

RUGGERO RUGGERI'S AMLETO

Notre Dame Shakespeare Festival, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, USA

4 November 2004

Luke McKernan

Of all the products of the first thirty years of cinema, when films were silent, perhaps none were so peculiar, so intriguing, and in their way so revealing of the temper of the medium in its formative years, as silent Shakespeare films. Shakespeare in the cinema is enough of a challenge for some people; what about Shakespeare on film when you can't hear any of the words?

The film you are to see this evening is one of two hundred or more Shakespeare films that were made in the silent period of cinema. You are seeing it because it has survived (when so many films from this time have not), because it is a rarity scarcely known even by those who are expert in this area, and because it is a good and interesting film. Not a great film, but arguably the best silent Shakespeare film that exists. It is certainly a film that needs to be much better known. To those who may never have seen a silent film before, be assured that even if you can't hear the words you will be able to read them, as such films commonly have on-screen titles throughout, and in performance they were never silent as such in any case – for you had music.

Silent Shakespeare

I said that more than two hundred silent Shakespeare films were made, and that is true, but few of these were feature-length, that is, an hour or more, such as this evening's attraction. Most were made before the First World War, when films were one reel in length; that is, lasting ten to fifteen minutes, and you saw a number of films of this length in a single programme. Why were these nickelodeon Shakespeares made?

First of all, such films arose because the cinema had need of them. In the early 1900s, films were increasingly starting to demand shows and exhibition halls of their own. Film programmes became gradually established at about one hour long, with a mixture of story and actuality films each one reel long. As the film-going habit became established, so special theatres came to be constructed for film exhibition, and as cinemas spread so more producers entered the market, eager for fresh source material and looking for literary and dramatic properties. These would preferably be out of copyright, following a significant court case won in 1907 by the author of the book *Ben Hur* against a film company who had filmed the story without permission. A dead playwright would not be claiming royalties.

With the growth of such cinemas, from around 1907 onwards, there came a film industry sensitivity towards its lowly reputation. It had a working class audience at its bedrock, but film producers and cinema owners sought to elevate their product, as a matter of pride, as a means of placating censorious authorities, and with the hope of attracting a moneyed, middle-

class audience. In short, richer audiences would pay more for their tickets, but they had to be reassured that they were getting their money's worth. A major strategy adopted was the imitation of the theatre. Cinemas copied theatre furnishings, film producers signed up stage stars, and stage plays were turned into films. Hence, for a combination of some if not all of these reasons, from 1908 there was a sudden and remarkable rush of Shakespearean films, each acclaimed on its appearance as being proof of the growing status of the cinema, the stamp of social acceptability. Putting it in simple figures, in 1905 three Shakespearean films were made, in 1906 three, in 1907 two, in 1908 fifteen, in 1909 eight, in 1910 fourteen.

Some film companies began to specialise in these one-reel Shakespeares. For example, in America, the Vitagraph company – one of the most commercially successful companies of the period - filmed *As You Like It*, *Henry VIII* (under the title *Cardinal Wolsey*), *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Twelfth Night* – all of these between 1908 and 1912. The plays were similarly filmed at this period by companies in Britain, Italy, Denmark and France.

Although imitation of the theatre was important to the new medium, such films were not read solely as substitute theatrical experiences. Many film companies of this pre-First World War period produced historical and costume dramas, and the Shakespeare films could be read simply as being within these genres, where the manners, dress and general action would all be generally comprehensible for audiences.

One-reel Shakespeare was, inevitably, a crude simplification of the plays' depths and subtleties. The idea was to cram as much as possible of the plot into that fifteen minutes, boiling down the action to each of the key, familiar scenes that would get over the story and serve as a recognisable record of the play. Viewed from the traditional Shakespearean perspective, this sort of signposting reduced the plays to a parade of stabbings, silent speeches, rapid exits and entrances that largely abandons dramatic logic, and provides precious little in the way of poetry, or feeling for metaphor and imagery.

The *idea* of Shakespeare, rather than the actuality, was the guiding force behind the production of these films. The producers wanted to make them and to be seen to have made them. The audience may or may not have appreciated their intended Shakespearean qualities, but there was always the spectacle or the costumes or the actors, and the certainty of another film coming along in 15 minutes.

Feature-length Shakespeare

In the early 1910s a change came over the cinema, with the arrival of the feature film. Cinema shows changed from being a collection of short films of roughly equal length to a main feature of an hour or more's length, with supporting programme, and with this change came a marked drop in the number of Shakespearean films produced. While companies were producing hundreds of short films, plundering literary and dramatic properties all the while, then there was almost bound to be a number of Shakespearean films. With the arrival of the feature film, and hence the opportunity to film the whole of one of the plays with reasonable fidelity, the financial risk became all the greater, and part of the battle to raise the status of the cinema was in any case already won - the middle classes were beginning to come to see films in

increasing numbers. Any film of a Shakespeare play from now on was a special commitment and something out of the ordinary.

The film we have this evening comes from 1917. Prior to its release, there were seven feature-length Shakespeare films made, four of them in 1916, which was the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death. Two of these feature-length films commemorated a specific stage production; the *Hamlet* of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson in 1913, and *The Merchant of Venice* with Matheson Lang in 1916. Both were British productions. However, despite the greater length of film seeming to offer the opportunity to record a performance almost in full, both films adopt some kind of cinematic sensibility. The 1913 *Hamlet* is full of people mouthing silent speeches, to what must have been the bewilderment of audiences at the time, but its performances – particularly that of Forbes-Robertson in the central role – are attuned to the close gaze of the camera. It is a *Hamlet* told as much by the eyes as by physical gesture. The 1916 *Merchant of Venice* is a lesser work, filmed mostly on the stage, but with a surprising use of camera movement to impart dynamism and visual depth.

The other feature-length films, including two versions of *Romeo and Juliet* (one starring Theda Bara, the original screen vamp), a *King Lear* from the Thanhouser company, a *Macbeth* produced by D.W. Griffith, and *Richard III* starring Frederick Warde, were made in America, and were, for the most part, attempts to demonstrate that Shakespeare's plays could act as scenarios, that the film, with the opportunities that it offered for action to be expanded through naturalistic settings and the use of exteriors, could absorb Shakespeare within its particular framework. In general there were two options on offer – record, or adapt the text to cinematic purpose. It is the abiding strength of the *Hamlet* of 1917 that it does both, presenting an idealised performance of the play, through a thoroughly realised cinema eye.

Amleto

AMLETO, therefore, was part of an already well-established tradition of filmed Shakespeare – though it was also very much a film out on its own. It was made in 1917 at studios in Turin, Italy. The director was Eleuterio Rodolfi, an experienced film director with the Ambrosio company. Its star was Ruggero Ruggeri, a stage actor celebrated in his native Italy, who had recently triumphed in a stage production of *Hamlet*, and whose third film this was. The remainder of the cast all had film experience. The Polish-born Elena Markowska played Ophelia. Mercedes Brignone, who is particularly good in the film, played Gertude. Armand Pouget was the Ghost of Hamlet's father, Gerardo Pena played Laertes, and an actor whom we have only as Martelli played Claudius. The film was released in Italy, France and Britain, and we may assume was exhibited in other countries across Europe (while always remembering that there was a war on). It was also released in America, though it seems to have made minimal impact.

AMLETO was made at a time when Italian cinema was in decline. The Italian film industry before the war had amazed the world with spectacular historical epics such as *Quo Vadis*, *Dante's Inferno* and *Cabiria*. These stupendous productions were immensely long, and had casts of thousands, wild beasts and gigantic sets which were invariably destroyed by invading armies, volcanoes or sometimes both in the final reel. They included some very loose adaptations of Shakespeare, such as *Antony and Cleopatra* in 1913 and *Cajus Julius Caesar*

in 1914. But the taste for such epics waned, and the money to sustain them disappeared once the war had its inevitable impact on the Italian film industry. *AMLETO*, a film made in 1917, was therefore made under economic circumstances very different to the pre-war period when Italian epics conquered the world cinema market. It is an altogether more modest production; though not an impoverished one as such.

Why the film was made when it was can only be left to speculation, though the most obvious reason was a desire to capitalise on the recent success of Ruggeri's stage production. There are few details available of that 1915 stage production, though we may assume that it inspired the film's setting in more of a Renaissance court than the heavily Viking-themed stagings of *Hamlet* that were common a generation before. In this, Ruggeri was probably inspired by the British production of the play by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson. This production, as I said earlier, had been filmed in 1913, and it seems very likely that it influenced first Ruggeri's stage production and then his film, as they share not only a general *mise en scene* but some individual pieces of action that are clearly interrelated. Most significant among these is Hamlet's death, where he is borne onto the throne and given a crown and sceptre. Forbes-Robertson included this piece of invention in his stage production and film; Ruggeri borrows it and improves upon it, giving Hamlet's death something of the imagery of the crucifixion about it.

The inspiration behind the film was therefore both Ruggeri's own stage production, and the film made four years earlier of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson's production. Ruggeri, I think, set out to make the film an improvement on the earlier film, an exercise in how to reimagine *Hamlet* for the camera.

Ruggero Ruggeri

Though little-known now, Ruggero Ruggeri was one of the leading figures of the Italian theatre in the twentieth century. He was born in Fano, Italy in 1871. He made his stage debut in 1888, and emerged as a leading actor in 1894 playing Iago in *Othello*. He made his reputation with lead performances in the plays of D'Annunzio, and established a theatre company in his name. In 1914 he starred in the Compagnia Ruggero Ruggeri's production of *Hamlet*, a performance which gained particular acclaim from Italian critics. He would tour London, Paris and then South America with a later production of the play in the 1920s. However, it was in 1918 that he became associated with the modernist playwright with whom he established his greatest reputation, Luigi Pirandello. Ruggeri starred in a number of the Italian playwright's major works, and Pirandello was inspired by Ruggeri's brooding and powerful stage presence to write specific roles for him, most notably the title role in *Henry IV*.

Ruggeri continued acting on stage until 1952, when he was 81. He toured Europe, Mexico and South America, though never North America. He made twenty or so films between 1914 and 1953, ending his career as the voice of God in the *Don Camillo* films, which gives some indication of the commanding nature of his voice as well as his presence on stage.

Commentators of the period agreed that Ruggeri was particularly strong in depicting, powerful, tormented men teetering on the edge of madness. Critics described as uncanny his ability to show someone in the grip of turbulent inner passions, being particularly effective in

how he combined restraint in physical presence with mobile facial expressions. Composure and anguish thereby existed in the same figure, struggling to master overwhelming feelings.

Historical commentators also position Ruggeri as being interestingly representative of both the traditionalist and the modern stage. He was an actor of the old school, a dominating star presence who wanted productions built around him, but equally he was someone open to new ideas, especially to Pirandello's radical ideas on stagecraft.

In Ruggeri's performance in *AMLETO* we certainly see this combination of the classical and the modern. Not least do we see this in the simple fact that it is a film, that the traditionalist theatrical performer has accepted the camera, working *with* the medium and not in spite of it. Of his reputation as an actor effective in portraying facets of madness, we would expect a particularly tormented Hamlet. Indeed, Ruggeri emphasises Hamlet's putting on of madness, and he is good at denoting changes of mood through dynamic facial expressions. It is, overall, a memorably expressive Hamlet, though to our tastes now one that is a little overplayed in places. He is also too old to convince us as being a young prince – he was forty-six, looks it, and indeed looks older than his mother. But the emotions portrayed are genuine, not merely melodramatic poses. If Ruggeri is not able to offer us the sensitivity in performance that Johnston Forbes-Robertson was able to do, his is a Hamlet whose inner crisis we are made to feel. And if Ruggeri was the star actor around whom a production had to be built, then this translates into his interpretation of Hamlet – an arch performer, caught up in a sea of troubles, but rather pleased with himself at how he directs the situation, even to the extent of choreographing his own death.

Cinematic Shakespeare

AMLETO is no mere stage play performed before the cameras. What most distinguishes it is its consistent cinematic sense. In contrast to the 1913 *Hamlet*, which is so in thrall to the theatrical tradition, *AMLETO* applies an altogether far more cinematic approach. The camera is constantly engaged and alert to the nuances of the action. Although the acting is redolent of the theatre, there is a sense of a real place, real relationships, and a time and a reason for these things. The royal court is a credible place, in which the interrelationships integral to the drama emerge naturally and convincingly.

The film has a painterly sense of composition. This is no great surprise from a period when films of the classics frequently took paintings as their compositional guide. But with *AMLETO* we have an artist's eye for its own sake. Orson Welles once said that, in making a film, there is only ever one right place to put the camera. *AMLETO* is, for the most part, a film where the camera has been put in the right place. There are two exceptions, and you will notice them readily enough. The play scene, which Hamlet organises to expose his uncle as a murderer, is poorly framed. The camera is too far back, awkwardly trying to encompass the whole of the complex action of performance and court audience, with the action in centre frame being unclear. This error is then repeated for the same setting, the duel scene at the end of the film, where again the central action is partially lost through the filmmaker's wish to take in the entire action within the frame.

There are other devices which to our eyes may seem odd, though they fit in well enough with filmic conventions of the period. Close-ups are used throughout the film, but often these are filmed against a plain background rather than the setting of the main shot, and they are thereby distanced from the narrative flow. Rather than look on these as awkward stylistic breaks, we should perhaps look on them as we might one of the soliloquies – an interiorised interpolation within the exterior dramatic action.

Regarding composition and the placing of the camera, look out for the scene where the First Player performs before Hamlet at the rehearsal. Note how the cast is arranged to catch the eye, the Player to foreground on the left, others watching standing behind, Hamlet seated in a chair to the right. Those seated behind the player, Hamlet included, in practical terms would not be able to see any thing of the Player, and yet it is true from the cinema audience's point of view, which is doing the witnessing of the acting for them. It is illogical and photographically logical at the same time. Then, most effectively, Hamlet brings the actor up close to camera, accentuating the visual conceit – all in all, it is fine use of filmic space and of the privileged position of the audience in relation to the camera.

The film shows cinematic strength in other ways. It employs some basic special effects, employing superimposition to create the Ghost, as had been done previously by Forbes-Robertson in 1913. But Ruggeri's innovation is to introduce the face of the living Yorick over the skull in Hamlet's hand, a simple but effective way of denoting through the visual what is lost in not having the word. The film also takes the expected advantages of the cinema in mixing interiors with natural exteriors, opening out the play, and allowing us to see scenes such as Ophelia's drowning. There are other scenes not seen in Shakespeare's play which the filmmakers introduce for the sake of narrative clarity, perhaps most effectively the funeral of Hamlet's father which opens the film. Lastly among this list of cinematic strengths, the film shows one clear advantage over the stage by the intercutting in the final scene between the duel and the army of Fortinbras marching ever closer to the castle. It adds to the dramatic tension, and it reinforces the role to be played by Fortinbras that might otherwise have been lost.

But what of the words? This is a difficult point, because we do not have the Italian original, and we do not know for certain whether the titles that exist in this French release print – the only copy that survives – accurately reflect the relationship the original had between Shakespeare's text and the action of the film. Going from the print that we have, the words of Shakespeare were used wherever possible, but only where they supported the filmic narrative. Titles are kept to a minimum; they are also cut into the action, not merely preceding it, which was the style adopted in earlier Shakespeare films. Thus we get insistent drama, not a series of tableaux introduced by Shakespeare's words. There are no quotations for their own sake – Hamlet does not give us the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy, for instance. Sometimes the quotations are reductions of Shakespeare's words; on one or two occasions lines are made up, or simply describe an action that we are seeing. The idea of *Hamlet* for the filmmakers lay not in the text per se, but in their particular understanding of what the play as whole conveyed.

So, we must then ask, what sort of an interpretation of *Hamlet* is it? Effectively, I think, it is not an interpretation at all; or, rather, that is not the way to be looking at it. We do not gain any insight into the character of Hamlet, nor any particular take on the unfolding of the tragedy – indeed, as seen here it is not really a tragedy at all, not in any sense of tragic loss. It is an idealised, simplified visualisation of the story of prince Hamlet as Shakespeare set it out, constructed as a star vehicle, and artfully organised so as to make the action and the motivation of the characters comprehensible in cinematic terms to a cinema audience. It is an exercise – a successful exercise – in demonstrating in how to film Shakespeare, simple as that.

Good Shakespeare

Robert Hamilton Ball, author of the one major book on silent Shakespeare, *Shakespeare on Silent Film*, despite his enthusiasm for the subject, makes this dismissive comment on the genre:

Silent Shakespeare film could not be art, a new art. The aesthetic problem is how to make good film which is good Shakespeare. It could not be good Shakespeare because too much was missing ...

I would say that the aesthetic problem was never how to make a good film that was good Shakespeare; it was instead to make a good film using Shakespeare. Ball's idea of 'good Shakespeare' lies beyond what the silent cinema, with the technology that it had at its command, could produce. What is necessary is to judge such films for what they are, not for what they are not. *AMLETO* was a silent Shakespeare film, one of an identifiable genre of silent Shakespeare films, with its own peculiar but particular aesthetic, its own special significance. These films were not great art, and *AMLETO* is not by any measure a great film, but there is art there, the simple measure of which is that one is rewarded by seeing the best of them. And *AMLETO* is among the best of them.

The simplest analogy is with ballet. No one gets up in the middle of, say, Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, and complains that they can't hear the words. Silent Shakespeare films have their own means of expression, their own special corner in the many kinds of Shakespearean performance. And it is in that spirit that I hope that you will enjoy *AMLETO*.

Music

Silent films were only silent insofar as they had no soundtrack on the point. But sound was an essential part of their effective presentation. There were isolated cases of Shakespeare films of this period being accompanied by someone reading the words off-screen while the film was projected, but chiefly silent films were accompanied by live music. This evening, we have one of this country's premier silent film accompanists, my good friend Phillip Carli. Before I say some final words about the particular print you are to see this evening, Phillip is going to say a few words about the music.

The print

Before we see *AMLETO*, some words about the print itself. This is a rare film. One single nitrate print survives, so far as I am aware, held by the Cinematheque Toulouse. A copy of

this print exists at the National Film and Television Archive in London, which has supplied the viewing print you are seeing today. An incomplete 16mm copy with English titles did exist some years ago in the USA; however, the copy you will see today does not have English titles – they are in French. Originally the film had Italian titles, of course. We do not know the degree to which those original titles were faithful to Shakespeare, but in this French release version, the titles are mostly Shakespearean dialogue, though sometimes compressed, and with a few explanatory titles, and in one or two cases wholly invented dialogue.

I do not know which French translation of Shakespeare was used by the title writer, though one undoubtedly was, and the French employed is certainly archaic in places. However, do not fear, this is not going to be a test of your French. As each title card appears, I will read out the words in English. Translating the titles has been problematic. As I have indicated, at times there is a clear correlation between the titles and Shakespeare words, at other times the words are simplifications of the play text, at other times the titles have been made up. I have taken the decision to use Shakespeare's words wherever possible. Thus you will notice at times, depending on how good your French is, that the words on the screen and the words I am reading out do not bear much relation to one another. I hope this will not be too distracting. And some times you will hear words and think, I don't remember Shakespeare writing that. And you will be right.

A word of warning about the print itself. As I said, it derives from the sole surviving original copy, which has suffered from degradation of the nitrate stock. You will notice scenes where the image deteriorates quite badly, where the film has begun to decompose, and in one or two places the action is entirely lost. There is nothing that can be done about this – there is no other copy to turn to, and though copying the film has saved the images that are normal from further deterioration, there is no way of recovering those images which are damaged or lost. Happily, the nitrate deterioration is infrequent, and never lasts for long, but should be aware of what you will see, and why it is unavoidable.

Two final words of warning about the print – in a couple of places the title cards last for a single frame only, so you will not be able to read them, but rest assured I will read out the translation at this point just the same. And the film itself has no opening titles – they are lost – instead we start right in the middle of things, with Hamlet witnessing his father's funeral.

But enough of all these words. I hope you enjoy the film.

AMLETO (1917)

French intertitles from BFI print, with English translation

REEL ONE

Flash title – Un mois s'est ecoule et la reine veuve epouse Claude, nouveau roi de Danemark, et frere de feu Gonzague.

One month has passed and the widow queen marries Claudius, the new king of Denmark, and brother of the late Gonzago.

Inconstance... ton nom est: FEMME!

Frailty, thy name is woman

Salut a Votre Altesse. Horace, je suis heureux de te voir en bonne sante

Hail to your Lordship

I am glad to see you well, Horatio

Eh bien, Horace, es-tu convaincu que nous ne sommes pas dupes de notre imagination?

How now, Horatio ...is not this something more than fantasy?

Nous raconterons au prince Hamlet ce que nous avons vu cette nuit.

Let us impart what we have seen tonight/Unto young Hamlet

Laerte demande a son pere la permission de retourner en France.

Laertes asks his father for permission to return to France

Claude, le nouveau roi de Danemark

Claudius, the new king of Denmark

Nous vous autorisons, Laerte, a vous rendre en France

Take thy fair hour, Laertes. Time be thine/And thy best graces spend it at thy will

Hamlet, renoncez a votre project d'aller a Wittenberg, car il est contraire a nos desires

For your intent/In going back to school in Wittenberg/Is most retrograde to our desire

Je vous en prie, ne demeurez pas sourd aux priers de votre mere. Restez avec nous.

Let not a mother lose her prayers, Hamlet/I pray thee stay with us

Prince, votre pere nous est apparu la nuit passee

My lord, I think I saw him yesternight

Cette nuit, mes amis, je veillerai avec vous.

I will watch tonight. Perchance 'twill walk again

Prince, c'est l'heure!

My Lord, it is the house [coined]

L'évocation du crime

The depiction of the crime

...Pendant mon sommeil, ton oncle me versa dans l'oreille quelques gouttes de jusquiame...

Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole/With juice of cursed herbona in a vial/And in the porches of my ears did pour/The leperous distillment

...et sa main criminelle m'ota ainsi ma vie, mon épouse et ma couronne...

Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand/Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched

Quelque soit ma conduite désormais, ne t'étonne pas, ne demande rien!

Here as before, never, so help you mercy/How strange or odd some'er I bear myself ... etc etc [However much my behaviour may surprise you from now on, do not question it]

C'est ton amour qui l'a rendu fou. Je vais consulter le roi.

I will go seek the King/This is the very ecstasy of love

Majeste, votre fils a perdu l'esprit.

Your noble son is mad

Mes fideles Rosencrantz et Guildenstern, je veux vous entretenir en secret.

Dear Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, I need you to keep a secret [coined]

Suivez Hamlet, ne le quittez pas: je veux connaître la raison de ce changement

And I beseech you instantly to visit/My too much changed son

Des comédiens sont de passage dans la ville.

The players passing through the town

Nous allons ces gens de venir distraire le prince.

We will have these people entertain the prince [coined]

Pourrais-tu représenter l'assassinat du roi Gonzague?

Can you play The Murder of Gonzago?

Tu apprendras quelques vers que j'ajouterai au texte.

You could for a need study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines which I would set down and insert in't, could you not?

Le prince Hamlet prie Votre Majeste de vouloir bien assister a la representation.

He beseeched me to entreat your Majesties/To hear and see the matter

Les plus riches cadeaux perdent leur valeur quand le Coeur qui les offer deviant indifferent.

Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind

Je ne vous ai jamais aimee, Ophelie! Il vous reste un parti a prendre: entrez au couvent.

I loved you not. Get thee to a nunnery

Ce n'est pas l'amour qui lui trouble le cerveau; ce qu'il dit ne peut etre la language d'un fou.

Love? His affections do not that way tend/Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little/Was not like madness

Hamlet fait repeter.

Hamlet at the rehearsal

Ne fendez pas l'air de vos gestes emphatiques. Soyez sobres, moderes.

Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, but use all gently

Devant le roi on jouera une scene reproduisant le meurtre de mon pere.

There is a play tonight before the King/One scene of it comes near the circumstance/Which I have told thee, of my father's death

Toi, Horace, observe mon oncle!

Observe my uncle

Le prologue est assez sommaire! Comme l'amour de la femme!

'Tis brief, my Lord

As woman's love

Quel est le titre de cette comedie?

What do you call the play?

Le piege!

The Mousetrap

Il l'empoisonne pour lui voler sa couronne!

'A poisons him i' th' garden for his estate

De la lumiere... de la lumiere! Sortons!

Give me some light. Away!

Ah! Horace, le fantome disait vrai!

O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound

Sa folie doit etre observee avec soin. Il partira our l'Angleterre.

I like him not, nor stands it safe with us/To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you./I your commission will forthwith dispatch/And he to England shall along with you

Prince, la reine veut vous parler.

My lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently

Voyez ce nuage, la-haut? ... N'a-t-il pas la forme d'un chameau?...

Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Ou plutot d'une baleine oui, d'une baleine...

Or like a whale

Very like a whale

Ma mere, je dois avoir pitie de vous!

Mother, I pity you! [coined]

Flash title: Non, pas maintenant... il prie: il irait au ciel!

Now might I do it pat, now 'a is praying/And now I'll do it. And so 'a goes to heaven/And so am I revenged

REEL TWO

Dites-lui que ses extravagances ont excite mon royal courroux

Tell him that these extravagances have excited my royal wrath [coined]

Hamlet, tu as bien offense le roi.

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended

Et vous, madame, vous avez bien offense mon pere.

Mother, you have my father much offended

Tu ne vas pas m'assassiner! ... Au secours! Au secours!

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me? Help, ho!

Au secours! Au secours! [this is Polonius]

What, ho! Help!

Malheureux, qu'as-tu fait? – Je ne sais pas ... n'etait-ce pas le roi?

Oh me, what hast thou done?

Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

Pauvre Polonius, j t'avais pris pour un plus haut personnage!

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! I took thee for thy better

Mais qu'ai-je fait? Pourquoi me parles-tu ainsi?

What have I done that thou dar'st wag thy tongue/In noise so rude against me?

Que fixes-tu dans le vide?

Alas, how is't with you/That you do bend your eye on vacancy?

Lui! Lui! Regardez sa paleur!

On him, on him! Look you, how pale he glares!

Repentez-vous du passé, et lorsque vous aurez mérité le pardon du ciel, je vous demanderai le mien

Confess yourself to heaven/Repent what's past, avoid what is to come

Entendant du bruit derrière le rideau, Hamlet a tiré son épée et tué Polonius

Friends both, go join you with some further aid/Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain

J'aurais subi son sort si je m'étais trouvé là!

That would have been my fate had I been there! [coined]

Hamlet, il est urgent que vous partiez pour l'Angleterre.

The bark is ready and the wind at help/Th' associates tend, and everything is bent/For England

Et qu'il revienne pas vivant!

And he must not return alive! [coined]

Hamlet, allant s'embarquer pour l'Angleterre, rencontre une armée en marche contre la Pologne.

Hamlet, going to embark for England, comes across an army marching against Poland

Ces gens croient défendre l'honneur de leur pays. – Et moi, pourquoi n'irais-je pas me battre contre un roi qui a souillé l'honneur de mon nom?

How stand I then/That have a father killed, a mother stained/Excitements of my reason and my blood/And let all sleep, while to my shame I see/The imminent death of twenty thousand men/That for a fantasy and trick of fame/Go to their graves like beds

Qu'as-tu, Laerte? – Le sang de mon père crie vengeance!

What have you, Laertes

Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged/Most thoroughly for my father

Voici la branche de romarin et la fleur du souvenir.

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance

Patience, Laerte, justice sera faite!

Be you content to lend your patience to us/And we shall jointly labour with your soul/To give it due content

Letter: Cher Horace, Des irates m'ont capturé en mer. Pourvoyez-vous d'argent pour ma rançon et venez me rejoindre. Hamlet

Horatio ... Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase ...I alone became their prisoner ... Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death

Laisse toi guider par moi, Hamlet est maintenant en Angleterre.

Let yourself be guided by me, Hamlet is now in England [coined]

Letter: Grant et puissant souverain. J'ai l'honneur de vous informer que je suis revenue dans vos Etats. Je demande la faveur de me presenter devant Votre Majeste. Hamlet.

High and mighty, you shall know I am set naked on your kingdom. Tomorrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes; when I shall (first asking you pardon thereunto) recount the occasion of my sudden and more strange return

Pour qui cette fosse? – Pour une vierge

Who is to be buried in't?

One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead

C'est le crane de Jorick, ex-bouffon du roi.

This same skull, sir, was, sir, Yorick's skull, the King's jester

Qu'une triple malediction retombe sur cet home don't le crime t'a privee de la raison!

O, treble woe/Fall ten times treble on that cursed head/Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense/Deprived thee of!

J'aimais Ophelie, et rien ici-bas, meme la tendresse d'un frere, n'egalera jamais mon amour!

I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers/Could not with all their quantity of love/Make up my sum

Allez demander a Hamlet s'il accepte de faire un assaut d'escrime avec Laerte.

Ask Hamlet if he accepts Laertes' challenge to the fight [coined]

Le roi a parie 6 chevaux contre 6 epees d'or que Laerte ne vous donnera pas plus de trois coups en dix assauts.

The King, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses, against the which he has impawned, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards

Laerte, au contraire, parie qu'il vous attaquera 12 fois en 9 assauts.

The King, sir, hath laid, sir, that in a dozen passes between yourself and him he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid on twelve for nine

La trahison.

The treachery

Si votre Coeur eprouve quelque defiance ne vous battez pas! – Qui'importe de mourir plus tot ou plus tard!

If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither and say you are not fit.

If it be now, 'tis not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all

Laerte, pardonnez-moi! – Mon Coeur vous pardonne!

Give me your pardon, sir

I do receive your offered love like love/And will not wrong it

Si Hamlet touché le premier son adversaire, le roi trinquera avec lui.

If Hamlet give the first or second hit ... The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath

Hamlet, ta mere boit a ton success!

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet

Cette boisson... cette boisson ... je meurs empoisonnee!

The drink, the drink! I am poisoned

La trahison retombe sur moi ... le roi avoir emousse et empoisonne l'epee.

The foul practice/Hath turned itself on me ... The treacherous instrument is in thy hand/Unbated and envenomed

Que les officiers portent le corps d'Hamlet, comme il convient a un officier!

Let four captains/Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage/For he was likely, had he been put on/To have proved most royal

FIN