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A “Shocking” or a “Moving” Scene? The Need for a More Critical Approach to Teaching Literature in Translation

Lars Liljegren

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9454-1024>

lars.liljegren@liu.se

I argue that there needs to be a greater critical awareness in parts of the academic world as regards the use of literary translations published at a time of state censorship. Using the first English translations of August Strindberg's *Giftas* (1884; 1886) and *I harsbandet* (1890) as a case in point, this paper demonstrates the extent to which translations of books whose content clashed with the British Obscene Publications Act 1857 deviated from their source texts, often on the very points that made the books and their authors famous. Although there are more recent and uncensored translations available today, the old and censored translations of “provocative” authors such as Strindberg, Zola and Flaubert often outnumber more recent ones on the market, sometimes under the guise of being “Scholar's Choice” editions. I will demonstrate that several literary scholars quote and refer to censored translations, even to the censored passages themselves, and that some use them in academic courses focussing on the very aspects that were censored. I therefore suggest that it should be made mandatory for all courses dealing with translated literature to include critical discussions on the use of translations.

Keywords: censorship, literature, research, teaching, translation

1. Introduction

Many teachers of literature, and even researchers, make use of translated works in their daily trade. Whereas this is often considered a natural way of approaching works written in foreign languages, and conclusions are often drawn as regards the “true” nature of the original work itself, its author or the society the work depicts, such conclusions are often drawn with little thought to the complications involved. Indeed, many readers read translations as if they are the original work (cf. Alvstad, 2014; Gullin, 1998), even though, on some level, they know that this is only an illusion, as translators must always consider not only the different languages involved in the translation, but also the source and target cultures. Aspects such as political, social, aesthetic and moral norms, values and expectations often differ between cultures, and cultural allusions often cannot achieve the same effect on the reader of the translation if retained as they were in the original. Translators therefore tend to make cultural adaptations in order to ensure that the readers of the target text are not offended or left wondering about what is actually alluded to in the translated text. Such changes made in translations are termed *translation shifts*. In short, a translation shift is a deviation from the source text, and the deviations discussed in this article are “non-obligatory,” i.e. they are not the result of incompatible grammar- or lexical structures and could thus have been avoided from a linguistic point of view (cf. Toury, [1995] 2012, p. 80).

The study of non-obligatory shifts can lead to useful insights. For instance, Theo Hermans (1999) points out that these non-obligatory shifts are often the results of the norms and values of the *target* culture – not the source culture. In other words, “[i]t would be only a mild exaggeration to claim that translations tell us more about those who translate and their clients than about the corresponding source texts” (Hermans, 1999, p. 95; cf. Liljegren, 2018, pp. 14-15). Thus, studying non-obligatory shifts may help reveal the reasons for translational choices made by agents in the target culture.

When conclusions about the original, its author and the source culture are drawn based on the reading of translations rather than on the original texts, particularly if it also turns out that these translations were carried out and published within the frames stipulated by state censorship, they reveal an approach to foreign literature that requires further scrutiny. This is particularly important as problems arise not only through analyses of censored translations, but even if teachers of

literature are careful not to use translations in their courses. For instance, they are likely to make comparisons with other literary works that they may well have read in translated form, and where censorship may have been enforced, or they may have read articles on said texts – articles whose authors may have analysed censored translations. This highlights the possible reach of translations and the complications that censored translations may give rise to, unless a critical stance is applied. Of course, translations, even if censored, may become part of a culture's canon of works by foreign authors, and many argue that translations should be considered works in their own right. However, when censored translations are read in an attempt to understand aspects of the source culture or how the original authors wrote, both stylistically and thematically, this may lead to inaccurate conclusions.

As discussed by Celia Marshik (2006) and Denise Merkle (2009), many works of literature were censored in Britain in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and this affected translations of naturalist authors such as Émile Zola (Brownlie, 2007) and Gustave Flaubert (Deane, 2011). While censorship may occur in different forms, it often appears in the form of self-censorship employed by authors and translators in an attempt to enable publication and avoid legal repercussions. As this reality has been a prominent constraint to translators in many western countries up until quite recently – and maybe still is, in some – it is striking that some teachers of literature and literary scholars seem to disregard it. This situation will be illustrated through a comparative analysis of source and target texts, focussing on Ellie Schleussner's 1913 translations into English of August Strindberg's naturalist-inspired collection of short stories *Giftas I* and *II* (1884; 1886) and the novel *I harsbandet* (1890).¹ I will show that British translators had to abide by the Obscene Publications Act 1857 all the way up until 1959, with dire consequences for translators of works whose content clashed with British moral norms. I will also demonstrate how, despite the relative freedom that followed for translators to stay closer to their originals, today, old and censored translations are often preferred to more recent, uncensored ones, even at universities. As will transpire, the works of Strindberg are far from isolated cases in this regard. I therefore argue that there needs to be a greater awareness in parts of academia, not only in the Anglo-American world, as regards an uncritical use of translated literature.

¹ Original spelling: *I hafßbandet*.

2. The Dangerous Ideas of August Strindberg's Naturalism

One of the first scholars to acknowledge the importance of viewing translated works as part of the literary canon of a literary system was Itamar Even-Zohar, who claimed that literary systems should not be regarded as isolated from each other, but that through translations, they are instead in constant dialogue (1978). In translated form, August Strindberg is decidedly an author considered part of the literary canon in Britain and America today (Robinson, 1995; Jonsson, 2015), where his books and, especially, his plays are often read and staged. However, before the 1960s, after which numerous retranslations of his works were published, his canonical status was much weaker (Liljegren, 2018). Strindberg, who saw himself as a follower of Émile Zola (cf. e.g. Lamm, 1940, p. 37), was known both in and outside Sweden as a provocative author whose works were sexually explicit and challenged the moral norms of western society. In the English-speaking world, the image of Strindberg was that of a Swedish misogynist and “madman” (cf. e.g. Murjas, 2005, p. 94; Robinson, 1995, p. 19; Harboe, 1906, p. 143) and a “Bedeviled Viking” (Robinson, 1995, p. 119) long before his first complete work was published in English: Nelly Erichsen’s translation *The Father* (1899; see Liljegren, 2018). The Church in Britain, strongly puritan at this time (Smith, 2007, p. 160), felt threatened by the notions raised in naturalist-inspired works such as *Giftas*, for instance by the Darwinian concept that humans were animals that had developed through evolution, and, just like animals, had to live out their sexuality (cf. Marshik, 2006, pp. 2-3). Claiming that humans were the creation of God, the Church saw its power position threatened; and between 1888 and the late 1930s, it worked together with purity organizations, censors and the authorities to put pressure on writers not to write obscene literature or have obscene works published (Marshik, 2006, pp. 2-3).

Just as Strindberg’s naturalist ideas were considered provocative in Britain, the same applied to Sweden. Strindberg wrote his short-story collection *Giftas* in two volumes: the first one appearing in 1884, followed by the second volume in 1886. Within a week after the publication of the first volume, the book was withdrawn from the shelves in Sweden, charged with blasphemy. It is believed that what had agitated the authorities was not so much his critique of the Church as his sexually explicit descriptions, but that it was deemed that a charge of blasphemy was more likely to secure a conviction (Sandbach, 1972, pp. 16). In the passage for which *Giftas* was charged, Strindberg not only questioned the true nature of the wine and wafers handed out during Holy

Communion, which he described as a “shocking scene,” but he also made a point of tying the activities in Church to financial transactions – pointing out that someone benefitted financially from selling these goods. Although Strindberg won the case, this charge of blasphemy became associated with both the author and his work. Moreover, it contributed to the image of Strindberg as a particularly challenging and provocative author, even in the Anglo-American world, at least until the first wave of translations started to appear around the time of his death.

3. Obscenity and Censorship in Britain

The Obscene Publications Act 1857 forbade the publication of obscene literature, as it was believed that the reading of such literature would encourage immoral behaviour among the more vulnerable readers of society, such as servants, women and children (cf. Hilliard, 2013; Marshik, 2006). The definition of “obscene” was officially formulated in the so-called Hicklin case in 1868, where the term was defined as any matter that might “deprave and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands” such matter will probably end up (Lehman, 2006, p. 169). As this definition was later adopted for the same purposes in the USA (*ibid.*), it meant that, for a long time, the limits of literary representation were similar in both countries. Thus, if a British translator stayed within the margin of what was allowed in Britain (cf. Lefevere, 1984, p. 128; cf. O’Sullivan, 2009, pp. 113-14), the translation was likely to be accepted also for American publication.

As a result of this ban on obscene literature, what had to be circumscribed or omitted were primarily words or passages dealing with sexuality and sexual activity, but also passages expressing Darwinian ideas about human beings being animals. For instance, words such as “breast” or “penis; descriptions of sexual activities, such as “fuck”; or sexual thoughts or desires; as well as entire themes, such as works dealing with prostitution had to be somehow removed by translators (Liljegren, 2018, pp. 199-208). In this context, George Bernard Shaw has commented on how the Censor’s instruments could often appear to be blunt, with unforeseeable results, mentioning that even a film produced solely to warn the audience about the *dangers* of prostitution was banned (Shaw, 1970, pp. 265-66). Even if translators objected to making changes, they were often forced to do so to avoid possible legal repercussions. This created a very effective system of censorship, as authors and translators tended to apply self-censorship from the very start, often against their

own wishes (Liljegren, 2018, pp. 223-31). Possibly, the most famous book to be banned about a hundred years ago is D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). Lawrence seems to be one of the few authors who refused to conform to censorship (Liljegren, 2018, p 207).

One literary movement especially affected by these obscenity laws was naturalism, as it dealt with themes banned from public discourse in Britain. Naturalism never grew as strong in Britain as in the USA, and foreign naturalist authors such as Zola found it hard to make a name for themselves there. Instead, British naturalist authors tended to focus more on social matters than on the biological implications discussed by authors such as Zola and Strindberg (cf. Hewitt, 1990, p. 97; Liljegren, 2018, p. 99). French naturalism, often with more outspoken depictions of sexuality, was generally regarded as morally inferior, and was thus met with suspicion. The 1888 and 1889 trials of the publisher Vizetelly & Co.'s Zola translations, particularly *Nana*, *Piping Hot!* and *The Soil* (see Marshik, 2006, pp. 183-84), are good examples. The 70-year-old Henry Vizetelly, who had already tried to self-censor sensitive passages in the works, albeit describing them as "unexpurgated" to boost sales (Merkle, 2009, p. 96), was first fined and then sentenced to three months' imprisonment (Bassnett & France, 2006, p. 54), which put an end to his publishing company.

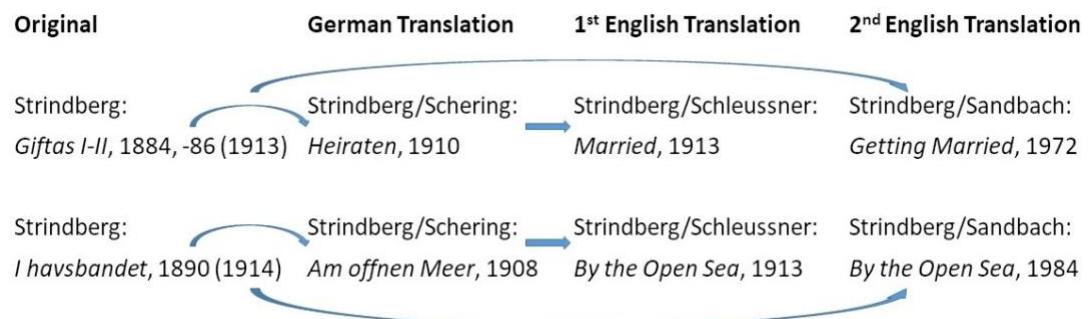
In total, Vizetelly & Co. published 18 English translations of Zola's novels (Bassnett & France, 2006, p. 54), and Zola was not the only "provocative" French author translated through Vizetelly & Co. For instance, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* appeared in 1886, translated by Eleanor Marx-Aveling. It is easy to understand how a publisher such as Vizetelly was regarded a threat to puritan Britain, and how his fate may have served as a deterrent to future translations of literature that challenged British morality, such as Strindberg's works.

4. *Giftas* and *Married* – a Dysfunctional Marriage

Before turning to an analysis of Schleussner's English translations, it must first be stated that for both *Giftas* and *I harsbandet* Schleussner's source texts were Strindberg's favourite translator's, Emil Schering, German translations of *Giftas – Heiraten* (1910) – and *I harsbandet – Am Offnen Meer*, from 1908 (cf. Liljegren 2014; 2016; 2018). Schleussner, who was of German origin and spoke no Swedish, was not the first foreign translator to produce translations using Schering's German translations as their source text, a case of relay translation (cf. Ringmar, [2012] 2016, pp. 141-144). Indeed, Strindberg had directed her to Schering when she approached him in 1910, asking for

authorisation to translate his works (Liljegren, 2018, pp. 106-07). Thus, here is already a complicating factor to the nature of Schleussner's translations, further reinforced as only two-thirds of the original stories appear in *Heiraten*, with the addition of a short story never published in *Giftas*. Moreover, in *Married*, one of the short stories retained in *Heiraten* has been replaced with *Creditors* – a translation of Strindberg's one-act play *Fordringsägare* (1890), and yet this is not the main deviation in *Married*. What is particularly striking is that *Married* displays significant translation shifts on the very aspects that were primarily associated with the author and his work. To illustrate this, comparisons will be made not only with Schleussner's source texts, i.e. Schering's German translations, but also with the Swedish originals. Such a comparison will clearly demonstrate how the image of how Strindberg wrote, as conveyed in Schleussner's *Married* and *By the Open Sea*, deviates significantly from the one found in both the original texts and her German source texts, where he comes across as much more provocative. Indeed, Schleussner's translations stand out in this respect in relation to translations into many other languages, thus conveying a different image of how Strindberg wrote from the one shared by those who read him in Swedish, German and French, for instance (cf. Liljegren 2018).

For clarity, the works in this study will be compared in chronological order, with my translation in square brackets. An overview of how the texts are interrelated might look as follows:²



² I have been able to establish that Sandbach's source texts were the so-called Landquist editions of *Giftas* and *I Havsbandet*, published in 1913 and 1914. However, in Landquist's *Giftas* and *I Havsbandet*, the few changes made were primarily due to a new spelling regulation and some minor editorial alterations Strindberg himself wanted to make (cf. Liljegren 2018, p. 144). In all the passages quoted or referred to in this study, Landquist's *Giftas* and *I Havsbandet* only display a limited number of spelling differences, which are of no consequence to the discussion in this article.

It was in the first story of the first volume of *Giftas* – “Dygdens lön” [the reward of virtue] – that Strindberg’s provocative critique of the Church appeared. As this story also best reflects Strindberg’s naturalist convictions, it will serve as a case in point. However, before an analysis of a selection of the deviations found may commence, it must be pointed out that *Married* is not the only English translation of *Giftas*. Comparisons will also be made with Mary Sandbach’s translation *Getting Married* (1972), especially since it is complete, uncensored and translated directly from Swedish into English, thus making it a good alternative translation to today’s readers.

In “Dygdens lön,” the reader meets young Theodor, who has to promise his dying mother not to have intimate relations with the opposite sex, as this would lead to his moral decline. After Theodor’s mother has died, there is a description of nature in spring. Flowers are pollinating; and in the animal world, the males are fighting for who is to impregnate the females, allowing only the strongest and fittest to carry their genes further. The narrative then returns to Theodor, showing how the laws of nature apply also to human beings. In his meetings with girls, Theodor is physically attracted to them. However, his having to abstain from sexual relations slowly destroys him, eventually leading to his premature death.

In short, Strindberg uses *Giftas* as a vehicle through which he puts forward his naturalist thesis that humans are animals with important, sexual instincts, and that they must follow these instincts in order to live in accordance with the laws of nature and become harmonious. Thus, renouncing one’s sexuality goes against the laws of nature, which explains Theodor’s fate. As a thesis must be supported, the support comes in the many sexually explicit descriptions for which *Giftas* became infamous.

For instance, not long after Theodor’s mother has died, his sexual instincts are awakened when he meets the gardener’s daughter Augusta. They climb onto a swing, sitting opposite each other. The swing goes higher and higher, and eventually, Augusta is frightened and throws herself into Theodor’s arms. His reaction is described as follows:

“han skulle ha släppt henne, om han icke kännt hennes venstra *bröst*³ mot sin högra öfverarm”
(Strindberg, *Giftas*, 1884, p. 51)

[he would have let go of her if he had not felt her left *breast* against his right upper arm]

“er hätte sie losgelassen, wenn er nicht ihre linke *Brust* an seinem rechten Oberarm gefühlt hätte” (Strindberg/Schering, *Heiraten*, 1910, p. 10)

[he would have let go of her if he had not felt her left *breast* against his right upper arm]

“he would have let her go if her left *shoulder* had not been tightly pressed against his right arm”
(Strindberg/Schleussner, *Married*, 1913, p. 19)

“he would have dropped her had he not felt her left *breast* against the upper part of his right arm” (Strindberg/Sandbach, *Getting Married*, 1972, p. 57).

In the Swedish original, as well as in *Heiraten* and *Getting Married*, it is evidently Theodor’s sexual instincts that steer his actions. However, in *Married*, the translation of “breast” into “shoulder” thoroughly weakens this connection, thus undermining Strindberg’s argumentative power, as the support for his belief that humans are animals with sexual instincts that steer us is much harder to make out. Theodor’s sexual awakening has now started; and not long after his encounter with the gardener’s daughter, he sees the housemaid in her underclothes and reacts:

“han ville *ta fatt i henne, trycka hennes bröst, para sig*, med ett ord, ty nu var qvinnan endast *bona* för honom” (Strindberg, *Giftas*, 1884, p. 54)

[he wanted to *seize her, to press her breast(s), to mate*, in a word, because now the woman was only a *female* to him]

“er wollte *sie festhalten, ihre Brüste drücken, sich paaren* mit einem Wort, denn jetzt war das Weib nur *Weibchen für ihn*” (Strindberg/Schering, *Heiraten*, 1910, p. 12)

[he wanted to *seize her, press her breasts, to mate* in a word, because now the woman was only a *female* to him]

³ Throughout, any italicized words in quotations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

“he tried to *put his arm round her and kiss her, [to mate, in a word,]* for at the moment he was conscious of nothing but *her sex*” (Strindberg/Schleussner, *Married*, 1913, p. 21)

“He wanted to *seize her, to press her breasts, to mate;* in a word woman to him at that moment was only *female flesh*” (Strindberg/Sandbach, *Getting Married*, 1972, p. 58).

This passage incorporates both Strindberg’s claim that sexuality is important and his naturalist conviction that humans are animals. But the rather aggressive “seize her,” retained in both *Heiraten* and *Getting Married*, has turned into the more romantic “put his arm round her” in *Married*. Similarly, the clearly sexual act “to press her breast(s),” also retained in *Heiraten* and *Getting Married*, has lost its sexual connotation in favour of the romantic “kiss her.” Furthermore, the clear nod towards the naturalist notion that humans are animals, signalled in the formulation that Theodor wanted “to mate,” has been completely omitted in *Married*. Finally, there is the complication of how to translate the word “hona.” In Swedish, this word can only be used for female *animals*, so the description of Theodor regarding the woman only as an animal clearly conveys Strindberg’s naturalist conviction. In *Heiraten*, the meaning of this word has been retained in the word “Weibchen.” However, in English, there is no equivalent translation relating only to animals, the word “female” describing both humans and animals. Hence, the reformulations of the two English translations can be understood, but both translations thereby carry a weaker allusion to naturalist notions.

As the story goes on, Theodor’s health is deteriorating due to his having to abstain from sexual contacts. His father is deeply concerned and seeks his brother’s advice. The answer “*pojken ska ha flickor*” [the boy must have girls] (p. 77) translated in *Married* as “the boy must see something of life” (Strindberg/Schleussner, 1913, p. 43) does little to help the English reader understand what is actually suggested. Theodor finally meets Riken and falls in love, not yet realizing that she is a prostitute. The description of their meetings reads as follows:

“Han höll långa, allvarliga samtal om lifvets höga uppgifter, om kärleken, om religionen, om allt, och *dess emellan gjorde han sina angrepp på hennes dygd*”

(Strindberg, *Giftas*, 1884, p. 85)

[He held long, serious talks on life’s higher duties, about love, about religion, about everything, and *in between he made his attempts upon her virtue*]

Er hielt lange, ernste Gespräche über die höchsten Aufgaben des Lebens, über die Liebe, über die Religion, über alles, und *dazwischen machte er seine Angriffe auf ihre Tugend*”
(Strindberg/Schering, *Heiraten*, 1910, p. 38)

[he made long, sincere speeches on the higher duties of life, on love, on religion, on everything, and *in between he made his attempts upon her virtue*]

“He had long and serious conversations with her on the most sacred duties of life, on love, on religion, on everything, and *between while* [sic] *he spoke to her of his passion*”
(Strindberg/Schleussner, *Married*, 1913, p. 51)⁴

“He had long, serious conversations with her about the higher purpose of life, about love, about religion, about everything, *and in between he made attempts upon her virtue*”
(Strindberg/Sandbach, *Getting Married*, 1972, p. 78).

This is a very important scene because it illustrates the struggle in Theodor’s mind. While trying to keep the promise of chastity given to his mother, he cannot fight being a biological creature, which sometimes gets the better of him, thereby making him break the moral norms of society through his attempts on Riken’s assumed virtue – an effective image of Theodor’s inner conflict. Whereas *Heiraten* and *Getting Married* have retained this internal battle, *Married* not only removes the image but almost hints at the opposite state of affairs, as speaking to a woman about one’s passion for her was a hailed ideal in 1913, a case of courtly love, where men were to confess their love of women without any physical contact.

Before summing up some of the main shifts found in *Married*, the passage for which *Giftas* was charged with blasphemy must also be addressed. The passage in question appears in Strindberg’s description of Theodor’s confirmation, and it concerns the “true” nature of the Holy Communion. The different versions will be presented in an overview of *Giftas* to the left, with my English translation to the right, and below it, Schering’s *Heiraten* to the left, with my English translation to the right. At the bottom, Schleussner’s *Married* will appear to the left, followed by Sandbach’s *Getting Married* to the right:

⁴ In the American second edition from 1917, “between while” has been corrected into “between-whiles.”

Det uppskakande uppträdet, då öfverklassen tog ed av underklassen *på Kristi lekamen och blod*, att den senare aldrig skulle befatta sig med hvad den förra gjorde, satt länge i honom. *Det oförskämda bedrägeriet* som spelades med Högstedts Piccadon à 65 öre kannan och Lettströms majsoblater à 1 krona skålps., hvilka af presten *utgåfvos för att vara* den för öfver 1800 år sedan afrättade *folkuppviglaren* Jesus af Nazareths kött och blod, föll icke under hans reflexion, ty man reflekterade icke den tiden, utan man fick “stämningar”. (Strindberg, *Giftas*, 1884, p. 74)

Der erschütternde Auftritt, in dem die Oberklasse der Unterkasse *auf Christi Leib und Blut* den Eid abnimmt, dass die letzte sich nie mit dem befasse, was die erste tut, blieb lange in ihm haften. Dass des Weinhändlers Högstedts Piccardon à 65 Öre die Kanne und des Bäckers Lettströms Maisoblaten à 1 Krone das Pfund vom Geistlichen *fälschlich* für das Fleisch und Blut des vor 1800 Jahren hingerichteten Volksaufwieglers Jesus von Nazareth ausgegeben wurden, darüber dachte er nicht nach, denn man dachte damals nicht nach, sondern man bekam “Stimmungen”. (Strindberg/Schering, *Heiraten*, 1910, p. 29)

[*The shocking scene*, when the upper class made the lower class swear *on the body and blood of Christ* that the latter should never have anything to do with what the former did, remained with him for a long time. *The impudent deception* that was played with Högstedt's Piccadon at 65 öre a jug and Lettström's maize wafers at 1 crown a pound, which *were claimed* by the *priest to be* the body and blood of *the instigator of rebellion* Jesus of Nazareth, executed more than 1800 years ago, was not something he reflected upon, as one did not reflect in those days, but one had “moods”.]

[*The shocking scene*, where the upper class takes an oath from the lower class *on the body and blood of Christ*, that the latter should never have anything to do with what the former does, remained with him for a long time. That the wine seller Högstedt's Piccadon at 65 öre the jug and the baker Lettström's maize wafers at 1 crown the pound were *falsely* handed out as the flesh and blood of *the instigator of rebellion* Jesus of Nazareth, who was executed 1800 years ago, was something he did not think about, since one did not think at that time, but one had “moods”.]

The moving scene in which the lower classes promise on oath [~~on the body and blood of Christ~~] never to interfere with those things which the upper classes consider their privilege, made a lasting impression on him. [*The impudent deception*] It didn't trouble him that the minister offered him wine bought from the wine-merchant Högstedt at sixty-five öre the pint, and wafers from Lettstroem, the banker, at one crown a pound, *as the flesh and blood of the great agitator* Jesus of Nazareth, who was done to death nineteen hundred years ago. He didn't think about it, for one didn't think in those days, one had emotions.

(Strindberg/Schleussner, *Married*, 1913, p.

40)

The agitating performance, at which the upper classes force the lower classes to swear by *the body and word of Christ* that they will never concern themselves with what the latter do, haunted him for a long time. He did not devote any thought to *the impudent deception* practiced with Högstedt's Piccadon at 65 öre the half gallon, and Lettström's wafers at 1 crown a pound, which the parson *passed off as* the body and blood of Jesus of Nazareth, *the agitator* who had been executed over 1800 years earlier, for this was not a time for thought, you were there to receive "grace".

(Strindberg/Sandbach, *Getting Married*, 1972, p. 71; cf. Liljegren, 2018, p. 161-62).

Whereas *Married* displays a striking range of translation shifts in the above passage, my discussion will focus on those most relevant to the charges of blasphemy. Firstly, it is noticeable that as opposed to *Heiraten* and *Getting Married*, *Married* deviates substantially in Strindberg's critique of the Church. For instance, the description of the ceremony as "det uppskakande uppträdet" [the shocking scene] is rendered by Schleussner as "the *moving scene*," which is nothing short of startling, unless one is to understand it as attempted irony, which is not likely given the other changes in the passage. There is also the omission of "det oförskämda bedrägeriet" [the impudent deception], which effectively removes Strindberg's explicit critique of the Holy Communion. Moreover, in the formulation "hvilka af presten utgåfvos för att vara" [claimed by the priest to be] there is a clear indication that the priest may not be telling the truth about the nature of the wafers and the wine. This questioning of both the priest's truthfulness and the real significance of the Holy Communion has been made much milder in *Married*. Furthermore, Strindberg's description of Jesus through the negative word "folkuppviglaren" [the instigator of rebellion] has seen the use of the more neutral word "agitator" in Schleussner's translation, interestingly preceded by the addition of the attribute

“great.” As “great” is most often found in compounds with positive connotations in English, such as “a great author” or “a great man,” what is conveyed in *Married* is primarily that Jesus was very good at what he did and was possibly hailed by others for it.

If we return to the criticism in Sweden that Strindberg had made connections between the Holy Communion and financial transactions, there is actually an ironic misprint in *Married*. As Schering had made additions to his translation by explaining that Högstedt was a wine merchant and Lettström a baker, Schleussner has naturally translated these additions as well; but in the 1913 edition of *Married*, “baker” was misspelt as “banker.” This is obviously a mistake. The result is that Schleussner here makes a clearer connection to financial transactions than was even there in the original, steering in the opposite direction to the one she most likely intended to go. This mistake was rectified in the American edition from 1917.

At the end of the story, poor Theodor dies at only twenty-eight years of age, as a consequence of his virtuous life. Thus, the title “Dygdens lön” [the reward of virtue] is ironic. It is therefore unfortunate that Schering, and Schleussner as a result, named it “Asra.” Schering’s title is an allusion to Heinrich Heine’s lyric “Der Asra” (1851), probably inspired by a reference to the lyric made at the end of “Dygdens lön.” Whereas this was most likely an attempt by Schering to bring Strindberg closer to the German literary canon, the irony in the title is missed out as a result.

The above-discussed deviations in *Married* are only few of the very many occurring in this short story alone. In total, the book, spanning just over 400 pages, contains some 120 censored formulations, most likely altered through self-censorship employed by Schleussner herself in order to ensure publication without legal repercussions. This might be regarded as rather unproblematic were it not for the very traits associated with both Strindberg’s way of writing and with *Giftas* being precisely those that were removed in *Married*. Schleussner’s translation has conformed to the norms of British society in 1913, making it possible that readers at that time might at least have *guessed* that state censorship had resulted in some omissions or reformulations, albeit not to what extent. Whereas it is generally the case that translations make changes as a result of time having passed between the publication of the original and the time when the translation was performed, giving them a “time-stamp” as it were, the two English translations of *Giftas* could be said to go directly

against such expectations. In Britain in 1913, it was forbidden to write about sexuality the way Strindberg did in Sweden in the 1880s, but the replacement in 1959 of the censorial law from 1857 enabled Sandbach's translation from 1972 to come closer to the original text. In this light, it is apparent that twenty-first-century readers of *Married* encounter a problem, since they most likely do not share the same norms as those in post-Victorian Britain, and they may even be unaware of the Obscene Publications Act 1857 and the effects it could have on published translations. For them, it ought to be very difficult to understand how Strindberg could stir up such strong reactions through his way of writing. In short, *Married* could be considered a translation with a "best-before" date.

5. *I harsbandet* and *By the Open Sea*: Decadence Washed Away

One might, of course, assume that *Married* is an isolated phenomenon, but this is not so. For instance, this is evident in yet another translation of one of Strindberg's naturalist-inspired works, *I harsbandet* (1890), translated by Schleussner as *By the Open Sea* (1913) and based on Schering's *Am offnen Meer* (1908). As there is an alternative translation by Mary Sandbach, *By the Open Sea* (1984) – a translation both uncensored and based on the Swedish original – this will be used for comparison. It should be pointed out that there were two English translations of *I harsbandet* in 1913, the other one being Elizabeth Clarke Westergren's American translation *On the Seaboard*, Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, New York. Interestingly, in the censored passages discussed below, *On the Seaboard* stays much closer to the original. The differences between the two English translations could be an indication of Schleussner having censored more than she had to, but it could also be the result of a slightly laxer attitude towards the limits of literary representation in the USA. Whereas most of the shifts found in Schleussner's *By the Open Sea* cannot be found in *Am offnen Meer*, it must be pointed out that Schering affected the English translation much more than in the case of *Heiraten* and *Married*. He inexplicably rearranged the division into chapters, so that events taking place in one chapter in the Swedish original resurface in quite a different one in the German and English translations. Here, Clarke Westergren's *On the Seaboard* follows the Swedish structure, clearly indicating that *Am offnen Meer* was not her source text.

The story is that of Axel Borg, an aristocrat working as a fisheries inspector who moves to an island in the outer Stockholm archipelago, tasked with teaching the local fishermen how to increase their catch. Filled with confidence in his superior education and knowledge, the inspector soon finds not only resistance among the natives, but he also succumbs to the environment, and, after experiencing a bitter love story, loses his mind and sails out to sea to die. As in the case of *Giftas*, *I havsbandet* contains several traits and formulations considered obscene and decadent in Strindberg's day, and, unsurprisingly, it is these formulations that have been circumscribed, made milder or completely omitted in Schleussner's translation. Most of these censored passages concern descriptions of the main character and have to do with his sexual desire:

“Hur hade han inte gråtit af hunger och *brunst*?”

(Strindberg, *I havsbandet*, 1890, p. 223)

[how often had he not cried from hunger and *rut*]

”Wie hatte er nicht geweint vor Hunger und *Brust*?”

(Strindberg/Schering, *Am offnen Meer*, [1908] 1914, p. 246)

[how had he not cried from hunger and *rut*]

“How he had wept with ambition and *desire*!”

(Strindberg/Schleussner, *By the Open Sea*, 1913, p. 263)

“Had he too not wept from hunger and *lust*?”

(Strindberg/Sandbach, *By the Open Sea*, 1984, p. 148)

In this passage, the clearly naturalist allusion, achieved through the word “brunst” [rut], confirms that the sexual desire experienced by human beings is the same for both humans and animals, as “brunst” is only used in connection with the latter. This naturalist nod is retained in Schering's translation, but surprisingly not in Sandbach's *By the Open Sea*, from 1984, where the word “lust” has lost the implication that human beings are animals, even though the sexual tension has been clearly retained. Schleussner, however, translates “brunst” into “desire” only, thus omitting any apparent naturalist connections; and as “desire” does not necessarily have to refer to sexual sensations only, the way “lust” does, this also makes such allusions less apparent.

Another example of similar shifts is a comment on the thoughts of Borg, following the passage above:

“Dessa den ännu mjuka hjärnans slappa halftankar *under trycket från blodkärl och testiklar.*”

(Strindberg, *I harsbandet*, 1890, p. 223)

[these half-thoughts of the still soft brain *under the pressure from blood vessels and testicles*]

“Diese schlaffe Halbgedanken des noch weichen Gehirns *unter dem Drück vom Blutgefäßen und Testikeln!*” (Strindberg/Schering, *Am offnen Meer*, [1908] 1914, p. 247)

[these half-thoughts of the still soft brain under the pressure from blood vessels and testicles]

“~~[These half-thoughts of the still soft brain under the pressure from blood vessels and testicles]~~”

(Strindberg/Schleussner, *By the Open Sea*, 1913, p. 264).

“The flaccid, incomplete thoughts of a brain that is still soft under the pressure of blood-vessels and testicles” (Strindberg/Sandbach, *By the Open Sea*, 1984, p. 149).

As is evident, this rather explicit description has been entirely omitted by Schleussner alone, providing an image of the author where the provocative Strindberg appears much less so. Yet, this omission pales in comparison with the one taking place towards the end of the story (pp. 268-69; Strindberg/Schering, [1908] 1914, pp. 298-99; Strindberg/Schleussner, 1913, pp. 313-14; Strindberg/Sandbach, 1984, pp. 178-79). Here, the main character is having a mental breakdown. He has lost his love, and thus the likelihood of his ever becoming a father has diminished. In his laboratory, he has somehow managed to get hold of a human egg, keeping it warm in an incubator while allowing his sperms to impregnate it, with the entire scene studied through a microscope. The passage, some two hundred words long, is indeed explicit – depicting the way the sperms look and move, how they impregnate the egg whose cells start multiplying, until Borg makes a mistake with the lamp screw and the newly-created life dies. This long and, most likely, shocking and tasteless scene in the eyes of most British readers more than a hundred years ago has been completely omitted, only to be replaced in Schleussner’s translation with a couple of short sentences about some primarily unrelated events.

Whereas the number of censored passages is far greater in *Married* than in *By the Open Sea*, these selected examples from both of Schleussner's Strindberg translations clearly demonstrate how the long-held Anglo-American image of Strindberg's provocative, persuasive and shocking way of writing finds little support in these translations. Ironically, in both cases, it is the very traits for which the works and their author were known that have disappeared. Any English-speaking reader having heard about Strindberg's provocative sexual formulations and now wanting to find out what he wrote, and anyone interested in what formulations were considered so blasphemous by Swedish society that they led to *Giftas* being charged, is likely to get a skewed idea of the true nature of the works, their author and the limits of literary representation in Sweden in the 1880s. Having argued that the failure of the first English translations to live up to the readers' expectations may explain Strindberg's limited early success in Britain and America (see Liljegren 2018), I will now turn to how these old translations still influence today's literary scene, despite the availability of modern and uncensored translations.

6. Today's Uncritical Book Market

An easy way of finding out what editions and translations are currently on the market is to go to the Internet. Accessing sites such as the Amazon online bookshop often provides prospective readers with a range of options, where various editions are listed. Paratextual material describes the different editions, naturally in an attempt to make the readers interested in buying those very editions. It is most likely not too bold to assume that the younger the readers, the more books are purchased via the Internet. One might also assume that the younger the readers, the less likely is their understanding of there having been censorial laws enforced long before they were born, and that these laws sometimes forced translations to deviate from the original texts. In an ideal world, this situation should not be a problem, as paratextual material and other information ought to guide readers to the critical and uncensored translations available on the market. Alas, however, a glance at the Amazon bookshop in Britain and the USA soon confirms that the paratextual material is often misleading.

For instance, an English-speaking reader accessing Amazon to purchase Strindberg's works in English – perhaps to find out why August Strindberg was considered such a provocative author,

why his works were often met with shock and horror, or what one was allowed to say or not in Swedish society in the 1880s and 1890s – might end up drastically misled. An overview of the different editions on offer explains why this is so. If one wants to find an English translation of Strindberg's *Giftas*, and goes to www.amazon.co.uk (12 Sep. 2019), chooses “books” and types in “Strindberg Married,” the page referred to lists no fewer than eight posts for different editions of Schleussner's *Married*, as well as *Married* appearing in one collected-works volume. However, there is only one post for Sandbach's complete and uncensored translation *Getting Married*.

One of the editions of *Married* is also labelled as a “Scholar's Choice Edition,” clearly stated in the online description of the book. Moreover, “Scholar's Choice” covers about one-third of the front cover, and the accompanying paratextual material describes the translation as one “selected by scholars.” On close inspection, it turns out that the publisher has also conveniently taken the name “Scholar's Choice,” blowing up the size of their name to the effect that it appears to be a branding of the book. This is indeed problematic as the paratextual material makes claims that the book does not meet, and even more so as the paratexts surrounding Sandbach's critical edition from 1972 make no such claims, although they would have been valid there. Thus, the reader interested in finding a critical edition is easily led astray. Moreover, at the back of the “Scholar's Choice” edition, the reader is also informed that “[t]his work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work was reproduced from the original 95rtefact, and remains as true to the original work as possible.” Given what we now know about *Married*, we can see how this paratext is also misleading. Whereas *Married* may well contribute to the “knowledgebase of civilization,” its contribution lies not in providing an understanding of Swedish civilization in the 1880s, but rather of British civilization and its limits of literary representation around 1913. Going to the American www.amazon.com, typing in the same search words, the results are very similar. On offer, there are nine posts for *Married*, and another three omnibuses where *Married* is included (12 September 2019). As in Britain, there is only one post for *Getting Married*.

Other types of paratextual material are also misleading. For instance, on the Australian homepage for Amazon, www.amazon.com.au, *Married* is presented with a quotation from the book:

Higher and higher rose the swing, until it struck the topmost branches of the maple. The girl screamed and fell forward, into his arms; he was pushed over, on to the seat. The trembling of the soft warm body which nestled closely in his arms, sent an electric shock through his whole nervous system; a black veil descended before his eyes and he would have let her go if her left *shoulder* had not been tightly pressed against his right arm. (16 Sep. 2019)

This passage – also found as a paratext at the sites of other online bookshops, such as www.fantasticfiction.com, www.dymocks.com.au and www.fullreads.com (16 Sep. 2019) – is the one where “breast” was replaced with “shoulder” by Schleussner.

Interestingly, a search for “Strindberg Married” on the Swedish bookshop www.bokus.com (30 Sep. 2019) renders 40 hits, 39 of which are Schleussner’s *Married*. One hit for *Getting Married* appears at the end, but it turns out to be a Russian translation of *Giftas*. If we turn to *By the Open Sea*, results are quite similar. At www.amazon.co.uk (12 Sep. 2019), one has to type in “Strindberg ‘By the Open Sea’ Schleussner” in order to find more than one post (the one found being Schleussner’s translation). Two different posts then appear; and if one clicks on the hardback edition for the first one, the imprint on the cover, in the form of a logo with a laurel wreath covering half the page, states that it is a “Scholar Select” edition, the publisher being Franklin Classics. However, in other cases, the same logo is used by a publisher called “Scholar Select,” so there seem to be few guidelines as regards how these names and descriptions are used. There is also a paratext that is very similar to the one mentioning the work’s cultural importance above. When using the same search words at www.amazon.com (12 Sep. 2019), no post is displayed. However, once “Schleussner” has been removed, the “Scholar Select” edition mentioned above appears. As regards Sandbach’s translation, a search for “Strindberg ‘By the Open Sea’ Sandbach” at Amazon UK (12 Sep. 2019) renders one post, and a search at American Amazon renders one post as well, but a different edition. Underneath it, Schleussner’s Scholar Select edition is suggested as an alternative.

Thus, it transpires that Schleussner’s old and censored translations are not only for sale, even today; attached to them are also paratexts providing the readers with misleading information as regards the true nature of these texts. Nowhere can one read that these translations have been censored or

that the translator used a German translation as source text, and only in the odd case does one find a comment on *Married* being only a selection of the original stories. In addition, whereas there seems to be only one edition of Sandbach's critical edition available at a time, the reasons for which to be commented on later, there are many more uncritical and censored Schleussner editions on offer.

Further study reveals that these two Strindberg works are no exception to the rule. Andreas Künzli and Gunnel Engwall (2014) show how Schleussner's translation of Schering's *Die Beichte eines Toren* (1912), entitled *The Confession of a Fool* (1912), has also been subjected to self-censorship by the translator. A search for “Strindberg ‘the Confession of a Fool’” on www.amazon.co.uk results in at least seven posts of different modern editions, with similar results on www.amazon.com (16 Sep. 2019).

Moreover, it turns out that this situation is not confined to English translations of Strindberg's works alone. For instance, Siobhan Brownlie (2007) discusses the self-censorship employed by the translator of the 1884 translation of Zola's *Nana*, published by Vizetelly & Co. As with Strindberg's works, what are primarily censored are so-called “obscene” formulations. A search at www.amazon.com (“Zola Nana Vizetelly” [12 Sep. 2019]) reveals at least four posts where this edition is on offer, and there are at least four posts for Vizetelly's translation *Piping Hot!* (“Zola ‘Piping Hot’ Vizetelly,” 12 Sep. 2019), as well as two for Vizetelly's *The Soil* (“Zola ‘The Soil’ Vizetelly”). www.amazon.com also lists Vizetelly's *The Soil* as a “Scholar's Choice” edition (19 Sep. 2019), and the same situation applies to Eleanor Marx-Aveling's translation of Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, also published by Vizetelly & Co. in 1886 as the first English translation. Sharon Deane (2011) states that on the basis of England displaying “a latent distrust of foreign morality,” the translation was “undoubtedly [...] held [...] at bay” (para. 4). However, she continues, “in the face of its supposed flaws, the translation has thrived in the British literary system, having been taken up by a further nine different publishers and reissued a total of fifteen times.” Not surprisingly, then, this book is also found on Amazon UK in no fewer than 33 posts (“‘Madame Bovary’ Aveling” [13 Sep. 2019]), and these are only the posts where the translator's name is specifically mentioned.

This brief overview alone serves as a good indication of a problem on today's book market, where censored translations of works with a sexually explicit content, translated under the yoke of the Obscene Publications Act 1857, are still uncritically circulated, often under the false pretence of being "Scholar's Choice" or "Scholar Select" editions. These claims might be valid for any scholar interested in the limits of literary representation in Britain some one hundred years ago, or even for anyone interested in how the authors were known to English-speaking readers all the way up to the 1970s or 1980s. However, for the scholar interested in the authors themselves, their works or the society in which they were written, these translations would be a poor reflection indeed. After all, they primarily deviate on the very points that made them (in)famous, thereby creating a situation where modern readers will read censored translations based on moral norms established more than 160 years ago, and unlikely to be shared by most readers today. Whereas many readers in 1913 are likely to have guessed that these translations were subjected to censorship, the question is whether today's readers would understand what changes these works are likely to have undergone.

7. Academia No Exception

This uncritical approach to translations is not only confined to the book market, but can also be found within academia. For instance, if one wants to study Strindberg and accesses *Britannica Academic* online, typing in the name August Strindberg will take the reader to quite a long article on the author and his most famous works. Under the section "Short Stories," *Giftas* is mentioned, but the only English translation stated is Schleussner's *Married* from 1913. Likewise, under "Novels," the only English translation of *I harsbandet* mentioned is Schleussner's *By the Open Sea* (1913). Mary Sandbach, who is responsible for a number of modern and uncensored translations, is not mentioned once. Instead, essentially all the English translations brought up seem to be the first ones, published while the Obscene Publications Act 1857 was still enforced. There is a section that suggests three modern translators of Strindberg's plays, but that is all. For such a distinguished encyclopaedia as *Britannica Academic*, this is indeed striking, and it could well lead even scholars astray. It seems as though the *Britannica* article was written in 1979 or later, given the fact that the most recent translation mentioned stems from that year. At this time, Sandbach's *Getting Married* had been on the book market for seven years. Though *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s copyright from 2020 appears at the bottom of the page, it is clear that this article needs an update.

Turning to the scholars themselves, I will now assess what impact these old translations may have on scholarly research. One good place to start may be Ashley Taggart's "A Provisional Hypothesis: Paternity or Pangenesis." This article was published in *The Modern Language Review* (1996) and discusses *Giftas*. In a discussion where Taggart makes the claim that Strindberg shows clear connections to Darwinian ideas, he quotes a passage in *Married* for support, instead of using *Getting Married*. The irony is that the quoted passage was partly censored by Schleussner, thus resulting in a situation where Taggart's own claim, Strindberg's naturalist connection, is weakened by his own choice of source.

An even more striking example can be found in Ingrid Basso's "August Strindberg: Along With Kirkegaard in a Dance of Death" (2013). In this article, Basso brings up the fact that *Giftas* was charged with blasphemy and that Strindberg had to defend the work in a "trial in his country in October and November" in 1884 (pp. 67-68). Via a footnote, Basso explains further:

In the story *Dygdens lön* [...], Strindberg presented a kind of autobiographical sketch of his confirmation, with an incisive description of the hypocrisy of religious education in society [...]. (English translation: *Asra*, in August Strindberg, *Married: Twenty Stories of Married Life*, trans. by Ellie Schleussner, Boston: J.W. Luce, p. 40). (pp. 67-68; cf. Liljegren, 2018, p. 252)

This reference to *Married* is especially problematic. As we have already seen in the passage referred to, many things for which *Giftas* was charged were removed, or drastically changed, even to the extent that *Married* sometimes states the exact opposite of the Swedish original. It is therefore noteworthy that Basso knows both the Swedish title of the short story and the slightly unexpected one of the English translation, and can even refer to the page in *Married* where this passage appears. The result is that any English-speaking reader interested in finding out why Strindberg was charged with blasphemy in Sweden will get a skewed idea of both the Swedish limits of literary representation in the 1880s and the level of Strindberg's provocativeness. Indeed, this entire situation highlights what might happen when translations are read as if they are the original works, not least if the translation was carried out in times of state censorship of the very aspects that made the works famous.

In addition to the above articles, I have found several other academic references to *Married* made after *Getting Married* was published in 1972. For instance, Lars G. Warme (1980) discusses *Giftas*, mentioning, “the ‘heresy’ [sic] trial after the publication of [...] *Giftas (Married)* in 1884” (p. 183). Yet another example can be found in “So Here It Is at Last” (2003), where Hugh Kenner also refers to Strindberg’s *Married* in a Routledge volume on Modernism.

Furthermore, Chandak Sengoopta (1996) quotes from Schleussner’s *The Confession of a Fool* (1912) on Strindberg’s views on feminists, despite there being uncensored translations available. Likewise, B. S. Devi and P. S. Mangang (2018) use the same translation to discuss Strindberg’s comments on his being branded a misogynist. Unfortunately, they quote a censored passage, so that Strindberg’s arguing against monogamy and calling the “woman question” “a swindle” have both been removed, thus rendering him much less provocative than in the source text on the very issue the authors are discussing (Strindberg/Schering, [1910] 1917, p. 271; Strindberg/Schleussner, 1912, p. 207).⁵

In addition to scholarly research, my study shows that this situation has found its way into university courses. For instance, the University College London homepage recently offered a literature course entitled *Decadence* (24 April 2017). On the reading list, Strindberg’s *I harsbandet* is one of the books listed. Two translations are suggested, one being Schleussner’s *Married* and the other one being Sandbach’s *Getting Married*. The students may choose either or, but are informed that *Married* is available for free at Project Gutenberg, thereby making it likely that this book will be preferred to Sandbach’s complete, critical and uncensored version. One cannot help but wonder how a literary analysis of the decadent aspects in Strindberg’s *I harsbandet* would turn out when the translation used has omitted the most striking cases of these very traits.⁶

Moreover, a view of the entire reading list shows that a majority of the translations listed were published while the Obscene Publications Act 1857 was still enforced, despite modern translations being available. For example, the first of the works is Joris-Karl Huysmans’ *À rebours* (1884), and the only translation on the reading list is John Howard’s *Against the Grain*, from 1922. An option

⁵ Schleussner’s translation was based on Schering’s *Die Beichte Eines Toren* (1910. See Künzli & Engwall 2014).

⁶ It should here be added that there is nothing in the course description to hint at there being a discussion on different translations, which is also supported by the fact that most often, only one title is stated on the reading list.

would have been Margaret Mauldon's translation *Against Nature* from 1998, published by Oxford World's Classics, with an introduction by Nicholas White. The second on the list is Gabriele D'Annuzio's *Il Piacere* (1889), translated by Georgina Harding and Arthur Symons in 1898, entitled *The Child of Pleasure* and stated as available at Gutenberg.org. Here, again a new translation, *Pleasure*, came out as late as in 2013, published by Penguin Classics and translated by Lars Gochin Raffaelli, with an introduction by Alexander Stille.

8. The Reasons for This Situation

Before we turn to a further discussion of the implications of the above, it is important to analyse what may be the reasons for this situation occurring in the first place; and as regards the many old translations on offer online, there are most likely several reasons.

Firstly, in Britain, there seems to be widespread ignorance of the Obscene Publications Act 1857 having ever existed, or at least a failure to understand the impact that such a law may have had on translations. This lack of insight may also be tied to Gullin's and Alvstad's claims that we tend to read translations as if they are the original text.

Secondly, there is the concept of cultural memory: in the case of *Giftas*, *Married* was the undisputed English translation for 59 years, during which readers may have discussed Strindberg's views on several controversial issues based on what was found in *Married*. There could be some resistance towards changing one's image of Strindberg and nuancing one's previous claims made about him when a new translation appears where Strindberg's text no longer contains what one has previously quoted for support. As indicated by its overrepresentation on Amazon, *Married* may simply have become inscribed into the literary canon in Britain and the USA. The role of encyclopaedias should not be underestimated in this context. *Britannica Academic* only listing the first English translations is an unexpected and unfortunate approach, but it may be explained by the same phenomenon.

The third and, probably, most important reason is purely economic. With these old translations, copyrights have been lifted, as have any royalties to the long-dead translators. Thus, it is simply cost effective to make facsimiles of old translations and disseminate them with paratexts and logos that cover up any reasons why these translations may not be the best choice available. Unsuspecting

readers will then buy them, unaware of how, and to what extent, these translations deviate from both modern ones and from the originals. Hidden under the logo “Scholar’s Choice” is something completely different from what the readers have been led to expect.

This is not to say that translations such as Schleussner’s *Married* and *By the Open Sea* and the Vizetelly translations are useless today. Having been part of the Anglo-American literary canon of translated works for a long time, they still have a cultural value. Moreover, in accordance with Hermans’ statement that translations may tell us more about the target culture than of the source culture, a comparative study where the source and the target texts are compared may provide important and useful insights into the norms of the target culture at the time the translation was carried out. Such studies may also provide insights into the constraints facing translators in times of censorship, as well as the strategies available to translators working in a state of censorship (Liljegren, 2018).

9. Conclusion

A problem on today’s book market and within academia is that old, censored translations are uncritically sold, read and cited. This situation must somehow be addressed because misinformation and misrepresentation are being disseminated through the surprisingly central position many censored translations hold in the canon, even today.

I claim that the most severe source of misinformation is academia itself. Whereas the basis of all academic research and study is a critical approach, this does not seem to be a universally shared insight when it comes to reading and citing old translations. One article using censored translations may be enough to lead other scholars down the same path; and when academic courses do not differentiate between censored and uncensored translations, this uncritical approach is also taught to students, thereby spreading it even faster. Moreover, in any academic course using literary translations for study, an uncritical stance to translations published at a time of state censorship is likely to provide readers with a flawed image of the original authors, the way they wrote, the societies they described, and so on.

It is important to acknowledge that this situation does not apply to Anglo-American translations alone. It is relevant to any country where censorship was once applied, particularly if the works studied contain themes or topics that would have challenged such contemporary censorial legislation.

Finally, addressing the issue requires both a critical approach to translations in general and a clear awareness of the historical presence of target-culture censorship and its possible impact on translations. One solution would be to introduce critical discussions on the use of translations in every university course dealing with translated literature. Indeed, as long as we believe that through the analysis of translated literature we get a good glimpse of the original authors, their works and the culture they write about, there must always remain, in the back of our minds, that critical filter through which we select the best translations on which to make valid assumptions and draw plausible conclusions. After all, without a critical approach to our own material, how can we call ourselves academic scholars?

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