looking for Richard (Shakespeare) part 1

For the most part you are to sit back and enjoy the film – and pay very close attention to how Al Pacino and company put on *Richard III*; and how can you can use what you see **in a very practical way in your Macbeth productions**. The questions in italics are to be answered later at your own leisure, just glance at them so you know the parts of the movie that they are based on. As you are watching also try and pay attention to the story of Richard III. Questions with an asterisk in front of it do not require a written answer.

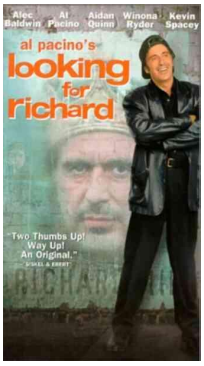
THINK of this Film as an instruction manual of how you and your group can go about approaching, understanding and practicing your scene. For instance – watch the wonderful discussions the actors and director have about the play (Richard III) – this should be at the heart of your Director's Notebooks – make those Notebooks (really, prompt books for your scene) REAL. (Extra Credit 25 points – watch the remaining 60 minutes of this film with your group and answer a few questions – not movie questions, don't worry).

I saw this movie at its World Premiere. It was at a conference for English Teachers (NCTE) and after it was over it got a standing ovation from the standing room only audience of English Teachers. More than anything else, I think we were grateful that someone articulated both this love of Shakespeare but also that there is a path to understanding it – and that path lies through the actual words of the author. After the film was over, Al Pacino was there and talked about the film and answered a few questions (along with the great film critic Gene Siskel).

ATTENTION: Notice how they sit around and go over the text is a great way for you to begin the discussion of your scene – remember to give copies of the scripts (your Macbeth scene) to all your members and everyone should jot down notes – then consolidate them on your Director's Notebook (make that a REAL and useful exercise**). Use the thoughtfulness and creativity of the discussions you see as a guide for your own discussions when you get together – remember – when you cut, when you cast, when you set your scene – etc. – all of these things should have meaning..**

1. Pay close attention to the opening speech here; it's from *The Tempest*. *How does "we are such stuff as dreams are made on" fit in with Macbeth's speech about life is a tale told by an idiot (how does it oppose that speech?)*

1b. WATCH the screen. What is Al Pacino's reaction to seeing a very certain person in the audience? *Why do you think he reacts this way? (**Answer the rest of this after you have watched the entire excerpt that we are watching in class – and after you have answer all the rest of the questions)**. How is this film – at least in part – an attempt "to do right" by that special person in the audience?*



2a. *Is there any credence to what the old man says about if kids learned more Shakespeare there'd be less violence? How, why? Isn't it an extension of the argument that kids are driven to violence by gangster rap or heavy metal? On the other hand, could thoughtfulness (through literature perhaps) have a positive effect? Is it also an extension of "to know we're not alone"? Was there anything in Macbeth that gave you a better understanding of something from your own life – it's ok if there isn't. Be subtle – be honest).*

2b. I had to expand this given new data and information and research (2018) – New studies have shown a connection between the decline in reading (and a corresponding increase in social media use) in younger people with an increase in depression, lack of focus, etc. How does this (or does it) affect your view of the old man's words (in 2a)? If you don't believe this research is correct, that's fine – just say why.

3. *Explain the point about how Al Pacino knows the play (having done it twice) but the audience doesn't know it? How will/should this effect your own productions?* *Notice the conversation in the car and how it echoes actors & audience. Remember, when you did the shoebox scene and we talked about the way Polanski made things clearer to the audience (the Pendant for the Thane of Cawdor).

4 . * Notice – hey! They're using Folger Editions! *Why do editions matter – use what you've learned this year.*

5. *Why do they pay such close attention to how the play will begin? Notice the close attention to the words – and how that attention to the words effects and change the stress and inflection of how they are performed.*

6. *I disagree about what Al Pacino says about how it is important to know what happens before the play begins (the historical context) – unless you are performing the Shakespeare play that historically precedes this play. Briefly explain and justify both points of view. Remember, Shakespeare made changes to the historical <u>Macbeth</u> all over the place, when it suited him*

7. What is Richard's problem that makes it hard for him to woo women (and his subjects as well)? *Now – think hard – what must he do to compensate for his physical deformities and how does this (know your antecedent) wonderfully work in Shakespeare's (a genius of a wordsmith) favor (<u>contrary</u> to the reason the person on the screen says).*

8. *Considering the above question and what we've talked about in class – why do they pay such close attention to even changing one word, or even a letter (C to G)? Later you will see they can't make that suggested change (of a C to a G) – other lines won't make sense.*

9. Try to sum up what they say about American actors' problem with doing Shakespeare? *Over the years, I've had many students use a fake British accent (something you should **<u>NEVER</u>** do) when reading Shakespeare – can you connect this to our "inferiority" complex?*

10. Pay close attention to what they say about meter: *Why do they say "at it worst" when overemphasizing the meter – what does it do the poetry and natural quality of his language? What do they mean "all the iambics will fall into place"? Remember – when reading your lines – don't end at the end of each line, use the punctuation for your pauses.*

11. What do people say is the problem with following Shakespeare (list 3-4 reasons). I*s Pacino right that you shouldn't have to understand every single word (in the audience). I think he's right (but don't let that effect your answer). For those of you who have watched Shakespeare films have you encountered getting into a "zone" after watching it for a while? Some of you got into this same kind of zone with Ben Bagby and Old English.*

12. Watch the natural demeanor and believability of the actors. *NOTICE – When the British Actress is arguing about the incompetence of those standing in Richard's way – AND THEN starts reading her character's lines – there is no difference – nothing is fake – all is real. Consider this – and your answers to the questions above and <u>how you can make your scene real when you put on your own scenes</u> – bring your emotions in to play.*



13. What's kind of funny (ironic) about their visit to Shakespeare's birthplace?

14. *Explain what the man says about "allowing the verse to be a man speaking?" Link this to what you wrote for question 12. Again remember this put it in big letters up above your rehearsals.*

15. What does the director think about getting a scholar to help the explain what's going on with Richard III? *Do you agree or disagree? Explain. Go back to question #6 – how does what you wrote for that question support of deny the director (Fredrick)?*

16. The final scene in Shakespeare's play, between Richard and the woman he is wooing, blows audiences away (when done right). It is both incredible (it goes against our reason) and yet we believe it – *who is responsible for that paradox – is it one person (Shakespeare, the actors, the director, etc.) Explain.*

You will be given time to work on these in class (01/16) – and will be due at the end of that class period. Remember, this is long division. If you feel you won't finish work on some of it, tonight.