

A Note on the Closet Dramas

Per their designation, these dramas were written with the theater of the reader's imagination as their intended site of performance. Though short, their length is only the outcome of the author's execution of his inspiration to whatever point he felt satisfied some organic roundness and finality had been achieved. These works' somewhat detailed "stage directions" perhaps do enough that a reasonably fleshed-out interpretation within the internal theater might be pulled off in the case of each reader's experience. But in considering these dramas' brevity, the author wonders whether, as supplementary guidance for his readers, he ought provide a last few instructive hints, that those who favor his works with their attention might more closely fulfill his intended effects in their imaginative directing.

These works' brevity in mind, one imagines that their action and development have scope for a kind of temporal expansion, as well as an expansion of the depth and capacity of their landscapes, vastnesses, and echoing chambers. The author advises the reader to imagine each drama as occurring within a kind of languorous, slowed-down, almost underwater, dream-like surreality. Let the lines breathe, and so let the characters breathe (though they be underwater). Perhaps a pause lasts a minute – or perhaps, instead, an hour. Though this would never do in actual performance, perhaps it is appropriate enough in some cases to imagine such a lapse.

Put plainly, the effect I mean to achieve in each moment in each drama, whether the mood be one of love or rage, frustration or rapture, frantic frenzy or defeated quietude, is a kind of perpetual and all-enveloping sense of *hypnosis*, almost as though the reader were mesmerized, or indeed viewing the impromptu dramatic productions of slumber. Words must go by nearly as gradually as the drifting of clouds, movements and changes as the shifting of the seasons, so that all unfolding seems but the unified out-working of some uncanny and infinitely patient sensibility. Such a frame of understanding is, I believe, the master key to discovering something of the intended effect and atmosphere of these works.

If any of them are ever performed, such understanding must be foremost in the process of directing. A filming, I think, would be more appropriate than live staging to achieving the right effects of mood and pace – specifically, a film production using deliberately theatrical, rather than realistic, sets and staging, and of a perhaps highly stark, stylized, and

expressionistic nature. All should be conducive to the languid dream-atmosphere, nothing superfluous or distracting. I would venture to suggest filming using technology and technique reminiscent of the throbbing, gauzy texture-look of color films of the mid-twentieth century, thus lending the productions some further suggestion of far removal from the humdrum nature of the waking world.