

## ANNE BUSHBY, TRANSLATOR OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

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In his 1954 book on Hans Christian Andersen, Elias Bredsdorff devotes a chapter to the translator Mrs Bushby, but criticizes her work severely.<sup>1</sup> His point of departure is the traditional academic one that a translation's 'faithfulness' to the original is the only yardstick for an assessment of its worth. In this article, however, I shall argue that Mrs Bushby is in many ways an interesting translator, who did not see Andersen as simply a children's writer, and that some of her divergences from Andersen's text are not mistakes but deliberate adaptations for the benefit of her audience in Victorian Britain. Bushby's translation strategy will be briefly compared with those employed by her predecessors, Caroline Peachey and Clara de Chatelain, and by a later translator, Dr Dulcken.

The study is, in a general way, indebted to Toury (1995): I see it as a specimen of descriptive translation studies, with the reservation that description for me must form the basis for criticism, and that I think the degree of 'equivalence' with the original does count, although only as one among other parameters relevant for the assessment of the quality of a literary translation.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs Anne S. Bushby (died 1875) knew Andersen personally, had indeed courted his acquaintance since his first visit to London in 1847, when her husband called upon him to invite him to dinner (Bredsdorff 1954: 314). At that time Andersen's English translator was Charles Beckwith Lohmeyer,<sup>3</sup> but his English publisher, Richard Bentley, apparently encountered difficulties with him, and in a letter to Andersen

dated 18 January 1853 suggested Mrs Anne Bushby instead, referring to her as "a friend of yours, I believe" (189).

How Mrs Bushby came to know Danish we do not know. However, it is remarkable that unlike most of Andersen's other translators from the same period, she seems to have translated mainly poetry, and of prose only Danish. Apart from a number of Andersen's tales, she translated M.A. Goldschmidt's *En Jøde* (*The Jew of Denmark* (1853)).

It appears from a letter Bushby wrote to Andersen that she also translated some of Heiberg's plays and offered them to London theatres. Their reaction was that they were only interested in translations from the French, and the plays were apparently never published.<sup>4</sup> However, in 1864 appeared *The Danes Sketched by Themselves* (3 vols.; published by Bentley), containing a selection of short stories and poems by the Danish writers Storm, Blicher, Carl Bernhard, Oehlenschläger, and others. There are two early comic verse tales by Andersen, obviously inspired by Baggesen: 'Morten Lange. A Christmas Story' and 'The Man from Paradise.' They are from *Digte* (1830), and *Fantasier og Skizzer* (1831), respectively (Danish: 'Morten Lange' and 'Manden fra Paradis - En komisk fortælling,' both printed in *Samlede Digte* (2000), ed. Johan de Mylius).

Mrs Bushby published a fair amount of original poetry and verse translations in magazines; most of this was collected and posthumously published in the volume *Poems by the Late Anne S. Bushby* (1876), and here a whole section - about 75 of its 399 pages - is devoted to translations of Andersen's poems, doubtless the ones she had prepared for a projected volume of later tales and poems mentioned in a letter to Andersen dating from 1868. This volume never appeared, however, presumably because by then Andersen had agreed to give the American writer Horace Scudder a monopoly as translator, cf. Bredsdorff (1954: 336f.). At least some of these poems had been translated as early as 1847, when Andersen rather

unkindly noted in his diary that "Fruen har oversat flere af mine Digte, netop dem, jeg har forkastet" ['the lady of the house has translated several of my poems - the very ones I have rejected'] (13 July 1847, *Dagbøger III*: 226; see also Bredsdorff 1954: 314).

It seems fair to conclude from the above that, unlike Mary Howitt and Clara de Chatelain, Mrs Bushby was not a professional translator, but that her work was indeed a labour of love.<sup>5</sup> It is equally clear from examining the stories she chose that she was not aiming at the children's market, where stories like 'The Old Bachelor's Nightcap' have never belonged. Nor are her two volumes of tales (*A Poet's Day Dreams* (1853)<sup>6</sup> and *The Sand-hills of Jutland* (1860)<sup>7</sup>) illustrated or in other ways made appealing to the young. Indeed it would seem that she saw it as her job to supplement the earlier translations, translating new work by Andersen rather than bringing out established successes in yet another version. This was undoubtedly also the attitude of her publisher, Bentley, who at one point complained to Andersen that competition was becoming so fierce and pirating so rife that only new work which could be published and sold before competitors could pirate it was reasonably sure of earning a profit (letter dated 1 August 1850, in Bredsdorff (1954: 172)). In the end, Bentley gave up publishing Andersen altogether. Before that, however, he brought out one further short collection of tales in Bushby's translation, *The Ice Maiden* (1863).<sup>8</sup> In addition, Andersen's novel *At Være eller ikke Være* (1857; *To Be, or Not to Be?* (1857)), and his travel book *I Spanien* (1863; *In Spain* (1864)) were also translated by Bushby and published by Bentley.

### The poetry

Bushby's poems are often colourful essays in the Romantic (Byronic) tradition. There are poems about ghosts and pirates' treasure, greetings to polar explorers, an 'Indian Spirits' Song' "written in a forest near the Falls of Niagara, on the borders of which an Indian mound had recently been

discovered," a poem which shows great sympathy for the vanquished Indians. There are also tributes to nature, as in 'The Rocks of Caithness,' which, however, are also seen as the haunts of "Norse Sea-Kings" "in days of yore," etc. Even a seemingly innocent title like 'Stanzas to the Moon' proves to be more about man than nature, giving a half-humorous account of how the moon could help the newly formed police force to prevent deeds of darkness. Some stanzas are worthy of Gilbert:

What splashing, clashing, crashing, smashing  
Of carts, cabs, omnibuses, flies!  
What thumps! what bumps! what slashing, gashing!  
Sprain'd arms, bruised shins, and blacken'd eyes!  
(1876: 101)

The poetry is hardly distinguished, but Bushby is a competent minor poet with a gift for the comical perhaps rather than the lyrical.

The verse translations bear witness to the range of Bushby's interests: there are translations from the French, Danish, Spanish and German. The Danish section includes translations from Ingemann, Baggesen, Oehlenschläger, and others. But the largest section of translations is devoted to Andersen. There are poems in it, admittedly, which Andersen would hardly have considered to be among his best. However, there are also central texts like 'The Dying Child' and 'Melodies of the Heart.' Obviously sharing Andersen's love of Spain, Bushby also translated half a dozen of his poems on things Spanish, from 'Andalusian Eyes' to 'On Granada.'

Mrs Bushby sided emphatically with the Danes in 1864, writing poems praising 'The Brave Sons of Denmark,' and a satirical 'Song for the English in 1864,' deriding her countrymen for remaining neutral, and concluding:

Our money we don't wish to spend;  
 Us English, then, may Heaven defend  
 From Yankees, Germans, French, Chinese,  
 And leave us just to live at ease!  
 (1876: 183)

### **The translations of Andersen's stories**

Bredsdorff (1954: 506) is severe on Mrs Bushby, saying that there is not much good to be said about her as a translator. He notes that she translated directly from the Danish,<sup>9</sup> but concludes that her Danish was not good enough for this to be a viable procedure, and instances a number of misunderstandings of nuances and some examples of plain mistranslation, as from 'It is Very True': "i den Kant af Byen, hvor Historien ikke var passeret" > "in a remote corner of the town, where no historian had ever been seen." Dulcken, more correctly has "in a quarter of the town, where the occurrence had not happened."

It is unfortunately all too easy to find more examples of this kind, as in the first paragraph of 'Charming,' where Andersen's "han [i.e. the sculptor Alfred] fik Guldmedaillen" [he was awarded the gold medal (of the Academy)] becomes "He used to engrave gold medallions"; and later in the same story "Salvelse" [unctuousness] becomes "deep attention," "enfoldig" [simple-minded] becomes "ridiculous," and "dvask" [indolent] "silly."

One of the stories most disfigured by mistranslations is 'Everything in its Right Place.' Most of this story is indeed translated reasonably well, but towards the end a series of horrible misunderstandings manage to destroy important parts of the author's meaning, as in the following examples:

En gammel Greve af Landets ældste Slægt blev urokket paa sin Hæders-Plads; for Fløiten var retfærdig, og det skal man være. (A. II: 253)<sup>10</sup>

An old count of one of the most ancient families in the country **remained untouched in his place of honour**; for the flute was just, as men ought to be. (Dulcken: 456)

An old count, of one of the first families in the kingdom, **was hurled from his seat of honour to a more lowly one, bearing the same name in common parlance**, for the flute adhered to justice; (Bushby 1853: 127)

to rige Bønder, **der i vor Tid vare voxne over deres egen Kornmark**, blæste ned i Muddergroften; (A. II: 253)

Two rich peasants **who in our times had grown too high for their corn-fields**, were tumbled into the ditch. (Dulcken: 456)

two rich peasants, **who had got possession of cornfields of their own**, were blown down into a muddy ditch.<sup>11</sup> (Bushby 1853: 128)

However, even here it is only the bilingual reader who can see what is wrong. The surface meaning of the English version is by and large acceptable, although the mistranslated sequences may seem a little uninspired here and there, as in the first of the above examples.

So, while these mistranslations certainly exist, and while there are rather too many of them, here as well as in her other translations, the overall impression conveyed by Bushby's English text is good, rather better than that of a number of her contemporaries. It should also be noted that Andersen kept Bushby as translator, in spite of her shortcomings, of which he was well aware (cf. Bredsdorff 1954: 316).

The poetical passages in particular are rendered by Bushby better than by most others, though they still fall short of the original (cf. for instance the opening paragraphs of 'The Nis at the Cheesemonger's'); and it seems to me that Bredsdorff's claim (1954: 506) that she cannot cope with stories like 'Good Humour' and 'Grief of Heart' is an exaggeration. For this

reason I would like to consider more closely her translation of these stories.

'Good Humour' starts with a description of the narrator's father, a hearse-driver, and goes on to reflect on the inmates of a number of graves in the cemetery, prescribing as a cure for ill humour a walk among graves in search of a suitable plot in which to bury a person one detests. (I have tried this cure, and found it useful).

The text is perhaps an essay rather than a story, and there are relatively few linguistic or pragmatic difficulties in it. As appears from the opening section (Appendix 2), Bushby generally manages very well; but then she does skip some of the difficulties (and also some sentences that are not difficult, but probably seemed to her tedious or irrelevant, for instance part of the description of a man who died of vexation through witnessing bad performances at the theatre), and she does make mistakes, even ludicrous ones, as when "Bøger" [books] is rendered by "district-chapels," no doubt to contrast with "churches."<sup>12</sup>

Another mistake reflects a pragmatic difficulty: the text refers repeatedly to 'Adresseavisen,' in Andersen's time a Copenhagen daily newspaper featuring advertisements and official notices. Bushby translates this as "the Directory," and thus suggests a book rather than a periodical or paper ["I am in possession of the Directory"].<sup>13</sup> In any case the reference had a topical meaning for Andersen's original audience that no translation could hope to copy.

An examination of the paragraph from which this example is taken reveals a couple of other difficulties. Bushby has found it impossible to imitate the sound effect of "hvem der sælger ud og hvem der selv gaaer ud";<sup>14</sup> and she has, I think, deliberately refrained from translating the suggestion in the conclusion that the paper may be used to line one's coffin. Probably she considered this idea indelicate. The same reservation perhaps also applies to the following simile from 'Charming':

I stort Selskab er det høist ubehageligt at mærke, at man har mistet begge sine Seleknapper og vide, at man ikke kan stole paa sit Spænde, for man har intet Spænde, men endnu værre er det i stort Selskab at fornemme, at Kone og Svigermama tale dumt ... (A. II: 116)

In a large party it is very disagreeable to observe that one's buttons are giving way, and that there are no buckles to fall back upon; but it is worse still in a great company to become aware that wife and mother-in-law are talking nonsense ... (Dulcken: 516)

It was very mortifying to Alfred that in society neither his wife nor his mother-in-law was capable of entering into general conversation ... (Bushby 1860: 249)

'Grief of Heart' is a sketch of two related incidents: a visit from a tanner's widow with a disagreeable lapdog, and the burial of the same dog, arranged by some children, who charge a button as entrance fee for visitors to the grave; all the neighbouring children go, except a poor little girl who has no button, and therefore sits down and cries bitterly.

The simple narrative is distinguished by its mixture of humour and sadness, for instance in its description of the comical, but desperate - and, one fears, futile - attempt of the widow to sell shares in her business to the distinguished people she has called on. But again there are few difficulties from a translation point of view.

There are indeed a number of misunderstandings in Bushby's translation, such as "oil-flask" for "Ølflaske" [beerbottle], "sturdy" for "praktisk" [practical], and "han [the lapdog] var jo ogsaa taget med for sin Fornøielse og Sundheds Skyld > "he had been brought along for the sake of his health, and for her pleasure," which introduces a neat contrast that unfortunately is not in the original. Besides, Bushby's style, not surprisingly, is inferior to Andersen's, but on the whole the story is well

told, and the point that children's sorrows are as acute to them as adults' are comes across quite clearly:

It was to her a real *grief of heart*, acute, as children's sorrows often are.  
(Bushby 1853: 108)

This is the story; and those who do not understand it can take shares in the widow's tannery. (Bushby 1853: 109)

Some infelicities noted by Bredsdorff seem to me inevitable. It is said of the dog that "Braknæse og Fleskeryg var hans Udvortes" [literally: snub-nose and porkback were his exterior]; Andersen here deftly exploits the facility of Danish to form nonce-compounds, and, unlike Bredsdorff, I find that Bushby's "A snub-nosed, fat animal he was" is a very reasonable translation.

The two stories in Bushby's translation, then, are certainly a little reduced in comparison with Andersen's text, but they read well and all things considered they make the points that the author wanted to make.

As her mistakes suggest, Bushby must have translated mainly from the Danish, even though German influence is also perceived, in all probability mainly via Peachey, see Appendix 1. Of her translations Bushby herself suggested in letters to Andersen that, in comparison with those by Dulcken and other Germans, they were at least in good English (cf. for example Bredsdorff 1954: 336). I tend to agree with her, and though her misunderstandings and omissions are too numerous to place her among the best Andersen translators, her efforts on his behalf, and generally to promote Danish literature in Britain, did not go entirely unrewarded.

## Notes

1. A different version of this article will appear as a chapter in Pedersen (forthcoming).
2. For a discussion of equivalence and quality as understood by Nida (1964) and House (1977), among others, and the usefulness of these concepts for a study of literary translation, see Pedersen (forthcoming).
3. Charles Beckwith Lohmeyer (1810?-74) translated Andersen's *A Poet's Bazaar* (1846), *The Two Baronesses* (1848), *Rambles in the Romantic Regions of the Hartz Mountains, Saxon Switzerland, etc.* (1848) and *Pictures of Sweden* (1851) for Bentley. An examination of excerpts from the first two of these texts does not suggest any incompetence. On the contrary, the novel seems adequately, and the travel book extraordinarily well translated. Thus the description in *A Poet's Bazaar* of a concert given by the composer Liszt, a tour de force on Andersen's part, is brilliantly rendered in the English translation. *Pictures of Sweden* is perhaps a little less impressive, but is still a professional job.
4. Letter dated 31 July 1864 in Bredsdorff (1954: 330).
5. This applies to the situation in the early 1850s. However, when her husband died (1866) she must have begun to rely more on her ability to earn money, cf. Bredsdorff (1954: 333).  

Here, however, she emphasizes the fact that translating is not very lucrative: "... I make nothing worth mentioning by translations. I make a good deal more by original tales which I write for a popular Magazine ..." (334).
6. The volume contains 20 stories, ranging from 'There is a Difference' (51) to 'The Last Pearl' (67), and containing masterpieces like 'It is Very True' (58), 'A Good-for-Nothing' (65), 'Grief of Heart' (60), 'Everything in its Right Place' (61), and 'The Nis at the Cheesemonger's' (62). (Numbers in parenthesis refer to the Danish canon of 156 tales and stories). As appears, the stories are not chronologically arranged.
7. Containing 18 stories from Andersen's *Nye Eventyr og Historier*, among them 'The Sand-Hills of Jutland' (95), 'The Mud-King's Daughter' (83), 'The Bell's Hollow' (76), 'Something' (80), 'The Wind Relates the Story of Valdemar Daae and his Daughters' (86), 'A Row of Pearls' (75), and 'Charming' (94).
8. Containing, apart from the title story (106), only three additional tales: 'The Butterfly' (98), 'Psyche' (107), 'The Snail and the Rosebush' (108). Translated from the Danish by Mrs Bushby. With drawings by Zwecker, engraved by Pearson.

London 1863. The source is Andersen's *Nye Eventyr og Historier, Anden Række, II, 2* (1862).

9. While this is undoubtedly correct, there are nevertheless occasional examples of influence from Peachey, cf. appendix 2.

10. Here and in the following A. means Andersen (1963-90).

11. This could form the basis of a whole essay on social differences between Denmark and Britain. However, in addition to everything else, Bushby's text, though idiomatic, does not really allude to Grimm's 'The Fisherman and his Wife,' the Danish title of which is 'Konen i Muddergrøften' [the woman in the muddy ditch].

12. The fault is so glaring that one wonders whether the change here, too, is deliberate; perhaps the idea of preaching in books seemed too profane.

13. Both Dulcken and Hersholt have better solutions: "the Intelligencer" (D.); "the Advertiser" (H.).

14. Meaning "who sells out, and who goes out" (i.e. dies). Dulcken omits this phrase; Hersholt keeps the word-play, but then has to change the meaning: "who is selling out and who is buying up."

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### Appendix 1: Andersen, Peachey and Bushby

Though Bushby translates from the Danish, she is often influenced by Peachey, sometimes to the extent that she repeats Peachey's mistakes. Below are two examples from 'The Goblin and the Huckster.'

jeg er kun en ringe Bøtte imod Spekhøkeren! (A. II: 256)

I am only a Tub at the Grocer's (Peachey)

I am only a poor tub at the cheesemonger's! (Bushby 1853: 134)

[should be: compared to the cheesemonger]

Og *Nissen* satte Mundlæderet paa Caffemøllen, nei, hvor den gik! og han satte det paa Smørferdingen og Pengeskuffen; - **Alle vare de af Mening, som Bøtten**, og hvad de fleste ere enige om, det maa man respectere. (A. II: 256)

And the Nisse put the tongue on the coffee mill, - oh, how bravely it worked then! - and he put it on the money box and on sundry other articles, and he asked them all the same question, and all gave much the same answer; **all were of the same opinion**, and the opinion of the multitude must be respected. (Peachey)

Then the Nis placed the *talkativeness* on the coffee-mill, and how it did go - so fearfully fast! Then he placed it on the money-till **and other articles in the shop**, one after the other: **they all said the same thing as the tub had done**; therefore what everybody says must be respected. (Bushby 1853: 134)

It will be seen that Bushby does not copy Peachey. She correctly renders the fact that the objects in the shop agree with the tub, not with each other, as Peachey writes. However, she follows Peachey in paraphrasing "Smørfjerdningen og Pengeskuffen" as "other articles."

## Appendix 2: 'Good Humour'

### Et godt Humeur

Efter min Fader har jeg faaet den bedste Arvepart, jeg har faaet et godt Humeur. Og hvem var min Fader? ja, det kommer nu ikke Humeuret ved! han var livlig og trivelig, feed og rund, hans Ydre og Indre ganske i Strid med hans Embede. Og hvad var hans Embede, hans Stilling i Samfundet? Ja, skulde det skrives ned og trykkes lige i Begyndelsen af en Bog, saa er det rimeligt at flere, naar de læste det, lagde Bogen tilside og sagde, det seer mig saa uhyggeligt ud, jeg skal ikke have af den Slags. Og dog var min Fader hverken Rakker eller Skarpretter, tvertimod, hans Embede bragte ham tidt i Spidsen for Stadens allerhæderligste Mænd, og han var der ganske i sin Ret, ganske paa sin Plads; han maatte været forrest, foran Bispen, foran Prindsen af Blodet - og han var forrest - han var Ligvogns-Kudsk! (A. II: 238).

From my father I have received the best of inheritances, for I have received - good humour. And who was my father? But that has nothing to do with his humour. He was plump and round, sociable and jovial; his outer and his inner man were neither of them in keeping with his employment. And what was his employment, what his station in society? Well, if these were to be disclosed at the beginning of the story, it is very probable that many, when they read it, would lay the book aside, exclaiming, "No, I won't go on: it is so very uncomfortable to be reminded of such matters."

Yet my father was neither a hangman nor an executioner of any sort; on the contrary, his occupation often brought him in contact with the greatest men of the

town; and he was always in his own place, which, by right, was to be first, - ay, *first*; his place was before that of the Bishop, before even princes of the blood: - he was - a hearse-driver! (Bushby 1853: 59-60)

Jeg er ikke ganske ung, - jeg har hverken Kone, Børn eller Bibliothek, men som sagt, jeg holder Adresseavisen, den er mig nok, den er mig det bedste Blad, og det var den ogsaa for min Fader; den gjør sit gode Gavn og har Alt hvad et Menneske behøver at vide: hvem der prædiker i Kirkerne og hvem der prædiker **i de nye Bøger!** hvor man faaer Huus, Tjenestefolk, Klæder og Føde, hvem der "*sælger ud*" og hvem der selv gaaer ud, og saa seer man saa megen Velgjørenhed og saa mange uskyldige Vers, der ikke gjør noget! Ægtestand, der søges og Stævnemøder, som man indlader og ikke indlader sig paa! altsammen simpelt og naturligt! **Man kan saamæn meget godt leve lykkeligt og lade sig begrave, ved at holde Adresseavisen - og saa har man ved sit Livs Ende, saa deiligt meget Papir, at man kan ligge blødt paa det, dersom man ikke holder af at ligge paa Høvlspaner.** (A. II: 238-39)

I cannot call myself any longer young; I have neither wife, child, nor library; but, as I have said, I am in possession of the Directory, and this is quite sufficient reading for me, as it was for my father before me. It was very serviceable to him, and it contains all that is really necessary to be known: - who performs the services in each of the churches, and who **in the new district-chapels**; where one can find lodgings, servants, clothes, and food; who has changed his place of residence, and who has departed this life altogether; with much information concerning law and matrimony. **Truly the directory is very useful in affairs both of life and death.** (Bushby 1860: 60)