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Legenda

2021

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Keinänen , N 2021 , The Role of Hamlet in Finnish Nation-Building, 1879-1884 . in M Minier & L Kahn (eds) , Hamlet Translations : Prisms of Cultural Encounters across the Globe . Transcript , no. 16 , Legenda , Cambridge , pp. 81-100 .

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# **The Role of *Hamlet* in Finnish Nation-Building, 1879-84<sup>1</sup>**

Nely Keinänen

## **Introduction**

When the Finnish Literature Society published Paavo Cajander's translation of *Hamlet* in 1879, it was heralded as the triumphant culmination of a long struggle to bring Shakespeare's works into Finnish, and hopefully as the proud beginning of the first sustained effort to translate the complete works of Shakespeare into Finnish. Although Shakespeare was known in Finland through Swedish and German translations, there had been few attempts to translate Shakespeare's works into Finnish, which still in the nineteenth century was not considered a literary language, although it had been used in religious literature since the sixteenth century. But as in other minority languages and cultures, translation of classics such as Shakespeare became part of a broader process to develop the Finnish language and theatre, both significant in the development of national consciousness in pre-independence Finland.<sup>2</sup> As Joep Leerssen points out,

[I]n many emerging countries Shakespeare inspired poets as a literary nation-builder. Many subaltern vernaculars that in the nineteenth century undertook a program of national emancipation wanted to demonstrate their stature as cultural vehicles, either

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank the late Matti Rissanen for his invaluable help on this article. All translations from the Finnish are my own, with thanks to Kimmo Absetz and Kati Laasonen for help with checking them. Thanks also to Maria Salenius, who provided English translations of the Swedish-language sources.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the transmission of Shakespeare into other Nordic countries, see Smidt (1993) and Sorelius (2002). Little has been published in English on the transmission of Shakespeare into Finland, aside from Aaltonen (1999).

by trying their hand at a nationally historicist theater or by attempting translations of world classics. (2016: 1068)<sup>3</sup>

While this process has been explored in relation to many European nations, especially Eastern Europe, thus far there has been little research on these processes in Finland.<sup>4</sup> *Hamlet* plays a key role in this early history, as it was among the first plays to have scenes translated and performed, and then later the play was selected to begin the complete works translation project. The discussions around *Hamlet*, therefore, provide key insights into the significance of Shakespeare in late-nineteenth century Finland, where translating and performing his works was a dual struggle, first to find a translator capable of rendering Shakespeare's language into Finnish, and then to find Finnish-speaking actors who could perform these translations.

In this chapter, I first examine the political, linguistic, and theatrical hurdles which needed to be overcome before Shakespeare could be translated into and performed in Finnish. After a brief look at Cajander's stylistic choices, I next examine the translation's reception, outlining the reasons offered for the importance of translating Shakespeare in general, and *Hamlet* in particular, and also look at the ways the translation was assessed. Reviewers focused on the difficulty of Shakespeare's language, and the differences between Finnish and English. They praised Cajander's fidelity to his source and creative solutions, and also commented favourably on how his translation compared to the more familiar German and Swedish ones. Perhaps most significant from the point of view of global Shakespeares were the ways that Shakespeare and *Hamlet* were seen as representing the best

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<sup>3</sup> See also Joughin (1997). For Shakespeare in a broader European context, see Hattaway, Sokolova, and Ropereds (1994), Pujante and Hoenselaars (2003), Massai (2005), and Delabastita, De Vos, and Franssen (2008). A good recent review article is Mancewicz (2016).

<sup>4</sup> Veronika Schandl (2016) discusses examples from Poland, Czech, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. See also Mooneeram (2016).

of European civilization, a civilization that Finland wanted to join as an independent member. I do not want to overstate the importance of Shakespeare to the development of Finnish literature, theatre, and the national consciousness, as the development of a vernacular literature was in many ways considered an even higher goal.<sup>5</sup> But nevertheless, translation and performance of classic texts played an important part in these processes, and this analysis of the Finnish case will help to deepen knowledge of the spread of Shakespeare globally.

### **The Political and Linguistic Situation in Finland in the 1870s**

After hundreds of years of Swedish rule, in 1809 Finland became an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Empire. Russian rule lasted just over 100 years, as Finland achieved independence in 1917. Although the majority of the population spoke Finnish, a small Swedish-speaking elite dominated the country. In the early 1800s a growing cultural movement, which later became known as Fennomania, was formed with the aim of enhancing the role of the Finnish language in the country's affairs, and of promoting the development of Finnish culture. When Finland was joined to the Russian Empire, the Finnish language was almost entirely marginalized: the language of government, civil service, and university was Swedish, though Finnish was an official language of the church. At this time, there were very few people who could actually read and write Finnish, since it simply had not been used in higher education, theatre or literature (Oinonen 2008: 37).

The drive to improve the status of Finnish began in university circles, and led to the establishment of the Finnish Literature Society in 1831, whose goal was to promote the literary uses of Finnish. In the 1840s, J. V. Snellman wrote powerfully about how Finland lacked a national identity, and how such an identity could never be created unless Finnish would become the

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<sup>5</sup> But Finnish vernacular literature, too, was influenced by Shakespeare; e.g. Alexis Kivi, the greatest of the nineteenth-century writers, spoke openly of his debt to Shakespeare.

language of education and culture (Sevänen 2007: 13). Snellman's ideas were met with derision, but nevertheless a law was passed in 1850 which forbade the publishing of works in Finnish without a special permit; exceptions were allowed for religious works and those helping to improve the economy (Leino-Kaukiainen 1980: 179).<sup>6</sup>

The first complete works series was planned and published by the Finnish Literature Society (SKS), an important player in this story. In reviewing the work of the association in 1893, Hannes Gebhard noted that the two main goals of the organization were to 'create connections between Finland and the rest of the civilized world, and to promote the production of our own cultural products' (Gebhard 1893: 354).<sup>7</sup> The SKS carried out three major types of projects in the earlier years. One was producing Finnish-language textbooks for higher education. For example, they translated advanced books on agriculture because Finnish speakers were not being admitted to the agricultural college since there were no textbooks available in Finnish. Other textbooks were published in the areas of minerals, geology, and meteorology (Gebhard 1893: 357). A second important area for the SKS was bilingual dictionaries, e.g. Finnish-Latin (1883), Latin-Finnish (1884), Swedish-Finnish (1884), Finnish-Swedish (1886), and Finnish-German (1888). In 1893, a Finnish-Russian dictionary was being prepared, but it was hoped that 'few people will need a Russian dictionary in their daily lives' (Gebhard 1893: 358).<sup>8</sup>

The final area SKS worked in was literary translation. As in many smaller European nations and minority languages, translation played a large role in developing vernacular literatures

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<sup>6</sup> This particular regulation lasted only a few years, though it plays a large role in Fennomanic historiography (Paavolainen, personal communication, 22 October 2015).

<sup>7</sup> '...toisen joka on koettanut yhdistää meitä muuhun sivistysmaailmaan, toisen joka on tuonut esille oman kansamme hengen-tuotteita.'

<sup>8</sup> 'Mutta toivottavasti ei kovinkaan suuri osa yleisöstämme tule venäläisiä sanakirjoja jokapäiväisessä elämässään tarvitsemaan.'

(Sevänen 2007: 13). Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, there were four main goals set for translation. The first was to link Finnish culture more tightly to European or Western culture, as the works translated were mainly produced in the leading centres (Germany, France, Great Britain) along with the Scandinavian countries. Second, through these translations, Finnish-language writers would be introduced to the main genres, forms, and expressions of this literature, and would then be able to incorporate them into their Finnish-language productions. Readers, too, would learn these forms. Third, through the aid of translation, the Finnish language itself could be developed, which was crucial for the development of the national culture. The goal was to develop Finnish into a language capable of expressing the highest forms of philosophy, science and literature. Fourth, translations were also seen as being instrumental in raising the general levels of education of the Finnish people, and expanding their world views. Translation was thus seen as a national responsibility, and was supported by researchers, teachers, and writers (Sevänen 2007: 13). Tensions between the Swedish-speaking elite and Finnish-speaking majority were also instrumental in creating a perceived need for translation, so the Swedish-speaking ‘aristocrats in our country would start to read in the language of their country’ (cited in Leppihalme 2007: 152)<sup>9</sup>. Having said this, however, it is important to remember that many of those involved in promoting the translation and performance of Shakespeare in Finnish were from this Swedish-speaking minority, working alongside their Finnish-speaking colleagues.<sup>10</sup>

Shakespeare was not the only author the SKS was promoting. In 1871, the Society published a list of works it felt ought to be translated, and this was followed by a second list in 1887 and a third in 1895 which covered children’s literature (Sevänen 2007: 13). In 1871, British writers on the list included Walter Scott, Jonathan Swift, Laurence Sterne, and Charles Dickens, with George

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<sup>9</sup> ‘herrassäätyiset maassamme rupeevat [sic] maan kieltä lukemaan’

<sup>10</sup> And these ties extended to translation as well. For example, Cajander translated from Swedish into Finnish the key works of J. L. Runeberg (1804-1877), an important early nationalist poet.

Eliot, Benjamin Disraeli, and William Makepeace Thackeray added in 1887 (Leppihalme 2007: 155). Also in 1871, the Society created an award for the ‘most gifted’ translation which provided ‘enriching linguistic examples to be emulated’ (Sevänen 2007: 13).<sup>11</sup> By 1917, the SKS had funded translations of selected works of Homer, Dante, Boccaccio, Molière, Cervantes, Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, and Henrik Ibsen (Sevänen 2007: 14).

A few statistics provide some sense of the importance of translation in the development of Finnish vernacular literature. In the years 1870-79, there were 259 works of literature published in Finland, of which 219 or 84.5% were translations and only 40 or 15.5% were originally written in Finnish (Sevänen 2007: 16). The percentage of works written in Finnish steadily went up, so that in 1880-89 it was already 36.1%, rising to 42.3%, 48.1%, and 51.4% in the following decades. The highest ratio of original Finnish to translation was reached in 1930-39, 61.7%. By way of comparison, in 2000, original Finnish works accounted for 42.6% of the total, so 57.4% of published literary works were translations (Sevänen 2007: 16-17). Regarding the source languages, in the years 1870-79, 20.8% of translated works were from Scandinavian languages, 26% from German, 3.3% from French, 18.2% from English and 22.9% from other languages or works whose original language is not known (Sevänen 2007: 19).

The earliest works translated from English into Finnish were religious: for example, John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* was translated in 1809, and was reprinted several times during the nineteenth century. In 1847 the first novel was translated, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. Beginning in the 1870s, many more British novels were translated, including George Eliot’s *Silas Marner* (1869), Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1870), Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1876), and several works by Charles Dickens, including *David Copperfield* in 1880 (Leppihalme 2007: 154).

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<sup>11</sup> ‘vanhan tai uuden maailmankirjallisuuden piiriin kuuluvan teoksen etevästä ja kielellisesti esikuvallisesta suomennoksesta’

## Early Translations of Shakespeare into Finnish

Shakespeare was well known in Finland due to German- and Swedish-language travelling troupes, with the first performance likely being F. Seuerling's production of *Romeo et Juliet* in 1768 (Aaltonen 2003: 105-11). The first translation of Shakespeare into Finnish was an adaptation of *Macbeth* called *Ruunulinna* (1834).<sup>12</sup> Thirty years later, in 1864, Kaarlo Slöör translated *Macbeth* as part of the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. Reviews of this translation indicate the at once hopeful yet pessimistic views of the Finnish language and its capacity for Shakespeare in the period. On the one hand, Slöör's translation was considered 'an excellent translation made from the original language, following the verse form of the original' (cited in Aaltonen 2003: 114). Others, however, were more dubious, as this quotation by the scholar August Ahlqvist demonstrates:

In our opinion, it is still too early to begin translating Shakespeare into Finnish. Our language lacks the vocabulary to discuss the exalted things the poet describes; it is still too unstable and formless; it still wobbles clumsily and staggers awkwardly in its new poetic clothes. And I doubt we'll ever get Shakespeare's works to sound in Finnish like they sound in Swedish for example. The Finnish language is simply too far removed from the Germanic languages. (Ahlqvist cited in Hellemann 1970: 471-72)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Outi Paloposki (2007b) notes that in the early years of Finnish translation, it was rather common for translators to make adaptations. In Lagervall's version, place and person names have been domesticated, the metre is altered to conform better to Finnish's trochaic metre, events refer to Finnish rather than Scottish history, and the witches have been replaced by figures from Finnish mythology. See also Paloposki (2007a) and Nummi et al. (2016).

<sup>13</sup> 'Meidän mielestä on vielä liian aikainen ruveta Shakespearea Suomeksi kääntämään; kielemme sanasto monessakin niistä korkeista asioista, joita tämä runoilija kuvailee, on vielä epävakainen ja muodostamaton, ja kielettäremme liikkuu vielä kömpelösti ja hoiperrellen uudemmissa runopuvuissa. Ja tuskinpa koskaan saatane Shakespearen teoksia



Significantly, this critique is written in exquisite Finnish, with measured sentences, interesting metaphors, and no signs of the clumsiness attributed to the translation. A speech by Fredrik Cygnaeus delivered at the 1864 commemoration touches on similar fears, that somehow Shakespeare is ‘too high’ for the Finns even as he represents the very ‘civilization’ they are striving for. Nevertheless, Cygnaeus believes that the Finns have not only the right, but indeed the obligation, to celebrate Shakespeare:

The question is whether we should try to be part of the civilization spreading across the world; we cannot cast off this connection, explaining that the memory of Shakespeare does not touch us, that Shakespeare is too high for us, that a people as small as ours has no right to meddle in the affairs of others. But we believe that we do have the right to be counted among the civilized peoples, and we want this right to be known; this is why we are commemorating Shakespeare. (Cygnaeus cited in Rein 1916: 2)<sup>14</sup>

After *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* was the next work taken up by Finnish-language translators, with the inspiration being the Swedish actress, Charlotte Raa, who was able to perform in Finnish. In 1873, Antti Tuokko translated Ophelia’s mad scenes from *Hamlet*, and Raa performed these together with Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking scene from Slöör’s *Macbeth*. Tuokko admitted that his English was

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Suomeksi kuulumaan siltä, miltä ne kuuluvat esim. Ruotsin kielellä. Suomen kielen luonne on kokonaan toinen kuin germaanisten kielten.’ See also Rissanen (2007).

<sup>14</sup> ‘On kysymys siitä . . . onko meidän pyrittävä olemaan silmu siinä verkossa, jonka sivistys on levittänyt maailman ylitse; emme saa viskata luotamme tätä yhdyssidettä, selittäen, ettei Shakespearen muisto koske meitä, että se on meille liian korkea, ja että meidän tapaisten vähäväkisten ei tule puuttua muiden asioihin. Sillä me katsomme olevamme oikeutetut lukeutumaan ihmiskunnan sivistyskansoihin ja semmoisena tahdomme saada oikeutemme tunnustetuiksi; sen vuoksi vietämme Shakespeare-juhlaa . . .’

weak, but he was hoping to improve it through further translations (Kivistö 2007: 195). Raa performed the Ophelia scenes three more times in 1875-76, to wide acclaim (Aaltonen 2003: 114-15). In his introduction to an edition of Cajander's poems, A. V. Koskimies remarks that in the early 1870s, 'as a result of guest performances by Raa on Finnish stages, and J. A. Lindberg on Swedish, the Helsinki theater scene was so "electric" with Shakespeare, and so full of admiration of *Hamlet* in particular, that it seemed natural that this was the play to be translated' (Koskimies 1914: 21).<sup>15</sup>

The plan was originally that Slöör would translate *Hamlet*, but then it was suggested that Cajander, who had become known for his translation of Josef Julius Wecksell's *Daniel Hjort*<sup>16</sup> and was well known in theatre circles, would do the translation (Koskimies 1914: 22). It was in this broader context, then, that in 1878, the poet Paavo Cajander (1846-1913) suggested to the Finnish Literature Society that they fund the translation of Shakespeare's plays, beginning with *Hamlet*. For the next 33 years, Cajander produced translations of Shakespeare at the rate of about one a year; he did 36 translations in total. The pay was minimal (Hellemann 1970: 472). The order of the plays to be translated was worked out in close cooperation with the new Finnish Theatre Company (later the Finnish National Theatre). In the early years, Cajander translated *Hamlet* (1879), *Romeo and Juliet* (1881, the first to be performed), *The Merchant of Venice* (1882), *King Lear* (1882), *Julius Caesar* (1884), *Othello* (1884), and *Macbeth* (1885) (Hellemann 1970: 472).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> '...oli Helsingin teatteriyleisössä ilmapiiri, rouva Raan vierailunäyttäjien johdosta suomalaisella näyttämöllä ja J. A. Lindbergin ruotsalaisella, niin Shakespeare-sähköinen, ja nimenomaan juuri Hamletin ihailua täysi, että ajatus tämän draaman suomeksi saamisesta oli niinä aikoina aivan luonnollinen.'

<sup>16</sup> A historical drama considered one of the most significant early Finnish plays, itself influenced by Shakespeare. The play premiered in 1862 and was published in 1863, with Cajander's Finnish translation published in 1877.

<sup>17</sup> See Aaltonen and Jänis (2007) for a detailed history of drama translations into Finnish.

Cajander never became as famous as a poet as he did as a translator, a point which is perhaps of significance when thinking about the place of Shakespeare in minority cultures and languages. During the late nineteenth century, when Finnish was just being established as a literary language, some writers probably felt like they had to make a choice between writing original works and doing translations.<sup>18</sup> In a review of *Hamlet*, one critic hoped that the ‘difficult job ahead’ (translating the complete works of Shakespeare) would not ‘prevent our poet from completing his own projects’, as his early poetry ‘had raised expectations’ (A-n 1879: 111).<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Cajander felt that translating was the best contribution he could make to the nationalist cause. We know he had nationalist aspirations, though he did not live to see the birth of an independent Finland. Just before the Russian Tsar revoked freedom of the press in Finland, Cajander managed to publish a poem called ‘31 May in the year 1867’, an allegory about freedom of speech (Oinonen 2008: 38).

### **Why Shakespeare, Why *Hamlet*?**

Translating Shakespeare was considered important primarily for the perceived cultural and national effects such work would have on the developing country. The translations would align Finland more closely with Europe and at the same time develop the poetic capabilities of Finnish. For example, in his lengthy review of the translation, the prominent literary critic B. F. Godenhjelm writes: ‘The translation of these brilliant works by Shakespeare is a project which we hope will bear

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<sup>18</sup> Yrjö Koskinen, the director of the Finnish Literature Society from 1874 to 1892, was indeed trying at the time to shift focus away from translation towards production of vernacular texts: in 1875, he wrote: ‘No nation can justify its existence only through its ability to somehow borrow and domesticate the cultural products of other nations. Rather, every nation should also be able to offer to the advancement of the rest of the civilized world some efforts drawn from its own cultural resources, before it can be allowed to justifiably claim its place among civilized nations’ (cited in Sulkunen 2004: 181).

<sup>19</sup> ‘...mutta kuitenkin tahtoisin lausua sen toivon, että tuo ankara työ [Shakespearen koko tuotannon suomentaminen] ei kokonaan estäisi runoilliamme itsenäisestä tuotteliaisuudesta. Hän on näet siksi herättänyt kylliksi toiveita.’

the most delectable fruits for the furthering of our national culture and civilization, as his magnificent genius is everywhere, helping us to invigorate and uplift our national poetry” (1880: 36).<sup>20</sup>

A few years later, in a review of *Romeo and Juliet* (the second play in the series), Godenhjelm (1881: 197) reiterates this theme, hoping that ‘Cajander’s skill will in many more translations continue to enrich our national literature’.<sup>21</sup> A review in the *Hämeen Sanomat* emphasizes the important contribution Cajander’s translation is making to ‘young Finnish literature’ (Review of *Hamlet*, 1879: n.p.).<sup>22</sup> These reviews extolling the importance of translating Shakespeare for cultural and national reasons often display extensive knowledge of previous translations of Shakespeare into multiple languages. For example, one reviewer notes that Shakespeare translations into European vernaculars often coincide with ‘a blossoming in that nation’s national literature’<sup>23</sup>; this review contains analyses of early translations into German and French (Review of *Hamlet*, part 1, 1880: 1). There is a sense of competition in these reviews, both in competing against other translators and languages, a theme I will return to below, and also in triumphing over one’s own limitations. Speaking of the theatrical version in 1884, a reviewer notes that ‘*Hamlet* is one of those works that, once presented in the Finnish Theatre, we can with joy and pride see as breaking new

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Shakespeare’n ikimainioin teosten suomentaminen on toimi, josta sopii toivoa mitä ihanimpia hedelmiä kansalliselle sivistyksellemme; sillä tämän valtameren mahtava henki on kaikkialla, mihin on päässyt perehtymään, elähyttänyt ja kohottanut kansallista runoutta.’

<sup>21</sup> ‘etevä taito vielä monella Shakespeare’n teoksella on rikastuttava kansallista kirjallisuuttamme’

<sup>22</sup> ‘nuorelle suomalaiselle kirjallisuudelle’

<sup>23</sup> ‘Tidpunkten för öfverflyttandet af Shakespeares dramer till en främmande nations språk har visat sig icke ligga aflägsen från någon rikare blomstringstid inom samma folks nationallitteratur.’ All translations from the Swedish, here and below, are by Maria Salenius.

ground, an honorable victory' (Söderhjelm 1885: 226).<sup>24</sup> In the political and linguistic context, this imagery of a contest to be won is quite significant, showing the longings of the Finns to raise their language and culture to new levels, and Shakespeare as a concrete marker of the European civilization to which the Finns aspired.

In addition to Shakespeare's cultural significance, critics also acknowledge his literary and dramatic gifts:

In world literature there is no other poet whose style is as dramatic as Shakespeare's. Characters are infused with a bursting vital energy constantly transformed into action and this rampant joy is evident in their speech. Every sentence, every word is linked to action; the emotional outpourings of his characters are full of dramatic power, they pour out of the heart as an expression of the character in each particular moment. (Godenhjelm 1880: 36)<sup>25</sup>

Especially considering the immediate difficulties of staging the play (in the late 1870s there was still a dearth of qualified Finnish-speaking actors), it is also interesting to consider why Cajander, the SKS and Finnish Theatre chose to begin with *Hamlet*. A reviewer of Cajander's *Romeo and Juliet* translation, looking back at his *Hamlet*, offered this explanation:

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<sup>24</sup> 'Hamlet kuuluu niihin kappaleihin, joita näytettyään suomalainen teatteri voi ilolla ja ylpeydellä katsoa uuden askeleen urallaan astutuksi, kunniallisen voiton voitetuksi'

<sup>25</sup> 'Maailman-kirjallisuudessa ei ole toista runoilijaa, jonka koko esitystapa olisi niin perin draamallinen kuin Shakespeare'n. Henkilöissä kuohuu niin hilpeä elinvoima, että se joka hetki on teoksi puhkeamaisillaan, ja tämä riehuva into kuvauupi heidän puheissansakin. Jokainen lause, jokainen sana liittyy toimintaan; ovatpa myös mietelmät ja tunteiden purkaukset täynnä draamallista voimaa; nekin aina uhkuvat toimivan henkilön sydämmestä, hänen omituisen luonteensa ilmauksena, kunakin hetkenä vallitsevain olojen johdosta.'

*Hamlet* is the work of a mature genius. It was conceived when Shakespeare's dramatic style was already fully-developed. The dramatic life shining through Shakespeare's texts flows majestically, infusing every word. The poet dives into the deepest reaches of human nature to dig out cause for action, and every word, every phrase develops these dramatic actions. They are harsh and cutting, defying all the laws of eloquence... In *Hamlet* we see a man who thinks deeply, who has turned inward, who weighs every feeling and responsibility and whose internal conflicts are clearly displayed before us... *Hamlet* demands from the translator strength and vigour, whereas *Romeo and Juliet* requires the skill to reproduce the poetic beauty and pretty flowery phrases of the original. (Godenhjelm 1881: 193-94)<sup>26</sup>

As I mentioned above, *Hamlet* was also already partially known through Charlotte Raa's performances of Ophelia's mad scenes and Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene, and Finland seems to have been participating in the late nineteenth-century fascination with viewing hysterical women. In addition, the play had been performed in Swedish during the 1860s and early 1870s, often with Raa in leading roles. As we will see below in the theatre reviews, Ida Aalberg's Ophelia was virtually turned into the star of the show.

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<sup>26</sup> 'Hamlet on täysin kypsytetty neron tuote; se syntyi sillä ajalla, jolloin Shakespeare'n esitystapa jo oli kaikin puolin varttunut. Se draamallinen elämä, joka hehkuu Shakespeare'n teoksissa, virtaa siinä mitä mahtavimmalla voimalla, puhjeten näkyviin koko sen lausuntotavassa; runoilija sukeltaa alas ihmisluonteiden syvimpään syvyyteen toiminnan aiheita ammentamaan, ja näistä johtuva toiminta hallitsee sitten kaikki sanat, kaikki lausehet, jotka sentähden jyrkkinä, karkeina syöksyvät puhujan suusta, kaunopuheisuuden sääntöjä halveksien... *Hamlet*'issa näemme syvämielteen, itseensä vaipuneen luonteen, joka epäilyksen vaa'alla punnitsee kaikki tunteensa ja velvollisuutensa ja jonka sisälliset ristiriidat selvästi asettuvat silmiemme eteen... *Hamlet* vaatii kääntäjältä etupäässä voimaa ja pontevuutta, *Romeo ja Julia* sitä vastoin taitoa somasti jäljitellä alkuteoksen runollista ihanuutta ja sieviä kuvalauseita.'

## Cajander's Stylistic Choices

We know that Cajander took great care with his translation of *Hamlet*, as there are several versions. Excerpts of the ongoing translation were published in a literary journal in 1878, and the version published by the SKS in 1879 has further corrections. Additional corrections were made for a second edition towards the end of Cajander's life (Rissanen 2007: 203). Rather than focusing on minute differences between these versions, however, I will briefly outline the main stylistic choices Cajander made in this translation, as these may be of some use in comparing attitudes towards the source text in translations made into various other foreign languages in the same period. Later translators into Finnish have made rather different choices, especially regarding the verse.

And indeed, the first, and perhaps most significant choice that Cajander made was to translate Shakespeare's iambic pentameter as such, despite the fact that Finnish is a trochaic language.<sup>27</sup> He uses two main methods of achieving iambs, both of which can be seen in the example below. The first is to start lines with one-syllable words (which are rare in Finnish), such as the repeated *ja* below, which means *and*. Another is to shorten two-syllable words to one syllable at the beginnings of lines, as was often done in poetry at the time (italicized in the example). Cajander makes wide use of feminine endings, since Finnish words tend to end with unaccented syllables (bolded in the example).

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| HAAMU.<br><br>Ja kostaa myös, kun kuullut olet. | GHOST<br><br>So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt<br>hear. |
| HAMLET.<br><br>Mitä?                            | HAMLET  |

<sup>27</sup> In the recent complete works translation project done by the leading Finnish publisher WSOY (2002-13), only one of the translators chose to translate verse into iambic pentameter. See Martin (2016), especially 76-78.

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| <p>HAAMU.</p> <p><i>Min'</i> olen isäs henki,</p> <p>Tuomittu ajaks öisin kulkemaan,</p> <p>Ja päivät paastomahan valkeassa,</p> <p><i>Siks</i> kunnes elämäni inhat synnit</p> <p>Tulessa puhdistuvat.</p> | <p>What?</p> <p>GHOST</p> <p>I am thy father's spirit,</p> <p>Doomed for a certain term to walk the night</p> <p>And for the day confined to fast in fires,</p> <p>Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature</p> <p>Are burnt and purged away. (I.5.8-13)</p> |
|---|--|

Sometimes the need for short words at the beginning of lines leads to characters repeating variations on the interjections *oi* (literally 'oh') as seen in the next example:

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|---|--|
| <p>HAMLET</p> <p><i>Oi</i>, että tämä tiukan tiukka liha</p> <p>Hajoisi, sulaisi ja kasteeks liukeis!</p> <p><i>Oi</i>, miksi taivaan Herra itsemurhan</p> <p>La' issaan kielsi? <i>Oi</i> mun Jumalani!</p> <p>Kuin tylsää, kurjaa, tympeää ja tyhjää</p> <p>Tään mailman kaikki toimi minust' on!</p> | <p>HAMLET</p> <p>O that this too too sallied flesh would melt,</p> <p>Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,</p> <p>Or that the Everlasting had not fixed His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,</p> <p>How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable Seem to me all the uses of this world!</p> <p>(I.2.129-34)</p> |
|---|--|



For Finnish readers, both of the above examples demonstrate other stylistic choices as well. One is the use of beautifully parallel sentence constructions, as in *Ja kostaa myös, kun kuullut olet*, where the word for ‘revenge’ (*kostaa*) alliterates and rhythmically resonates with the word for ‘hear’ (*kuullut*). Cajander also has an exceptional poetic ear, and his sounds and rhythms make for a very effective theatrical language. A particularly evocative line here is *Kuin tylsää, kurjaa, tympeää ja tyhjää* with its assonance on the [æ] sounds, sharpened with alliteration on *ku* and *ty*. It is no wonder that this translation was met with proud acclaim.

### **Difficulty of Translating Shakespeare**

In assessing Cajander’s translation, many reviewers comment on the challenges which Cajander had to overcome in order to succeed in his work. First and foremost is Shakespeare’s difficult language:

I doubt there’s a poet whose works are more difficult to translate than Shakespeare’s. His unusually rich imagery, along with his precise and powerful word choices, give a translator much to think about. (A-n 1879: 110)<sup>28</sup>

Another reviewer notes ‘the *painstaking* faithfulness with which the *arduous* task has been completed’ (Review of *Hamlet*, part 1, 1880: n.p., my emphasis).<sup>29</sup> Closely tied to these ideas about the difficulty of Shakespeare’s English is the observation that English and Finnish are structurally very different from each other, leading to further problems for the translator. One issue which several reviewers discuss is the contrast in typical word lengths between English and Finnish, with

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Tuskin löytynee runoilijaa, jonka teoksia olisi vaikeampi kääntää, kuin Shakespeare’n. Hänen runokielensä omituinen kuvarikkaus, sanojen terävyys ja painavuus antavat kääntäjälle yhä miettimistä.’

<sup>29</sup> ‘...obetingadt erkänna den samvetsgranna trohet, hvarmed det mödosama arbetet är utfördt.’

English being seen as having short words, while Finnish words are much longer. For example, one reviewer commented that

...translating is certainly more difficult when the source and target languages are so different. The English language is incredibly rich in one syllable words, whereas Finnish has almost none. (A-n 1879: 110)<sup>30</sup>

Godenhjelm analyzes this difference at length, and I would like to quote much of this discussion for what it reveals both about attitudes towards Shakespeare and his language, and attitudes towards the Finnish language during this period:

English has short, non-inflected word forms, which can be joined together in almost any syntactic order, and which are ideal for describing brisk action and that restless frame of mind which, caught between changing feelings and passions, sets dramatic characters in action. The frequency of one-syllable words give each phrase a certain harshness, but when linked together in longer units they give voice to the melancholic conflicts which drive the characters. The nature of Finnish is completely different. Its long words with their vowel harmonies and inflectional endings, combined with precise grammatical rules, lead to sentences being formed as a plastic whole, whose effect is one of calm. Nevertheless, our language is also well suited for narrative poetry describing situations and telling stories and bringing forth thoughts and silent joys and sorrows hiding in the mind. We might compare the English language to the surging waves of a stormy sea crashing restlessly against the rocky shores, whereas

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<sup>30</sup> 'Kääntäminen on tietysti sitä vaikeampi, kun alkukieli ja se, johonka käänös tehdään, ovat niin erilaatuisia kuin nyt tässä. Englannin kieli on äärettömän rikas ykstavuisista sanoista, jota vastoin Suomen kielellä niitä on vallan vähän.'

the Finnish language is like a steady stream making its way silently towards the sea. But due to its synthetic character, our language, in artistic hands, can create equally short phrases as in any analytical language and thereby achieve excellent strength and vigor, while nevertheless maintaining its plasticity. That calm, steady stream might, when squeezed between mountains, turn into a raging torrent which surges forward in rolling waves, forceful and foamy. (1880: 36-37)<sup>31</sup>

I find these sea images quite evocative, and also find significant the way Godenhjelm speaks of ‘our language’. The discussion of the relation between form and content, and the whole issue of preserving style in translation, is also quite perceptive. These are sophisticated comments from a critic writing only two decades after the legalization of the publication of written Finnish.

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<sup>31</sup> ‘[Englanninkielen] lyhyet, taipumattomat sanamuodot, joita sovitetaan yhteen melkein ilman mitään lause-opillista järjestystä, ovat omiansa kuvailemaan reipasta toimintaa ja sitä levotonta mielialaa, joka, vaihtelevien tunteiden ja himojen vallassa, panee draamalliset henkilöt liikkumaan. Ykstavuisten sanojen paljous antaa lauseille jonkunlaisen karkeuden; mutta nämä hajanaisista sanoista yhteen-liitetyt / lauseet kuvastelevat sitä haikeata ristiriitaisuutta, joka hallitsee henkilöin mieltä. Ihan toisenlainen on Suomen kielen luonto. Sen pitkänlaiset, täysisointuiset sanat liitteinensä päätteinensä ja niiden tarkka kieli-opillinen yhdistys muodostavat lauseet plastilliseksi kokonaisuudeksi ja luovat esitystapaan eepillisen tyyneyden; sentähden meidän kielemme onkin ikään-kuin luotu kertomaruoudon tavalla laajalta kuvailemaan oloja ja tapauksia tahi tuomaan esiin mielessä piileviä mietteitä tai hiljaisen ilon ja surun tunteita. Englannin kieltä sopisi verrata myrskyisen meren kuohuviin aaltoihin, jotka rauhattomina särkyvät rannan kallioita vastaan, Suomen kieltä virtaan, joka tasaisest, hiljalleen viereee merta kohden. Mutta synteettisen luonteensa vuoksi meidän kielemme, taitavasti käytettynä, voipi supistaa lauseet yhtä lyhyiksi kuin mikä analyytinen kieli tahansa ja siten saavuttaa erinomaista voimaa ja pontevuutta, samalla kuin niiden plastillisuus säilyy. Tuo tyyini, tasainen virta saattaa vuorien väliin ahdistettuna muuttua mahtavaksi koskeksi, joka syöksyy eteenpäin pyörivin lainehin, rajuna, vaahtoisenä.’

The same reviewer discusses several strategies of translating a writer whose language is as complex as Shakespeare's and again, these reveal much about attitudes towards both languages:

Many translators, faced with the plethora of ideas Shakespeare fits into one phrase, would undoubtedly break them up into long, clumsily joined series of words, so that their power and flavour would be lost; or perhaps a translator might have achieved the required brevity by throwing out excess words, which is bad for poetic colour. Only Mr C. has resorted to the correct strategy. He uses short and pithy words and phrases to correspond to the brief forms of English, and thereby manages to preserve the power of the original. (Godenhjelm 1880: 37)<sup>32</sup>

Nationalistic efforts to raise the status of Finnish can also be seen in the ways that reviewers emphasize Cajander's skill and fidelity to the original, often in positive comparison to Swedish or German translations. In these comparisons, there seems to be an effort to assert the equality of Finnish to these languages of power. For example, one critic comments that in terms of translating the iambic pentameter verse, 'our translator, at least based upon this sample, is sometimes more accurate than Shakespeare's Swedish translator C. A. Hagberg, even though Swedish is much closer

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<sup>32</sup> 'Monelta kääntäjältä se ajatusten paljous, jonka Shakespeare saa kootuksi yhteen lauseeseen, epäilemättä olisi hajonnut pitkäksi, höllästi yhdistetyksi sanasarjaksi, joten niiden voima ja mehu olisi kadonnut; taikka suomentaja olisi saavuttanut lyhyttä tärkeiden lisäsanojen pois-heittämisellä, joka on runolliselle väritykselle haitaksi. Vaan hra C. on turvannut oikeaan keinoon. Hän panee pontevia, mehukkaita sanoja ja lauseita vastaamaan englannin-kielen lyhitä muotoja, ja näin säilyy alkuteoksen voima.'

to English than is Finnish' (A-n 1879: 110).<sup>33</sup> Note, too, the reference to 'our' translator, which is repeated in many of these reviews – our translator, our language, with a strong sense of pride, and even competition. The same reviewer who praised Cajander for his brevity also contrasts this feature with German and Swedish translations, noting that even though Finnish has long words, Cajander's translation is 'often much shorter than what Schlegel and Hagberg achieve in German and Swedish, languages with much shorter words than Finnish' (Godenhjelm 1881: 194).<sup>34</sup> In close comparison with the Swedish translation, Godenhjelm provides examples showing where the Swedish is 'more watered down and stretched out than the Finnish translation' (1880: 38).<sup>35</sup> Examples are also given of more successful word plays and puns, as compared to Swedish and German (Godenhjelm 1880: 38). A reviewer in the Swedish-language press concurs:

In terms of Shakespeare's well-known wordplays, often deemed untranslatable, P. Cajander succeeds rather well. Due to the verbosity of Finnish, Cajander manages sometimes even better than the excellent and so far unsurpassed Swedish Shakespeare translator C. A. Hagberg, whose treatment of the more difficult parts in the verse Mr

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<sup>33</sup> 'tässä kohden on meidän kääntäjämme, sen mukaan kuin tästä näytteestä voi huomata, joskus ollut tarkempi kuin Shakespearen ruotsalainen kääntäjä C. A. Hagberg, vaikka ruotsin kieli on englannin kieltä verrattomasti lähempänä kuin Suomen'

<sup>34</sup> 'Merkillistä kyllä, verrattain pitkäsanaisella Suomen kielellä hän usein saa käänöksensä supistumaan paljoa lyhyemmäksi kuin Schlegel ja Hagberg lyhyempi-sanaisilla Saksan ja Ruotsin kielillä.'

<sup>35</sup> 'laimeampi ja pitemmäksi venynyt kuin suomennos.' Pentti Paavolainen suggests that this difference may also have something to do with the aesthetics of the period: in contrast to his Swedish language forebears, Cajander seems to have preferred a harsher touch, in part due to the rise of realism (personal communication 22/10/2015).

Cajander has consulted with praiseworthy criticism. (Review of *Hamlet*, part 1, 1880: n.p.)<sup>36</sup>

It is uncertain what the reviewer means by the ‘verbosity’ of Finnish, especially given that at the time Finnish-speakers seem worried that the Finnish vocabulary was not rich enough to encompass Shakespeare. As the reviewer notes, it does seem likely that Cajander would have consulted other translations when making his own.<sup>37</sup>

The *Morgonbladet* reviewer raises the fascinating point that Shakespeare not only has significance as a writer of dramas, but also as the writer of ‘world-renowned expressions and images’ (Review of *Hamlet*, part 1, 1880: n.p.)<sup>38</sup> which circulate across languages and cultures. With Cajander’s translation, Finns, too, will have versions of the famous expressions from *Hamlet* in their own language. In the second instalment of a two-part review, published the following day, the reviewer discusses a long list of these expressions, including ‘Frailty thy name is woman’,<sup>39</sup> ‘Get thee to a nunnery’,<sup>40</sup> ‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’,<sup>41</sup> and of course ‘To be or

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Återgifvandet af de bekanta och ofta som ööfversättliga ansedda ordlekarna hos Shakespeare har lyckats herr Cajander rätt bra; stundom, tack vare finska språkets ordrikedom, till och med bättre än den utmärkte och örverhufvud ööverträfflige svenske Shakespeare-öfversättaren C. A. Hagberg, hvares behandling af svårare ställen I dikten herr Cajander med prisvärd kritik rådfrågat.’

<sup>37</sup> Cajander’s most recent biographer believes that Cajander would have consulted A. W. Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck’s German translation and Karl August Hagberg’s Swedish translation. In addition, he possessed a Swedish-language grammar of English, an English dictionary, several bilingual dictionaries, including Swedish-Finnish, Finnish-Swedish, and Latin, German, French and Estonian dictionaries (Niemi 2007: 133).

<sup>38</sup> ‘...de verldsbekanta uttrycken och liknelserna...’

<sup>39</sup> ‘Heikkous, vaimo nimes!’

<sup>40</sup> ‘Mene luostariin sinä.’

<sup>41</sup> ‘Jotakin Tanskan valtioss’ on mätää.’

not to be'<sup>42</sup> (Review of *Hamlet*, part 2, 1880: n.p.). This list is surprisingly long, containing twenty-three items, and the English original, Swedish translation, and/or the Finnish translation are discussed and compared. Pentti Paavolainen suggests that this was part of the project of developing Finnish into a cultured language which the educated classes could use (personal communication 22/10/2015). It also seems that early on it was recognized that global Shakespeare, and perhaps *Hamlet* in particular, circulates on many levels, both onstage and in the conversations of ordinary people.

In addition to the collective significance of Shakespeare translation for the country, one reviewer also mentions the personal significance of getting to hear and interact with Shakespeare in one's own language, an idea ...an idea which was repeated over one hundred years later in defense of a new complete works translation project in Finland (Keinänen 2017: 113-14). In Finland, there was also a sense that the translation into Finnish would allow Finns to understand Shakespeare more deeply, to adopt him as their own. Regarding the translation of *Hamlet*, says Godenhjelm, even more important than enriching the national literature is 'the appeal of having the thoughts of such an elevated poet as Shakespeare shown to us in Finnish clothes – only when we come to Shakespeare in our own language can we take him for our own' (Godenhjelm 1880: 40).<sup>43</sup>

### ***Hamlet* Onstage**

This story would not be complete without some mention of the first complete performance, which did not take place for another five years, premiering on October 30, 1884 (Aspelin-Haapkylä 1909:

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<sup>42</sup> 'Ollako, vaiko ei, se kysymys.'

<sup>43</sup> 'mutta vielä suurempi on tietysti tämä viehätys, kun Jalon runoilijan ajatukset, semmoisen kuin Shakespeare'n, meille esitetään suomalaisessa puvussa; sillä vasta omakielisenä Shakespeare oikein omaksemme tajutaan.'

195).<sup>44</sup> Along with the cultural and linguistic challenges analyzed above, there were theatrical hurdles as well: in 1879 the Finnish Theatre was only seven years old, in constant money troubles, and there were few professional actors who spoke Finnish, even fewer whose mother tongue was Finnish. The Finnish Theatre had been founded in 1872 by a brother and sister team, Kaarlo and Emilie Bergbom, Swedish speakers who championed theatre as an integral part of the nationalist revival. From the very beginning the Bergboms hoped to perform Shakespeare. In 1872, Kaarlo wrote: ‘Only in that language which we love and which Finland understands, in plays that are of our flesh, our spirit, let us hear how Shakespeare, with the torch of poetry, illuminates the depth that is called the human heart’ (cited in Houni 2007: 151).<sup>45</sup> I think it is important to stress how the project to translate Shakespeare into Finnish drew together both the Swedish- and Finnish-speaking populations, and that a non-native speaker of Finnish could talk about ‘loving’ the Finnish language, feeling it in his body, his soul. This may be one of the reasons that ‘foreign’ Shakespeares generally do not travel well – it is hard to feel a performance in a language one does not understand in one’s body. But not impossible, as we will see below.

Although the *Hamlet* translation was available in 1879, the theatre’s leading star, Ida Aalberg, wanted to play Juliet, so *Romeo and Juliet* was the first full-length Shakespeare production in Finnish, premiering to rave reviews in 1881. But having now proved that it was up to the challenge of Shakespeare, audiences now set their sights on *Hamlet*: a reviewer of the next

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<sup>44</sup> Around the same time, the newspaper *Suomalainen Virallinen Lehti* printed over a period of several days a long synopsis of *Hamlet* (Review of *Hamlet*, *Tanskan prinssi* 1884) as well as a brief biography of William Shakespeare (‘William Shakespeare’ 1884). In the same season, the Finnish Theatre put on a Finnish play, Aleksis Kivi’s *Nummisuutarit*, as well as Goethe’s *Faust*, which had also felt like something of a stretch for the actors (Aspelin-Haapkylä, 1909: 215).

<sup>45</sup> ‘Antakaa meidän vain sillä kielellä, jota rakastamme ja jota Suomi ymmärtää, kuvaelmissa, jotka ovat meidän lihaamme, meidän henkeämme, kuulla, miten Shakespeare runouden soihdulla valaisee sitä syvyyttä, jota sanotaan ihmis-sydämeiksi.’



production, *The Merchant of Venice*, wrote: '[Shakespeare's] – and the world's – most noble tragic work has yet to be performed. This success gives us courage. The step must be taken, sooner or later, and that step is *Hamlet*. Only then will the Finnish theatre have fulfilled its responsibility' (Review of *Venetsian Kauppia* 1883: n.p.).<sup>46</sup>

The main impediment to performing the play was the lack of an actor capable of performing the lead role, and interestingly the theatre seems to have tried to solve this problem by alternating the role between two actors, Axel Ahlberg and Niilo Sala. The role was initially given to Ahlberg, but he had been rather lazy about learning it, so in an effort to stir some rivalry, Bergbom also gave it to Sala. In 1884, Sala had been to Vienna to study under Mr. Lewinsky, and he had seen Hamlet at least twice at the Burgtheater (Pentti Paavolainen, personal communication 22/10/2015). The theatre critic Söderhjelm recalls that neither actor was very promising when they started acting; only a few years ago 'Mr Ahlberg was unable to gain control over his body, which is in some sense unsuitable for acting, nor over his diction which tends to frightfully inflect in all the wrong directions; and when Mr. Sala first performed with a stumbling gait and broken voice, who would have thought that either of them would so soon even somewhat adequately perform what is perhaps the most difficult role in theatre, Hamlet?' (Söderhjelm 1885: 227).<sup>47</sup> Apparently Axel Ahlberg was so reluctant to do the role of Hamlet that Bergbom was afraid he would not be able to pull it off,

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<sup>46</sup> '[Shakespearen] – ja maailman – ylevin traagillinen teos vielä on esittämättä. Vaan menestys antaa rohkeuta. Askel on otettava ennen tai myöhemmin, ja sen askeleen nimi on Hamlet. Silloin ainakin on Suomalainen teatteri todistanut velvollisuutensa.'

<sup>47</sup> 'Olisiko muutama vuosi sitten, kun hra Ahlberg ei millään tavalla saanut valtaa uppiniskaisen, näyttelijäntoimeen jotenkin sopimattoman ruumiinsa sekä väärään suntaan pelottavasti taipuvan lausumatapansa yli ja jolloin hra Sala ensin esiintyi horjuvin askelin ja ääni sorroksissa, olisiko silloin voinut luulla, että kumpanenkin näin lyhyen ajan kuluttua saattaisi jotenkin tyydyttävällä tavalla suorittaa näyttelijätaiteen ehkä vaikeimman tehtävän, Hamletin esittämisen?'

which angered Bergbom because he said that ‘Vilho [the pioneering Finnish-speaking actor Oskari Vilho] would have given years of his life to play the role’ (cited in Aspelin-Haapkyllä 1909: 195).<sup>48</sup>

But despite these trepidations, the two actors did learn the roles. It seems that many reviewers went to see multiple shows, because they compare the two performers, who by all reports had diametrically opposed interpretations of the character. Söderhjelm writes that Shakespeare has ‘given the actors a great deal of freedom’ in how they interpret the role: the actor can decide whether Hamlet is a ‘weak, feminine dreamer’ or a ‘coldly calculating philosopher’ or a ‘strong-willed knight’ (Söderhjelm 1885: 227).<sup>49</sup> Söderhjelm found Sala’s Hamlet to be more nuanced, though the reviewer felt that sometimes Sala lacked power (Söderhjelm 1885: 227). Ahlberg, by contrast, was thought to be a little bombastic, occasionally physically too stiff, and at times his Finnish pronunciation failed (Söderhjelm 1885: 227-28). The reviewer for *Suomalainen Virallinen Lehti*, reviewing a performance in March 1885, makes similar points: ‘In Ahlberg’s Hamlet, youthful enthusiasm and rage were all too obviously highlighted, while in contrast Sala’s Hamlet was marked by sensitive emotions. But this is an incorrect understanding of Hamlet’s character, because it’s not emotionality that stops Hamlet from acting, but rather his penchant for thinking too much, which can clearly be seen in his soliloquy “to be or not to be”’ (1885: n.p.).<sup>50</sup> Later the same year, the *Viipurin Sanomat* said that Ahlberg acted with ‘artistic genius and vigour’, but that his

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<sup>48</sup> ‘Vilho [uraa uurtanut suomenkielinen näyttelijä Oskari Vilho] olisi antanut vuosia elämästään saadakseen näytellä sitä roolia’

<sup>49</sup> ‘Hamlet-luonteen käsittämiseen on runoilija antanut näyttelijälle erinomaisen lavean vapauden’ (227) siinä, miten hän tulkitseisi roolin: näyttelijä voi päättää esittääkö hän Hamletin “heikkona, vaimollisena haaveksijana” vai “kylmästisuunnittelevana filosoofina” vai “tahdoltaan voimallisena ritarina”.’

<sup>50</sup> ‘Jos herra Ahlbergin Hamletissa tuo nuoruuden into ja raivo liian jyrkästi pisti silmiin, niin oli sitä vastoin herkkätunteellisuus peräti vallannut herra Salan Hamletin. Vaan se on väärä käsitys Hamletin luonteesta. Sillä tunteellisuus ei häntä pidätä toiminnasta, vaan miettiväisyys, joka selvästi nähdään hänen kuuluisasta monologista “Ollako vai ei”.’

interpretation was ‘too modern’ and thus deviated too much from the spirit of the text (Review of *Hamlet*, *Viipurin Sanomat* 1885: n.p.).<sup>51</sup> Despite his limitations, Ahlberg was given a gold watch after the first performance (Aspelin-Haapkylä 1909: 195).

Reviewers were quite sympathetic to their efforts, however. Söderhjelm says *Hamlet* was worth doing, because ‘only then will the actors gain the confidence to do such roles, and at the same time the whole theatre’s point of view and sphere are broadened’ (Söderhjelm 1885: 226-27).<sup>52</sup> Another reviewer made a similar point, that only by taking on such challenging roles could actors develop the power and sensitivity to do them justice, and at the same time, the audience develop the skills it needs to appreciate art at its highest level (Review of *Hamlet*, *Suomalainen Virallinen Lehti* 1885: n.p.).

The star of the night, as she had been in *Romeo and Juliet*, was Ida Aalberg, who played Ophelia. Söderhjelm (1885: 228) said she had a ‘miraculous artistic spirit’.<sup>53</sup> Several reviewers commented that Aalberg’s acting was on a level with the finest in the world: ‘Such an Ophelia as Miss Aalberg gave us you can seek in vain even on the finest theatre stages of the world. Her movements, her expressions, the nuances of her voice in the madness scenes were so natural and at the same time so thoroughly artistic that the spectator veritably forgot he was sitting in a theatre and couldn’t help but feel genuine pity for the poor woman’ (Review of *Hamlet*, *Suomalainen Virallinen Lehti* 1885: 1).<sup>54</sup> An unnamed reviewer in *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* was even more ebullient:

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<sup>51</sup> ‘Hra Ahlberg osoittaa Hamlet’in osan suorittamisesta suurta taiteellista neroa ja pontewuutta. Mutta roolin muodostamisessa hän poikkeaa sen entisestä käsittelemisestä.’

<sup>52</sup> ‘...niin kasvaa näyttelijäin luottamus melkoisesti ja samalla kerta laajenee myöskin koko teatterin näköala sekä vaikutuspiiri yhä kauemmaksi.’

<sup>53</sup> ‘loi neiti A. aivan hurmaavan tuoksun, puhtaan, jalon vaikutuksen ihmeen hienosta taiteilijahengestään.’

<sup>54</sup> ‘Semmoista Ofeliaa kuin se, jonka neiti Aalberg antoi meille, saa turhaan etsiä maailman parahaimmillakin näyttämöillä. Hänen liikkeensä, hänen mimiikkinsä, hänen äänensä väreet tuossa kohtauksessa, jossa Ofelia on

We cannot imagine anything more complete and consummate than Miss Aalberg's finely-chiselled Ophelia. We want to use the work chiselled, because when creating her images, Miss Aalberg is actually a visual artist closely observing the demands of the art of drawing; her contours and movements are at every moment dependent on the general law of beauty and delight, and her facial expressions also constantly follow this. Furthermore, her voice, her intonation, has a nuance for every frame of mind, for every sentence, for every word, and the make-up and costume are in fullest harmony with the brilliant acting. Youthfully enchanting and maidenly pure in her short moment of happiness, Ida Aalberg's Ophelia works upon us a magnetizing effect already in the very first acts, but when insanity dazed her senses and she expresses her sorrow in bewildered words and melodies, which imperceptibly transform into shrill dissonance, the audience is completely carried away, and under the magic of the artist they forget both time and space and are profoundly touched by the cruel fate of Ophelia as if it had befallen a dear relative. (Review of *Hamlet*, *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* 1885: n.p.)<sup>55</sup>

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mielipuolena, olivat niin luonnollisia ja kumminkin niin täysitaiteellisia, että katselija peräti unohti istuvansa teatterissa, ja syvällä mielihartaudella surkutteli tuota neiti-parkaa.'

<sup>55</sup> 'Vi kunna icke tänka oss något mer fulländadt och helgjutet än fröken Aalbergs med så mycken finhet utmäjlade Ofelia. Vi säga utmäjlade, ty fr. A. är i sjelfva verket, då hon gestaltar sina bilder, plastisk konstnär, som strängt iakttagger den teknande konstens fördringar; hennes yttre linier och rörelser äro i hvarje ögonblick afhängiga af skönhetens och behagets almmänna lag, liksom ock anletets mimik städse lyder denna. Härtill kommer att rösten, tonfallet har en nyans för hvarje stämning, hvarje sats, hvarje ord, samt att maskering och kostym stå i bästa harmoni med det genialiska spelet. Ungdomligt tjusande och jungfruligt skär i lyckans korta stund, utöfvar Ida Aalbergs Ofelia redan i de första akterna på oss en magnetiserande verkan, men då vansinnet omtöcknat hennes förstånd och hon i förvirrade ord och i melodier, hvilka omärkligt öfvergå i skärande dissonanser, uttrycker sin sorg, då ryckes åskådaren

Ida Aalberg was so successful in this role that she was invited to perform Ophelia, in Finnish, at the Swedish Royal Theatre in Stockholm. The Swedish reviewer Gustaf af Geijerstam had this to say about a performance he was presumably watching in a foreign language:

Above all, the famous Finnish actress Ida Aalberg allowed us to see how warmly Ophelia loves Hamlet. In act three, scene one, she managed to convey such nervousness with her acting that it made a great impression. We could see how much she had to hold herself back from expressing tenderness to Hamlet as she saw how he was suffering. And the mad scenes gave just as strong an impression of madness as the earlier scenes of love. Ida Aalberg's acting was unbelievably nuanced. (af Geijerstam cited in Houni 2007: 157)<sup>56</sup>

Here is thus an early example of foreign language Shakespeare, succeeding despite language barriers. This example also shows that the webs of Shakespeare across Europe had many different points of intersection.

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helt och hållet med och under inflytande af konstnärinnans trollmakt glömmar han både tid och rum samt gripes af Ofelias hårda öde såsom om det drabbat en kär närastående.'

<sup>56</sup> 'Kuuluisa suomalainen näyttelijä Ida Aalberg antoi meidän ennen kaikkea nähdä, miten lämpimästi Ofelia rakastaa Hamletia. Hänen näyttelemisessään oli kolmannen näytöksen ensimmäisessä kohtauksessa jotain hermostunutta, joka teki erinomaisen vaikutuksen. Huomasi, miten hänen täytyi hillitä itseänsä voidakseen olla osoittamatta hellyyttä Hamletia kohtaan ja nähdessään mitenkä Hamlet kärsi. Mutta siitä syystä, että katsoja sai niin voimakkaan vaikutelman Ofelian rakkaudesta, saattoi hän saada yhtä voimakkaan vaikutelman mielipuolisuuskohdauksesta. Ida Aalbergin näyttelemisessä oli tavatonta vivahdusrikkautta.'

The translation and reception of *Hamlet* in Finland in the late 1870s and early 1880s shows the significant role that Shakespeare could and did have in the development of a vernacular language, literature, and theatre. Of special interest is the rivalries of Swedish- and Finnish-speaking theatre companies to produce Shakespeare in Finland, and the ways these rivalries can be seen in the competitive spirit with other languages seen in the reviews. Also significant is the way that Shakespeare is seen as representing ‘Europe’ rather than ‘England’ or ‘Englishness’; by joining Europe, Finland hopes to gain her freedom. So by the time *Hamlet* gets to Finland, ‘Shakespeare’ is already global. And while stories like this tend to focus on a few heroic individuals – Paavo Cajander, the Bergboms, Ida Aalberg – the reality is that many people contributed to bringing *Hamlet* to Finland – at the SKS, the Finnish Theatre, the press who publicized the translation and covered the performances, and perhaps most importantly, the individuals who bought books and theatre tickets.

Since Cajander’s translation in 1879, *Hamlet* has been translated five more times into Finnish: by Yrjö Jylhä in 1955, Lauri Sipari in 1975, Eeva-Liisa Manner in 1981 (hers is perhaps still considered the most poetic, and is often used by theatres), Veiho Meri in 1982, and most recently by Matti Rossi in 2013. In a fitting parallel, Rossi’s translation of *Hamlet* was scheduled to be the final work of a recent Complete Works translation project undertaken by WSOY, a large Finnish publishing company. In the years since Axel Ahlberg and Niilo Sala struggled with the role, a number of excellent Finnish actors have made it their own, including Aarne Orjatsalo, Kosti Elo, Wilho Ilmari, Joel Rinne, Jani Volanen, Ville Sandqvist, and Tomi Alatalo. But arguably few of the later *Hamlets* have had the cultural significance of the first, instrumental as it was in helping to forge the Finnish national consciousness and resistance to imperial rule.

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