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Helen Wells' *Peril over the Airport* (1953)

Norwegian and Swedish Translations of Gender

Because this volume focuses on fairness and women, it seemed an opportune time to concentrate my work in Translation Studies around gender. Translation Studies, a relatively new discipline, has not always considered gender important in its purview. However, in the twenty-first century, gender has now become a frequent focus (see López & Alvstad, 2017, p. 5). In her seminal book *Translation and Gender* (1997), Luise von Flotow called for combining Gender Studies and Translation Studies. She argued that the two disciplines have much in common. Both of them are interdisciplinary, and both evolved substantially during the latter part of the 20th century. They often also have language as a common object of study. In Gender Studies, scholars focus on revealing uneven distributions of power, expressed through a patriarchal language, whereas most studies carried out in Translation Studies have language as their object of study (von Flotow, 1997, p. 1). According to von Flotow (1997, p. 1), combining the two disciplines is fruitful since it enables scholars to highlight questions concerning gender differences in different countries, and helps to reveal how these differences are expressed in language.

My chapter in this fairness volume answers von Flotow's call for more research on women and translation by focusing on the translation of Young Adult (YA) detective fiction for girls – a genre with women protagonists, often written by women, for young women. In their anthology *Gender and Translation: Understanding Agents in Transnational Reception*, Isis Herrero López and Cecilia Alvstad (2017, p. 5) identify a research gap regarding gender and translation in Scandinavia, which I will contribute to bridging by directing the attention toward Norway and Sweden. The chapter consists of a qualitative case study investigating the Norwegian and Swedish translations of the American novel *Peril over the Airport* (1953), written by Helen Wells for the Vicki Barr series. My aim is to investigate how descriptions of female appearance and misogynistic comments uttered by the characters are translated in the two Scandinavian versions of the novel. I also focus on the translation of passages where the topic of women in aviation is brought up. In addition, I discuss the possibility that there could be activist translation strategies at work (see below).

Ideas of what is considered appropriate for women and men to do, think and say, change over time, and also between cultures. These differing ideas have resulted in many rewritings and omissions in translations over the years (López & Alvstad, 2017, p. 4). As an example of this, Ida Hove Solberg's (2017) study of the Norwegian translations of Simone de Beauvoir's works may be mentioned. Solberg

finds that several passages in de Beauvoir's works relating to sex or gender have been abridged or changed in the Norwegian translations, making the target texts less feminist than their originals. In this chapter, I am dealing with the genre of fiction, but it is still interesting to bear Solberg's results in mind when carrying out the present study. It should also be mentioned, though, that many translation scholars have found results that point in other directions than Solberg's results. As an example, López and Alvstad (2017, pp. 7–8) mention Paul Tenngart's (2017) study of how Baudelaire's poetry was translated into Swedish. Tenngart notices that the Swedish translations are, if not feminist, at least less misogynistic than the French source texts.

López and Alvstad (2017, p. 4) mention that at the birth of feminist translation studies, feminist translators became aware of the risk that they, when translating, reproduced the same misogynistic views they were contesting. Naturally, there are often activist tendencies in feminist translation studies, which is a discipline that aims to contribute solutions as to how translators could use translations to subvert patriarchal norms (López & Alvstad, 2017, p. 4). This study, however, is positioned within the field of Descriptive Translation Studies, which focuses on what translators do and not on how a translation ought to be done (see e.g. Hermans, 1999, pp. 7–9, 73; Toury, 2012). We do not know anything about the Vicki Barr translators' views on feminism and women's liberation and will therefore be limited to studying the effects of the translators' choices; we may only hypothesize about possible (activist) intentions. Activist intentions are closely related to "norm(s)" which is a key concept in Descriptive Translation Studies, where one views translation as a strictly norm governed practice (see e.g. Toury, 2012, pp. 54–55). In this study, the combination of the focus on norms from Translation Studies and my focus on women in aviation, may reveal the effects of target culture norms relating to sex and gender in the two target texts.

Feminist Approaches in YA Detective Novels for Girls

Although the literary quality of the 20th century juvenile series genre has been questioned, it is a fact that these novels were immensely popular among young readers (Black, 1995; Shoemaker, 1995; Theander, 2006, *passim*; Söderberg, 2010, p. 165). In her article "Reflecting on Girls' Series", Sherrie A. Inness (1997, p. 255) mentions that 20th century girls' series books have experienced a great increase in scholarly interest in recent years.¹ Researchers have focused on how these series help us understand the role they had in culture at the time, and how they contributed to shaping the values of future women (see also Theander, 2006, p. 20). Some scholars even argue that the series had a positive influence on the wom-

1 The title of Birgitta Theander's (2006) dissertation on girls' fiction in Sweden, *Älskad och förnekad*, ('Loved and denied') may epitomize the approaches to, and beliefs about, girls' fiction over the years.

en's liberation movement (see e.g. Theander, 2017, pp. 295–309; Woolston, 2010; Mason, 1995). For example, in *Girl Sleuth*, Bobbie Ann Mason goes as far as to ask “[w]here would women’s liberation be without Nancy Drew and Judy Bolton and Beverly Gray and Cherry Ames?” (1995, p. 6).

Both authors of the Vicki Barr series, Helen Wells and Julie Tatham, were active writers of young adult detective fiction for girls in the middle of the 20th century (Mason, 1995, p. 107; Sangster & Smith, 2019, p. 146). In their article “From Career Girl to Sexy Stewardess: Popular Culture and Women’s Work in the Canadian and American Airline Industries”, Joan Sangster and Julia Smith (2019, p. 146, 157) mention that both Wells and Tatham were aware of gender discrimination and expressed their feminist ideas in an understated manner. Wells herself said that she wanted to reach out to young women who were interested in meaningful careers and independent lives. Even though writing within the formula of juvenile mysteries was like writing in a straitjacket, Wells said that it was still possible to express “values one believe[d] in” in the novels (qtd in Mason, 1995, p. 109). This conscious address to the readers is one reason why it is interesting to read the Vicki Barr series from a fairness perspective. Even though I do not investigate the entire Vicki Barr series, I believe that it is important to note both the progressive and emancipatory tendencies that exist, and that 20th century girls’ detective fiction was highly influential for its readers (cf. Woolston, 2010; D’Amico, 2016, p. vii).

Peril over the Airport and its Translations

Grosset and Dunlap published sixteen mystery books in the Vicki Barr Flight Stewardess Series between 1947 and 1960. Thirteen of the novels were translated into Norwegian, whereas all sixteen were translated into Swedish. Helen Wells wrote thirteen of the novels, while Julie Tatham penned three. Wells wrote *Peril over the Airport* (1953), which was translated into Norwegian by Arnold Jacoby as *Vicki og spøkelsesflyet* (‘Vicki and the Ghost Plane’, Forlagshuset, 1954) and into Swedish, *Vicki vid spakarna* (‘Vicki at the Helm’, B. Wahlströms, 1964), by Gudrun Ullman.

The Swedish translation of *Peril over the Airport* is considerably shorter than its original. Senior editor Louella Bergman at B. Wahlströms² hypothesizes that many of B. Wahlströms’ translations were shortened in order to maintain a low retail price by keeping down the costs for printing (see also Andræ, 2001, p. 38). Bergman believes the publisher may have asked the translator to cut text in order to meet the page count standard for B. Wahlströms’ series. B. Wahlströms had a tradition of being quite drastic in the revisions of manuscripts and translations. In

2 Louella Bergman, e-mail communication, October 28, 2019.

the latter case, the revisions were often made in order to adjust the target text to Swedish readers (Andræ, 2001, p. 38).

Giving an account of how the women's liberation movement evolved in the United States, Norway and Sweden, respectively, falls outside of the scope of this chapter, but let me still say a few words about this matter, in order to provide some historical background to the study. In 1963, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, which, in many ways, marks the beginning of the second wave of feminism, at least in the United States (Fox, 2006). *Peril over the Airport* was written before the second wave of feminism and will hence have to be categorized as "prefeminist", or at least, "pre-second wave feminist". The same goes for the Norwegian target text, which was published in 1954. The Swedish translation, however, is from 1964, one year after Friedan's book. At the time, much progress was made within the women's liberation movement and gender equality was on its way to becoming a norm in Scandinavia (cf. Ljungberg et al., 2017, p. 5). With the 1960s came ideological changes in Sweden where one was not supposed to differentiate between boys and girls. As a concrete example, Theander (2006, p. 10) mentions the 1962 government act decommissioning girls' schools. It is important to bear these facts in mind when conducting the present study, especially since Theander (2017, p. 315) has found that girls' fiction, to a large extent, mirrors the time in which it was written.

Analysis of Excerpted Units

In order to compare the three texts, I use a coupled-pairs analysis (see Toury, 2012, p. 33, 117–129), where I identify a unit of analysis in the source text (ST), match it with the corresponding unit in the target texts (TTs), i.e. the coupled pair, and compare them. As stated above, I focus on passages containing descriptions of female appearance, misogynistic comments uttered by the characters, and passages where the topic of women in aviation is discussed. When first embarking on this study, I read *Peril over the Airport* with the intention of uncovering occurrences of master suppression techniques as theorized by Berit Ås (1981, pp. 42–73). Master suppression techniques are techniques used to suppress women and women culture (pp. 42–43). I focused on the techniques *ridicule* (pp. 49–54), *withholding information*³ (pp. 54–57) and *objectification* (p. 67) and I found that these, to a great extent, appeared in passages with misogynistic comments uttered by the characters (*ridicule*), bodily descriptions of female appearance (*objectification*), and passages concerning a woman's right to enter a field from which she had been historically excluded (*withholding information*). This is the reason why these three units of analysis remain integral to my study. In this chapter, I pres-

3 *Withholding information* includes keeping women away from certain domains (see Ås, 1981, pp. 54–57). In this study, this technique is visible in passages where women's role in aviation is brought up.

ent the most noticeable examples of the excerpted occurrences. When presenting the examples, the ST is followed first by the Norwegian TT and then by the Swedish one. Literal back translations (BTs), i.e. translations that are translated literally from the TT language back into English, are provided when the Norwegian and/or Swedish examples are so far from the ST that they need a back translation in order to be understood by a non-Swedish or non-Norwegian speaker. For simplicity's sake, I present the examples chronologically, i.e. as they appear in the plot. Only page numbers (no dates or author names) are given for examples quoted from the investigated material.

Results

Peril over the Airport starts in medias res with Vicki's dreaming about something that seems almost unmentionable, in this case, "a forbidden love", which is also the title of the first chapter in the book. As the experienced Vicki Barr reader may have anticipated from previous novels in the series, this love is connected to her dreams of learning how to fly. The narrator refers to this dream as an "it":

Something had been going on in the back of Vicki Barr's mind for quite a long time now. At first Vicki had shut her wide azure-blue eyes and pretended it wasn't true. When that didn't work, she tried her best to ignore it. But it bobbed up, uninvited. "It" was dangerous, expensive, exciting. Certainly "it" did not seem a suitable ambition for a small, ash-blond girl. (1)

Noe hadde alt i lang, lang tid ligget og modnet i Vicki Barrs tanker. Først hadde hun lukket øynene og sagt til seg selv at det aldri kunne bli virkelighet. (5)

BT of Norwegian translation: Something had already for a long, long time been ripening in Vicki Barr's thoughts. At first she had closed her eyes and told herself that it could never become a reality.

Någonting hade rört sig längst bak i huvudet på Vicki Barr ganska länge nu. Först hade Vicki knipit ihop sina stora, blå ögon och låtsats att det inte var sant. När detta inte hjälpte, gjorde hon sitt bästa för att ignorera det. "Det" var farligt, dyrt och spännande. Och "det" tycktes faktiskt inte vara en lämplig ärelystnad för en liten, askblond flicka. (5)

BT of Swedish translation: Something had been moving in the back of Vicki Barr's head for quite some time now. First Vicki had closed her large, blue eyes and pretended it wasn't true. When this didn't help, she did her best to ignore it. "It was dangerous, expensive and exciting. And "it" was not an appropriate ambition for a small, ash-blond girl.

In the ST, it seems as if the narrator suggests that being a girl, in addition to being both small and ash-blond, are characteristics that would make flying even more unthinkable than if Vicki were a woman with other characteristics. It is probable

that Vicki, formed by the norms of her time, reasons with herself that she should not have any “unsuitable” ideas. At the same time as Vicki’s dreams are described as unsuitable, the passage also expresses some irony from the narrator’s side – i.e. the relevance of her hair color for flying – and even disapproval of the gender inequality in society, where flying is not for girls (like Vicki). The ST passage in the example above is typical for the Vicki Barr series, where Vicki’s body and looks are often seen as a hindrance for her. These hindrances are both practical – being too short to be a flight attendant (2) – and related to being treated unfairly, as a “decorative piece of bric-a-brac” (2), instead of being taken seriously. Concerning the translations above, it turns out that the Swedish translation renders the wording of the ST rather literally and hence retains its semantic content, expressing Vicki’s unsuitable ideas, her blue eyes – although no longer azure-blue, which suggests less focus on Vicki’s appearance – as well as the hint of irony associated with the irrelevant mention of her hair color. The Norwegian translation is shorter than both the American and Swedish versions. The part concerning Vicki’s being ash-blonde and small is omitted in the Norwegian translation. This also means that her doubts related to her gender and bodily features are omitted. In fact, the Norwegian TT just says that Vicki has new ideas. In addition, Vicki’s eyes are not described in the Norwegian text, which only states that she has closed them. In the example above it is thus the Norwegian translation which tones down or omits passages where looks are mentioned, resulting in the Norwegian TTs becoming slightly less focused on objectification and appearance than the other versions.

Peril over the Airport is especially interesting from a perspective of gender equality, since it represents a liminal moment in Vicki’s career. It is the novel where she earns her private pilot’s license. This license opens up new possibilities for her since she becomes more independent from her male pilot colleagues when solving the mysteries she is confronted with in the series. Sangster and Smith (2019, p. 147) argue that her license allows her to control her own fate. In his article “Configuring Identity and Flights of Fancy in the Vicki Barr, Flight Stewardess series,” Michael G. Cornelius goes so far as to suggest that flying symbolizes a liberation for Vicki, since it is: “suggestive of rising above the mundane world above us, of escape from reality (in Vicki’s case, the patriarchal world of both her hometown and the airline industry itself)” (2009, p. 43). Even though I am hesitant to stretch my interpretation of the novel that far, Cornelius’ point is an interesting example of the emancipatory content that may be present in Well’s authorship. However, at the same time as one may argue that there are feminist approaches in the Vicki Barr series, Sangster and Smith (2019, p. 147), as well as Mason (1995, p. 112), also point out some contradictions and paradoxes in the series. After Vicki has acquired her license, she does not give up her career as a flight attendant. Instead, she remains in the patriarchal aviation industry, deferring to men, constantly claiming that her flying is not a profession but only a means of recreation. In the very first pages of *Peril over the Airport*, it is for example made

clear that Vicki “wouldn’t trade the fun of being an air hostess for being a princess or a – a –” (2), where she does not even dare to pronounce the word “pilot”, but further on it is mentioned that Vicki “felt stewardess work to be a stepping-stone to something else” (4), suggesting that she has ambitions to use her license to move away from her current profession. In the Norwegian translation, none of these passages has its counterpart. In fact, the first pages of the novel, where Vicki’s doubts are expressed, are considerably shortened in the Norwegian TT. Instead, the Norwegian translation quickly goes on to the passage where Vicki and her friends discuss how she may proceed to get a license. This results in Vicki’s appearing more self-confident in the Norwegian TT than in the ST. The introductory pages in the Swedish translation, on the other hand, are close to the American ST, expressing the same contradictions and the same doubts.

A little later in the novel, Vicki convinces her father to allow her to start taking flight lessons. The narrator tells us: “[s]he had no doubt that her mother would loyally be her first passenger. Her dad, however, had some old-fashioned ideas and a bad habit of obstructing her plans” (12), which is quite literally translated in both TTs. It is not mentioned what these ideas consist of, but if one were to speculate on what is said between the lines, it is highly probable that these ideas have to do with women’s place in the aviation industry. When Vicki wants to become a flight attendant in the first novel of the series, she meets with great resistance from her father, although he eventually gives her his blessing and it later turns out that he is not at all as authoritarian as it first appeared. In fact, Professor Barr breaks gender barriers in his own way by entering domains at the time traditionally dominated by women. For example, he often takes over the kitchen in the Barr home. In all three texts, Vicki faces her father’s objections by trying to persuade him, but when that does not work, she simply makes an appointment for her first meeting when her instructor calls, despite her father’s disapproval. This is an instance of Vicki’s breaking norms and claiming independence by following her dream, which is rendered quite literally in both TTs.

Moving on in the novel, Vicki’s first meeting with her instructor, Bill Avery, a World War II veteran, is characterized by mixed feelings from both of them. Bill arrives late for their first appointment, and his sloppy appearance is disturbing to Vicki. When Bill later excuses himself for his appearance, Vicki says that she does not mind – which is, of course, pure civility – to which Bill gives a misogynistic reply.

Well, I’m glad you’re not one of those fussy females. So prissy and perfect — it’s not worth while livin’ with them around. (26)

Det er godt at De ikke hører til disse pirkete fruentimmerne. Mange av dem er så pertentlige og masete og umulige at det ikke går an å bo i nærheten av dem. (21)

BT of Norwegian Translation: It's good that you are not one of these over-orderedly women. Many of them are so meticulous and nagging and impossible that one cannot live close to them.

Skönt att du inte är en sån där fjäskig typ. Så där noga och perfekt...dom är besvärliga att ha i närheten. (34)

BT of Swedish translation: Good that you're not such an officious type. So meticulous and perfect ... they are difficult to have nearby.

Even though Bill excludes Vicki from the “fussy females”-category, his utterance is clearly sexist and insulting, not only to Vicki but to all women. The translation into Norwegian, using the word “fruentimmer”, is possibly even more insulting than the American formulation. “Fruentimmer” has negative connotations and may be translated as ‘bloody women’. Its etymology is not derogatory,⁴ but it has taken on negative connotations over the years, and was considered an insult already in the 1950s,⁵ when the Norwegian translation was published. Moreover, in the Norwegian TT, more adjectives are added/replaced in order to describe how difficult women are; they are both “umulige” (‘impossible’) and “masete” (‘nagging’). In the Swedish version, however, there is another, much shorter solution, where women are not mentioned at all. Instead, Bill’s comment expresses criticism of hypocritical and false behavior in general, which makes the Swedish reader’s first meeting with Bill more positive than in the ST and the Norwegian TT. Since *Vicki vid spakarna* is shorter than both *Peril over the Airport* and *Vicki og spøkelsesflyet* it is no surprise that the Swedish translation of the example above is shorter than the Norwegian. What is interesting to note, though, is that there is one cut in a passage that expresses thoughts on gender and behavior. This translation strategy is one noted by Laura Leden, who, in her 2019 study, “Girl’s Classics and Constraints”, investigates how Lucy M. Montgomery’s *Emily of New Moon* series was translated into Swedish, and finds that the translator, when asked to shorten the TT, frequently omits passages relating to gender.

In neither of the TTs does Vicki instantly react to Bill’s misogyny, since the conversation quickly takes a new turn when Vicki sees the plane in which she is going to have her first flight lesson. However, Vicki is not unaffected by his tart comment. Her disappointment shows when the conversation eventually comes to revolve around Vicki’s clothes and their suitability for flying. Vicki notices that Bill is not happy with her shoes (“yellow cotton, sling back and open toes, with a flat bow atop” (26)), and she asks him why he is not pleased with them. The narrator mentions, “[h]is earlier remark about fussy females had nettled her” (27). This sentence is omitted from the Swedish TT, and also from the Norwegian version, which results in the Norwegian translation ignoring Vicki’s thoughts of having been insulted and hurt altogether.

4 Fruentimmer (n.d.). In *Ordbog over det danske sprog*.

5 Fruentimmer (n.d.). In *Store norske leksikon*.

Bill and Vicki's conversation about aviation goes on undisturbedly for a while, but it eventually comes to a halt when conversation turns toward their common background within flying, with Bill as a pilot and Vicki as a flight attendant. It turns out that Bill does not consider her experience of any value for learning how to fly, and he makes another insulting comment:

"Aw, that's not real aviation. That's just the plus trimmings. Servin' dinner, holdin' the passenger's hand — " [...] "Dressed up pretty all the time, keeps her plushy plane cabin in apple-pie order." (33)

— Det har vel ingenting med flyging å gjøre, iallfall ikke ordentlig flyging. Det er jo bare å servere frokost og middag og holde folk i hånden, og — (26)

BT of Norwegian translation: — That doesn't have anything to do with flying, at least not real flying. That's just serving breakfast and dinner and holding peoples' hands, and —

— Asch, det är en helt annan sak. Det är bara såna där extra krusiduller. Servera midnan och hålla passagerarna i hand... — [...] och är fint och elegant klädd och håller din lilla lyxkabin i perfekt ordning. (41–42)

BT of Swedish translation: — Ah, that's a completely different thing. Those are just extra curlicues. Serving dinner and holding the passengers' hands... — [...] and is nicely and elegantly dressed and keeps your little luxury cabin in perfect order.

By criticizing her occupation in general, Bill also criticizes Vicki. This comment saddens Vicki, and even though she makes a terse remark where she criticizes fliers' narrow-mindedness and Bill's unordered airfield, she does nothing to point out that the comment is demeaning.⁶ Nevertheless, Bill half-apologizes by saying that "You sound like my sister. I guess I must be a hopeless mess" (33) – crediting Vicki for being right in some of her criticism. As can be noted in the example above, Bill's comment is translated quite literally in both the Norwegian and the Swedish TTs. However, the last sentence, which deals with clothing and the plushy cabin, is omitted from the Norwegian translation, which results in its focusing somewhat more on flight attendants' deeds than on their looks. One also notes that the phrase "plus trimmings" in the previous sentence has been omitted from the Norwegian translation. In the Swedish TT, it has been translated as "extra krusiduller," which describes something 'fanciful and curlicue-like'. This translation strategy adds to Bill's derogatory remark, since any kind of "fuss" is clearly not to Bill's taste. Throughout the series, we see examples of how Vicki counters misogynis-

6 It should be noted that although Vicki does not verbally resist Bill's sexism, internally she reacts much more strongly, as can be seen if one reads the passage in full: "Vicki was so hurt that for a moment she could not speak. Her work with people, and her secondary job of representing aviation to the public, amounted to a great deal more than this boy gave credit for. Vicki remembered her father last evening scornfully describe fliers as narrow. He had been right. About all Bill understood was torques and ailerons and manifold pressure. Vicki said so and wished she hadn't started to like him so well [...] 'Seems to me this field could stand a little apple-pie order [...].'" (33)

tic comments in the “understated manner” that Sangster and Smith (2019, p. 145) notice. She deals with them by pointing out the adversary’s shortcomings, as in the case above, but she seldom directly counters the comments by pointing out that they are misogynistic. After Bill’s half-apology above, for example, Vicki lets go of any lingering animosity against Bill and suggests that both she and Bill were stupid, and does not explicitly confront him any further with his sexism. This is typical behavior of Vicki’s, and it is translated in an ST-oriented way in both TTs. Although Bill makes some comments that Vicki finds insulting, it later appears as if Vicki has “won over” Bill to her side, by showing him how knowledgeable she is about aviation.

It is then Bill’s mechanic, Spin, who takes over as the misogynist in *Peril over the Airport*. Almost every time Vicki and Spin meet, he expresses negative thoughts on women in general and Vicki in particular. When Spin criticizes Vicki, he usually attacks her for being a flight attendant, something he judges to be an insignificant profession. Vicki meets Spin for the first time when she and Bill visit him at a neighboring airfield. This first meeting is entirely disagreeable for Vicki, not least because of his way of speaking about women. Spin does not shake Vicki’s hand when they first meet, and after Vicki has tried to engage in Bill and Spin’s conversation by asking a flight-related question, he looks at her with contempt for being ignorant. Spin then ridicules Vicki by telling Bill quietly:

“Number forty-seven of the things I’d like to see before I die. That’s a stewardess who doesn’t think she’s a gift of nature because she’s a female.” (55)

— En av de tingene jeg har drømt om å møte før jeg dør, sa mekanikeren lavt til Bill, — er en flyvertinne som ikke tror at hun er naturens største underverk. (44)

BT of Norwegian translation: — One of those things I have dreamt of seeing before I die, the mechanic said quietly to Bill, — is a stewardess who doesn’t think she’s nature’s greatest wonder.

Swedish TT: omission.

Regarding the translations of this passage, the Norwegian translation is just as unfair to flight attendants as the American ST, but it should be noted that it is less demeaning to women in general, since the part where women are mentioned (“because she’s a female”) is left out. In the Swedish TT, large parts of Bill and Spin’s conversation are omitted, including Spin’s demeaning comment about women. In the example above, it turns out that the Scandinavian versions are more prone to omit content where women are negatively commented upon. It may be hypothesized that the omissions mirror target culture norms, i.e. a different view of women’s position in the target societies. Nevertheless, Spin appears just as disagreeable in both TTs; it is only that the TT readers are faced with less misogynistic content. In association with the example above, it is also important to point out that it seems as if Bill has learned from his and Vicki’s first disagreement.

He does not acknowledge Spin's joke and he indirectly defends women by telling Spin that he himself learned to fly from female instructors. This passage is translated literally in the Norwegian translation, which is interesting to note, since only flight attendants, and not women in general, are criticized in Spin's snide comment in the above example. This makes the Norwegian TT even more supportive of women than the ST. Bill's answer is omitted from the Swedish TT.

Throughout the novel, Spin demonstrates his disdain for women. Except in the passage above, the two TTs do not tone down or omit Spin's insults. Some of the comments are omitted from the Swedish version, but these omissions are often associated with the omission of large parts of text. It thus seems as if Spin's derogatory comments are kept in order to draw attention to how reprehensible he is. Spin is, contrary to Bill, the villain of the story and the reader is not supposed to sympathize with him anyway. Spin's misogynistic comments appear so flagrant to the reader that they will not pass just as personal animosity toward Vicki, but also to all of the readers of the novel, who are (were) mostly young women. One may hypothesize that the strategy of keeping Spin's misogynistic comments is an activist strategy where the reader is invoked to react. This would hence be a strategy where the most politically correct way of translating a book would not be, as is most often done, to omit or tone down controversial content (cf. Billiani, 2009, pp. 28–31), but rather to keep it, which would be more conspicuous in Sweden in 1964 than in the source text from 1953.

In patriarchal language, Ås (1981, p. 52) mentions that animal metaphors often are used to describe women and men. She mentions that small and helpless animals are used to describe women, whereas strong and tall animals are used to describe men. In *Peril over the Airport*, Vicki is constantly being called "pigeon" by Bill, which can signify a 'young woman' in English slang⁷. The use of "pigeon" in this sense was lexicalized long before *Peril over the Airport* was written, but it is nonetheless an example of patriarchal language describing women as small. A direct translation of "pigeon" would have been unidiomatic in Norwegian and Swedish. The Norwegian TT has "vesla" ('little you') (see e.g. 99, 103, 152), "vennen min" ('my friend') (see e.g. 47, 61, 138), the completely neutral "flyger" ('flier') (99), or omissions (see e.g. 68) as translations for "pigeon". Almost all instances of "pigeon" are omitted in the Swedish translation, resulting in a TT with fewer patriarchal metaphors.

In the last example of this chapter, I would like to draw attention to the last lines in the novel. Despite some obstacles, Vicki manages to both earn her pilot's license and solve the mystery around which the novel revolves. Vicki is also assigned a new route by the airline company. This means that Vicki has to say goodbye to Bill, who has grown very fond of her. The novel ends with Bill expressing his worries that Vicki will disappear now that she has managed to get her license. The example below contains descriptions of Vicki's looks as well as men

7 Pigeon (n.d.). In *Merriam Webster Dictionary*.

expressing their approval of Vicki's accomplishment – her successful entrance into the male-dominated domain of aviation:

Bill looked down on Vicki and said, "I almost wish I'd never taught you to fly, if it's going to take you away." "I, too, wish you'd never taught her," her father said, but he smiled with pride. Vicki shook her silvery-gold hair. "This isn't the end," she said happily. "It's the beginning of something new — and wonderful." (211–212)

Bill skottet ned på Vicki og sa: – Jeg skulle ønske at jeg aldri hadde lært deg å fly — hvis det er det som tar deg fra meg. — Jeg skulle også ønske det, sa faren, men han smilte da han sa det. Vicki ristet de gule krøllene. — Dette er da ikke slutten, sa hun lykkelig. — Det er begynnelsen — til noe nytt og vidunderlig. (172)

BT of Norwegian translation: Bill peered down on Vicki and said: — I wish I had never taught you to fly — if that's what takes you away from me. — I would also wish so, said the father, but he smiled as he said it. Vicki shook her yellow curls. — This isn't the end, she said happily. — It's the beginning — of something new and wonderful.

Bill tittade på Vicki och sa: — Jag önskar nästan att jag inte hade lärt dej flyga, när det tar dej ifrån oss. — Det önskar jag med, instämde hennes far. Men han log ett mycket stolt leende när han sa det. (188)

BT of Swedish version: — I almost wish I hadn't taught you to fly, when it takes you away from us. — I wish so too, her father agreed. But he smiled a very proud smile when he said it.

Before comparing the translations, it is interesting to point out that the example above shows one characteristic of the Vicki Barr series: Vicki never becomes especially involved in the romantic opportunities that appear throughout the series. Her love of flying and experiencing new adventures is always stronger than any romance involving men, in this case what could have developed with Bill. Concerning the translation of the example above, it turns out that the Norwegian version is very ST-oriented. One of the first things that one notices in the Swedish TT, is that it is shorter than the other versions, and the last lines of the novel are simply omitted. This strategy results in the disappearance of Vicki's own voice and her father having the last word, but at the same time, it also focuses less on Vicki's looks, since the yellow curls are gone. In the beginning of the Swedish example, one also notices that Bill does not look down on Vicki, instead he just looks at her – from a more equal perspective.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has focused on women and translation. I have studied how passages containing descriptions of female appearance and misogynistic remarks uttered by

the characters have been rendered in the Norwegian and Swedish translations of Helen Wells' *Peril over the Airport*. I have also, to some extent, examined how passages regarding women in aviation are brought up and translated in the two TTs. No Norwegian and Swedish culture norms relating to sex and gender are clearly expressed in the text in the form of additions, but it is possible to conclude that the two Scandinavian TTs seem to contain fewer descriptions of Vicki's appearance, and fewer instances of misogynistic comments. In the translated passages concerning women's role in aviation, Vicki faces fewer negative remarks from other people around her, and she appears more confident than in the American ST as to whether she has the right to follow her dream. This is true especially for the Swedish TT, but also in the Norwegian text. In the case of misogynistic comments, one notes that there are a few instances where the Norwegian TT has become more derogatory toward women than the ST, but the occurrences where the opposite is the case outnumber the former.

I have only had the possibility to highlight select excerpts from the novel. When looking at the overall results from the analysis (i.e. including text passages that have not been presented in this chapter), it turns out that gender perspectives in many cases are translated in an ST-oriented way, i.e. with no major changes. Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that the Scandinavian readers are faced with less sexist and misogynistic content than are the ST readers.

The Swedish TT is shorter than its original and it is therefore not surprising that it contains frequent omissions. It appears as if several of the omissions are made in passages with sexist or misogynistic content. This is an interesting result and one may hypothesize whether this strategy mirrors the society in which the TT was published. Earlier, I put forward the possibility that this study may reveal the effects of target culture norms relating to sex and gender in the two TTs. The Swedish text was published as late as 1964, which is more than ten years after the American publication. As mentioned earlier, gender equality was on its way to becoming a norm in Scandinavia at the time and the Vicki Barr translations may mirror these changes. Theander (2017, pp. 312–315) mentions that mid-century's girls' fiction mirrors the society in which it was written. In passing she suggests that one, when looking for information on attitudes to gender roles at the time, instead of turning to historical and sociological methods, might study how these books deal with gender (Theander, 2017, p. 11). Could we then, following Theander's suggestion, proceed in the same way when studying translations?

Let me for one moment return to the topic of misogynistic comments. López and Alvstad (2017, p. 4) point out that the views on what is considered appropriate for, among others, women to do, say, think, etc. change over time. This means that the views on what may have been perceived as misogynistic in the 1950s and what is considered misogynistic today not necessarily correspond. In this study, I have focused on misogynistic comments uttered by the characters in the novel, which would, no doubt, have been perceived as misogynistic also by the mid-cen-

ture readers. One may have missed, however, other – most probably unintended – authorial comments, that the readers of today may perceive as misogynistic. In a future study, it would be highly interesting to study whether there are different strategies at work when translating comments uttered by the characters and comments uttered by the author or narrator.

Considering the feminist leanings critics have witnessed in the Vicki Barr series, as noted in the beginning of this chapter, I would argue that the two translators (or the publisher, editor, or another literary agent involved in the translation-revision process), measured by today's standards, have done Wells a favor by making these leanings more evident in the two TTs; this is mainly achieved by omissions, but also by reformulating words with neutral connotations. However, some passages – for example the one in which Vicki defies her father and takes flying lessons – are translated in an ST-oriented way in both TTs. This orientation results in a forwarding of Wells' feminist tendencies to the TT readers.

In the introduction to this chapter, I referred to López and Alvstad's (eds., 2017) book on gender and translation, where they mentioned that there are activist tendencies in feminist translation studies and that feminist translators are trying to subvert anti-feminist discourse in translation. In the case of the translators, Arnold Jacoby and Gudrun Ullman, we do not know much about their views on feminism and women's liberation. Directing the interest toward these specific translators may be a possible area for future studies. What we do see, though, is that they have – as also Tenngart (in López & Alvstad, 2017, p. 7) noted in the case of Baudelaire's poetry in Swedish – toned down anti-feminist discourses in the Scandinavian target texts, hence indirectly making them more feminist than before.

Lastly, I have made the assumption that omitting or diminishing misogynistic comments or sexist content make the TTs more progressive in terms of their emancipatory potential. In addition, I suggest the possibility that these passages *per se* are activist. It is possible that they are activist, serving as eye-openers for how unfairly women are treated, and to provoke the readers to react.

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