

William Shakespeare

Hamlet (1600-01)

TEXT 4

Hamlet



MP3 88

As the final effect of a tragedy, according to Aristotle, is catharsis, that is the process of removing evil. Hamlet follows the pattern of order-disorder-order, which implies that the situation of disorder (King Hamlet's murder, Gertrude's remarriage, a world dominated by evil, 'an unweeded garden') has to flow, at the end, into one of 'restored order'. Hamlet dies, as all the other characters, except for Horatio and Fortinbras, the prince of Norway, who arrives to claim the throne of Denmark and arranges Hamlet's funeral service, paying homage to his royalty.

HAMLET. [...] I am dead, Horatio. Wretched queen, adieu!

You that look pale and tremble at this chance,
That are but mutes or audience to this act,
Had I but time, - as this fell sergeant, death,
5 Is strict in his arrest, - O! I could tell you -
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead;
Thou liv'st - report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfied.

HORATIO. Never believe it;

10 I am more an antique Roman¹ than a Dane:
Here's yet some liquor left.

HAMLET. As thou'rt a man,

Give me the cup: let go; by heaven I'll have't.
O God! Horatio, what a wounded name,
15 Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me
If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.

AMLETO. Sono morto, Orazio; sciagurata regina, addio. Voi che assistete tremanti, pallidi a questi casi, semplici spettatori o comparse in questa vicenda, quando ne avessi tempo - ché la morte, empio sbirro non allenta la sua ferrea tenaglia - oh, potrei dirvi. No, nulla. Orazio, io muoio: tu vivi; racconterai di me, della mia causa, onestamente, la verità a chi vorrà saperne di più.

ORAZIO. Non io. Io sono più un antico romano che un danese. E in questa coppa, di quel veleno c'è ancora qualche goccia.

AMLETO. Se sei un uomo, dammela. Per il cielo, la voglio: dammela. Oh buon Orazio, che nome ferito, se le cose rimangono ignorate come ora sono, vivrà di me! Se mai mi portasti nel tuo cuore negati per qualche tempo ancora l'eterna beatitudine e resta a sospirare di pena in questo nostro crudo mondo, per raccontare la storia, vera, di me.

Traduzione di C. V. Lodovici

1. **Roman:** nel periodo Elisabettiano questa parola era sinonimo di 'nobile'. Il coraggio di suicidarsi era segno di un nobile comportamento.



OVER TO YOU

- 1 Answer the following questions.
 1. Who does Hamlet say goodbye to?
 2. Which lines are addressed to the public?
 3. What do you think Horatio intends to do?
 4. What task does Hamlet leave him?

- 2 Hamlet's speech is marked by the contrast between life and death. Find the expressions used to describe them and say what they convey.

- 3 The two requests Hamlet makes to Horatio are: 'report me' (l. 7) and 'to tell my story' (l. 19). Why do you think he insists on them?

- 4 Hamlet calls 'incest' the marriage between Gertrude and Claudius, but actually it was a marriage between a brother-in-law and a sister-in-law. In Elizabethan England such marriage was forbidden by the Church, and offenders were publicly humiliated. So the audience watching Hamlet at the Globe probably felt moral repulsion at the Queen's hasty marriage, also because widows were expected to observe a long period of mourning, and shared Hamlet's disgust. Would it be the same in our society?

WRITER'S CORNER

1. Konstantin Sergeevic Stanislavskij (1863-1928), attore, regista e teorico teatrale russo, creò un metodo di recitazione basato sull'approfondimento psicologico del personaggio e sulla ricerca di affinità tra personaggio e attore.

- 5 According to Stanislavskij' each dramatic character has a 'super-objective', that is what s/he wants overall during the course of the play, what drives him/her forward. Consider Hamlet, explore his motives and draw a self-portrait using the first person. Fill in the following.

I want (what I want to achieve)
I think (what I think about the other characters and the situation)
I feel (fears, hopes, love, hate, etc.)
This is what I'm like (my nature)