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**READING KAREN BLIXEN IN DIFFERENT CULTURES.**

**“SAILOR-BOY’S TALE” (“SKIBSDRENGENS FORTÆLLING”):**

**WHAT IS LOST AND GAINED IN SELF-TRANSLATION?**

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The paper analyses Karen Blixen’s short story “The Sailor-boy’s Tale”, which opens her collection “Winter’s Tales” (1942), in comparison with the Danish translation made by the author in the same year. The Danish text is considered the result of a process of auto-translation, recoding, and adaptation of the text for the Scandinavian reader. In the Danish version, the prose is more rhythmic and the descriptions are more vivid, which enhances the sensual authenticity. However, allusions to English and American authors and quotations are translated into Danish, which obscures their significance as markers of intertextual dialogue. Additionally, the dialogue with Scandinavian pretexts and paintings familiar to the Danish reader becomes more pronounced.

**Keywords:** Karen Blixen, Isak Dinesen, Danish literature, selftranslation, E. M. Forster, *Winter’s Tales*, intertextuality.

Karen Blixen (1885–1962) is one of the well-known examples of self-translating authors. If we talk about the early to mid-twentieth century, she finds herself among such names as V. Nabokov, S. Beckett, A. Strindberg, and E. Södergran. Unlike her contemporaries, Blixen used a pen name for her English editions. The majority of her English works were published under the pseudonym Isak Dinesen. The writer’s choice of a male pseudonym follows a long tradition of women writers using male names to increase the reception of their work, as male literature was historically better received than female literature.

K. Blixen attributed her choice of English as the main language of communication with her readers to her desire to write for a larger audience and for economic reasons [Brantly, 2002]. In addition, English was her main language of communication in Africa among British settlers, aristocrats and officials, where she lived from 1914 to 1931. Thus, most of her works were written keeping in mind the anglophone world and taking into account the cultural baggage of English-speaking readers. Her first works were therefore coolly received in Denmark.

The present paper aims to take a closer look at the first story in the collection of short stories “Winter’s Tales” (1942) “The Sailor-Boy’s Tale” (“Skibsdrengens fortælling”) as a result of self-translation, by some scholars called “transcreation” [Steponavičiūtė, 2011] and adaptation of the text to the perception of readers belonging to different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, who have experience in reading texts and are familiar with works of art from different cultures.

When comparing the English and Danish texts, the English text is considered the first original and the Danish text the second original [Gentes, Van Bolderen, 2021].

The focus of the research is on what changes the short story has undergone as a result of self-translation at the textual (lexical and syntactic levels), and what factual changes occur at the story level. Another important question is whether the Danish version retains all the clues to intertextual dialogue with the predecessor works that are familiar to Anglo-American audiences.

K. Blixen’s “Winter’s Tales” in both English and Danish versions retains a reference to two English texts, W. Shakespeare’s “The Winter’s tale” (1623), R. L. Stevenson’s “The Master of Ballantrae: A Winter’s Tale” (1889), and the German text “Deutschland — ein Wintermärchen” (1844) by H. Heine. It was written over a period of five years and published in 1942 in both England and the USA in English. The author took only two months (from 11.05 to 11.07.1942) [Behrendt, 2010, s. 406] to translate and “recode” a new version for Danish readers.

A comparison of the changes that occurred during the process of “recoding” as a result of self-translation into Danish is rather complicated because of the fact that the Danish version remained unchanged, while the English version was corrected and amended with each new British edition until 1958 [Roper, 1998]. It means, that by 1958, there

were also significant discrepancies between the British and American versions of the book.

D. Roper cites the memoirs of Blixen's secretary Ulla Rask, who shares a description of how the writer worked when writing the Danish version of the book. She would dictate the translation, then finalise it herself, then dictate it again, making changes. Sometimes the Danish version of translation appeared before the finished English, which means that the English and Danish texts were sometimes worked on simultaneously [Roper, 1998].

Similar to other bilingual authors, the writer switches from one cultural code to another not by translating but by rewriting her texts, refining them stylistically and making some factual changes. Despite the writer's claim that writing in English came naturally after living in Africa, her English versions contained errors that were corrected by her editors, as well as there are some danisms that remained.

First of all, it concerns the translation of idioms. For example, in the English version of "The Sailor-boy's Tale" to describe the girl Nora a loan translation of the Danish idiom *at være slank som en ål* is used: "She was... *as slim as an eel*" [Dinesen, 2001, p. 9]. In another short story "The Pearls" the writer uses calque of the Danish proverb *Hæleren er lige så god som stjæleren*: "The receiver of stolen goods is no better than a thief" [Dinesen, 2001, p. 48], while there is an English proverb about the same: *The receiver is as bad as the thief*.

Researchers of Blixen's texts agree on the main features that characterise her prose — stylization of the oral narrative, high density of references to various pretexts, irony and ambivalence of her plots, which allow for multiple interpretations and suggest a special strategy of involving the reader in exploring the hidden relationship between events and providing his or her own interpretation of the story. Usually, Blixen establishes a dialogue with numerous previous texts, indicating a possible connection by means of various markers (quotations, paraphrases, plot parallelism, names of characters or places where the action takes place).

Susan Brantly points out that "the more a reader becomes aware of the hints, clues, allusions, and hidden meanings in the text, the deeper will be the reader's understanding" [Brantly, 2002, p. 1]

The ideological basis of K. Blixen's artistic worldview is to a large extent to be found in the principles according to which the world of the French and Danish Symbolists (S. Mallarmé, G. Vanor, S. Claussen)

functions: understatement, reality as a reflection of the world of ideas [Gabriel, 1994; Jørgensen, 1994] and the artistic world of E. M. Forster, who in his essay “Aspects of the Novel” (1927) develops the idea of the god-author and the artistic universe created by him and introduces the phenomenon of “homo fictus” — a character created by many predecessor authors [Forster, 2010].

For readers who lived during Blixen’s time, her allusions would have been more noticeable, as many of the texts which she refers to were recently written and therefore better known, such as K. Hamsun’s novels. However, the reading experience among the educated population in Europe was much more extensive than it is now. Furthermore, readers from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden perceived authors from these countries as culturally closer due to their shared history. Additionally, German culture had a significant impact on Danish culture during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that the reaction of the critics on the publication of “The Winter’s Tales” in Danish in a way proves the obviousness of the intertextual references. According to S. Brantly, the Danish critic Henning Kehler expressed his dissatisfaction with the writer’s use of pastiche technique, stating that “She has that truly feminine capacity to be able to copy superbly” [Brantly, 2002, p. 102].

The numerous semantic gaps in K. Blixen’s texts, which have to be filled, are revealed at a moment when there is a pause in the action, a sudden silence in the conversation or a long glance in the mirror. The characters in the short story turn white or red, faint, remain silent for a long time and always reveal a total change in their attitude towards the events and the change in their behavior. For example, the young girl from “The Sailor-Boy’s Tale” that gives the main character a kiss for an orange says at their first meeting that she is looking out for a man she is going to marry [Dinesen, 2001, p. 9]. At their last meeting she promises she will never marry anybody, as long as she lives [Dinesen, 2001, p. 12]. In “Pearls” the main character starts with the intention she would “never cry quarter, but that this must be her husband’s part” [Dinesen, 2001, p. 40]. But at the end of the story she admits, that “she will cry as loud as she can” [Dinesen, 2001, p. 48].

The references, that can be found both in English and in Danish texts by K. Blixen, evoke both the events from her own life and real persons, the literary pretexts and works of art. One of the many examples of how she turns the personal experiences into the narrative elements could be

the fact that one of the prototypes for Adelaide from “Ib and Adelaide” is a distant relative of the writer Agnes Krag-Juel-Vind-Frijs [Lasson, Selborn, 1992]. Another example is to be found in the “Sailor-boy’s Tale”: In the short story there is a mention of Takaunga, with its ruined minaret, where a Lappish witch flies to visit her sister, after having turned herself into a falcon. P. Behrendt indicates, that this location near Mombasa was the home of Karen Blixen’s lover Dennys Finch-Hatton [Behrendt, 2010, p. 285].

The names and appearances of the author’s characters, together with the landscapes described, serve often as a “portal” to the world of numerous images of predecessors. One and the same character can have features that identify him with several characters from texts of different cultures, thus creating an ironic dialogue and bringing together several authors from different periods and cultures on the plane of one text.

Depending on the reader’s cultural background and preferences, some markers cease to work, and with them the works alluded to by the author recede into the shadows, while others, on the contrary, become more obvious.

In his analysis of the intertextual dialogue that begins with the names of the characters in “Alkmene”, Jürgen Hiller draws a portrait gallery of the ancestors of William and Alkmene and Jens and Gertrud, which he finds in the Bible, the texts of Homer, H. Kleist, J. W. Goethe, S. S. Blicher [Hiller, 2020]. Another long gallery of portraits and a dialogue are to be found in the short story “The Bear and the Kiss” from 1958 [Lomagina, 2020].

Thus, the events in the author’s text develop in a similar or, more often, diametrically opposed way to the situations described in the texts referred to by means of markers, one of which can be the character’s name. In other cases, the reference alludes to the possibility that a character’s action or destiny may develop in a certain pattern beyond the plot, or allows to suspect the potential features of the character with that name.

Among the list of creations of predecessor authors with whom the writer enters into dialogue, there are a fair number of fine art objects. Some of them should arise in the reader’s memory thanks to the mention of the title or author, such as the names of the historical painting “Olav Tryggvason” by P.N. Arebo in the short story “The Bear and the Kiss” [Lomagina, 2020] or the names of Titian and Veronese in the short story “Eloise” [Sørensen, 2002]. Sometimes the presence of intermedial

interaction can be proved if there is a reference to it in another text by Blixen [Stahr, 2020].

As the newlyweds in the short story “The Pearls” go on a wedding trip to the Hardanger fjord, it sends, most likely, ironically the attentive reader to the famous painting by Norwegian artists H. Gude and A. Tidemann “Wedding Procession at Hardanger”, then the clue would be the name of the famous fjord and the description of beautiful views. In the same text, the views of Norwegian mountains with waterfalls and a rainbow above them is a generalized landscape, that alludes to the Norwegian landscape painter J. K. Dahl (“Rainbow over Stalheim”) and perhaps also J. Bauer’s illustrations to “The boy who was never afraid” by A. Smedberg, the story that is mentioned in the text.

The story “The Sailor’s Tale”, in the Danish version “Skibsdrengens fortælling”, is, on one hand, paired with the gothic short story “The Monkey” from “Seven Gothic Tales”, since it also deals with the transformation of a man into an animal, combined with murder and the magic of the moon. However, this story shares also similarities with the later text “The bear and the kiss” in that it features a witch (who is an alter ego of K. Blixen herself) that provides a young man with a magic drink, her support and protection. Despite her outward unattractiveness, the witch also has a certain erotic power over the young man.

The short story is commonly interpreted by scholars as a narrative of initiation that centers around the growth and maturity of a young man. The plot, in brief, is that a young man on a ship rescues a falcon that has become entangled in the rigging at the top of the mast. When the ship arrives in the Norwegian town of Bodø, he wanders around the town, meets a 14-year-old girl, gives her an orange and she promises him a kiss in return. She asks him to come back the next day for the kiss. On his way to the girl’s house, however, the young man is stopped by a group of drunken Russian sailors who want to have a drink with him. One of them confesses his love to the boy and won’t let him out of his drunken embrace. The young man kills him with a knife in an attempt to free himself and manages to get a kiss from the girl, even though he is wanted for murder. Unexpectedly, he is helped by an old Lappish woman who everyone thinks is a witch. She hides him in her hut and threatens the sailors who come looking for him with a curse. As she leaves, she tells the young man that she is the same falcon he saved from the mast and promises him many adventures in life and the love of girls.

Among the quite numerous studies of the correlation between the English and Danish versions of Blixen's short stories it is worth mentioning two main ones, where most of the changes made in the Danish version were summarized. The first one is the article by E. Bredsdorff, where he compares the translation of *Seven Gothic Tales* into Danish and the English text. He notices that the language and the style of the narration differ a lot in the Danish version. In his research he mentions a change in dates, some names, number of different subjects, different paragraphing [Bredsdorff, 1985].

L. Kure-Jensen notes the following changes in the writer's style when switching to Danish: richer vocabulary, dramatizing effect, higher degree of specificity and elaboration of concepts [Kure-Jensen, 1985]. Overall, both researchers note an improvement in style in the Danish translation of the short stories.

When comparing the texts of "The Sailor-boy's Tale" and its Danish version, the differences fit into the pattern formulated by the researchers.

*A question of time and quantity:* In the Danish text, the events take place in early May, not April; the girl Simon meets has one long plait, not two; the sailor Ivan wants to remember himself as a young man at 17, not 16 as in the Danish version. Finally, whereas in the English edition Simon stands for 5 minutes in the dance hall and realizes what has happened to him, in the Danish text it takes 10 minutes.

*All character names, toponyms and the names of the ships* are the same in the Danish text as in the English. The only change occurs with the name of the ship's dog, with whom Simon stays on board before his unauthorized shore leave. In the English version, it is "Balthasar", the same name as old Jolyon's dog in "The Forsyte Saga" by J. Galsworthy. In the Danish edition the dog is named "Alert", perhaps as a more obvious dog name that is loaded with additional meaning (in the commentary on this short story, P. Behrendt cites its possible modern equivalent "Kvik" — "smart, quick"). However, it is possible that the name is still literary and comes from a novel by the German writer Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825), who, like K. Blixen 100 years later, was fond of literary ciphers, anagrams and mystifications.

In Jean Poul's novel "The Life of Fibel" (1812), a dog of the same name appears. Then the ironic scene of Fibel and the forester's daughter first kiss under the magical influence of the moon in the German writ-

er's text, and Fleur's transformation in the moonlight and Jon's first kiss in Galsworthy's novel are echoed in K. Blixen's short story. It is also a coincidence that Jon Forsythe cannot remember whether the kiss lasted ten seconds or ten minutes, while the character in the Danish short story does not know whether the kiss lasted a second or an hour.

Another difference is that the Danish version is much more detailed and accurate in the way it visualizes the action. Here are some examples:

<i>Sailor-boy's tale</i>	<i>Skibsdrengens fortælling</i>
"came down to sell bead-embroidered leather-goods"	"for at sælge perlebroderede lædervarer, <b>og knapper og knivskafter af rensdyrhårn</b> "
"wiped the knife"	"Tørrede kniven af i <b>Ivans klæder</b> "
"led him to the door"	" <b>tog ham i ærmet</b> , ledte ham til døren"
"so that his head swam"	"det blev sort for øjnene af ham, <b>og hele verden gyngede op og ned som et skib i høj sø</b> "
"gave him a little push down the doorstep"	"gav ham et let stød, så <b>at han kom hurtigt ned ad trinnet</b> "
"a lamp hang from the ceiling"	"der hang en <b>tranlampe i en kæde</b> fra loftet"
"she pressed her young face to his and kissed him tenderly"	"hun pressede <b>sin unge, slanke krop</b> imod hans mellem gærdestavene, og kyssede ham"

Another stylistic feature in the Danish version of the text is the use of more adjectives in the form of epithets, which enhances the effect of descriptiveness and sensory authenticity. Additionally, adjectives, nouns, and verbs are often paired with synonyms or antonyms. The use of repetitive parts of speech and alliteration, which is more frequent in the Danish text, creates a rhythmic effect and reinforces the perspective of the third-person narrator.

<i>Sailor-boy's tale</i>	<i>Skibsdrengens fortælling</i>
"mute, deadly fight"	"den stumme kamp <b>på liv og død</b> "
"and expect no help from others"	"at det kun er <b>børn og fæhoveder</b> , der stoler på, at andre skal hjælpe dem"
"Simon has been small for his age all his life"	"Han havde hele sin barndom været lille af sin alder, <b>en spinkel, svag dreng</b> "



“a mark to pay for the blood you have spilled”	“en mark for <b>dit skind</b> og det blod, du har mistet”
”bewildered boy”	“den svimle og <b>fortumlede</b> dreng”
”drunk”	“fuld eller <b>vanvittig</b> ”
“her face, cool as the moonlight”	“hendes ansigt, der var <b>blidt</b> og køligt som fuldmånen selv”
“I promise you, that I will never marry anybody, as long as I live”	“Nu lover og <b>sværger</b> jeg dig, at jeg aldrig vil gifte mig med nogen anden <b>end dig</b> , så længe jeg lever”

In addition to the differences between the two versions of the short story, there are also some elements that remain unchanged, which feel alien in both languages. For example, in the English version of the short story, the description of the summer evening and the moonlit landscape above the sea compares the calm water to milk mixed with water, which may not be a common comparison in English: “The pale evening was all round him, the sky was faintly roseate, **the sea was quite calm, like milk and water**, only in the wake of the boats going inshore it broke into streaks of vivid indigo” [Dinesen, 2001, p. 10].

To a reader from an English-speaking reading culture, the comparison of calm sea water to a mixture of milk and water looks new. However, to readers of the Danish version with a background in reading Scandinavian literature, it may refer to Norwegian realities.

In the Danish version, when describing the sea surface, the author writes that it is not only calm but also colourless. The colourlessness of the sea is like a mixture of milk and water, a Norwegian drink for which the Norwegian word *mælkeblende* is used, which sounds quite different in Danish. The description of the sea thus looks like this “Himlen var Ganske svagt rosenrød, **søen var blikstille og farveløs som mælkeblende**, kun i kølvandet efter de både, der roede indefter brød den i en stribe af indigo” [Blixen, 1972, s. 8].

P. Behrendt noted the use of the Norwegian word in the Danish version of the short story in a commented edition of the short stories: “Mælkeblende: blanding af (sur)mælk og vand (efter det norske)” [Behrendt, 2010, s. 283].

In Norwegian literature from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1942, the word *melkeblende* appears with three meanings: firstly, in the direct meaning

of “drink” (S. Undset, A. Garborg, A. Skram, H. Ibsen), secondly, in the description of the appearance, especially the eyes, in the meaning of being colourless “like water” (K. Hamsun, S. Undset, J. Lie).

The use of the word *melkeblande* to visualise a landscape is less frequent: the whitish air resembling *melkeblande* during a nighttime storm in May is found in Nini Roll Anker’s “I Amtamandsgaarden”. In A. Skram’s story “Fru Ines”, the flow of dirty water in a ditch is compared to *melkeblande*. The closest to the description of the sea in Blixen’s story is S. Undset’s description of water in her novel “Olav Audunssøn og hans børn” where the foaming water around the bathing children is compared to *melkeblande*.

Possible references to texts of Norwegian literature, where the mention of *melkeblande* could serve as a key to trigger a comparison between the plots, are not very convincing. But a series of landscapes by Norwegian artists, including those who depicted the sea at Bodø, such as Eilert Adelsteen Normann (1848–1918), Sophus Jacobsen (1833–1912), Knud Baade (1808–1879), Georg Anton Rasmussen (1842–1914) captured the sea in different moods: both mirror-like calm, with foam over the stern of the boat, and moonscapes during white nights, and stormy, and the merging of sky and sea into a single whole. So, it is possible that in all three descriptions of the sea in the short story we are dealing with ekphrasis, which is quite consistent with the writer’s view of the world as the result of a creative act performed by God, and that the comparison to the Norwegian milk-and-water drink is a clue for understanding it.

A turning point in the story is the appearance of the moon in the sky. Under its influence, Simon finally decides to leave the ship and meet Nora. She resembles the description of the girl: her round, clear face and presumptuous smile, the moon is described by the same epithets: “round, demure, presumptuous” [Dinesen, 2001, p. 10], “rund, stille og hovmodig” [Blixen, 1972, s. 8] in Danish.

If we follow the principle of “repetition” and assume the possible existence of characters, quotations and plot twists from predecessors, we can try to find among the works known to the writer a girl and a moon connected by similarities. One obvious would be Swann’s description of his falling in love with Odette in the novel “In search of lost time” by M. Proust (1871–1922), which can be found in the writer’s library at Rungstedlund. “Sometimes, as he looked up from his victoria on those fine and frosty nights of early spring, and saw the dazzling moonbeams

fall between his eyes and the deserted streets, he would think of that another face, gleaming and faintly roseate like the moons, which had, one day, risen on the horizon of his mind and since then had shed upon the world that mysterious light..." [Proust, 2003, p. 852].

But the last appearance of the moon, which Simon notices on the doorstep of the old witch's house, is described differently. In the English version "there was a wide ring round the moon" [Dinesen, 2001, p. 14]. "Natten var svagt diset nu, og der var en stor ring omkring månen" [Blixen, 1972, s. 13]. The ring around the moon in both English and Danish tradition signifies a change of weather, which can be understood as an impending storm, literally and metaphorically. Simon is in danger or, on the contrary, the danger will pass him by. The English saying "Ring around the moon, brings a storm/rain soon" speaks of this. In Danish it sounds similar: "Hjul om sole giver omslag inden tre dage" [Behrendt, 2010, s. 284]. However, there is a possibility, that the English phrase is a quote from the poem "Farewell" by James Russell Lowell (1819–1891): "*There's a wide ring round the moon, The ghost-like clouds glide by, And I hear the sad winds croon A dirge to the lowering sky*". The poem is about saying goodbye to a dead beloved. If the plot of the short story enters into dialogue with this poem, the reference to it could mean that Simon will never meet Nora. For the Danish reader, this allusion will probably go unnoticed.

K. Blixen significantly strengthens the relationship between the events of the Danish text by schematically contrasting two kisses, the kiss of the girl that Simon expects to receive and the kiss of the sailor Ivan that keeps him away. In the English version, Ivan does not kiss the young man on the lips, so the choice between loving a man and falling in love with a girl does not seem so pointed. The absence of this detail in the English version may have been censored.

In Nora's last promise, there is a small change when switching to Danish. In the English version, she promises never to marry, while in the Danish version, she states that she will not marry anyone except Simon. If we assume that all details in Blixen's texts are verified and nothing is accidental, this difference can be explained by the fact that the writer had in mind the types of relationships from different literary works. Perhaps she was thinking in the first case about the fate of June Forsyte and about Ramborg from Sigrid Undset's novel in the second.

It is thought that some of the allusions are intended for readers from different linguistic backgrounds. For example, the bird on the ship refers to S. Coleridge's English poem about the old mariner and the story of a sailor called Simon Hatley from G. Shelvock's travelogue, which inspired S. Coleridge. At the same time, Scandinavian readers may recall an episode from the Danish work "The Hunt Letters" ("Jagtbreve"), written by K. Blixen's father, W. Dinesen. In both episodes, the birds (an albatross and a falcon) are killed by sailors. In Blixen's story, this scene foreshadows and ultimately determines the fate of the young man who, in contrast, saves the disoriented falcon.

At the same time, a significant part of the allusions should be equally noticeable to all readers in Europe and America. It is about the use of references to the Bible, Greek mythology and ancient literature in Blixen's texts. The short story being examined contains only a few such allusions. The sailor Ivan recalls himself as a young "little lamb of God" and then carries the boy "like a bear that carries a sheep" [Dinesen, 2001, p. 11]. This is an obvious paraphrase from the Bible. This episode paraphrases the conversation between David and Saul, where David promises to defeat Goliath. David explains: "Your servant used to tend his father's sheep, and whenever a lion or bear came to carry off a sheep from the flock..." This allusion then equates Simon, who killed the giant Ivan, who resembles a bear in appearance, smell and behavior, to David, who defeated a superior opponent.

The setting of the novel in both the English and the Danish version has clear references to the Norwegian novels by K. Hamsun (1859–1952), especially "Benoni" and "Rosa" (1908) and the author's favorite antagonist, S. Undset and her novel "Kristin Lavransdatter" (1920). It should be noted that at the time of writing both authors had been translated into English and received international recognition.

When compared to Hamsun's texts several parallels emerge. The main events of the short story take place in the Norwegian town Bodø (Bodo in English spelling), which is situated in Norland, the setting of many of Hamsun's works dealing with the life of fishermen and sailors.

Simon's ship arrives to be loaded with herring. The novel "Benoni" describes in details how the locals depend on herring fishing, drying and selling. One of the characters in the story resembles a character in the novel "Benoni": Blixen also has a Jewish merchant who sells watches. K. Blixen, like K. Hamsun, writes that the watches were mostly of

bad quality, but the sailors bought them anyway and showed them off. Among Hamsun's characters in "The Rose" there is a Lappish sorcerer. He is feared by the locals and believed to be able to cast spells. This character is, as is often the case with the author, the double of the witch in Blixen's short story.

These coincidences bring to life Hamsun's problematic, especially his theme of love-hate, complex relationships between a man and a woman that usually end tragically and the sailor's life and travelling. Is it possible that the relationship between Blixen's two young characters could develop in the same way?

In S. Undset's novel, there are several coincidences with Blixen's story. The name of the main character, Simon, is the same as that of Kristin's first fiancé. The similarity is strengthened by the fact that Kristin's younger sister in Undset's novel, who is 14 years old like Nora, is in love with him.

Not only does the name of the Lappish witch Sunniva make her a doppelganger of St Sunniva, the patron saint of northern Norway, as Aage Henriksen writes in his essay "The Divine Child" [Henriksen, 2017, p. 240], a rather typical oxymoron in the author's texts (a holy witch), but also a double of Erlend's attractive and erotic mistress from "Kristin Lavransdatter", who bears the same name. This suggests that the witch and the young girl Nora are rivals for a young man in the short story.

The following table lists possible predecessor characters to the three main protagonists, each denoting a possible perspective, characteristic or pattern by which events might develop further.

Compared to Simon, his prototypes share similar themes, such as the struggle to choose one's destiny, a desire for adventure, a love for a girl and the sea, a passion for poetry, or a talent for storytelling.

The female characters in the short story are presented as opposites in terms of their external qualities, such as age, beauty, and ability to help. The old woman is in addition said to be a witch, while the young one is a daughter of a parson. Another pair of oppositions can be seen when considering the girl's name, Nora, which refers the reader to H. Ibsen's most famous play. One of Nora's characterizations in the play is repeatedly mentioned by her husband, Torvald, and by herself: that of a care-free bird. This reinforces her opposition to the falcon-witch. Although the old woman assures the young man that "all females of this earth

<i>Witch Sunniva</i>	<i>Sailor-boy Simon</i>	<i>Teenage girl Nora</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— patron saint of Norway</li> <li>— the seductress, Erlend's lover in S. Undset's "Kristin Lavransdatter"</li> <li>— H. C. Andersen's Lappish woman from "The Snow Queen"</li> <li>— the which from the sagas</li> <li>— the alter ego of Karen Blixen herself</li> <li>— the double of the Lappish sorcerer in K. Hamsun's "Rosa"</li> <li>— the falcon caught in the tackle-yarn upon the mast of the ship = "L'Albatros" by Ch. Baudelaire;</li> <li>"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by S. Taylor Coleridge; Boganis "Jagtbreve"</li> <li>— a falcon during the hunt, which leads the hunter to a future love = K. Hauch "Valdemars sang"; W. Shakespeare "Winter's Tale"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Kristin's first fiancée in S. Undset's "Kristin Lavransdatter"</li> <li>— the sailor-boy in K. Hamsun's novels</li> <li>— "The Sailor-Boy" from the poem by A. Tennyson</li> <li>— the sailor in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by S. Taylor Coleridge</li> <li>— Simon Hatley from G. Shelvocke's "A Voyage Round the World by Way of the Great South", where he shot a black albatross</li> <li>— Fibel, writer from Jean Poul's "Leben Fibels"</li> <li>— Jon Forsyte, young dreamer and poet</li> <li>— a young man on a crossroad between a love to a woman and a love to a man;</li> <li>— Hercules' choice between Vice and Virtue: being a sailor and being married</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Nora, Ibsen's character in the "Doll's House", who resembles a bird</li> <li>— the pastor's daughter Rosa in the novel Benoni</li> <li>— K. Hamsun's female character in love, waiting outside the fence for her beloved</li> <li>— Ramborg, the Kristin's sister of 14 years old, the wife of Simon</li> <li>— one of the female characters in "The Forsyte saga" by J. Galsworthy</li> </ul>

hold together" [Dinesen, 2001, p. 16], she sends him to the sea instead of returning him to his beloved. Simon, playing the role of Hercules at the crossroads, chooses the fate of a sailor and a storyteller.

What possibilities does Nora open to the young man Simon through intertextual play? Erotic love: she will be very beautiful, young, slim as an eel, a possible Hamsun's love-hate, Ibsen's family relations from "The Doll's House". What Sunniva promises: her patronage, the love of all the girls, the long happy journey as a sailor, a long life as a good story.

As a result of comparing the English and Danish texts of the short story, several types of differences can be distinguished:

- minor plot changes, possibly related to censorship or switching to a pre-text from another culture;

- visual specification of the characters' actions in the Danish text;
- an increase in the rhythmic nature of the prose in the Danish text;
- enhancing the third-person narrator's perspective in the Danish text.

The cultural adaptation of texts for Danish or Scandinavian readers is not intentional, but certain markers that are imperceptible to Anglophone readers may become more pronounced for Scandinavian readers. At the same time, many texts and works of fiction are familiar to all the readers with a European or American upbringing. These include biblical and ancient Greek allusions.

The short story under consideration maintains the main features of intertextuality with intermedial elements, such as references to paintings, which are characteristic for Blixen's work. The clues evoking the dialogue with the pretexts are objects or phenomena of nature, quotations, names of characters, and similarities in the setting and circumstances.

The authors' polylogue creates a narrative that is open to multiple interpretations, while also reinforcing through repetition the idea of a universe narrated by a narrator-God.

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**ПРОЧТЕНИЕ КАРЕН БЛИКСЕН В РАЗНЫХ КУЛЬТУРАХ.  
ЧТО ТЕРЯЕТСЯ И ПРИОБРЕТАЕТСЯ ПРИ АВТОПЕРЕВОДЕ?  
(НА ПРИМЕРЕ НОВЕЛЛЫ «РАССКАЗ КОРАБЕЛЬНОГО ЮНГИ»)**

**Для цитирования:** *Lomagina A. Reading Karen Blixen in different cultures. “Sailor-Boy's Tale” (“Skibsdrengens Fortælling”): What is lost and gained in self-translation? // Скандинавская филология. 2024. Т. 22. Вып. 1. С. 136–152. <https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu21.2024.109>*

В статье анализируется новелла Карен Бликсен *The Sailor-boy's Tale* («История корабельного юнга»), которая открывает ее сборник *Winter's Tales* («Зимние сказки») (1942), в сравнении с переводом на датский язык, выполненным авто-



ром в 1942 г. Датский текст рассматривается как результат автоперевода, перекодирования и адаптации текста для читателя со скандинавским кругом чтения. В то время как в датском варианте усиливаются ритмичность прозы и чувственная достоверность описания, которая, в частности, выражается в усилении визуализации текста, — аллюзии к английским, американским авторам и цитаты переводятся на датский и их значение как маркеров интертекстуального диалога затеняется. Более ярко начинает звучать диалог со скандинавскими претекстами и живописными полотнами, знакомыми датскому читателю.

**Ключевые слова:** Карен Бликсен, датская литература, автоперевод, Э.М. Форстер, *Зимние сказки*, интертекстуальность.

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