

## *A Play like Social Media*

I want to see a play that is like scrolling through one's phone on Instagram, or TikTok, or ideally Vine.

A play for the young, for Gen Z. A play for my generation, one that works with our fast-paced postmodern sensibilities. A fragmented performance, viewed through the angry existential lens which we see a beautiful dying world. The performance is a mixture of pastiche and originality. It is vignettes, if they can be called that, extremely quick, a whirlwind of disruption, with no clear connection between moments.

The production is chaos. Short. Disorienting. Our short attention spans are magnified by social media, so these days the scenes cannot be too long. 30 seconds, or less. We borrow some ideas from the Futurists, but reject their underlying reasoning, which has always been ridiculous. The fast pace is to replicate the quick processing of information, to disrupt meaning, not to condense the narrative into essential moments. There are no essential moments.

The production embraces a wildness. An existentialism, bordering lunacy. It is anarchist. It is insanity. The world is doomed and so are we, we fight to save it, we despair that we shall triumph. Our lives are meaningless. So, we romanticize every moment — every moment is a dialogue of unspoken poetry. The beauty of a moment is borne of its transiency. We are liberated from the shackles of societal norms, who give a damn about respectability if the world is ending, it is ridiculous.

The humor is mixed with pain. A pressing despair that drives one to irrationality. Anything is a joke, everything is funny. The humor is zany, distorted, romantic notions regurgitated and mocked. Absurd. Society is mocked. Everyone is a fool. The audience more than anyone else.

We fall into the roles of childhood and flip them. We take stale dialogue, repeated phrases and ridicule the empty sentimentality. Angry politics, razor sharp. The play is a riot. A call from the wildness inside us to the uncontrollable hellscape of reality surrounding us.

Scenes begin in action. Some are not funny. Some end before they are done because the audience “scrolls past” them.

Music is incorporated — it is sampled, re-occurring — perhaps, sometimes, it is seemingly unrelated to the action. The sampling is essential. Replication and repetition are our language. Trends are moments repeated through many eyes.

To this show the root of evil is control. Over time. Over space. Authority. The play depicts a government that is a façade, a tool used by the capitalists to enslave this dying America. The play rebels. Against logic, against structure, against the Aristotelian unities.

This play is called the last revel of humanity. It is sacred. It celebrates. It is reckless.

Some of it is serious. Heartfelt. and True. Real people, real stories, verbatim. “When I lost my friend in a school shooting” and so on. Other times is not. Stereotype is employed — useless categorization — it is contradicted a moment later. A scene begins: “Teachers be like....” it is rude, crass, mocking the ridiculousness, the pompacity of some educators — but still it is truthful. Then, later, we see the same teacher shield her students during a shooting. This is also true. The play, as reality, is filled with contradiction. A person can be a pompous academic ass and a selfless heroic protector.

It is not that simple. We all know this. Why is it that our plays never revel in this truth? Character is situational. It is a reaction. Dialectic. People have agency, certainly, but they are in flux, they are always changing. And why are they changing? Circumstance.

The play is an unreliable narrator. The actor embraces this.

We flip up into the poetics occasionally — into the head state. It is like depersonalization. We slow down. The beat shifts. It pounds slowly, rhythmically. Eventually we can no longer take it. We open our phone again. We see images, dreams, a mesh of formalist-surrealist imaginings. When it is too much to process we go back to empty entertainment.

We flip down into the mundane occasionally — into the world. Into a “realism,” but we are never trying to be “real” and the audience is never led too far in without being jerked out. Stuffy naturalism does not entertain the youth, so we open the phone again and get back on the social media whirlwind. The real is to contrast what is not. It is to remind us of the what is a lie and looks like it is not.

The play is current. Up to date. New pieces are added every performance. Every performance is in a different order.

The audience is a viewpoint. We place a viewpoint character or characters in the audience to be clear what is happening and when it is happening. They are aware of the audience. Talk to them, etc. The performers are also aware of the spectators, but their role is to perform, whereas the viewpoints are the facilitators of the actor/audience connection.

The play ends. And it continues. A psychotic break. Rage. Something. The connection between the viewpoint and the stage is broken sharply. The viewpoint roles fall asleep. Commit suicide. Leave the playing space. It is different every performance. Abruptly the performance stops. Lights out. Work lights on. As if in an emergency. The actors are actors again, just as they were before the “performance started.”

The audience exits. They pull out their phones. Probably to give this ridiculous show a bad review.

The point is not understanding. It is the impression of a contradiction.