsterdam, De Stalhouderi, Amsterdam (15 to 31 January, 1988).

The Book of Life (1990), at Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney, Australia (1990).
--- Tandanya Aboriginal Centre, Adelaide International Festival of the Arts (1992).

The Navigators (Premiere): Amsterdam and USA Tour (1993): De Stalhouderij, Amsterdam; Dixon Place, CBGBs, Croton, NY, USA; Dance Umbrella, Austin, Texas, USA; CCA, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA.

[For further details see NZEPC, "Red Mole: A Chronology of Works 1974-2002", Dec. 15, 2003, http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/brunton/brief/mole_chron.asp]

Rodger, Victor
Black Faggot (2013) at Assembly Roxy, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (31 July to 25 August, 2014). Dir. Roy Ward. [Previously toured to Australia in 2013.]

My Name is Gary Cooper (2007), at Kumu Kahua Theatre, Honolulu, Hawai'i (22 January to 22 February, 2015). Dir. David O'Donnell.

Royale Productions
The Generation of Z (2013, as *Apocalypse Z*) by David Van Horn, Simon London and Benjamin Farry at Assembly George Square Theatre, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (31 July to 25 August, 2014).
--- As *The Generation of Z: Apocalypse*, Dept. W, Whitechapel, London, England, UK (4 April to 19 July, 2015).

Shaky Isles Theatre Company
Established 2006. Various productions, including:
My Inner Orc (Premiere) by Allen O'Leary at Stage Space, Pleasance Theatre, London, England, UK (13 to 24 October, 2010). Dir. Stella Duffy.

Taniwha Thames (Premiere) by the company, at Ovalhouse Theatre, London, England, UK

(15 November to 3 December, 2011). Dir. Stella Duffy.

(For *Skin Tight* see **Henderson, Gary**.)

Sinclair, Stephen
With Anthony McCarten, *Ladies Night* (1987). Numerous productions by international companies in the UK, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, Greece, Scandinavia, Iceland, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, USA, Australia. Including:
--- Mermaid Theatre, London, UK (1989).
--- Paris, France (2001). [Received the Meilleure Pièce Comique Molière Prize.]

Ladies Night 2: Raging On (1993): Various international productions.

(For *Blowing It* see **Papps, Stephen**.)

Theatre Action
Once Upon a Planet, NZ Trade Week, Suva, Fiji (1972).

The Canterbury Student Players
Othello (1603) by William Shakespeare and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921) by Luigi Pirandello, Australia Tour (1949): Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra. Dir. Ngaio Marsh.

The Conch
Vula (2002), at Festival of Pacific Arts, Palau (July 2004). Dir. Nina Nawalowalo
--- The Charter Day Festival, Guam (2004).
--- Sydney Opera House, Australia (2006).
--- The Vaka Vuku Conference, Suva, Fiji (2006).
--- Australia Tour (2008): Brisbane Powerhouse, Brisbane; World Theatre Congress, Adelaide.
--- Holland Tour (2008): Rotterdam; Lieden; Amsterdam; The Hague; Utrecht.
--- The Pit Theatre, Barbican Centre, London, England, UK (23 April to 3 May, 2008).

Masi (2012), at The Oceania Centre ITC Theatre, Suva, Fiji (2012). Dir. Nina Nawalowalo and Tom McCrory.
--- Everest Theatre, Seymour Centre, Sydney Festival, Sydney, Australia (20 to 25 January, 2013).

The Kiwi Concert Party / The Kiwis
The Kiwi Concert Party, the Entertainment Division of the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force, performed during WWII throughout Crete, Syria, Malta, Italy and North Africa: First Revue, Maadi, Egypt (1 May, 1941); Final Revue, outside Siena, Italy (6 November, 1945).

As The Kiwis, toured Australia and New Zealand (1946-1954), including:
-- Comedy Theatre, Melbourne, Australia (21 December, 1946 to 6 January, 1949).
--- Empire Theatre, Sydney (2 February, 1949 to 1950).

Trick of the Light Theatre
The Road that Wasn't There by Ralph McCubbin Howell, at Free Sisters, Edinburgh Festival

Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (August, 2012). Dir. Hannah Smith.
--- Zanetti Productions, Assembly Roxy Upstairs, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, UK (3 to 27 August, 2017).

Urale, Makerita
Frangipani Perfume (1997) at Playroom, Pasifika Styles Festival, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, England, UK (29 to 30 May, 2007). Dir. Rachel House. [Also toured to Canada in 2006 and Australia in 2007.]
--- Laboratory Theatre, Leeward Theatre, Leeward Community College, Ala Ike, Pearl City, Hawai'i, USA (17 to 26 September, 2015). Dir. Ashley DeMoville.

Wendt, Albert
The Songmaker's Chair (2003), at Kumu Kahua Theatre, Honolulu, Hawai'i (March 16 to April 15, 2006). Dir. Dennis Carroll.

White Face Crew
La Vie Dans Une Marionette (2013), Betsy & Mana Productions, at Gilded Balloon at the Museum, NZ at Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK (2 to 28 August, 2017). Dir. Jarod Rawiri.