



The Screens

Jean Genet , Bernard Frechtman (Translator)

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Jean Genet was one of the world's greatest contemporary dramatists, and his last play, *The Screens*, is his crowning achievement. It strikes a powerful, closing chord to the formidable theatrical work that began with *Deathwatch* and continued, with even bolder variations, in *The Maids*, *The Balcony*, and *The Blacks*.

Explicitly political, *The Screens* is set within the context of the Algerian War. The play's cast of over fifty characters moves through seventeen scenes, the world of the living breaching the world of the dead by means of shifting the screens—the only scenery—in a brilliant tour de force of spectacle and drama.

The Screens Details

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From Reader Review The Screens for online ebook

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Hotspur says

Its hard not to give a poor rating for a play that cannot be staged. Therefore, it is impossible to know if the staging would work--and if it did with the few performances that were put on--the length and complexity would render the play and point useless with a 6 hour performance. Not to mention there is way too much going on, way too many characters, sideplots that really have no purpose, etc. There are other ways of describing the complexity of the Algerian War, without writing an unstageable play. A very regrettable piece of drama.

Karlo Mikhail says

Novel and ingenious use of screens as formal device to emphasize play's substance (different social worlds, different levels of reality, different dimensions even!). Yet I have a lingering feeling that the play is too expansive, too over-extended to be able to maximize the form of the screens. I feel this would have been more effective with more focus.

Kim Zinkowski says

B-. A play first published in 1961 about the Algerian war for independence.

Christopher says

I'm conflicted with this play. I've only read it, but it seems like the use of the screens as a trick for scenery (a fun technique in many plays) doesn't entirely mesh with the story being told here, and I'm a bit confused why he decided to combine the two. In addition it doesn't seem like he utilizes them to their full potential (except in the scene of the burning orange grove and the first scene in the land of the dead), which is a good challenge for any director. Again, I withhold these reservations for if/when i can see it on it's feet.

These being said: the Mother is a wonderful character, the morality of the world is wonderfully complex, and the land of the dead is a fascinating parallel to Thorton Wilder's.

Just not sure how well this sprawling landscape fits together into an effective story. I guess I was just a bit disappointed.

Morgane Zambrelli says

(re)lu pour les cours

Eadweard says

Very ambitious.

M-R-N-D-R says

colorful, fast-paced, vivacious, violent, disturbing, original, hilarious, really great

jordan says

Subject of Master's thesis.

Ali says

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Heidi (KosminenK) says

Jean Genet: Kaihtimet (Les Paravents, 1961) (suom.Ville Keynäs, 1996) Like kustannus /Kumma näytelmä, josta pidin. Outoja seikkailuja, katkonaista menoa, pataljoonan piereskelyä kuolevan luutnantin nenään, huoria, fiiniä yläluokkaa, poikiaan palvovia äitejä...ja levottomat näyttämöohjeet ja välipuheet.

tENTATIVELY, cONVENIENCE says

Like most Genet that I've read, it was so long ago (although I think I probably read this one much more recently) that I barely remember it. I remember its only scenery being screens. Genet, always political, does

something that always interests me: he makes explicit political commentary at the same time that he manages to transcend the obvious w/ a higher formal level. Just as he used role-playing in *The Balcony* to unhinge the fixedness of people's role-playing in daily life, here I interpret his use of screens as a meta-device for partitioning off different levels of 'reality'. Just as in math, "grouping" can be used to determine whether an infinite series equals 1 or 0, here screens can be used to partition off matters of life & death & make them more ambiguous w/o taking away the hard study that Genet makes of them.
