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Two Versions of the Same Narrative – Astrid Lindgren's *Mio, min Mio* in Swedish and Danish

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RÉSUMÉ

Cet article est en partie une revue des qualités littéraires des contes narratifs de l'auteur suédoise pour enfants, Astrid Lindgren, et en partie une comparaison de la version suédoise de *Mio, min Mio* et de sa traduction danoise de 1955. On montre comment la version danoise a été adaptée du suédois et ainsi pourquoi la version danoise n'a pas les mêmes qualités littéraires que l'original.

ABSTRACT

This article is in part a review of the literary qualities of the narrative tales written by the Swedish children's author Astrid Lindgren and in part a comparative reading of the Swedish *Mio, min Mio* (*Mio, my son*) and its Danish translation from 1955. It will be shown how the Danish version has been adapted from the Swedish and how as a result the Danish version of the narrative does not have the same literary quality as the original.

MOTS-CLÉS/KEYWORDS

adaptation, translation for children, narrative tales, comparative reading, literary qualities

Opening Remarks

It is difficult, if not impossible, to give an unequivocal response to the question of what constitutes a good translation. Translators have a variety of approaches and attitudes to their work, and their opinions on what one can or cannot write for children change not only from one period of time to another, but also from country to country and within the various language communities in between. In this article the intention is not, however, to give strategies and guidelines for a good translation from a theoretical standpoint, but to give a concrete example of a translation that seems to have neglected the linguistic and literary dimension and has focussed instead purely on the level of plot. I have chosen to look at the Danish translation of the Swedish *Mio, min Mio* (1954, Danish: *Mio min Mio* 1955, English *Mio, my son* 1956), written by Astrid Lindgren. The Danish version of Astrid Lindgren's *Mio, min Mio* tells the same story as the Swedish original and the message is the same; however, the Danish translator Else Kappel had a different type of reader in mind from that of the book's actual author, Astrid Lindgren. As I will show in my examination of the two versions, the Danish text is simpler than the Swedish source text and whereas the Swedish original is a book of high literary merit, its Danish counterpart is an adaptation and is less rich and has fewer literary qualities. I will return to what I mean by this later.

The reason I have chosen *Mio, min Mio* as a case study of what a translation should not be is firstly because I wish to draw attention to the many differences there are between the two versions and what implications cuts and changes carry for a literary text, and secondly because Astrid Lindgren is one of the most translated of children's authors. Her books have been translated into 76 languages, while, for the sake of comparison, Selma Lagerlöf has been translated into 38 languages, August Strindberg into 36 languages, and to quote a modern example, Joanne K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books have been translated into 42 languages. In 1997 there were in existence 3,000 different editions of Astrid Lindgren's books and approximately 80 million single copies. In addition, Astrid Lindgren has proved in books such as *Mio, min Mio* and *Bröderna Lejonhjärta* (1973, English: *The Brothers Lionheart* 1975) that she is not only a good storyteller but she has also revealed her literary consciousness and great diversity. For this reason I believe it is worth looking at how the literary aspect of her work has been lost to some degree in the Danish translation, which as a result of this comes across as a good story but one which is linguistically uninteresting.

In this article I will not make reference to any other translations of Astrid Lindgren's work; I will focus exclusively on *Mio, min Mio* and only look at the Swedish original as compared with the Danish translation. My final conclusions are drawn from an analysis of the Swedish source text and a comparative reading of the Swedish and Danish texts. My purpose in examining *Mio, min Mio* is to show in what ways it not only qualifies as a good story, but also as a work of high literary merit. This is a dimension that I believe has been lost in the Danish translation.

In my analysis and examination of the source text and the Danish translation of *Mio, min Mio,* respectively, I have chosen to leave my examples in the languages they are quoted from, as my point with the various quotations will be lost in an English translation. I have, however, made references to where the respective quotation can be found in the English edition of *Mio, min Mio*. In this regard I should point out that I do not make any comments on the English translation *Mio, my son*, even if, clearly, it is not without its own problems.

As a basis for the remarks I make in this article I will give a brief review of some viewpoints and guidelines with respect to literary translation. Following that, there is an interpretation of *Mio, min Mio* and an evaluation of where the merits and strengths of Astrid Lindgren's authorship lie. The last part of the article will be a comparative reading of the two versions, the aim of which is to show what changes and decisions have been made in the translation and what the consequences have been.

The Translation of Fiction

One of the many problems one has to face up to in the field of literary translation, and especially with respect to the translation of children's literature, is that the readership of the target text probably will not have the same background knowledge as the readership of the source text. This can mean, for example, that a variety of explanations, adaptations or direct changes may be necessary. References that only the source text reader may be familiar with would be a case in point. It is the task of the translator to make appropriate decisions on how s/he will compensate linguistically for the new reader's lack of background knowledge and it is imperative here for there

to be consistency in the chosen strategy. In addition, it is very important that the translator be sensitive to the expressions that are used in a figurative or metaphorical sense. Often similes and metaphors do not necessarily have a direct translation, particularly when used with humour or irony. It is important that the context of the source text be preserved and respected in the target text, and that the various changes and adaptations be consistent with the context. Translation involves not only linguistic competence, but also the competence to deal with intertextuality, psychology and the narrative. However, as Umberto Eco writes in the introduction to *Experiences in Translation:* "Every sensible and rigorous theory of language shows that a perfect translation is an impossible dream." (Eco 2001, ix) The target text has of necessity to be different from the source text because, as Riitta Oittinen writes in her *Translating for Children* (2000, p. 3) "they [the translators] bring to the translation their cultural heritage, their reading experience, and, in the case of children's books, their image of childhood and their own child image," and, as mentioned above, because they have different backgrounds and different frames of reference.

I, like many others, believe that it is important that the target text be as close to the source text as it can possibly be and that the message, the atmosphere and the symbolism be retained in the target text. The translator should not only decode the message, but also re-encode it; the text should not only be dissected but also fully re-constituted. In other words, the characteristics of a good translation are that it should be both faithful to the original and faithful to the receiving language. It should follow the original as accurately as possible, but at the same time there should be enough freedom for it to be literature in its own language. It cannot be literal textbound translation as this type of translation, characterised by poor flow, poor rhythm, insufficient variety and potentially incoherent and contradictory passages, is clearly unsuitable for the translation of fiction. For this reason it is important that the focus moves away from the word to other semantic units to give a better translation. The largest semantic unit is the text in its own communicative context. However, very often the semantic elements that are said to guarantee appropriate textual continuity are syntactical. There are two basic requirements in a text, or two features that characterise a text: one is that every sentence should contain shared knowledge with the previous sentence (sure coherence); the other is that every sentence should contain new knowledge (to avoid total redundancy). It is the task of the translator to ensure that the communicative force of the sentences is respected so that the sentences in the translated text cohere with both the preceding and following sentences. It is also at this level that there is such a large difference between the two versions of *Mio, min Mio*. I do not mean to say that the Danish text does not cohere, but that the communicative force has been changed and the Danish text emerges as more concrete and direct, with less redundancy and less information, than the Swedish text. There is less freedom given to the imagination in the Danish version.

Astrid Lindgren's Literary Qualities

Mio, min Mio was Astrid Lindgren's literary breakthrough and I consider that, along with *Bröderna Lejonhjärta*, it should be seen as one of the absolute highpoints of her writing career. It is, as mentioned above, these two books that show that Astrid Lindgren is more than just a good storyteller and humorist. In the following section

I will argue the case for the literary merits of *Mio, min Mio*. In this context, I will not focus on the plot of the narrative, as the purpose of this article is to examine the way in which the translation has neglected the linguistic and literary dimension and the consequences of this.

Astrid Lindgren made her debut in 1944 with a novel for girls *Britt-Mari lättar sitt hjärta* (1944, [Britt-Mari Speaks her Mind] which has not been translated into English), but it was when *Pippi Långstrump* (1945, *Pippi Longstocking* 1950) came out the year after that the world began to take note of this new writer. Long before her debut Astrid Lindgren had written short stories for, among others, the Swedish magazine *Landsbygdens Jul* [Countryside Christmas]. Apart from these stories, however, *Mio, min Mio* was Astrid Lindgren's first fantasy novel. *Mio, min Mio* was followed by two collections, *Nils Karlsson-Pyssling* (1949, [Simon Small] which has not been translated into English) and *Sunnanäng* (1959, [The Southern Meadow] which also has not been translated into English), and *Bröderna Lejonhjärta* (1973, *The Brothers Lionheart* 1975) and one of her output *Ronja röverdotter* (1981, *The Robber's Daughter* 1983). From the first two short narratives through to *Bröderna Lejonhjärta* Astrid Lindgren developed her own style of tale. It was a style that built on the popular tradition of the folk tale at the core, spiced with elements from the genre of the novel in the sense used by Mikhail Bachtin, the Russian literary scholar. With her narratives Astrid Lindgren revitalised and developed the tradition of the tale, as we know it, from the folk tale and also from the literary tale. It is important to bear in mind that Astrid Lindgren was inspired by writers such as the Danish writer of fairy tales Hans Christian Andersen, the Swedish writer Elsa Beskow and poets such as Edith Södergran. The literary allusions that Astrid Lindgren makes are easy to find in her writings, especially in her fairy tales. In *Mio, min Mio* there are references, for example, to Aladdin from *1001 nats eventyr* (*Tales from 1001 Arabian Nights*) and to Edith Södergran's poem „Landet som icke är" (the collection of poems *Landet som icke är* [The Land That Didn't Exist], published posthumously in 1925).

Astrid Lindgren's version of the tale is recognisable by its varied and distinctive use of linguistic style, its use of spoken language, the narrator's authority and firm grip on the reader, and by the way the story is located in a social context. The clear intertextuality, the metafictional features and the interplay between fiction and reality are also distinctive features. The innovation in the tale consists then in its linguistic awareness and the integration of both literary and non-literary genres. Where the form of the traditional folk tale had become rigid, Astrid Lindgren took its idiom and the genre's characteristic features and revitalised them by placing them in a social context, in the premises of the novel. The social context is apparent in the clear representation of reality in the opening chapter, but also through the interpretation that these works lead towards. The influence of the folk tale is seen in the structure of the tale, in the narrative process and in the oral dimension. Her narrative, like the folk tale, contains a great deal of linguistic redundancy, and folk tales are clearly the inspiration behind the detailed description of the characters, the resolution of conflict and the figurative language. In addition, Mio's referential world comes from his reading of tales.

What Astrid Lindgren does in her stories is to let an oral tradition inspire the literariness of her stories. She uses the vernacular of popular culture and combines it with a very literary tradition. To put it another way, she brings the spoken world into

the novel. In Astrid Lindgren's stories there is sophisticated figurative spoken language, which brings out the atmosphere and its symbolic value. In other words, in Astrid Lindgren's writing there is clear evidence of the oral tradition and the structure of the folk tale. The many demonstrable similarities between Astrid Lindgren's style and the oral narrative are seen in the fact that the story can be recited, it is rich in vocabulary, it has a rhythm, the narrative style depends for its effect on fluency, it is concerned with situations rather than abstractions and it has recourse to strong emotions, empathy and sympathy. In *Mio, min Mio* there are outbursts and variations in the use of language and style to make the narration linguistically dynamic to bring it alive and to keep the reader engaged. There is interplay between the various rhetorical figures of speech, there are references to poems, tales and much more, which strengthens the dynamism of her narrative. The obvious intertextuality in *Mio, min Mio* is a feature that has parallels with the novel and separates it from the classical tale and the epic poem. However, the oral expression, the plot and the structure draw more from the folk tale genre.

Astrid Lindgren varies the language by working with different sentence constructions. There are, for instance, examples of paratactical and analytical language. Mio's many sentences starting with and linking repetitively with 'and' are instances of polysyndeton language. Examples of asyndeton are to be found in descriptive passages, particularly in critical situations such as when Mio rides over Morgonljusets bro (the Bridge of Morninglight) for the first time, thinking they are riding to their doom.

Apart from the use of the vernacular, language styles fluctuate between being everyday language, poetic, high-flown and at times simply theatrical. The theatrical tone is apparent in such passages as Bosse's dialogue with the spirit when he wants him to take him to Landet i Fjärran (Farawayland). The language is also rich in imagery and asyndeton is employed here, too. Using outbursts and exclamations serves partly to enrich the atmosphere and to enhance the effect of oral expression, and partly to heighten the drama. The oral effect is also strengthened by the many references to the reader and formulations such as: "This is how I got my horse Miramis." Of other linguistic devices it is worth mentioning the use of simile. There are examples of simile when the boys are hiding from Sir Kato's scouts; they compare themselves to two leverets waiting for the fox to come. The similes concretise the connection between the levels of imagery and reality. Mio alludes to his experiences in Landet i Fjärran (Farawayland) several times and compares them with his dreams and nightmares in Upplansgatan (North Street), which also serves to maintain the dramatic tension and to provide a link with his own time and reality. By using images and allusions that the reader/child is assumed to be familiar with, the author maintains the connection between the reader and the narrator. At the same time Mio makes it clear that the whole thing is worse than a dream, since no dream can be that awful. The language is rich with imagery and the range of vocabulary full of powerful words that increase the feeling of how evil and fearful everything is. The use of superlative adjectives has an intensifying effect. Thus language is used to accelerate the pace of the action and to emphasise the gravity of the situation, the fear and the dread, as, for example, with Sir Kato. The name is first mentioned in hushed tones, then the name is mentioned again followed by details of what he has done. In the end the mere mention of his name is enough; the two words "Sir Kato" are enough for Mio and hence the reader to know what follows.

Bosse gets an apple from "tant Lundin" (Mrs. Lundy), which is described later as a "golden gold apple." "Golden" is in itself superfluous, but in this context it acts as an intensifier. Several such formulations then appear as set phrases, such as the "golden gold apple," and it exemplifies pleonastic usage. When Mio asks after Nonno's brothers or Jiri's (Totty) sister, the answers he receives use very similar language and when Jum Jum (Pompoo) makes repeated wishes the language he uses is similar too. Even though it is only the final parts of the sentences that are similar, the tone and the melody are the same. A quotation from the English translation of *Mio, min Mio* illustrates this point:

> "'Sir Kato,' whispered Nonno, 'the cruel Sir Kato has taken them.'" (Lindgren 1956, p. 50),
> "'Sir Kato!' said Totty (Jiri). 'The cruel Sir Kato has taken her away!'" (Lindgren 1956, p. 61) or
> the mountains weren't so black and we weren't so small and lonely.'" (Lindgren 1956, p. 86) and
> "'I wish our boat wasn't so small!' said Pompoo (Jum Jum). 'I wish the lake wasn't so deep and the waves weren't so wild! I wish we weren't so small and lonely!'" (Lindgren 1956, p. 130).

The same technique is used with Jum Jum's comments about Mio's ignorance.

The use of redundancy also helps to strengthen the oral feel of the narrative. All the repetition of language, especially in the last half of the narrative, helps to create a stereotypical folk tale effect rather than an individual writing style. This section of the book shares therefore several typical features of the stereotypical folk tale. These features enhance the impression of a folk tale and reinforce the child's view of events. The "and" clauses have the same effect; they reinforce the sense of the oral mode and also the impression that it is a child telling the story.

While Upplandsgatan (North Street) is described in everyday language, Landet i Fjärran (Farawayland) and Rosengården (Garden of Roses) are described in high-flown, lyrical prose. Astrid Lindgren's style of set phrases, superlatives and recitation prose is not just artistically sophisticated, it also corresponds to the child's need for something other than everyday modes of expression. It also provides rhythmic language and its own atmosphere and originality.

In this section I have tried to outline how I think that Astrid Lindgren has very deliberately employed the multiplicity of language in *Mio, min Mio*. In the next section I would like to give a comparative reading of the two versions of *Mio, min Mio* to show how the linguistic variety has been lost in the Danish translation.

The Danish Version of *Mio, min Mio*

Mio, min Mio was translated into Danish in 1955 by the Danish translator and children's author Else Kappel. In the Danish edition not only the text but also the illustrations have been changed. Ilon Wikland's illustrations were replaced with illustrations by Iben Clante's. There are 23 illustrations in the Danish *Mio, min Mio*, whereas there were 56 in the original book. Of these only 14 illustrate the same sequence or, to put it another way, have the same inspiration from the text. Both illustrators have depicted the scene in which Kato's scouts take Miramis prisoner, but for the majority of the motifs it is true to say that Iben Clante chose to illustrate different sections from the text than Ilon Wikland. Iben Clante was clearly inspired

by Ilon Wikland's illustrations, and this is seen in the illustrations below, respectively, Ilon Wikland's and Iben Clante's illustration of the children sitting round the "Brunnen som viskar om kvällen" (The Well That Whispers at Night). However, despite the obvious influence, the interpretation behind Iben Clante's illustrations is different; they have been toned down, as is seen in the two illustrators' completely different interpretation of the ride over Morgonljuset bro (the Bridge of Morninglight).

Ilon Wikland chose to emphasize the idyllic elements of the ride with the two boys on the back of the great horse with the butterflies flying around their ears, while Iben Clante chose to show Mio covering his eyes. Apart from Mio with his hands over her eyes, there is no drama in the illustration. Ilon Wikland has several separate full page illustrations, many with a caption – an excerpt taken from the main body of the text – while Iben Clante uses smaller illustrations, all without a caption, often with the boys, as in the scene where the scouts capture Miramis and the boys are looking back at a rock, which is two separate illustrations in the Swedish book. Iben Clante very often takes two separate illustrations by Ilon Wikland and combines them in one.

Quite apart from the illustrations, which are fewer in number and smaller in size than in the Swedish original, the Danish translation of *Mio, min Mio* differs in its overall presentation. It has a 128x205mm format instead of the 152x205mm of the original. Furthermore, there is a table of contents in the Danish version, which is not there in the Swedish version. As my reading and comparison of the two versions will show, the Danish edition is different in presentation, form and content from the original, which is a book with a very conscious use of literary devices, while the Danish rendering has been made simpler, but I will come back to this later.

In the Danish *Mio, min Mio* the action has been moved from Sweden to Denmark, from Upplandsgatan 13 in the Swedish capital of Stockholm to Gl. Kongevej 73 in the Danish capital of Copenhagen, from Tegnérlunden to Frederiksberg Have. The characters' names have also been changed, so that Benka (Ben) is called Kesse, Bosse (Andy) becomes Busse, Edla (Aunt Hulda) becomes Edel and Sixten (Uncle Olaf) becomes Sigurd. It is clear that the translator tried to find names that were close to the names in the original text, but as a Danish reader one has to wonder about the choice of Busse as opposed to Bosse, for example. In fact, the change from Janne to Jens (Buster) is the only one that appears to be obvious and appropriate, since Janne in Denmark is a girl's name and could therefore have led to misunderstandings if it had remained in the target text. It is only in the frame narrative, which takes place in a real geographical area, that names have been changed.

When Mio arrives in Landet i Fjärran and enters the fantasy world, which is universal in nature, names, place names, etc. are kept. Jum Jum remains as Jum Jum and Jiri is Jiri, and so on. The fantasy world is thus the same in both versions. It is difficult to find a justification for the location of the text moving from Sweden to Denmark. However, one argument could be that by using an area that is familiar to the child, or at least one that they have heard of, this increases the chances that the child can identify with the story, and that was one way of retaining verisimilitude. However, since Stockholm, Tegnérlunden etc. exist as places (in a neighbouring country to Denmark) and since many Danish children will not know Gl. Kongevej or Frederiksberg Have any better than Tegnérlunden or Stockholm, the change appears unnecessary.

Above I have picked out and commented on the most visible changes. The most striking changes, however, are found in the language, right down to the level of syntax. Many details, sections and descriptions in the original are missing from the Danish version. The translation is shorter than the original, the syntax and content have been simplified and the style of writing has been changed. I will give examples of this below.

As the quotation below shows, the changes give the effect of simplification in the Danish text (it follows the Swedish text). The section „Kanske det var sant, att min mor dog, nar jag foddes" [Perhaps it was true that my mother died when I was born] is left out in the Danish version. This is clearly a change that has some significance for the content. In the Danish translation Mio is not aware that his mother may have died in childbirth and it is ignored or forgotten.

> „Jag hatade tant Edla för att hon sa så om min far. Kanske det var sant, att min mor dog, när jag föddes. Men jag visste att min far inte var någon slusk" (Lindgren 1954, p. 11), is translated as:
> „Jeg hadede tante Edel, fordi hun sagde det om min far. Jeg vidste, at min far ikke var en slubbert" (Lindgren 1955, p. 9).
> („I hated Aunt Hulda for speaking like that about my father. Perhaps it was true that my mother died when I was born, but I *knew* that my father wasn't a good-for-nothing", Lindgren 1956, p. 11).

There is a lot more redundancy in the Swedish text than in the Danish. I consider the redundant style an important part of the linguistic expression of the narrative, as it is through the use of redundancy that the narrative shows its connection with the tradition of the folk tale, which as I have shown above is of the greatest significance for *Mio, min Mio* as well as for other tales. As the repetition has been removed in the Danish translation, this dimension has been lost. The redundancy on many occasions has an intensifying effect and this can be interpreted as Mio firmly taking hold of the narrative. He has not only to convince the reader, but he has also to convince himself that the story is true, that he is really Prince Mio, who lives with his father, the king, in Landet i Fjärran (Farawayland).

The example below demonstrates how the use of asyndeton in the Swedish text heightens the drama; the Danish text does not use asyndeton with the result that the episode does not work nearly so dramatically.

> „Det var då jag såg det som höll på att hända. Det forsträckliga som höll på at hända. Miramis galopperade" (Lindgren 1954, p. 58) [That was when I realized what was going to happen. The terrible thing that was going to happen. Miramis was galloping..] vs.
> „I det samme så jeg det frygtelige, der var ved at ske. Miramis galoperede" (Lindgren 1955, p. 47).
> („Then I realized that something terrible was going to happen. Miramis was galloping straight toward a great drop", Lindgren 1956, p. 56).

There are instances of strong affirmative statements in the Swedish text, which become exclamations in the Danish text. In the following example Mio wishes that Benka were there with him. The Swedish text says: ja, jag önskade [Yes, I wished...] while in the Danish it is an exclamation: ih, hvor jeg ønskede [Oh, how I wished...].

> „Ja, jag önskade att Benka hade varit där" (Lindgren 1954, p. 25) vs.
> „Ih, hvor jeg ønskede, at Kesse havde været der" (Lindgren 1955, p. 20-21).
> („How I longed for Ben!", Lindgren 1956, p. 25).

Indirect speech is often turned into direct speech:

> „Hon sa att det inte var någon besvär“ (Lindgren 1954, p. 30) vs.
> „Det er da ikke spor ulejlighed, sagde hun“ (Lindgren 1955, p. 24).
> [That's no trouble at all, she said.].
> („She said it wouldn't be any trouble at all“, Lindgren 1956, p. 29).

In the section Bryr stjärnor sig om, ifall man spelar för dem? (Do Stars Care if you Play to Them?) the boys want to go to Nonno's grandmother. Nonno says that it is a long way, but if they play their flutes they won't notice the distance, and Jum Jum agrees. Jum Jum's support for what Nonno suggests and Mio's additional comment that Jum Jum and he would also like to go to the grandmother's is missing in the Danish, yet another example of how the Swedish original text has been simplified:

> „Ja, men vägen bliver kort, om vi spelar, när vi går, sa Nonno. – Ja, ja, vägen bliver inte alls lång, om vi bara spelar, när vi går, sa Jum Jum. Han ville, att vi skulle gå hem till Nonnos farmor, och det ville jag också“ (Lindgren 1954, p. 46) vs.
> „Ja, men vejen bliver kort, hvis vi spiller, når vi går, sagde Nonno“ (Lindgren 1955, p. 38).
> („'Yes, she does, but it won't seem far if we play as we go along,' said Nonno. 'That's right,' said Pompoo. 'It'll only seem a little way if we play as we go along.' He wanted to go to Nonno's grandmother as much as I did“, Lindgren 1956, p. 45).

There are several instances where Mio adds small comments to what he says or he makes a comment about his experiences, which are left out in the Danish. On one occasion Mio comments that a dark cloud passes over his father's face, which is translated into Danish as: han svarede mørkt [he answered darkly].

> „'- Ridder Kato,' sa min fader konungen, och det kom liksom ett mörker över hans ansikte“ (Lindgren 1954, p. 55) vs.
> „Svarede min fader kongen mørkt“ (Lindgren 1955, p. 44).
> („'Sir Kato,' said my father the King, and his face darkened“, Lindgren 1956, p. 53)

Mio often repeats himself, saying the same word several times, thus intensifying the effect, as in the following; jeg var så bange, så bange [I was so frightened, so frightened]. In my opinion there is an important point behind the repetition of „bange“ [frightened] and the decision not to use „forfærdelig bange“ [terribly frightened], which is how Else Kappel translated it. Astrid Lindgren writes in a way which very faithfully reflects the child narrator's vocabulary and referential world, a sensitivity that is missing in the Danish version.

Astrid Lindgren's descriptive writing is very poetic, with many examples of rich imagery and a great use of stylistic devices, such as simile. Similes are also used in the Danish text, but more sparingly. In the Swedish text „there is a whistling in the silver poplars as if a sudden storm had passed over them and the leaves fell to the ground with a sound like someone weeping“. In the Danish text there is only „a whistling in the silver poplars“.

> "Då brusade det i silverpoppelarna, som om en storm hade gått fram över dem. Många blad föll till marken, och det var som om någon grät, när de föll. Jag kände att jag var rädd för riddar Kato. Så rädd, så rädd" (Lindgren 1954, p. 56) vs.
> "Da brusede det i sølvpoplerne og jeg følte, at jeg var bange for ridder Kato. Så forfærdelig bange" (Lindgren 1955, p. 44-45).

(„There was a whistling in the silver poplars as if a fierce gust of wind had passed over them. Many leaves dropped to the ground, and there was a sound when they fell as if someone were weeping. I felt afraid of Sir Kato – terribly afraid", Lindgren 1956, p. 54).

Mio compares Jiri's house to a house familiar to him from fairy tales and he says that it must be because the well in the farmyard reminds him of a fairy tale house, since as Mio goes on to point out, that kind of well does not exist any longer or at least he has not seen one before. Else Kappel's translation omits this last statement and it is another instance of how the Danish text is an adaptation of the original. I see what Mio says as one of the many techniques he uses to build up his story, drawing on references at hand and constantly keeping in contact with the real-life world and with the time this narrative is set in.

„Jag fick for mig, att brunnen hade menat någonting särskilt just med den sagan. Att jag var den konungasonen, som en gång hade ridit genom Dunkla skogen och att jag måste göra det om igen. Att brunnen hade berättat och sjungit för mig en hel kväll bara för att påminna mig om det som jag måste göra" (Lindgren 1954, p. 71)

vs.

„Jeg syntes pludselig, at det var mig, der engang havde redet gennem den Dunkle Skov, og at jeg måtte gøre det igen" (Lindgren 1955, p. 57), [I suddenly thought that it was me who had ridden through the Forest of Moonbeams and I had to do it again.].

(„It seemed as if the well had meant something special by the story – perhaps that I was the king's son who had once ridden through the Forest of Moonbeams, and that I must do it again – and that the well had spoken and sung to *me* for a whole evening just to remind me of what I must do, Lindgren 1956, p. 69)

There are also a number of instances where the Danish version has added to the original text and a situation or an atmosphere has been made more concrete, whereas the original had been more suggestive.

„Riddar Katos borg! Där borta fanns han" (Lindgren 1954, p. 90) [Sir Kato's castle! He was there.] vs.
„'Ridder Katos borg,' hviskede Jum Jum og Miramis skælvede. Ridder Katos borg! Derovre var han" (Lindgren 1955, p. 73) ['Sir Kato's castle,' whispered Jum Jum and Miramis trembled. Sir Kato's castle! He was there.].
(„'Sir Kato's castle,' whispered Pompoo, and Miramis trembled. Sir Kato's castle! *He* was there!", Lindgren 1956, p. 89).

Beyond the omissions – descriptions, comments, reflection, etc. – the most noticeable thing about the Danish version is the changed syntax. Else Kappel uses more short sentences and more paragraphs, and there is less detail than in the Swedish source text. In some cases it is clear that Else Kappel, in trying to retain the atmosphere of the original, has chosen ill-sounding phrases or words.

Where Astrid Lindgren's text draws on the oral tradition of narration and retains the original narrative setting, Else Kappel has chosen a simpler form of presentation, which though it might make the text easier to read, loses some of its literary quality. With respect to the two versions of *Mio, min Mio*, Else Kappel's primary consideration was not the source text, but the reader.

Mio, min Mio

There is nothing in the Danish edition of *Mio, min Mio* to tell us that the book had been abridged, changed or adapted to suit Danish conditions; we are only told that it was translated into Danish by Else Kappel. As I have briefly outlined above, some striking changes have been made to the original text. By reducing the redundancy in the language, removing detailed description, reflection and commentary by the characeters the Danish version has been simplified and made plainer in its style. The implicit is made concrete, so that it is impossible to misunderstand what is meant. As Else Kappel chooses to split sentences up there are more short sentences in the Danish, and she has many more paragraphs. The context is retained, the problematic situation and thus also the storyline is kept, but still it is not the same *Mio, min Mio* that the respective readers of the source text and the target text meet. They are told the same story, but the literary quality in terms of the wordplay, the varieties and styles of language is missing in the Danish text and it comes across as linguistically less interesting than the Swedish one. The changed syntax has caused me to conclude that the Swedish book is relatively complex with conscious use of literary devices, whereas the Danish text has been through an adaptation process and is a lot simpler. All the evidence suggests that Else Kappel had a different reader in mind from Astrid Lindgren and that this was probably the motivation and the reasoning behind various changes; she was trying to reduce the complexity in the text and thus make it easier to read. As I consider that Astrid Lindgren shows her literary prowess particularly in books like *Mio, min Mio*, it is a problem that translations like the Danish one do not manage to open this dimension to a wider audience, by which I do not mean that the Danish *Mio, min Mio* is not literature, only that the Danish *Mio, min Mio* prioritises content over form, while the Swedish text gives the two equal priority. In other words, Else Kappel does not seem to have the same confidence in children's ability to read literature as does Astrid Lindgren.

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