
King Richard: View Of Shakespeare And Al Pacino

Throughout history, literature and different forms of texts have been utilised in order to illuminate and convey attitudes, ideas and contextual issues in a variety of ways, creating conversations between the texts. Shakespeare's Elizabethan history play King Richard III (1593), explores the Machiavellian-like rise to power of King Richard, a character heavily influenced by Marlowism. Al Pacino's didactic docu-drama Looking for Richard (1996), aims to "communicate a Shakespeare about how we feel and think today" by encountering Pacino's own progression in understanding the play, as he attempts to recreate it. LFR takes into account a range of different views, including from both scholars and actors, in order to truly understand King Richard III. In doing so, Pacino is expressing a textual conversation between the two texts, which has arisen to a range of resonances and dissonances, due to the differences in contexts.

The corruption of conscience due to power is a transcendental theme utilised by composers throughout times within their texts. Shakespeare's King Richard III is no exception, portraying the consequences of the lust for power on the human conscience and psyche. King Richard is heavily influenced by the ideologies of Niccolo Machiavelli and Christopher Marlowe, both of whom were well known figures within the 16th century. Shakespeare incorporates Machiavellian ideas such as "It is better to be feared than loved" and Marlowism through the implementation of a fatal flaw (hamartia). Richard is depicted with Machiavellian qualities in a stream-of-consciousness soliloquy, "Was ever a woman in this humour wooed? / Was ever a woman in this humour won?". Anaphora is utilised in conjunction with successive rhetorical questions in order to force the audience to admire in his rhetorical attributes, causing a desertion of the audience's own conscience through our role in plotting with the twisted Richard. Furthermore, enjambment is utilised in order to represent the flow of Richard's own delightful thoughts of himself, pertaining to the idea that the character of Richard is self-centred, and feeds off power. The 16th century was a time of religious tensions, with the on-going argument of free will opposing providentialism, and King Richard III is presented as a secular character. This is portrayed throughout the quote, "Thou hast made happy earth thy hell". The line occurs in the form of a stichomythic exchange between Richard and Anne. The dichotomy of God and hell reinforces the importance of religion within this time period, whilst also presenting Richards disruption of this ideal as chaotic. The use of religious imagery in conjunction with the implementation of an antithesis, further criticises Richard's use of power, and its corrupting effects on the psyche. Hence, Shakespeare, through the implementation of a secularised Machiavellian character, portrays power's manifesting effects on the conscience and psyche.

Resonances and dissonances in a texts interpretations brings new meanings, whilst portraying constant themes and messages in the process. In Al Pacino's visual adaptation and journey in producing King Richard III throughout LFR, the lust of power is revealed. However, a set of resonances and dissonances appear, due to the changes in times and context, with modern America being a much more secularised and diverse society, than Shakespeare's England. These resonances and dissonances can be seen through the recreation of the scene where Richard woos Anne. Al Pacino cleverly incorporates a medium shot which shows Anne turning away from the camera in order to reinforce Richard's power and dominance over Anne. Through the use of shadows and lighting, chiaroscuro is utilised in order to juxtapose the dark and Monstrous Richard to the innocent and calm Anne. Richards manipulating abilities are still

pertained however, as enforced by the scene where he offers Anne the knife to kill him. Richard goes down onto his knees, with the low angle shot representing the physical power that Anne has over Richard. Prop is used in order to show the planning endured, for a transition to Al Pacino's character laughing externalises Richard's internal thoughts, and lack of remorse. Whilst kissing, the shadow engulfs Anne, representing that she has fallen into Richard's trap. However, Richard's manipulating and psyche powers prevail. The lust for power is pertained within Pacino's LFR, in order to portray resonances and dissonances within contexts and understandings.

Superstitions often lead to the lust of power, with dreams acting as the driving factors for movements such as MLK "I had a dream" speech. However, in King Richard III, the use of superstition and dreams leads to the eventual demise of Richard, his hamartia. Dreams were believed to have prophetic values in Elizabethan times. Act 5 Scene III, takes place as a split-stage, in order to act out simultaneous events at the same time. Richard is visited by the ghosts of all his victims, who repetitively chant the incantation "Refrain and die". Epistrophe and isocolon are utilised by Shakespeare in order to reinforce the tormenting of Richard and his wrongdoings. Richard has an epiphany within a soliloquy in, "Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am". Shakespeare maintains textual integrity through the use of truncated sentence structure, in order to portray the conflicting ideas and corruption of psyche that has resulted from his lust for power. The use of a rhetorical question portrays that he is questioning himself. Marlow's influence on the Richard character is finally confirmed in the quote, "A horse, A horse, my kingdom for a horse", where it is revealed that power and jealousy is his hamartia, or his fatal flaw. The ironic quote, is analysed well by Professor B. Everett who states, "He is a boar who has subsumed into himself frightful animal images, all the rest have to do is hunt". Shakespeare portrays Richard's lust for power and its adverse consequences on the human conscience, which has been corrupted by the want for power.

Through the use of modern technology and visuals, traditional texts are able to become interpreted with a range of resonances and dissonances. Al Pacino's portrayal of Act 5 Scene III, takes its form in a series of rapid cut shots, whilst suspenseful music creates tension. This maintenance of textual integrity, allows for the audience to experience Richard's own torment, and in a twisted way, sympathise with him. The rapid film transitions between Richard and Richmond are used in order to portray their different approaches to power, with a medium shot on the praying Richmond juxtaposed to a low angle shot to capture his chaos and anger. In the final battle, the screen appears to turn red in order to represent Richard's animal-like instincts, whilst also portraying the chaos of not just the external, but his internal conscience. The film ends with "Richard's dead, at least we can rest", to perhaps reveal that the actors themselves were tormented and influenced by Richard's lust for power.

Pacino reveals the lust for power through a range of resonances and dissonances to King Richard III. Whilst many themes and scenes are portrayed in the same manner, the omission of ideas including religion due to a more secularised world, and the use of visual techniques portrays the dangerous lust for power, and corruption of conscience that results.