

THEATER AS MIRROR

Introduction to scene:

The most useful thing for us to do at the present moment is to ignore the metaphor in the phrase “theater as mirror.” In lieu of the illusion of a mirror placed upon the stage, an actual mirror the size of the curtain should be placed onstage. We should then set it up in front of the respectable audience that generally attends our few theaters. I clearly imagine this audience to be composed mostly of the bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie. This is precisely the audience that provokes me to put my chaotic mind in order, to attempt to find within theater my mind’s most ferocious and elevated potential.

I imagine the mirror to be wide and spotless, lying in wait before those who enter the light-filled auditorium. Their hands are holding tickets, which I hope are expensive, and their eyes look confusedly about for someone to lead them to their seats. The mirror, which is calm and confident, grabs them with a soft, velvety grip the moment they enter. They are now in its grasp, unable to escape or return to the place from which they came, wondering “Why?” At the beginning, as they sink into their seats, it may seem amusing to the audience to hastily search in the mirror and then to be subtly relieved as they encounter their own faces. But relief quickly turns to anxiety as they discover that other eyes are constantly catching theirs. They look away, but it is difficult to escape because the mirror, as expansive as a curtain, continues to face them. It throws their movements and

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