

“... far too large a proportion of intelligent playgoers know their Shakespeare too well. They are no longer capable of going to the theatre with that willingness to suspend disbelief, which any naïve spectator can bring. They go coldly, as specialists, to listen to the over familiar lives, and to watch the actor’s treatment of them. It is their influence on the theatre that has led to the type of Shakespearean production that is not uncommon nowadays, cold, correct, literary, un-theatrical, winning great praise but making no emotional impact on the average spectator.”

*Peter Brook – Style in Shakespeare Production*

My approach to Shakespeare is always to use whatever is at my disposal to create a world where the audience is free to invest emotionally in the production. It is not my intention to “dumb-down” the play or to make it overly esoteric. It is to tell a story in such a way that you care about the characters and recognize the difficulties they face.

Ruthless ambition leads to its own destruction: that is the premise of William Shakespeare’s play about the Scottish lord Macbeth and his wife, who murder their way to the crown. It is also about the choices one makes in ones life. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth can turn from the path of regicide but their ambition is greater than their values of conscience. There is a moral fissure in their natures that acquiesces to the most expedient way. The supernatural information provided by the weird sisters does not cause the Macbeth’s to make the decisions they make but, rather, opens the possibility that such decisions will give them what they tacitly desire. Banquo is presented the same information but does not act upon it. Macduff could easily be bent to Macbeth’s power structure but instead he sees it for what it is and determines to restore the rightful power.

It is not difficult to see these decisions of expediency in the play and find parallels in our present political world. It is one of the primary reasons why Macbeth has survived these past four hundred years – because we as a society have not evolved beyond the human flaws of ruthless ambition, cupidity and violence. Nor have we evolved our sense of morality to rise above the expediency of convenience.

Our production is, first and foremost, intended to give Shakespeare’s play a life that the audience recognizes as being contemporary, contemporary in human frailty, political expediency and social morality.

John R. Briggs

[Joomla SEO by AceSEF](#)