

# The Taming of a Viking: August Strindberg, Translation and Post-Victorian Censorship

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This dissertation studies August Strindberg's two-volume collection of short stories, *Giftas* (1884, 1886) and its first English translation, *Ellie Schlessner's Married* (1913). The purpose is to demonstrate that *Married* deviates from the original in many ways, primarily on the very aspects that were generally associated with the work. The study also analyses and discusses possible influences on the translation outcome and its reception.

The dissertation makes clear how the traditional image of Strindberg as a provocative author and a persuasive debater has almost disappeared in *Married* due to culturally motivated translational choices and the need to avoid state censorship, which could also explain the weak reception of *Married*. The hypothesis is that British readers were disappointed as Strindberg did not live up to the image they had expected to find. As there was state censorship of "obscene" publications in both Britain and the USA at the time *Married* was published, other Strindberg works saw similar changes in English translation. The conclusion is that a combination of these phenomena may help explain Strindberg's relatively belated entry into the Anglo-American canon.

The dissertation is carried out within the frames of translation studies, which is characterized by being multidisciplinary. The theoretical frame is based on descriptive translation studies (Gideon Toury) and polysystem theory (Itamar Even-Zohar), but it also incorporates perspectives from reception theory, the notion of multiple translatorship and imagology. Thus, it has both a source- and target-oriented focus. Of special relevance to the thesis are also the concepts of habitus, borrowed from the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, and the panopticon effect, as described by Michel Foucault.

Through some key concepts and perspectives borrowed from actor-network theory, the study shows how a prerequisite for a successful transfer of Scandinavian works at this time was easy access for the authors or literary agents of the source culture to a network of cultural agents such as translators, publishers, theatre directors and critics. The study analyses how Strindberg's access to such networks in France and Germany and his lack of a similar network in Britain and the USA may explain the divergent reception in these countries. In addition, the dissertation portrays the conditions for how European literature in general could migrate within Europe at the turn of the 20th century, and how the social norms in Britain and the USA in particular have affected the translation of Strindberg's works.

Keywords: August Strindberg, translation studies, descriptive translation studies, imagology, multiple translatorship, reception theory, polysystem theory, post-Victorian censorship, habitus, panopticon