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HAMLET ON A HOOK.

ADAPTATION AS A TRANSGRESSIVE FORCE IN CULTURAL REPRODUCTION

“The rest is silence,” are Hamlet’s famous last words. However, E. L. Karhu’s adaptation *Princess Hamlet* (2017) asks what happens next, for those who need to continue the story after its tragic end. It breaks the silence by offering us a new act during which Princess Hamlet’s body hangs on a meat hook, Horatia dresses up as Hamlet and the post-truth kingdom continues its life in front of a screaming crowd.

This presentation explores the strategies that *Princess Hamlet* uses to exceed the boundaries of tragedy and detect the implicit value-systems and hierarchies, especially in relation to gender. Chris Jenks writes in his book *Transgressions* (2003, 2) that “[t]ransgression is a deeply reflexive act of denial and affirmation”. The same is true for adaptations that confirm the status of the source text but simultaneously advocate a radical break with that tradition. Adaptation can be an oppositional, subversive or even hostile takeover that reflects and undermines the canon. It demands cultural knowledge on the part of the audience and can be viewed as a conservative and elitist genre, but at the same time the historical awareness of the tradition provides an opportunity for reformulation and expansion, especially with regard to those consigned to its margins or excluded from it. This study explores the connections between transgression and adaptation by investigating how *Princess Hamlet* raises fundamental questions concerning the categories of genre, gender, normality, and how it rocks the tradition and collective order.

Key words: transgression, adaptation, canon, cultural reproduction

Biography

Katri Tanskanen currently works as a university lecturer in theatre studies at the University of Helsinki. Her main areas of interest include dramaturgy and the politics and ethics of

contemporary theatre and drama. She is also an author of several books discussing contemporary performance and drama and Finnish theatre history. She has worked as a cultural journalist as well as a theatre critic and is currently a co-editor of the journal *Nordic Theatre Studies*.