

ENTERTAINMENT IS A REFLECTION OF POWER

I need to get serious for a minute.

If your aim is to be an entertainer in America, intense political consciousness is part of your job description. And the quality of your work is always a reflection of those who you allow to hold power.

America is a financial empire. "Foreign" policy is domestic policy.

Shakespeare's plays were so human because he wrote them for a Queen. A woman who traded openly with the North Africans whom her male counterparts routinely saw as barbarians. And who's current day autocrats are paid off by our government. Othello may have been based on Abd el-Ouahed Ben Messaoud... ambassador to Queen Elizabeth I who negotiated for an Anglo-Moroccan alliance to thwart the Spanish Inquisition--the three hundred and fifty year long purging of Muslims and Jews from the Kingdom established by Ferdinand and Isabella. These talks culminated in arms deals and on and off talks of mounting a joint operation against Spain, but the Queen and Morocco's ruler at the time both died within two years of the embassy.

Neither Othello in his tragedy nor Shylock in the Merchant of Venice are perfect reflections of the complex collectives they stood to represent in what seemed like the most fully fleshed form for the time. But it matters that they exist at all. And though there are complex women in Shakespeare's plays, there just aren't enough of them. But it matters that they exist at all. What matters is that the attempt to flesh out these characters genuinely is notable and due in large part to the heroic behavior of those in power.

America is a cultural backwater. We do not experience the capacity for genuine artistic abandon that much more socially progressive countries do.

The increasing numbness you feel in your Netflix binges is only compounded by the performative wokeness the platform tries to project. And it is a deadening lie.

Entertainment is not human if its makers are not conscious of the corruption of the state. And even if they are, their entertainment is still not human if it only exists in antithesis to that corruption. But how can conscious entertainment *not* exist in antithesis to a corrupt state? It is impossible in this case for our entertainment to reach a level in which we may regard this entertainment as art.

Justice is the parameter in which art can thrive. And the only one. And so it goes without saying that a concern for art is a concern for justice. And a concern for justice is a concern for art.

The popularity of "performance art" is a reflection of our inability to face the corruption of our state and our culture with any real courage. These performances are in precise submission to the kind of censorship they supposedly aim to denounce. And they are boring. Just say what you

mean.

In this country theatre is dead, television and films are malaise-inducing, hack paintings are overvalued, and books are unreadable past the preface because we pay our taxes to an organization more deadly than any mob or terrorist group. And that organization is still in power.

It is understandable if this is all too unbearable. The best thing to do for your art, in this case, is leave the country.

It could all be so much better.

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