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Keinänen, Nely

Berghahn Journals
2023

Keinänen, N 2023, 'Elli Tompuri's Female Hamlet, 1913', Critical Survey, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 58-75. https://doi.org/10.3167/cs.2023.350405

http://hdl.handle.net/10138/596774
10.3167/cs.2023.350405

unspecified
acceptedVersion

Nely Keinänen, University of Helsinki

author's accepted manuscript, published in *Critical Survey* Volume 35, number 4 (Winter 2023): 58-75

Elli Tompuri's Female Hamlet, 1913

In his preface to *Women as Hamlet*, Tony Howard comments that 'The extraordinary thing was not that so many great actresses had played Hamlet but that most were comprehensively forgotten'.[1] While Elli Tompuri is known as one of the premiere actresses in Finland, and her Hamlet tour generated wide interest in its day, it has been almost completely neglected by theatre historians.[2] The tour included two plays, *Hamlet* and Victorien Sardou's *Fédora*, and for three months travelled all over Finland, visiting at least 20 cities.[3] *Hamlet* premiered on 9 October 1913 in the city of Turku. In this essay, I examine the historical context of Tompuri's Hamlet, particularly her difficulties as a political radical and New Woman in finding acting work and hence her need to form her own acting company and take to the road. I consider what she thought of the role and why she chose to take it on, which sheds light on the status of *Hamlet* in the Nordic countries in the period. And finally I analyse the main themes arising in critical reception of the performance. Tompuri's Hamlet was received similarly to how other female Hamlets were being received in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, with objections that she was only seeking notoriety and, as was said of Sarah Bernhardt, '[o]ne could never, even for a single instant, escape from the consciousness that it was a man's part being rendered by a woman'.[4] But on the other hand, in 1913, nationalist sentiment in pre-independence Finland was strong, and most reviews mention with some pride that Tompuri was the first female actress in the Nordic countries to take on the role. Elli Tompuri's Hamlet thus allows us to see tensions in Finland between nationalist goals and

social control of women, as well as some of the ways that gender stereotypes could be challenged and subverted via recourse to Shakespeare's most classic play.[5]

Tompuri (1880–1962) was one of Finland's most renowned but also controversial actresses. In 1900 she joined the Finnish Theatre (after 1902, Finnish National Theatre, FNT), with her breakthrough role coming in 1905, as Oscar Wilde's Salomé. She also became the first woman in Finland to direct a theatre, having taken over for Kaarle Halme at the Tampere Theatre in spring 1905 when Halme abruptly quit.[6] After playing Salomé, Tompuri became identified with the idea of the New Woman spreading through Europe at the turn of the century. Writing in 1948, Tompuri defined this New Woman as one who 'now dared to rebel. She did not want to fight and win only by being coy and flirtatious. She no longer concealed her thoughts or her feelings. She sought to overcome excessive shame. Revealing her suffering became a woman's right and privilege'.[7] The risk of being a New Woman and an artist, as Tompuri writes of Eleonora Duse but could just as well be writing about herself, is that 'artists like her do not have permanent allies. A woman who has that much goodness, love, is condemned to loneliness'.[8] Although Tompuri had a warm relationship with Kaarlo Bergbom, the FNT's emeritus director (and married his nephew in 1910), she nevertheless struggled to find a place for herself in the company.[9] She argued with several directors, including Jalmari Finne (whom she accused of neglecting the deeper psychological sides of characters)[10] and Jalmari Hahl (whom she accused of breaking promises to her about roles).[11] Tompuri was not the only actress who had problems with the male leadership of the FNT, as her predecessor Ida Aalberg, who had played Juliet in the first Finnish-language production of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1881, had by the early 1910s been sidelined from the company, allowed to come in as a visiting artist but no longer with a permanent position.[12] Mäkinen thinks the efforts to keep both of these star actresses out of the permanent company was a way of limiting their influence.[13] A forward-thinking, left-leaning

radical like Tompuri would never find a place in the FNT, which after independence became an institution of the hegemonic state.[14] Tompuri's marginalization from the FNT also led to her marginalization in theatre history, and it is perhaps not a coincidence that her Hamlet has not been studied by Finnish theatre historians.

Shakespeare for the Provinces

In some ways, Tompuri's *Hamlet* tour can be seen as a dress rehearsal for the theatre company she would later found. After independence (1917) and the conclusion of the Finnish civil war (1918), in 1919, Tompuri formed the 'Independent Theatre' on the model of her former acting teacher André Antoine's Théâtre Libre, producing, directing and acting in such plays as August Strindberg's *The Crown Bride*, John Millington Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* and the Finnish Aleksis Kivi's *Olviretki*, works that treated taboo subjects such as female sexuality and the use of alcohol, the latter significant given the recent passage of Prohibition in Finland (1919–1932).[15] But before that, in 1912, she put together the first of her travelling companies, touring with Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House*, Franz Grillparzer's *Medea* and a French comedy, directing the productions herself and playing the main roles. The following year came *Hamlet* and Victorien Sardou's *Fédora* (originally written for Sarah Bernhardt, one of Tompuri's inspirations for Hamlet). Tompuri followed this tour with another in 1915–1916, this time with Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*.[16] Travelling mainly by train, Tompuri visited larger as well as smaller towns, covering the length and breadth of Finland. An important goal was to arrange performances in Helsinki which was not a given as the rents were expensive and there was competition for space. Exact figures are hard to come by, but I estimate *Hamlet* had at least

40 performances in its three-month run.[17] The production was widely reviewed, and indeed by the end of October, one critic is grumbling that 'Hamlet' and 'Elli Tompuri' are 'two names we've been forced to read almost every day in the last few months, especially in the Helsinki papers'.[18]

Despite operating on a shoe-string budget and not having access to the country's best actors, Tompuri worked hard to ensure the artistic quality of the production. The company included nine actors,[19] plus a stage hand/lighting technician, and she hired Jalmari Finne, a former director of the Finnish National Theatre, as her assistant director. There were some painted backdrops, though they also used curtains as sets. High-quality fabrics were purchased for the costumes, which were mainly sewn by an acting student, Ida Kalske,[20] who (at least judging by the number of letters to and from her in the Tompuri collection at the National Archives of Finland) remained a lifelong friend.

There was much discussion in the period about Tompuri's motivations for taking on Hamlet, with the general consensus being that she was seeking notoriety. In a puff piece before the tour in the *Helsingin Sanomat*, Finland's leading daily newspaper, Tompuri disputes this, claiming instead the cultural goal of spreading knowledge of Shakespeare:

> I've been thinking about performing [Hamlet] for a long, long time, but I'd always given up the idea: I was afraid that I would be accused of trying to cause a sensation. But now it can't be helped, I have to perform it – and if by doing so I can make Shakespeare better understood in the countryside, that will be the best reward. And I don't understand why my effort would be labelled sensationalistic – many female actors are playing and have played Hamlet.[21]

The reporter asks how she feels about playing in the provinces, does she think audiences will understand the play:

> In the countryside, you ask! Precisely there, I would say. There people come to a theatre performance as to a festival, eager and willing to be immersed in the performance. That's wonderful. And nevertheless I am always afraid, with every new place, every new city, increasing this feeling. Every evening there's a new audience to be won over, brought into the fold. And when it happens, when you feel the unbroken electricity between yourself and your audience – then, then – [22]

In the Tompuri archive, there is a letter written to her husband from one of the stops during the tour which sheds further light on her attitudes towards her mainly working class audience at her performances, significant as this was the audience she had in mind when selecting *Hamlet*. In the eastern town of Kotka, prices had had to be reduced in part due to the features of the hall as well as because there had been an outbreak of scarlet fever, which kept the higher-paying bourgeois patrons away from the Theatre. At this reduced price they ran out of tickets and decided to sell standing places at the back, which also sold out, likely due to a combination of Tompuri's star power and the novelty of a female Hamlet. She tells her husband that even though so many people were crowded together standing in the back, the hall was very quiet and the audience remained focused for the entire performance. She concludes, 'The working class is not at all a thankless audience'.[23] This formulation suggests that she thinks, or she thinks that her husband thinks, that they might be, showing the depths of class animosity even among the intelligentsia most sympathetic to the working class just a few years before civil war would break out in 1918 between the bourgeois (the Whites) and the working class (the Reds) over the shape the new republic would take. But still, it is quite

clear that Tompuri feels a deep connection with the audience and wants to share her insights about Hamlet the character as well as the play with them.

While spreading knowledge of Shakespeare in the provinces was an acceptable goal to be shared with the press, for an actress sidelined from the country's main stages, financial necessity was likely also a key motivation for the tour. Demand in many cities for her female Hamlet was so great they were able to schedule additional performances as reported in the above-mentioned letter to her husband, which focuses almost entirely on finances. She says that the two performances in Kotka netted over 1,500 Finnmarks (about 6,600 euros in today's money), which she seems to be satisfied with.[24] In addition to director and lead actor, Tompuri seems to have done much of the production work as well, and she speaks for example in her autobiography of how financially 'it was no small thing' to give her cast a day off when the tour came to Helsinki and she was invited to participate in a recital of poetry.[25] These tours allowed Tompuri to maintain her financial independence, as well as to keep acting, which in some respects was her most important goal.

But why Hamlet? In the first volume of her autobiography published in 1942, nearly 30 years later, Tompuri writes that for reasons she herself does not understand, after the birth of her first son (Lauri, in February 1913) she was suddenly inspired to play the role:

> When my son was born, I suddenly had the idea that now I have to play Hamlet. I still wonder about it, and cannot even now explain my burning desire to play the role. At the time I had only explored it as a rehearsal piece, following the advice of Sarah Bernhardt: any actor, male or female, should familiarize themselves with the role even if they never act it.[26]

Bernhardt had said that 'generally speaking male parts are more intellectual than female parts' and 'no female character has opened up a field so large for the exploration of sensations and human sorrows as that of Hamlet',[27] ideas that Tompuri shared. Tompuri says she would probably have never had thought of playing the role had not Sarah Bernhardt already done so. A French actress, Suzanne Desprès, was playing the role in Paris at the same time, a point made in reviews, but Tompuri only heard about her during her own run, so that was not part of her inspiration.[28] Regarding preparing for the role, Tompuri followed the advice of Paul Schlenther, director of the Vienna Burgtheater, whom she had met in an acting class on Ibsen: 'Don't read any commentaries on Ibsen, not even mine', although she did later read analyses of the play. Tompuri says she had not seen many previous Hamlets, only the Austrian actor Josef Kainz, presumably in Berlin, and 'perhaps one other whom I don't remember'.[29]

In addition to her fear of being accused of trying to cause a sensation, another impediment for Tompuri's playing a male role was her unwillingness to dress as a man, especially to wear the traditional doublet and hose and thus reveal her thighs. These comments are especially interesting given the tendency, as we will see later, of so many critics to focus on the female body underneath those tights:

> I had never even dreamed of pulling on Hamlet's black tights. When I was asked to play a page role, given my thin and straight legs, I was hopeless. I still shudder to remember how bad I was in [Zacharias] Topelius' *Seikkailu saaristossa* [Adventures in the Archipelago]. "Reveal whatever you want above and below, but please let me keep my skirt", I'd once told [a director]. But now it was clearer than clear: I had to act Hamlet.[30]

Breeches roles had long been a common convention in comedy, melodrama, and opera, and so a woman in tights would not have been that unusual, though Tompuri herself only played the one such role before Hamlet.[31] Also connected to playing a man was fencing, but Tompuri seems to have had fewer qualms about that than showing her legs. She took fencing lessons the whole summer, which was difficult in part because she was still nursing her son every three hours, and the round trip travel time was one hour. Having a child, she remembers, was distracting but also gave her reason to focus:

> And [my son] also indirectly caused me to pay very close attention to the tip of my opponent's foil, as it very effectively caused excruciating pain in my filling breasts if I didn't repel the attack. I recommend fencing as an exercise for actors. It helps you learn your lines, and to be attentive; you learn to think quickly on your feet.[32]

Despite practicing the entire summer, Tompuri says she never became much of a fencer, only enough to be reasonably convincing onstage. In her autobiography she mentions that to her surprise, fencing was prominently mentioned in the reviews, 'an example to men of fencing', to which she nonchalantly comments, 'Well, once again confident acting, also known as bluffing, had clouded their senses'.[33]

Although Tompuri is vague on her reasons for wanting to play Hamlet, in her autobiography she also reveals that the role served as a point of identification for her, and she experienced that she and the character shared an artistic temperament. Bitter at being denied employment in the country's premiere theatres despite all of her hard work and well-received performances, she speaks of a barrage of 'small needle pricks' ripping her apart, how it takes a long time and much experience for an artist to absorb these blows and still manage to move

forward, like a saint finding ‘support’ in the pricks of the ‘sword’. But, she adds, artists are ‘neither saints nor heroes’, but rather, like Hamlet, are especially sensitive, able to see and hear things which are hidden from others. Hamlet, like herself, realizes that ‘time is out of joint’:

> He understands his own responsibilities in this situation. He sees into the souls of those around him, he sees through them. Coldly, matter-of-factly. But he does not have the ability of the saint, or even a Christian, to forgive people for their imperfections, nor does he gain solace in philosophy: people must be taken as they are, and their actions understood in terms of what they are capable of given their own character.[34]

Tompuri says that Hamlet is not the kind of hero who simply brushes aside all obstacles. Instead, she sees him as a person who understands the justice of killing his uncle, and even the benefit of such to Danish society. But that act gets mixed up with his private feelings of revenge, and his moral values prevent him from performing such an act for personal reasons: ‘No genius, as Hamlet is, would be capable of such. And when the dam of pent up feelings finally breaks, it doesn’t happen on his initiative, but rather outside events force him to act’.[35] For Tompuri, playing Hamlet functioned similarly to her as a safety valve, allowing her to take her rightful place onstage, even if not as a permanent member of an established theatre company.

A Female Hamlet and the Nationalist Cause

However much reviewers disagree about whether an actress can or should play Hamlet, almost all strike a note of nationalist pride in their reviews, commenting that Tompuri is the

first female Hamlet in the Nordic countries, and it is in this sense that the reception of her Hamlet perhaps differs from that of other contemporary female Hamlets in Europe, where Shakespeare as a tool of nationalist revival was less prominent. For example, the day before the premiere in Turku the local paper writes that 'A monumental evening tomorrow: a woman will play Hamlet. This is rare even abroad, and for us it will be a first'.[36] The next day the paper repeats that 'Mrs. Tompuri is the first of our actresses to don Hamlet's black tights and cloak'.[37] Early puff pieces often cited European predecessors, thus linking Finnish theatre to its European counterparts: Sarah Bernhardt is always mentioned, and a typical list includes Sarah Siddons, Marie Seebach,[38] Adele Sandrock and Suzanne Desprès.[39] In late-nineteenth century Finland, the intersections of theatre, nation-building and the leading female actress had always been prominent, and the FNT had essentially been built around Ida Aalberg who in the 1870s became the living embodiment of the nation-as-female, the 'Finnish Maid', representing an idealized vision of rustic youth and innocence, an important component of the Fennoman nationalist project which reinforced existing gender stereotypes.[40] In the 1880s, Aalberg's ingénue roles gave way to those more in keeping with the New Woman, such as Shakespeare's Juliet and Ibsen's Nora, causing some tension with the preferred stereotypes of Finnish nationalism.[41] Tompuri never participated in nation-building in the same way as Aalberg, but nevertheless many of these same elements can be seen in the proud reception of Tompuri's Hamlet in 1913, when the political situation was exceptionally turbulent.[42] One difference is that while the earliest Shakespeares were treated as a cultural 'victory', Tompuri's *Hamlet* is more linked to cultural education and the spread of Shakespeare: 'And it is precisely that seeing and getting to know a piece like *Hamlet* will no doubt increase the level of education and cultural competence of almost everyone in the audience'.[43]

In keeping with this educative function, many reviews include long analyses of *Hamlet*, considered the most significant role in the western canon, thus heightening the sense

that now a Finnish *woman* is able to take on such a role. A typical example reads: '*Hamlet* is one of the greatest, most unusual, and brilliant creations of world literature and performing it requires enormous strength of mind ... a man whose sharp intelligence, contemplation, coldness, decisiveness and action are constantly being challenged'.[44] Just about every review also mentions that the production played to packed houses and audiences loved it. Of the premiere, the *Turun Sanomat* reports that 'the play was received with great acclaim and the audience was enchanted'.[45] Another paper similarly reported that 'The hall was full and the audience was gripped by Mrs. Tompuri's capable performance and applauded loudly at the end'.[46] Although it is seldom stated directly, one gets the sense that the Finns as a nation are proud of their developing Shakespeare traditions and Elli Tompuri's being the first female Hamlet in the Nordic countries.

Hamlet and the New Woman

In contrast to the agreement on the national and cultural significance of Tompuri's achievement, there are widely varying opinions on the wisdom of a woman tackling the role. According to Howard, two types of female Hamlets emerged in the mid-nineteenth century reflecting opposing images of women: a younger 'late-Romantic liberated beauty' who was almost by definition erotic, or a more matronly figure of 'moral worth'. For the latter group, 'Hamlet was their passport to exploring the mind onstage with dignity'.[47] Sarah Bernhardt had argued that only a mature woman can play Hamlet as she can combine a youthful figure with mature thought,[48] though her Hamlet was criticized as excessively boyish.[49] Tompuri, who was 33 at the time of the production, was precariously balanced between these two: young enough to be erotic (especially for those with memories of her Salomé) but old and

skilled enough to be interested in exploring the depths of his character. The 'key thing about Hamlet', she wrote, 'is not that he is a man, but that he is a human, a genius, but also a genius at human frailty. This is why everyone responds sympathetically to him'.[50] A photograph (reproduced on the cover of this issue) articulates these contrasts: seated on a stool with her legs clearly visible, she is leaning forward towards the camera in a thoughtful pose with a serious expression, holding a book.

While a few reviewers thought the gender of the actor was not relevant ('it did not bother us in the least that Mrs. Tompuri's Hamlet had feminine characteristics. Indeed we've seen men onstage whose feminine movements were more disturbing'[51]), others accused Tompuri of being '*uhkarohkea*', an adjective which has connotations of bold but also reckless, audacious, daring, even foolhardy. For those more supportive of the New Woman, this bravery was seen as a good thing: 'She has made an *uhkarohkea* attempt, has decided to play Hamlet even though she's a woman. And of course we well understand the bravery of a female artist like her – and after all many of the world's finest actresses have attempted the role as well'.[52] But not all critics were so understanding. Even twenty-five years later, in a retrospective piece on different Hamlets in the city of Tampere, Tompuri's decision is still called *uhkarohkea* and the author adds that 'indeed in our circumstances [it was] extremely questionable'.[53]

The chief reason offered for the claim of recklessness is simply that the role is not suitable for a woman, no matter how capable she is of playing it. This seems to be a case of fairly stereotypical male chauvinism laced with cognitive dissonance: 'And we have to admit immediately that it was a brilliant piece for Elli Tompuri despite the fact that it is far too difficult for a woman.[54] One reviewer argued that any woman playing the role 'is bound to fail', since Shakespearean heroes are so 'manly', returning to the idea that at any age a woman playing a man is always going to seem young: 'That women are less developed than

men can be seen in that even the most magnificent woman when dressed as a man looks like a fifteen-year old boy'.[55] By contrast, one reviewer was especially impressed with Tompuri's depiction of Hamlet's youthful angst which she did better than the male actors they had seen: 'And this is exactly what is needed: the image drawn feels more natural and thus tragic. When Mrs. Tompuri's Hamlet asks 'to be or not to be?' ... his trembling voice echoes in our ears and we feel the angst of Hamlet's anguish'.[56]

The solution, in the eyes of several reviewers, is for Tompuri to stick to women's roles: 'This brave attempt on the part of our female dramatic artist has demonstrated beyond a doubt that her creative powers know no limits, she reaches the outer bounds of human feeling, but of course she could best achieve this on familiar ground – woman's roles'.[57] In reviews of both productions, Maria Jotuni, a Finnish author and dramatist, echoed these feelings. She praised Tompuri's Hamlet, but then two days later said that Tompuri had been 'brilliant' in *Fédora* now that she was back playing a woman (in comparison Hamlet had felt 'cold' and 'strained').[58] Some reviewers who felt Tompuri should only act women's roles went so far as to name the ones they would like to see her play:

> By saying this I don't mean to imply that Mrs. Tompuri wouldn't be Hamlet, or that she doesn't understand his soul. But all the externals, all her means of playing the role which would allow the viewer to understand how she understands the character, work against her. It's true that such well-known actresses as Sarah Bernhardt and Suzanne Desprès have courageously tried the role, and failed. We don't understand why Mrs. Tompuri would subject herself to the temptation when she could be playing roles such as Hugo's Lucretia Borgia.[59]

It is difficult to discern what reviewers fear in a brave/reckless woman. There sometimes seems to be a subtle fear that she might wish to compete with male actors, although as one said, 'I don't suppose she even intended to compete with the most capable male actors performing Hamlet'.[60] This takes on extra significance when we remember that there had recently been a *Hamlet* at the FNT with two weak male actors alternating in the role. One critic even opined that 'In my opinion, Mrs. Tompuri is closer to Shakespeare's Hamlet than any of our male actors'.[61]

In contrast to these negative assessment of whether a woman can or should play the role, many reviewers comment favourably on Tompuri's 'intelligence', invoking another feature of the New Woman at a time when women were agitating for their rights (Finnish women had been granted the right to vote in 1906, the first in Europe). One reviewer said that Tompuri played the role with 'intelligence' which made the character more 'intelligible' to the audience.[62] A more diffident review nevertheless raised intelligence as a strength: 'But if we do not consider the production as a whole, we must admit that there were many extremely good details and intelligent interpretations'.[63] One went so far as to praise the 'genius' of Tompuri's physical movements onstage, linking these to the genius of Hamlet himself: 'In some moments she was absolutely genius, and one cannot marvel enough the artistry with which her hand movements, her derisive smile, her startled starts followed the crown prince's tremulous thoughts and flashes of intelligence and genius'.[64] Maria Jotuni also admired Tompuri's intelligence, commenting that 'an unintelligent actor, no matter how skilled and powerful, would never be able to combine Hamlet's complex and varying layers into a coherent whole. Mrs. Tompuri's Hamlet was carefully analysed and considered'.[65] Even critics who could not get over the fact that Hamlet was being played by a woman admitted they were impressed by the intelligence of Tompuri's portrayal. One particularly angry reviewer starts by saying he does not understand why women would even want to be 'guilty'

of playing a man onstage, and how it is difficult for the audience when everything – the visual image, voice, gesture – is so wrong. Such an endeavour would only work if the actress could strip her femininity entirely, but this would be 'abnormal'. But then the reviewer goes on to praise Tompuri's intelligence:

> But all this is just a criticism of how well Elli Tompuri passes off as a man. And indeed, I cannot help that in my opinion Hamlet ought to be a man. It's the primary requirement of the whole role. But if we give up on artistic illusion and ask only how well the actress understood the part, I must admit that Elli Tompuri's intelligent and cultured understanding of the role cannot be denied.[66]

The theme of intelligence comes up so often in the reviews that it begins to seem like a safe thing to say both for those who admire and despise the fact of a female Hamlet. It is interesting to note that Tompuri's interpretation of the character did not disturb reviewers the same way that Bernhardt's did, as Bernhardt's active young prince went against Romantic conceptions of the character as a weak and languid thinker, though she, too, was praised for the 'considerable care and intelligence' she bestowed on the character.[67] But as Tompuri drily notes in her biographical sketch of Sarah Bernhardt, 'it is to be expected' that critics will disagree about an actor's abilities, pointing out that two internationally recognized Danish names, the Shakespeare scholar Georg Brandes and the author and journalist Herman Bang, came to opposite conclusions about Bernhardt's Hamlet, Brandes thinking that the 'soul' of Hamlet was completely beyond her, while Bang saying that 'anyone who has seen Sarah Bernhardt's interpretation of Hamlet has at least one in their life come face to face with genius'.[68]

There seems to be in the minds of reviewers an impenetrable wall between (masculine) intelligence and (female) sensuousness, an inevitable by-product of the female body, and it is in this we see the precarious way Tompuri had to manoeuvre between 'moral matronly' and 'erotic' conceptions of woman, to go back to Howard's distinction.[69] Tompuri was by all accounts exceptionally attractive, and it seems some critics simply could not look past her face and body to see the character she was playing because, as one put it, 'Elli Tompuri's feminine attributes are so hard to hide'.[70] It seems that once an actress became known for her sensuality, as happened to Tompuri after playing Salomé, it was hard for critics to see beyond her body and physical beauty, and that all of this was simply not appropriate to Hamlet. As one critic put it, Tompuri's power rests precisely 'on her passionate feminine sensuality, the way she uses her voice, her plasticity, everything points towards that. Watching her Hamlet is disconcerting'.[71] Here it is clear that the reviewers had trouble seeing beyond the woman to the role.

Besides this focus on the erotic aspects of the actress' body, several critics commented more specifically on the female characteristics they found particularly alienating, often her voice. The following quotation combines many of the features we saw above, praise of Tompuri's intelligence and the distraction of the female body:

> [Hamlet] was like Elli Tompuri is, an attractive woman with beautiful body, a pretty, childish face, etc. Whether this is appropriate for Hamlet is an entirely different question. She understood the role correctly, had analysed it brilliantly, but there are two features this role absolutely needs, and they are emotion and voice ... [By contrast], Mr. Lauro's Claudius possesses many of the features required onstage, a handsome body and above all an unusually beautiful voice.[72]

This reviewer is unusual in pointing to the physical qualities of a male actor onstage, showing that while it was more serious for women to break gendered stereotypes, such existed for men as well, and here Lauro fulfilled them. Another example is similar; Tompuri's very good performance is undercut simply because she lacks a man's voice and manner:

> Elli Tompuri has in abundance the abilities needed for this challenging part. Her Hamlet was thoughtful, brilliant, fearless, effective, cold and at the same time a fully-realized human of flesh and blood. But we would have wanted even more. He[73] lacked power, a male voice and movements. He lacked, dare I say, his Kullervo-side.[74]

As these examples show, there is in the reviews an uneasy tension between the female body and an intelligent actor, though also some awareness that the viewing experience is highly subjective, and reviewers could not quite account for all of the emotions they experienced while watching a female Hamlet, presumably most of them for the first time.

As we saw earlier, one of the attacks that Tompuri anticipated and tried to deflect was that she was only playing Hamlet to cause a sensation, that a woman playing Hamlet could never be anything but, harking back to the idea that a New Woman should (or should not, depending on the point of view) dare to rebel, show her feelings, make a spectacle of herself. In her autobiography, Tompuri remembers that much of the criticism focused on her gender, but denied she ever meant to cause a sensation.[75] Reviewers come down on all sides of this debate. The reviewer quoted above who had trouble looking beyond Tompuri's beautiful body was fairly sure the goal for any woman playing Hamlet was merely to cause a sensation though also recognized that actresses might be frustrated by the limited choices available to them:

> The undersigned has trouble understanding what it is that gets female actresses – such as the well-known European stars Sarah Bernhardt and now most recently Suzanne Desprès – to be guilty of deviating from their own sex and playing a man on stage. Maybe they feel that roles written for women are too confining and one-sided ... maybe they are attracted by the difficulty of the role, or maybe it is just arrogance and the wish to cause a sensation![76]

Another thought the problem stemmed from the bad example of these Parisian actresses, whose audiences 'adored sensationalism but understood little of Shakespeare's real greatness'.[77] Other reviewers were more willing to give Tompuri the benefit of the doubt. One who was critical of the project nevertheless said that given Tompuri's artistic ambitions, she was unlikely to be seeking to create a sensation: 'Knowing the seriousness of Mrs. Tompuri's artistic purpose, we can already be sure that her Hamlet is not going to be a cheap morsel to satisfy the hunger of sensation-seekers, but there must be many who nevertheless have their doubts about this new-fangled and hardly-to-be-wished for experiment'.[78] Other critics, by contrast, denied that Tompuri meant to, or indeed caused, a sensation. As one put it:

> On the contrary her production was to the greatest extent interesting and indeed special. And not at all from the point of view of creating a sensation. We must say this because naturally all readers are focusing on the fact that this was a woman performing Hamlet – but the feminine characteristics of Mrs. Tompuri's Hamlet did not bother us at all.[79]

Accusing Tompuri of trying to cause a sensation likely speaks to fears of growing female visibility in the era, the fear that women would use their visibility to usurp male power, to demand better roles for themselves in life and in theatre. In Tompuri's case this is perhaps especially ironic, because she needed to seek visibility because she was being shut out of quieter channels to realize her acting ambitions, as it were. A certain amount of notoriety was good for ticket sales, but too much might drive patrons away. The negative associations with the 'Parisian actresses' are also interesting in this regard, because on the one hand as we saw earlier there is pride in the fact that 'our' actress is emulating European greats, while at the same time discomfort with her challenging stereotypical ideas of what is acceptable for a woman – and an actress.

One of the ways that Tompuri asserted herself as a New Woman, by necessity, was taking on the roles of producer and director, and another way of criticizing her indirectly was to disparage the rest of the cast, though it may very well be that there were also grounds for doing so. Here the critique is focused on what kind of ensemble she is able to create. One critic, for example, writes that 'the other actors did not command much attention' and aside from Kaarlo Aarni (Polonius) and Antero Lauro (Claudius), they 'were more or less mediocre'.[80] Emilia Mehtonen's Ophelia was considered 'thin and superficial'[81] though another said that while she 'naturally did not reach the highest levels', her depiction was not without some merit.[82] The latter reviewer would have wanted to see 'more passion and power' in the other actors and found them 'colourless'.[83] Interestingly, one of the two reviewers I know to be a woman, Helmi Krohn, a cultural figure in her own right, used the weakness of the cast as a means of criticizing the Finnish theatrical establishment:

> In my opinion it was a terrible disservice to Elli Tompuri that she was not allowed to present her Hamlet in a guest performance at the Finnish National Theatre rather than with her own travelling company since – with all due credit to Tompuri's diligent and industrious work as director and rehearser of her company – it would have been difficult to find a worse supporting cast. ... Without a doubt, with better support Elli Tompuri's Hamlet would have been much more harmonious and coherent.[84]

In her autobiography, Tompuri replies forcefully to these critiques of the rest of her cast, particularly to the charge that star actors would not want to surround themselves with equally good actors, so their own star shines brighter. She writes that she does not believe that any 'real artist' would do such a thing, and the attacks on the other actors then and later bothered her. She points out that many of the actors she trained and directed went on to work in prestigious theatres, including Wilho Ilmari,[85] who toured with her in a different production and went on to become one of Finland's premiere actor-directors of Shakespeare.[86] In a book analysing the artistry of Ellen Terry and Henry Irving, Tompuri returns to this idea of a leading actor needing a strong supporting cast. Speaking of Irving's *Hamlet*, she says: 'Seldom has an artist managed to find such a faithful supporting cast. Fate had brought them together, and instinctively and calculatingly he had managed to secure just those actors without whom no creative person can function productively'.[87]

The tone of most reviews was serious, even as emotions ranged from outrage to admiration. Three reviews, however, stand out for their humour, not surprising since they were published in humour magazines. Almost as if the answer to the New Woman was to create a New Man, they make jokes by extending the cross-dressed theme to men, talking about male actors they would like to see playing female roles. Significantly, in the first two cases, reference is made to a somewhat controversial male actor, Kaarle Halme (1864–1946),

who like Tompuri had a reputation for being difficult. He repeatedly argued with theatre professionals, and as mentioned above abruptly left the directorship of the Tampere Theatre in 1904,[88] a post taken up for a time by Elli Tompuri. In the late 1880s and 1890s, Halme had made his name playing leading roles in plays based on the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, and also played a number of secondary Shakespeare roles, including Cassio in *Othello* (1889), Cassius in *Julius Caesar* (1889), Horatio in *Hamlet* (1890), Macduff in *Macbeth* (1894), Polixenes in *The Winter's Tale* (1896) and the Duke of Richmond in *Richard III* (1897). He was known for his height, his beautiful voice and, at a time when many actors still had trouble speaking Finnish, his Finnish elocution.[89] In one of the reviews, the joke is that Halme should have been asked to play Ophelia: 'Mrs Elli Tompuri has played Hamlet in Helsinki. Why didn't she invite Mr Kaarle Halme to play Ophelia? Only then would the effect have been perfect, the atmosphere harmonious'.[90] The second humorous instance includes an even longer list of potential cross-dressed imaginings in both directions:

> The Elli Tompuri Company came, they saw, they conquered. We saw a middle-aged woman acting a young Hamlet, without receiving a special dispensation from the senate for her gender. It's difficult to know what the real Hamlet was like since he's been dead so long, but at least we can dare to say that he was a man. And indeed this attempt at a performance supports that claim. In all things, in art as well as other pleasures, we are against cheap tricks, and if this game continues, pretty soon we'll see Orjatsalo as Salomé dancing in front of Herod, and who knows maybe Mrs. Haverinen will play Monsieur le Directeur and Kaarlo Halme will prance daintily as Käthie in *Old Heidelberg*.[91]

The third piece also jokes about Aarne Orjatsalo playing Salomé, adding that it's a pity that Tompuri and Orjatsalo aren't married, as that would make the whole thing perfect.[92] Clearly for these writers, a cross-dressed actor can never be more than a joke, and the image of a large male actor playing the sensual Salomé or the heroine of Meyer-Förster's German Romantic play, or a small woman playing the hero of a French farce is just as ridiculous as a female Hamlet. Tompuri's age also becomes part of the joke, that a 'middle-aged' woman would try to pass herself off as a 'young' Hamlet. In these examples, the focus on the male body is also intriguing – Orjatsalo and Halme are both pictured as dancing, one sensually, one more flirtatiously, recalling the focus on Tompuri's body we saw in the reviews. For me, that Tompuri's Hamlet makes it into the humour magazines is testament to its cultural power: it is considered significant enough to make fun of, and while the jokes might serve as a kind of warning against further 'cheap tricks', they also serve to normalize the practice.

Tompuri's experiment in cross-dressing, heroic as it was in 1913, did not however open doors to further explorations in gender-blind casting in Finland. During the Second World War, Finnish actresses played male roles due to the lack of available male actors,[93] but the practice was quickly stopped when the war ended. To my knowledge, there has only been one other female Hamlet in Finland, in 1995 when Leea Klemola took on the role at the Q-Theatre. Beyond that, there was a brief renaissance of gender-blind casting in the late 1980s, at a time when there was broader feminist questioning of the status of women in society as well as the paucity of good theatrical roles for women: in 1987, Marja-Leena Kouki played Richard III at the Turku City Theatre directed by Laura Jäntti, and in 1988 there was an all-female production of the *Henry VI* plays done by the Raging Roses, directed by Ritva Siikala. In 2008, Elina Knihtilä played Macbeth at the Q-Theatre, and in 2023 Katariina Kaitue is appearing as Lear at the FNT.[94] But given the excitement Tompuri's tour generated, the flurry of opinions both positive and negative, the packed houses, the nationalist pride, its cultural

and feminist aspirations, the Elli Tompuri Hamlet deserves a place in the history of Shakespeare reception in Finland and the Nordic countries. Tompuri took on a monumental challenge befitting a New Woman, and mainly succeeded.

[1] Tony Howard, *Women as Hamlet: Performance and Interpretation in Theatre, Film and Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), ix.

[2] The most comprehensive work on Elli Tompuri, the dissertation by Helka Mäkinen, skips over the Hamlet tour entirely, focusing instead on the years after the Finnish Civil War in 1918. See Mäkinen, *Elli Tompuri – Uusi nainen ja punainen diiva* [Elli Tompuri – A New Woman and Red Diva] (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 2001). In her short sketch of Tompuri, Ritva Heikkilä mentions the *Hamlet* tour in two sentences, one of them discussing Tompuri's taking an evening off to give a spoken recital; 'Elli Tompuri' in *Työtä ja tuloksia: Suomalaisia Vaikuttajanaisia* [Work and Results: Prominent Finnish Women] (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1980), 107–119, here 111, 115. Tompuri herself was a prolific author, producing a four-volume autobiography, the first of which discusses the Hamlet tour at length, *Minun Tieni* [My Road] (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1942, 250–261), as well as four books on actors and acting, including a study of Ellen Terry and Henry Irving, *Sammumattomia tähtiä: Ellen Terry and Henry Irving* [Inextinguishable Stars] (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1950) and on the actresses Rachel, Sarah Bernhardt and Eleonora Duse, *Naamio and Ihminen: Rachel, Bernhardt, Duse* [The Mask and the Person] (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1948) which provide relevant material for this study.

[3] Hamina, Hanko, Hämeenlinna, Iisalmi, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Kajaani, Kotka, Kuopio, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Mikkeli, Oulu, Pori, Raahe, Sortvala, Tampere, Turku, Vaasa, and Viipuri.

[4] Howard, *Women as Hamlet*, 109.

[5] But as Howard points out, by the end of the century, *Hamlet* was losing its position as a vehicle of female resistance, as new plays, for example by Ibsen and Shaw, contained the kinds of female characters that top actresses longed to play (*Women as Hamlet*, 71).

[6] Pentti Paavolainen, *Suomen teatterihistoria* [Finnish Theatre History], Teatterikorkeakoulun julkaisusarja 53 (2016), https://disco.teak.fi/teatteri/.

[7] Elli Tompuri, *Naamio and Ihminen: Rachel, Bernhardt, Duse* [The Mask and the Person] (Porvoo: Werner Söderström, 1948), 202. All translations from Finnish are my own, with thanks to Kimmo Absetz for checking them.

[8] Tompuri, *Naamio*, 207.

[9] For a history of Tompuri's relations with the FNT, see Helka Mäkinen, 'Kamppailua hegemoniasta kulttuurin kentällä: Elli Tompuri vastaan Suomen Kansallisteatteri' [Hegemonic Struggles in the Cultural Field: Elli Tompuri vs. the Finnish National Theatre] in *Niin muuttuu mailma, Eskoni* [So the World Changes, My Esko], ed. Pirkko Koski (Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1999), 125–156.

[10] Tompuri, *Minun tieni,* 95–96. Interestingly, Tompuri would later ask Jalmari Finne to be her assistant director on the *Hamlet* production (*Minun tieni*, 252), a part of his career that Finne chooses not to discuss in his autobiography: *Ihmeellinen Seikkailu: Ihmisiä, Elämyksiä, Mietteitä* (Helsinki: Gummerus, 1939). Tompuri and Finne were briefly engaged in 1901, to the astonishment of everyone at the Finnish (National) Theatre since Finne was known to be homosexual. Finne's friend Erkki Melartin wrote that perhaps such an arrangement could be beneficial for both sides, saying that Elli is the kind of woman 'for whom this kind of purgatory could be very healthy, since she's not the kind of person who gets depressed if she's disappointed – she is quite the man'; qtd. in Pentti Paavolainen, *Kaarlo Bergbomin elämä ja työ*, iii: *Kriisit ja kaipuu: 1886–1906* [The Life and Work of Kaarlo Bergbom, vol. 3: Crises and Longing, 1886–1906] (Helsinki: Taideyliopiston Teatterikorkeakoulu, 2018), 519.

[11] Mäkinen, 'Kamppailua', 132.

[12] Mäkinen, 'Kamppailua', 132–133.

[13] Mäkinen, 'Kamppailua', 133.

[14] Mäkinen, ‘Kamppailua’, 149.

[15] Mäkinen, ‘Kamppailua’, 134.

[16] Helka Mäkinen, ‘Tompuri, Elli’, *Kansallisbiografia* (online publication), Studia Biographica 4 (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Serua, 1997), URN:NBN:fi-fe20051410 (accessed 22 February 2023).

[17] This estimate is based on the discussion of the *Hamlet* tour in Tompuri’s autobiography, where she discusses the only performance in Helsinki as coming ‘in the middle of the tour’ and before that they had done ‘twenty or thirty’ performances in the provinces (*Minun,* 257).

[18] *Ilkka,* no. 124, 30 October 1913.

[19] Emilia Mehtonen (Ophelia), Kaarlo Aarni (Polonius), Martti Aronen, later known as Antero Lauro (Claudius), Else Vanamo (Gertrude), Arvi Mansikka (Guildenstern, grave-digger), Alarik Sandelin (Rosencrantz) and Eero Boman (Laertes), with other parts doubled.

[20] Tompuri, *Minun*, 251–253.

[21] *Helsingin Sanomat*, 28 September 1913.

[22] *Helsingin Sanomat,* 28 September 1913.

[23] Elli Tompuri to Lauri af Heurlin, 12 November 1913, The National Archives of Finland, Tompuri Archive, Box 2 (hereafter cited as Tompuri archive).

[24] Elli Tompuri to Lauri af Heurlin, 12 November 1913 (Tompuri archive).

[25] Tompuri, *Minun*, 259.

[26] Tompuri, *Minun*, 250.

[27] Howard, *Women as Hamlet*, 99.

[28] Tompuri, *Minun*, 253.

[29] Tompuri, *Minun*, 253–254. Considering that a new *Hamlet* had premiered in February 1913 at the FNT, it is possible that this Hamlet she is not remembering was one of the two actors who alternated in the role, Eero Kilpi and Jussi Snellman. Neither was considered particularly

good. Eero Kilpi was especially criticized: ‘It’s not so many years since Eero Kilpi performed Hamlet, Daniel Hjort and Franz Moor always with the same dry gestures, behind which you had to struggle to find any glimpses of a genuine intention. He might as well have remained as he was, and it really looked like there was no hope he would be liberated either of his forced pathos or his sadly manneristic technique’ (Aaro Hallaakoski, ‘Eero Kilpi ja hänen Sakerinsa *Nummisuutareissa*’ [Eero Kilpi and his Sakeri in *Heath Cobblers*], *Aika*, no. 3, 1 March 1920, 129–130). Snellman had the previous year helped her by updating the translation of Ibsen’s *A Doll House* for her first tour (*Minun*, 247).

[30] Tompuri, *Minun*, 251.

[31] Information on Tompuri’s roles is taken from *Ilona*, the database of Theatre Info Finland and the Finnish Theatre Museum, http://ilona.tinfo.fi/default.aspx?lang=fi (accessed 23 March 2023). On breeches roles in English theatre, see Anne Russell, ‘Tragedy, Gender, Performance: Women as Tragic Heroes on the Nineteenth-Century Stage’, *Comparative Drama* 30, no. 2 (1996), 135–157.

[32] Tompuri, *Minun*, 251.

[33] Tompuri, *Minun*, 251–252.

[34] Tompuri, *Minun*, 254.

[35] Tompuri, *Minun*, 254–255.

[36] *Turun Sanomat*, no. 2639, 8 October 1913.

[37] *Turun Sanomat*, no. 2640, 9 October 1913.

[38] Seebach played Ophelia, but is not listed in Howard’s comprehensive study of female Hamlets as having played him.

[39] *Haminan Sanomat*, no. 88, 12 August 1913. The same list is repeated in *Wiipuri*, no. 184, 13 August 1913, and several other newspapers.

[40] These ideas were first developed in Hanna Suutela, *Impyet – Näyttelijättäret Suomalaisen Teatterin palveluksessa* [Virginal Maids: Actresses in the Service of the Finnish Theatre] (Helsinki: Otava, 2005), and later by Laura-Elina Aho in a series of articles focusing more specifically on Ida Aalberg: 'Neitsythahmoinen kansallisuus: Suomi-neidon representaatio Suomalisen Teatterin ohjelmistossa 1872–1882' [The Nationality of Virginal Characters: The Representation of the Finnish Maid in the repertoire of the Finnish Theatre 1872–1882], *Ennen ja nyt. Historian tietosanomat* 5 (2016); 'Motherless Girls and the Orphan Myth in the Making of the Nation: The Gendered Representation of a Nation in the Repertoire of the Finnish Theatre Company, 1872–76', *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 47, no. 2 (2020), 179–208; and 'Ihanteiden ilmiloihtija – nuori Ida Aalberg suomalisuuden personifikaationa' [Conjuring Ideals: The Young Ida Aalberg as a Personifications of Finnishness], *Historiallinen Aikakauskirja* 1 (2022), 22–36.

[41] For an analysis of this in relation to Aalberg's portrayal of Shakespeare's Juliet, see Nely Keinänen, 'Ida Aalberg and the first Finnish-language *Romeo and Juliet*, 1881', in Nely Keinänen and Per Sivefors, eds, *Reconstructing Shakespeare in the Nordic Countries* (London: Bloomsbury, 2023, in press), 69–97.

[42] In 1905 there had been a general strike protesting Russian efforts to rescind some of Finland's rights as an autonomous Grand Duchy, and in 1910 Nicholas II signed a law giving the Russian Duma power to make laws governing the entire empire and requiring Finland to send representatives, which it refused to do. The Finnish Senate declared independence on 6 December 1917, but in 1913 nobody could have known that independence was so near.

[43] *Haminan lehti*, 22 November 1913.

[44] *Suur-Savo*, no. 131, 15 November 1913.

[45] *Turun Sanomat*, no. 2641, 10 October 1913.

[46] *Uusi Suometar*, no. 236, 10 October 1913.

[47] Howard, *Women as Hamlet*, 80.

[48] Howard, *Women as Hamlet*, 100.

[49] Elizabeth Robins, 'On Seeing Madame Bernhardt's Hamlet'. *The North American Review* 171, no. 529 (1900), 908–919.

[50] Tompuri, *Minun*, 253.

[51] *Turun Sanomat*, no. 2642, 11 October 1913. The next day, a longer portion of this part of the review was re-printed, presumably approvingly, in *Uusi Suometar*, no. 238, 12 October 1913.

[52] *Haminan lehti*, 22 November 1913, emphasis added.

[53] *Aamulehti*, 1 January 1938.

[54] *Hangon Sanomat*, 13 December 1913.

[55] *Aamulehti*, 18 October 1913.

[56] *Mikkelin Sanomat*, no. 128, 8 November 1913.

[57] *Hangon Sanomat*, 13 December 1913.

[58] Maria Jotuni, *Novelleja ja Muuta Proosaa II* [Short Stories and Other Prose], ed. Irmeli Niemi (Helsinki: Otava, 1980), 504–505. The reviews are dated 6 November 1913 and 8 November 1913.

[59] *Aamulehti*, 18 October 1913.

[60] *Haminan lehti*, 25 November 1913.

[61] *Mikkelin Sanomat*, no. 128, 8 November 1913.

[62] *Vapaa Sana*, no. 123, 22 October 1913.

[63] *Valvoja* 33, no. 11, November 1913.

[64] *Vaasa*, no. 127, 28 October 1913.

[65] Joutini, *Novelleja*, 505.

[66] *Uusi Aura*, no. 234, 10 October 1913.

[67] M. Maurice Shudofsky, 'Sarah Bernhardt on *Hamlet*', *College English* 3, no. 3 (1941), 293–295, here 294.

[68] Tompuri, *Naamio*, 182.

[69] Howard, *Women as Hamlet*, 80.

[70] *Uusi Aura*, no. 234, 10 October 1913.

[71] *Aamulehti*, 18 October 1913.

[72] *Ilkka*, no. 124, 30 October 1913.

[73] Finnish does not have a gendered pronoun, and here it would interesting to know whether the pronoun especially in the first instance refers more to the character or the actor.

[74] *Suur-Savo*, no. 131, 15 November 1913. *Kullervo* (written 1859, first performed 1882) is a revenge tragedy by Aleksis Kivi based on a hero in the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, a figure of great anger. In its day, Kivi's play was also known to have been inspired by Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, speaking to the ways that Shakespeare was used in developing Finnish vernacular literature.

[75] Tompuri, *Minun*, 252.

[76] *Uusi Aura*, no. 234, 10 October 1913.

[77] *Tampereen Sanomat*, no. 240, 17 October 1913.

[78] *Uusi Suometari*, no. 259, 6 November 1913.

[79] *Turun Sanomat*, no. 2642, 11 October 1913.

[80] *Salmetar*, no. 132, 20 November, 1913.

[81] *Kaleva*, no. 247, 25 October 1913.

[82] *Turun Sanomat*, no. 2642, 11 October 1913.

[83] *Turun Sanomat*, no. 2642, 11 October 1913.

[84] Helmi Krohn, 'Katsauksia Kansallisteatterin syysnäytäntökauteen 1913 [Glimpses of the Autumn Season of the FNT 1913], *Valvoja* 33, no. 11, November 1913, 633–638, here 637.

Interestingly, Maria Jotuni also mentions the FNT, praising the company for its strong ensemble and 'culture and traditions of Shakespeare which are not so easily achievable' (*Novelleja*, 505).

[85] Tompuri, *Minun*, 255–256.

[86] Nely Keinänen, 'Finland, and Shakespeare', *Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Shakespeare* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, online), https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-99378-2_234-1.

[87] Elli Tompuri, *Sammumattomia tähtiä: Ellen Terry – Henry Irving* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1950), 117.

[88] Panu Rajala, 'Halme, Kaarle' in *Kansallisbiografia* (Helsinki: SKS, online).

[89] Rajala, 'Halme, Kaarle'.

[90] *Ampiainen*, 15 November 1913.

[91] *Weitikka*, no. 10, 1913. Aarne Orjatsalo, known for his height and manliness, would play Hamlet to great acclaim beginning in 1917 (also performing the role at a Finnish workers' theatre in the US in 1923), and like Tompuri had difficulties with the Finnish theatrical establishment due to his radical views. See Jotarkka Pennanen, *Orjatsalo: Taiteilija politiikan kurumuksessa* (Tampere: Sanasota, 2017). Aino Haverinen was Finland's first operetta star, a short feminine woman, known for her ingénue roles, though she also played Kate in *TS*. Alexandre Bisson and Fabrice Carré's French comedy *Monsieur le Directeur!* (1895) had been translated and directed by Jalmari Finne in 1896 and reprised in 1900 (Pentti Paavolainen, personal communication, 12 March 2023).

[92] *Kurikka*, 15 September 1913.

[93] Verneri Veistäjä, *Viipurin ja Muun Suomen Teatteri* [Viipuri and Other Finnish Theatres] (Helsinki: Tammi, 1957), 35.

[94] Keinänen, 'Finland, and Shakespeare'.