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Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's Regional Stories in France and Switzerland: Translators, Periodical Translation, and the Transnational Literary Marketplace

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Introduction: "Connected Histories" of Local Colour

Fiction that depicted regional mores and characters living in rural communities was popular in Europe throughout the nineteenth century.[1] Enabled by a transnationally interconnected literary marketplace with agents such as publishers reaching outside their national domain to foster business agreements and editors and contributors alert to international trends, these tales travelled beyond national confines both in their source language and in translation, and in turn inspired other localised expressions of village life. Josephine Donovan has looked at the phenomenon through a comparative lens, analysing the work of George Sand's *romans champêtres*, Berthold Auerbach's *Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten*, and the Scottish and Irish national tales of Walter Scott and Maria Edgeworth as influential for traditions of regional fiction throughout Europe.[2] In the introduction to a special issue of *Romantisme* on regionalist writing during the long nineteenth century, Cécile Roudeau formulates "new scales" and "critical issues" for these writings, stressing that literary regionalism "can no longer be understood in its unilateral relationship with the construction of nation" but rather "considering the scale of globalization that 'connected history' has invited us to think not in opposition to the national scale, but as its extension."[3] Here, Roudeau refers to the notion of "connected history" first theorised by historian of the early modern period Sanjay Subrah-

1 See Josephine Donovan, *European Local-Colour Literature: National Tales, Dorfgeschichten, Romans Champêtres* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010); K.D.M. Snell, ed., *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

2 Donovan, *European Local-Colour Literature*, 98.

3 Cécile Roudeau, "Écriture Régionalistes (1800-1914): Nouvelles Échelles, Nouveaux Enjeux Critiques", *Romantisme* 3, no. 181 (2018): 8. My translation ("…une écriture qui ne saurait plus être comprise dans son rapport unilatéral à la construction de la nation, qu'il s'agit en fait de lire à l'échelle d'une globalisation que l'histoire connectée nous invite à ne pas penser en opposition à l'échelle nationale, mais comme son prolongement"). Henceforth, all translations from French source texts into English are mine. Direct quotes from French source texts will be provided for some primary and secondary sources for further clarity.

manyam. Subrahmanyam's approach seeks out "the at times fragile threads that connected the globe, even as the globe became to be defined as such."[4] As his analysis of early-modern millenarianism that connected distant and different cultures such as the Mediterranean, Asia, and America shows, these threads were "already plugged into some network, some process of circulation."[5] This relational approach is valuable to literary historiography because of its attention to minimised or overlooked connective elements that defy fixed geographical and epistemic boundaries: it shifts the point of view to a previously ignored and unexpected vantage point.

Translations of regional or local colour fiction in periodicals and book form, such as those which will be examined in this essay, are a valuable example of this understudied connectivity between national literary historiographies and a way to explore the relational nature of literary regionalism. Translations, by their intermedial nature, can be considered "key elements of connectedness and transmission" and are embedded in transnational networks of print culture.[6] Yet, in nation-centric literary historiographies they are often overlooked (along with translators). Famously, Lawrence Venuti speaks of the "translator's invisibility" and of the "unformulated" nature of "the translator's authorship" whereby translation is stuck in a conundrum: on the one hand it is perceived as "second-order representation," on the other hand it "efface[s] its second-hand status with the effect of transparency, producing the illusion of authorial presence".[7] This ambiguity is also currently reflected in the legal status of translation, "both in copyright law and contractual arrangements",[8] and even more so during the nineteenth century. By then, agreements on copyright were initially negotiated on an ad hoc basis and then gradually standardised internationally. The Berne Convention of 1886-87, for instance, was the first successful attempt to mobilise "an international legal regime"[9] for multilateral

4 Sanjay Subrahmanyan, "Connected Histories: Notes towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3, Special Issue: The Eurasian Context of the Early Modern History of Mainland South East Asia, 1400-1800 (1997): 761.

5 Ibid., 762.

6 Ibid., 758.

7 Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 2006), 6.

8 Ibid., 8.

9 Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, "A Diplomatic Salto Mortale: Translation Trouble in Berne, 1884–1886," *Book History* 14 (2011): 88. Elsewhere, Wirtén notes that translation and intellectual property rights as outlined in these conventions often served a kind of inherent "cultural imperialism," and that countries which were not big exporters of literary works (e.g., Sweden and Portugal) but rather importers of translations initially objected to what they perceived as a bias towards France which was a major exporter of literary works. See Eva

copyright arrangements. Furthermore, as Anne O'Connor has shown in an Irish context, throughout the nineteenth century, "[t]ranslation was not a subsidiary activity but rather an element of a spectrum of literary possibilities."[10] Thus, the late-nineteenth-century translations of regional literature in this essay are important sources to understand literary translation as a widespread transnational practice at a time when it was also increasingly gaining international juridical attention.

Translation in periodicals, moreover, adds further complexity to the cultural transfer since nineteenth-century periodicals, as O'Connor argues elsewhere, were sites where "diverse forms of translation practices" appeared, ranging from "verse translations, paraphrases, quotations in review articles, unacknowledged works, and adaptations."[11] In addition, according to O'Connor, "the publication of translations in periodicals [...] gives rise to multifaceted considerations of authorship due to the presence of multiple voices including an original author, a translator, an editor and a collective ideology pertaining to that publication."[12] Literary periodicals were therefore crucial for enabling circulation, translation, and creative re-writings of texts, and for connecting people involved in these processes; in other words, they were key for the way they operated like networks. Scholarship has given much attention to the study of periodicals in relation to networks.[13] John Fagg, Matthew Pethers, and Robin Vandome have noted that "the periodical ... embodies the concept of network on both a material level (in the juxtaposition and interconnections it generates between different texts) and on an institutional level

Hemmungs Wirtén, *No Trespassing: Authorship, Intellectual Property Rights, and the Boundaries of Globalization* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 40.

10 Anne O'Connor, *Translation and Language in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 180.

11 Anne O'Connor, "Translation in Nineteenth-century Periodicals: Materialities and Modalities of Communication," *Translation and Interpreting Studies* 14, no. 2 (2019): 245–46.

12 Ibid., 254.

13 Arguing for a "transnational and large-scale approach to literary translation", Laura Fólica, Diana Roig-Sanz, and Stefania Caristia have examined case-studies of translation in periodicals from the 18th to the 20th century that cover geographical areas such as Europe, Latin America, and Asia and adopt quantitative network analysis methodologies. See, among others, Laura Fólica, Diana Roig-Sanz and Stefania Caristia, eds., *Literary Translation in Periodicals: Methodological Challenges for a Transnational Approach* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2020), 1–17. Some of the case-studies in this collection combine both qualitative and quantitative methodologies such as network analysis to shed light on the relationship between translations in periodicals against materials in the source language, the relationship between translators and publishers, and more. See Fabio Guidali, "A Historian's Approach to Quantitative Analysis: The Case of Translated Short Stories in Italian Women's *rotocalchi* (1933–1938)," 153–175; Michele Sisto, "Literary Journals and Book Series as Agents of Consecration: Thomas Mann and Franz Kafka in the Italian Literary Field (1908–1938)," 69–92. In this volume, see also Regner's essay.

(in the collaboration between authors, editors, illustrators, publishers, and readers, which goes into producing it)."[14] Translation and translators in periodicals exemplify both the "material" and the "institutional" levels of the periodical network, a network that is also transnational.

Drawing on these intersecting premises about the transnational nature of regional fiction, the complexity of nineteenth-century translation culture, and the role of periodicals, this essay compares the French translations of popular American regionalist Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's stories in two different European francophone countries–France and Switzerland–as they appeared in a selection of their literary periodicals of the 1890s. In France, one of Freeman's short stories was featured in the prestigious *Revue des Deux Mondes* signed by translator, critic, and novelist Thérèse Bentzon.[15] In Switzerland, translators and writers Lydie Charlier and Édouard Tavan translated Freeman in *Semaine Littéraire*; Charlier, moreover, published a book of Freeman's village tales entitled *Au Village* (1894). In *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse*, translator, novelist, and journalist Auguste Glardon not only translated Freeman but, using a pseudonym, also wrote regional fiction directly adapted from her. This essay shows that Freeman's stories were adapted differently for local audiences despite the use of a common target language (French): in the Parisian *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Freeman's work is mediated as exemplary of a distinctive American culture that was perceived as radically different from French culture and arguably more difficult to decode. In Switzerland, this difference appears to be more easily surmountable, as testified by several translations in periodicals, a volume of her translated stories, and a creative adaptation of one of her stories into a Swiss regional context.

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1852–1930)[16] was a writer from Massachusetts who came to prominence in American letters in the late 1880s and 1890s with collections of short stories and novels set in New England. She was

14 John Fagg, Matthew Pethers, and Robin Vandome, "Introduction: Networks and the Nineteenth-Century Periodical," *American Periodicals* 23, no. 2 (2013): 94. Alexis Easley's introduction to a Special Issue of the *Victorian Periodicals Review* entitled "Victorian Networks and the Periodical Press" draws a similar distinction between "physical" and "virtual" networks enabled by periodicals. See *Victorian Periodicals Review* 44, no. 2 (2011): 111–14.

15 In France, I could not trace any nineteenth-century book collection of Freeman's translated stories; to my knowledge, only Freeman's novels were translated and published in book form in the late nineteenth century.

16 In 1902, Mary E. Wilkins married Dr Charles Manning Freeman and after that her work appeared more frequently with both surnames ("Wilkins Freeman"). In this essay, she is referred to as Freeman for consistency, and Freeman has been added in square brackets when sources of the time (e.g., reviews) that only mention her maiden name are quoted directly.

part of a group of writers such as William Dean Howells, Hamlin Garland, and Sarah Orne Jewett, who wrote local-colour stories portraying people, customs, and manners of speech of specific American regions. This regionalist focus in American literature fell out of fashion in the mid twentieth century, and the regionalism of women writers such as Freeman and Jewett, in particular, suffered in reputation until recent feminist reappraisals, for example, in the seminal work of Judith Fetterley and Marjorie Pryse, who read the regional positioning of these authors' fiction as a critique to male-dominated fiction and patriarchal discourses.[17]

In *Transatlantic Footholds*, Stephanie Palmer has mapped the transatlantic reception of Freeman's work in the British Isles, drawing on an extensive corpus of reviews in British and Irish periodicals. Her research has shown that Freeman's fiction was received along two very different lines: in the first instance, her work was appraised "with reference to Anglo-Saxonism, the self-conscious construction of bonds between Britons and Americans on the putative basis of shared bloodline;" in the second case, British reviewers read her fiction, especially with reference to her characters' religious dissent, as aligned with various causes of "dissent from the British establishment", such as "the dour, self-destructive Scottish character, Calvinism, and Irish and Scottish Nationalism".[18] Most recently, Sandra A. Zagarell has sketched new trajectories for the study of Freeman, such as the need for a continued attention to "the complexity of Freeman's regionalism, including its alignment with her understanding that New England [...] was always affected and partly shaped by national, even global, circumstances and conditions" and a "materialist-historical" examination of the relationship between Freeman's texts and paratexts such as book covers or illustrations.[19] Since Freeman's stories also had a wide appeal in translation, my essay partly contributes to this scholarship by inscribing Freeman's work in a wider

17 See Judith Fetterley and Marjorie Pryse, *Writing out of Place: Regionalism, Women, and American Literary Culture* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Stephanie Palmer, Myrto Drizou and Cécile Roudeau, "Reading Freeman Again, Anew", In *New Perspectives on Mary E. Wilkins Freeman*, ed. Stephanie Palmer, Myrto Drizou and Cécile Roudeau (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 1–21.

18 Stephanie Palmer, *Transatlantic Footholds: Turn-of-the-century American Women Writers and British Reviewers* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 72. Palmer's essay in this volume examines the "art of comparison" in a transnational and translocal network of regional writers compared to Freeman in British reviews which included the Irish Jane Barlow, German Ilse Frapan, and English Mary E. Mann.

19 Sandra A. Zagarell, "Afterword: Why Mary E. Wilkins Freeman? Why Now? Where Next?," in *New Perspectives on Mary E. Wilkins Freeman*, ed. Stephanie Palmer, Myrto Drizou and Cécile Roudeau (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023), 279.

European framework and by looking at significant material aspects of her transnational resonance in another language, that is, the earliest French translations of her stories and the periodicals in which they first appeared.

Freeman in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*: "the English soul of the seventeenth century"

In France, Freeman's stories were published in several periodicals, including *Revue Politique et Littéraire: Revue Bleue* (1863-1939) and *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1829-). The *Revue Blue* featured a translation of "The Revolt of 'Mother'" (La Révolte de 'Mère') in 1898 and "The Cat" (Le Chat) in 1900, the latter being the only instance in which a translator is acknowledged ("W. P. Lafaije").[20] In the Parisian high-brow *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Freeman's work was translated and introduced to French readers by novelist and regular contributor Thérèse Bentzon (1840-1907), who signed her work "Th. Bentzon", thus leaving her gender identity ambiguous on paper, and who had built an expertise as critic of American literature: she was Sarah Orne Jewett's official translator and wrote frequent essays on Twain and other local colour writers. Bentzon translated Jewett's *A Country Doctor* (1884) for Hetzel as *Le Roman de la Femme-Médecin* (1894) after translated excerpts of this work and a critical essay had appeared a few years prior in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (1885).[21] She also spent months in the United States and, for the *Revue*, wrote travel notes about New England and essays on the condition of women in North America. As is known, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was an institution of French letters since its inception: it published leading French and European writers and was keen on building a bridge with other non-European cultures, including America.[22]

Karen Offen states that Bentzon was an example of a "'new woman' à la française, insofar as she was supporting herself through her writing"; yet, she "remained worried about the prospect of antagonism between the sexes and proposed that women should not push their claims for emancipation too far".[23] Jean Anderson has read one of Bentzon's novels, *Émancipée* (1887), in a similar way, as participating in the New Woman discourse, though

20 I could not retrieve any biographical information on this contributor.

21 Th. Bentzon, "Le Roman de la Femme-Médecin," *Revue Des Deux Mondes (1829-1971)* 67, no. 3 (1885): 598–632; *Le Roman de la Femme-Médecin* (Paris: Hetzel, 1894). Arguably, in her adapted title, Bentzon highlights the gender element of Jewett's country doctor also to differentiate the work from a notable predecessor, Balzac's *Le Médicin de Campagne* (1833).

22 "Qui sommes nous: L'histoire de la *Revue des Deux Mondes*", RevuedesDeuxMondes.fr, https://www.revuedesdeuxmondes.fr/qui-sommes-nous/, accessed Feb. 8, 2024.

23 Karen Offen, *Debating the Woman Question in the French Third Republic, 1870-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 190.

advocating for less radical and more conciliatory positions.[24] Significantly for the comparison with the American local colourists, *Emancipée* is a novel about an Alsatian expatriate, Hélène, who studies to become a female doctor in Paris, also joining "New Woman" circles with her sister Charlotte, a novelist who writes under a male pseudonym. Even if Hélène completes her studies, she consciously chooses marriage and motherhood over a career in the medical profession. The ending radically contrasts the one in Jewett's *A Country Doctor*, in which Nan refuses the marriage proposal to follow her call to become a doctor. While both novels tackle the conundrum women faced when choosing between professions outside the home and the traditional role of homemakers, Bentzon's novel lacks the regionalist element that constitutes, instead, Jewett's trademark. Jewett's novel follows Nan's *bildung* by depicting distinctive New England village characters with their beliefs and idioms as well as the local landscape. Bentzon's *Emancipée*, on the other hand, only briefly mentions Hélène's Alsatian background to characterise her as an outsider, but is a novel set primarily in Paris and more concerned with laying out positions surrounding the woman's question through various characters: interacting with female medical students are also women writers and journalists, divorcées who had embraced leading roles in charity work, and women who rebelled against the constraints of female fashion advocating for more comfortable clothing.

While Bentzon's fiction of the 1880s and 1890s partook in New Woman discourses, her early novel set on the Island of Bréhat in Brittany, *Le Violon de Job: Scènes de la Vie Bréhataise* (1875), engages more closely with French regionalism and with George Sand's "romans champêtres".[25] In the 1870s, Sand "occupied a pivotal position in literary France" with an extensive network of emerging and established writers who corresponded with her throughout her life and visited her in Nohant.[26] As one of them, Bentzon also owed to Sand's intercession in 1872 the beginning of her collaboration with the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, subsequently strengthening her profile as both a novelist and a critic.[27] While Bentzon's acknowledgement of Sand's

24 Jean Anderson, "Une Histoire de Bas-Bleus: Émancipée de Thérèse Bentzon," in *Passées Sous Silence: Onze Femmes Écrivains à Relire*, ed. Patrick Bergeron (Aulnoy-lez-Valenciennes: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 2015), 89–91.

25 Bentzon's *Le Violon de Job* was first published in 1874 in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (2, no. 3 [1874]: 531–62).

26 Alison Finch, *Women's Writing in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 83.

27 Cécile Roudeau, "'In Gallic Dress': L'Amérique Travestie, ou la Traduction du Biais Régionaliste. Le Cas Th. Bentzon," *Revue Française d'Études Américaines* 138, no. 1 (2014): 63.

influence is overtly stated in novels such as *Un Divorce* (1872),[28] Bentzon's early Breton novel also carries on the legacy of Sand's "roman champêtres" in interesting stylistic choices. Like Sand, who gathered the story of *La Mare Au Diable* (1846) directly from the protagonist and who documented a traditional Berry wedding as a member of the local community, Bentzon also includes herself in the narrative as a participant observer who had become acquainted with two of the main protagonists, Job and the priest M. Clech, while attending the traditional Breton festivals of the *Pardons* in Bréhat.[29] Another echo of Sand in Bentzon's novel is the love story between Job and Jeannie, which recalls moments in the development of the bond between the two protagonists of *La Mare Au Diable*, Germain and Marie. Bentzon's protagonist Job is, like Germain, a widower who falls in love with a younger peasant girl whose kindness and generosity ultimately help both overcome tribulations and social ostracism.

Very similar in the two texts is the pivotal scene when Germain and Job realise the intensity of their feelings for Marie and Jeannie, respectively. In Sand, Germain, his son, and the young peasant girl Marie have undertaken a journey together: Germain is going to pay a visit to a widow with the intention of re-marrying and providing a mother for his child; Marie is seeking work in a nearby village. During the journey, they are forced to spend the night together near a pond in the countryside, the titular "Devil's Pool", and at night, Germain's child falls asleep on Mary's lap. Germain contemplates the tenderness of the scene, which increases his feelings for Marie, and the chapter closes with the child awaking briefly and asking his father to choose Marie as his new mother.[30] This scene is also chosen for one of the engravings by Tony Johannot and Maurice Sand for an early 1857 edition of the work, captioned "In the firelight of the shelter, Germain was looking at his little angel asleep on the young girl's heart" ("A la lueur du feu du bivouac Germain regardait son petit ange assoupi sur le coeur de la jeune fille").[31] In Bentzon, Jeannie, who had a child out of wedlock, is forced to spend the night in Job's rustic abode on the island of Lavrec, off the coast of Bréhat. In looking at the girl sleeping on a straw bed in the stable while holding her daughter to her chest–"a vision of the Bethlehem crib" ("une vision de la crèche de Bethléem")–Job kneels down to contemplate Jeannie's beauty

28 Finch, *Women's Writing in Nineteenth-Century France*, 85.

29 George Sand, *La Mare au Diable*, in *La Mare au Diable – André – La Noce du Village – La Fauvette du Docteur* (Paris: Édition J. Hetzel, 1857), 6, 28. Th. Bentzon, *Le Violon de Job: Scènes de la Vie Bréhataise* (Paris: Michelle Lèvy, 1875), 14–15.

30 Sand, *La Mare au Diable*, 16.

31 Ibid., 17.

and falls in love.[32] Similarly to Sand, then, Bentzon also constructs a tableau reminiscent of pictorial scenes of Madonna with Child.

Bentzon's familiarity with novelistic trends such as regionalism and novels depicting women's changing roles in society, coupled with her expertise as a critic of American fiction, had her well-positioned to discuss Freeman. In 1896, Bentzon introduced Freeman's work to the readers of the *Revue* in a dedicated piece where she reviews and translates "A New England Nun" and parts of Freeman's novel *Pembroke*. In her assessment, Bentzon compares Freeman to Harriet Beecher Stowe and Jewett, praising her painterly way of synthesising a landscape or a person in "a few bold strokes" ("en deux ou trois touches hardies"), at times using a single word that can "move to laughter or tears or both at the same time."[33] She also links her depiction of New England culture to Anglo-Saxonism, outlining the connection between seventeenth-century England and its early colonial provinces in America–"the English soul of the seventeenth century, transplanted into what had become the old America in comparison to the provinces colonized ever since".[34]

Cécile Roudeau has noted that in Bentzon's translations of Bret Harte and Hamlin Garland, Bentzon renders their dialect in the stories not through a specific French regional idiom, but with a more general "peasant type" ("paysan type") of language.[35] In other words, Bentzon chooses to "render the local dialect with the voice of the social class" as this is the only viable strategy that makes the translation possible to a French audience, at a time when language and literary policies in France pushed for standardisation and centralisation, while American nation-building discourses in language and literature, instead, saw national unity as decentralised and plural.[36] In translating Jewett's *A Country Doctor* as *Le Roman de la Femme-Médecin*, Roudeau continues, Bentzon invests in a different interpretative key to draw in French readers, and in the revised title leaves out the rural element and instead combines two other spaces she sees as common between France and the United States: the novel and the growing importance of women in the public sphere.[37]

32 Bentzon, *Le Violon de Job*, 63-64.
33 Th. Bentzon, "Un Romancier de la Nouvelle-Angleterre: Mary E. Wilkins," *Revue Des Deux Mondes (1829-1971)* 136, no. 3 (1896): 557 ("[L]a puissance rare d'émouvoir d'un mot, d'imposer à sa guise le rire ou les larmes, de les provoquer même ensemble, ce qui est le triomphe de l'humour").
34 Ibid., 569: "[L]' âme anglaise di xvii ème siècle, transplantée dans ce qui comparativement aux provinces colonisées depuis, est devenu la vieille Amérique".
35 Roudeau, "'In Gallic Dress'," 63.
36 Ibid., 64, 58-59 ("rendre le dialecte local par la voix de la classe sociale").
37 Ibid., 67.

Differently from these writers, Bentzon admittedly compromises less to translate Freeman's regional writing and to render her distinctive use of language and style. Her translation of Freeman's story "A New England Nun" in the *Revue* is quite literal in both text and paratext, with the title being translated as "Une Nonne de la Nouvelle Angleterre."[38] Freeman's spare and minimalist style in the story, exemplified also by the scant dialogue and the lack of dialectal expressions more prominent in other stories, calls for less creative strategies of adaptation as Bentzon confirms in her introduction: "If she doesn't give the full measure of a talent made of minute observation and robust originality, on the other hand, she has the merit of losing less in translation than many others where dialect and local specificities play a bigger part".[39] Thus, Freeman's no-frills but evocative prose arguably poses fewer linguistic challenges for the translator, yet another type of problem arises in the process of cultural transfer.

In referring to Freeman's successful novel *Pembroke*, Bentzon states that the novel "will never find a translator in France because too many things are against our nature, and it is impossible for us to understand most characters, even if we feel them deeply human, but it is a different humanity from ours so to speak."[40] According to Bentzon, this fundamental difference is the Puritan spirit of those communities founded on the Bible, along with the irremediable stubbornness and austerity of the characters; this mentality, in Bentzon's reading, has not been influenced by German or Irish cultures which she sees as pervasive in the rest of the United States.[41] Bentzon's reference to the receiving culture as very different from Freeman's may also be interpreted in terms of religious cultures, since Bentzon was a Catholic writer.[42] While, as Roudeau has shown, Bentzon seems to have found important solutions to translate American regionalists such as Harte, Garland, and Jewett, and while appreciating the evocative realism of Freeman's

38 Bentzon, "Un Romancier de la Nouvelle-Angleterre," 544.

39 Ibidem. ("Si elle ne donne pas l'entière mesure d'un talent fait d'observation minutieuse et de robuste originalité elle a, en revanche, le mérite de perdre moins à la traduction que beaucoup d'autres où le dialecte et les particularités locales tiennent plus de place").

40 Ibid., 558 ("[ce roman] ne trouvera jamais de traducteur en France parce que trop de choses y sont au rebours de notre nature et qu'il nous est impossible d'en comprendre tout à fait la plupart des personnages, encore que nous les sentions profondément humains, mais c'est une humanité différente de la nôtre pour ainsi dire").

41 Ibid., 558, 560, 562, 569.

42 See Gérard Fabre, "Thérèse Bentzon, Une Féministe Française Catholique en Amérique du Nord (1897)," in *Atlas Historique du Québec: La Francophonie Nord-américaine*, ed. Gérard Fabre, Yves Frenette and Mélanie Lanouette (Québec: Centre Interuniversitaire d'Études Québécoises, 2018), https://atlas.cieq.ca/la-francophonie-nord-americaine/therese-bentzon-une-feministe-francaise-catholique-en-amerique-du-nord-1897.html, accessed Jan. 8, 2024.

world, she surrendered to what she perceived as an almost insurmountable cultural distance. Ultimately, she regarded Freeman as second only to New England predecessors Harriet Beecher Stowe and Jewett.[43]

Bentzon's assessment and translations of Freeman in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* contribute to establishing Bentzon's role as a leading spokesperson for American fiction in France. For such a high-profile personality in French letters as Bentzon, who worked in the literary business for about three decades at the end of the nineteenth century, translation played an active part in enhancing this reputation and in her role as a creative writer. Even if Bentzon arguably invested more energy (and translations) in other American regionalists (e.g., Jewett) who seemed to have had a greater influence on her own fiction, Freeman's rising popularity evidently could not have been left unexplored in such distinguished venue as the *Revue* and by an established critic of American letters such as Bentzon.

Freeman in Switzerland: the "simple mores" and "quiet gaiety" of the village

In Switzerland, two prestigious periodicals–*Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* (1861-1924) and *La Semaine Littéraire: Revue Hebdomadaire* (1893-1927)–featured Freeman's short fiction quite extensively, and a book of her stories was also published by F. Payot in 1894. In this section, I first contextualise the outlets in which Freeman's translations appeared and the translators; then I compare strategies of translation and adaptation of Freeman's work using the story "An Independent Thinker" as an example. As it will become evident, Freeman's work was favourably disseminated due to a common Presbyterian-Calvinist culture and a shared idea of village life that was prominent also in the receiving literary and cultural production.

Bibliothèque Universelle was one of the oldest Swiss monthlies devoted to literature, politics, economics, and society. Originating from the Swiss periodical *Bibliothèque Britannique* (1796-1816) that translated academic material from British publications into French, *Bibliothèque Universelle* became an institution in Swiss Francophone letters in the nineteenth century, after the rebranding as *Bibliothèque Universelle de Genève* (1816-1861) and the incorporation of the *Revue Suisse* in 1861.[44] In this final shape, the periodical showcased a transnational European outlook: it was published in Lausanne, with distribution in Paris by Firmin-Didot, London by Hachette, and Leipzig by Twietmeyer and Brock-

43 Bentzon, "Un Romancier de la Nouvelle-Angleterre," 557.

44 Daniel Maggetti, "La vie littéraire en Suisse romande entre 1815 et 1848," in *Histoire de la littérature en Suisse romande*, vol. II, ed. Roger Francillon (Lausanne: Editions Payot, 1997), 23–26.

haus, and featured an eclectic selection of Swiss and European fiction in translation along with sections called "Chroniques" about Parisian letters, Swiss, Italian, English, Scandinavian, Russian and/or German culture.[45] In 1896, the year of its centenary anniversary, it counted more than 3.000 subscribers in Europe.[46] In literature, *Bibliothèque Universelle* was alert to international trends in fiction but also to literature with a rigorous moral grounding, especially under the editorship of Édouard Tallichet (1828–1911) from 1866 to 1909.[47]

La Semaine Littéraire was published in Geneva since 1893 by publisher Maurice Reymond and was "the first example in francophone Switzerland of a weekly entirely dedicated to literature with contributions by both Swiss [...] and foreign writers".[48] As one of the literary periodicals that enriched the Swiss literary landscape from the 1880s, it partly undermined the previous monopoly of *Bibliothèque Universelle*.[49] By the start of the First World War, *La Semaine* had gained profound influence and reached a high number of subscribers together with *Bibliothèque Universelle*.[50] Aimed at a Swiss readership, *La Semaine* provided a forum for Swiss writers to be appreciated by their national public but was also interested in foreign writers with the strongest connections with Swiss "intellectual and moral nature", and therefore announced dedicated translations of foreign works "most deserving of interest". [51] It counted among its inspirators and contributors Swiss novelist, editor, and academic Édouard Rod (1857–1910), who was well connected with the Parisian literary circles of the day and had written regional novels set in the Vaud region as well as psychological and social commentary fiction.[52] *La Semaine* rapidly became one of the most prominent venues for most Swiss-Francophone authors, and, for instance, saw the debut of acclaimed poet and novelist Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (1878–1947) in 1904.[53]

45 See for instance *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* 1, n. 1-3 (1896): frontmatter, 670–672.
46 Gilles Revaz and François Vallotton, "La vie littéraire de 1850 à 1900," in *Histoire de la littérature en Suisse romande*, vol. II, ed. Roger Francillon (Lausanne: Editions Payot, 1997), 111, 117.
47 Gilles Revaz, "Tallichet, Edouard," *Dictionnaire Historique de la Suisse (DHS)*, 14 Sept. 2011, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/fr/articles/016009/2011-09-14/, accessed Jan. 8, 2024.
48 Daniel Maggetti, "Semaine Littéraire, La," *Dictionnaire Historique de la Suisse (DHS)*, 8 Dec. 2010, accessed Jan 8, 2024, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/fr/articles/024584/2010-12-08/.
49 Gilles Revaz and François Vallotton, "La vie littéraire de 1850 à 1900," in *Histoire de la littérature en Suisse romande*, vol. II, ed. Roger Francillon (Lausanne: Editions Payot, 1997), 110.
50 Françoise Fornerod and Roger Francillon, "La vie culturelle en Suisse romande de la Belle Epoque au début de la Seconde Guerre mondiale", in *Histoire de la littérature en Suisse romande*, vol. II, ed. Roger Francillon (Lausanne: Editions Payot, 1997), 237.
51 "A Nos Lecteurs", *La Semaine Littéraire* 1, no. 1 (1893): 1, 2.
52 Firmin Roz, *Édouard Rod* (Paris: Libraire E. Sansot Éditeur, 1906); Daniel Maggetti, "Rod, Édouard" *Dictionnaire Historique de la Suisse (DHS)*, 16 May 2012, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/fr/articles/016004/2012-05-16/, accessed Jan 15, 2024.
53 Maggetti, "Semaine Littéraire, La".

La Semaine Littéraire was the venue connected to Freeman's translator Lydie Charlier, who was acknowledged as the official translator of Freeman's works that appeared in book form: a collection of short stories, *Au Village*, published in 1894 with a second edition in 1895, and *Pour Sa Fille* (1901), a translation of *Jane Field* (1893). In the pages of *La Semaine*, Charlier published literary criticism and non-fiction under "L. Charlier," translated many of Freeman's stories, and in 1898 wrote a review with a partial translation of Freeman's novel *Jerome, A Poor Man* (1897) ("Le Roman d'un Pauvre Homme"). In the periodical, Freeman's stories were also translated by another literary figure, Édouard Tavan (1842-1919), whose name was fully displayed in the magazine as "M. Édouard Tavan." His translations of Freeman in *La Semaine* are classified as "inédite," or previously unpublished. Tavan was a regular contributor to the periodical, both through his own poems in the Parnassian style and through translations of writers such as Giovanni Verga, Enrico Castelnuovo, Rudyard Kipling, S. R. Crockett, and Armando Palacio Valdés.[54]

While Tavan did not introduce his translations, Charlier's prefatory note to Freeman's stories in the volume *Au Village* provides some background. Charlier describes New England as "a distinct country" ("un pays à part") for its "simple mores, [...] primitive customs and [...] strongly tempered and blunt characters" that "tend more and more to disappear under the rising and levelling tide of civilization".[55] Here, "civilisation" may be read as synonymous with modernisation, whose standardising effects on regional cultures ultimately lead to their demise. Nonetheless, she mentions that these "mores" and "characters" can still be found "in the countryside, in the village" ("à la campagne, au village"), and bringing Freeman to French-language Swiss audiences is therefore a way to positively highlight these local communities. In this case, what conjoins Freeman's work with Swiss culture is village life, summarised also in the title (not in fact the title of any of Freeman's collections and possibly Charlier's invention), which is simply *Au Village* without specific geographical attributes. *Au Village* therefore can refer to any village, thus drawing in more French-speaking readers and in particular Swiss readers, who would have already been familiar with modes of life in small, alpine communities.

Village life was at the core of the image that Switzerland showcased internationally, for example, at world fairs.[56] Even if many of these exhi-

54 Lazarille, "Échos de Partout," *La Semaine Littéraire* 9, no. 392 (1 July 1901): 322.

55 "[L]es mœurs simples, [...] les coutumes primitives et [...] les caractères fortement trempés, tout d'une pièce [...] "tendent de plus en plus à disparaître sous le flot montant et niveleur de la civilisation."

56 Louis-Ed. Coulin, "Le Village Suisse," Special Issue "La Suisse et le Village Suisse à l'Exposition Universelle," *Revue Illustrée* (1 Apr. 1900): 3.

bitions placed an emphasis on progress, new technology (for instance, the first line of the Paris metro was inaugurated during the Paris 1900 expo), or lavish architecture (e.g., temples, mosques, palaces), some participating countries drew on their peasant traditions, building rural villages as part of their pavilions and populating them with actors in peasant dress.[57] The construction of the Swiss village at the 1900 Parisian Exposition Universelle mobilised a large number of professionals, such as famous architects, and was inspired by the real village of Appenzell with its traditional houses and interiors.[58] Despite an emphasis on the authenticity of the national heritage displayed, world fairs were privileged sites of transnational cultural transfer, where the staging of regional and national folklore in urban, international contexts contributed to create a kind of supra-national "exhibition language," one that was first European, then transatlantic, and ultimately global.[59] Far from being unique to New England, village life, along with the nostalgia for older ways of life, is the powerful imaginary that travelled transnationally and worked as the interpretative key Charlier adopted to make Freeman translatable to French-speaking audiences and that found fertile ground in Switzerland. Hence, drawing attention to a kind of universal knowable community in both the book title (*Au Village*) and the prefatory note is Charlier's editorial strategy that connects Freeman's New England with Switzerland and beyond.

In addition, Charlier adapts some of the characters' names to French. For instance, in "Le Tricot d'Esther" (a translation of "An Independent Thinker" originally included in *A Far-away Melody and Other Stories*), Charlier maintains the English surnames, but slightly changes some characters' first names into French-friendly equivalents (e.g., Lavinia/Lavinie; Hatty/Hettie). She also translates monetary currency, such as when Esther, who lives with a pension of 96 dollars, is described as living with "700 francs."[60] While the translation is generally attentive to Freeman's language and detailed description

57 See Eric Storm's essay in this volume and Shahmima Akthar, *Exhibiting Irishness: Empire, Race and Nation, c. 1850-1970* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024).

58 Coulin, "Le Village Suisse".

59 Angela Schwartz, "The Regional and the Global: Folk Culture at World's Fairs and the Reinvention of the Nation," in *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 99–100, 110. See also Akhtar on artificial constructions of Irish villages at the Chicago 1893 Exposition "rooted in the diasporic realm of nineteenth-century Irish America". (Shahmima Akhtar, "Learning 'The Customs of their Fathers': Irish Villages in Chicago's Columbian Exposition, 1893," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 28 [2023]: 5.)

60 Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, "Le Tricot d'Esther," in *Au Village*, trans. L. Charlier (Lausanne: F. Payot, Libraire-Éditeur, 1894), 209.

of landscapes and interiors, these minor changes enhance readers' comprehension of and identification in Freeman's village world. Charlier's familiarisation strategies have also been noted in a contemporary review of her translation of Jane Field, in which the reviewer, though, criticises the fact that Charlier "spoke francs instead of dollars", translating only some proper nouns in French and leaving some in English.[61] This lack of consistency, according to the reviewer, actually diminishes the "local colour" effect ("la couleur locale")[62] since it simultaneously evokes two very distinct national traditions, therefore defamiliarising readers.

As one of the oldest Swiss literary periodicals, *Bibliothèque Universelle* was key for the dissemination of Freeman's work in Switzerland, thanks to the efforts of Auguste Glardon (1839–1922), a Swiss Presbyterian pastor who had trained in Geneva and Scotland and had served as a missionary to India. In *Bibliothèque Universelle,* Glardon also published his own fiction under the pseudonym of Paul Gervaix and Marcel Valmont[63] and penned numerous reviews of the latest American, Scottish, and Irish local colour fiction.[64] The periodical featured the French translation of "A Gatherer of Simples," rendered in French as "Herboriste" in 1893; between 1894 and 1895, it also published a translation in four parts of Freeman's novel *Jane Field* (1892), so nine years prior to Charlier's book translation. However, in all these pieces, unlike in *La Semaine*, the translator is not acknowledged.

In March 1894, Glardon wrote a long essay on Freeman as part of a series entitled "Romanciers Anglais Contemporaines" in which he provides a short biography of Freeman and discusses her works that circulated on the continent in English editions (e.g., the collections *A Humble Romance*, *A Far-away Melody*, *A New-England Nun*, published by Heinemann and Balestier in Leipzig).[65] In the essay, Glardon mentions Freeman's Scottish connections, both with Scottish literary predecessors like J. M. Barrie and Walter Scott, and with Scotland's religious milieu of Puritan stamp:

61 D. A., "Mary E. Wilkins, *Pour Sa Fille*, d'après l'anglais, par Mlle L. Charlier. Lausanne, chez Henri Mignot: Paris, chez Fischbacher," (review), *La Semaine Littéraire* 9, no. 366 (1901): 12 ("Je regrette qu'une chose, c'est que le traducteur ait parlé francs au lieu de dollars, et qu'il ait traiduit jusqu'à certains noms propres. Pourquoi pas tous, alors ? Porquoi ne pas appeler Ida Star, par example, Ida Etoile, puisque, de Green River il fait : Verte-Rivière ? Mince détail, assurément, mais détail regrettable, parce que la couleur locale y perd").

62 Ibidem.

63 Paola Crivelli, "Glardon, Auguste," *Dictionnaire Historique de la Suisse (DHS)*, 12 July 2007, accessed Jan. 8, 2024, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/fr/articles/011132/2007-07-12/.

64 See Auguste Glardon, "Un Nouvel Humoriste Écossais: Jan Maclaren," *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* 1, no. 1 (1896): 564–586; "Les Idylles Irlandaises de Jane Barlow," *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* 3, no. 7 (1896): 82–108.

65 Freeman's work also circulated in English in Tauchnitz editions.

> Coming from an old Puritan family that left Scotland at the time of the persecutions, she has preserved this heritage of austere virtue, rectitude of conscience, and moral rigidity, which has made the strength of the American nation at its beginnings. Only, she has added to it that exquisite sentiment of a quiet gaiety which captures the amusing side of things, that "quaint humour" which is not a vulgar gift, even in the homeland of Walter Scott and Barrie.[66]

Due to his Presbyterian background and training in Scotland Glardon was certainly partial to novels depicting close-knit religious communities; moreover, the emphasis on the religious milieu of both Freeman and her stories also aligns with the periodical's moralising agenda.

Glardon also creatively adapted one of Freeman's tales in *Bibliothèque Universelle*, transplanting characters and location to the Swiss village of Vallorbes, in the Vaud Canton. Under the pseudonym of Marcel Valmont, he penned "Tante Sophie" from "An Independent Thinker" in 1893. In a footnote, he carefully credited his inspiration: "The subject of this short story was taken from Miss M. Wilkins [Freeman], an American author whose interesting story 'Herbalist' was published recently (August 1893) in *Bibliothèque Universelle*".[67] While the interactions amongst the four main characters (the aunt, her niece, the niece's suitor, and the suitor's mother) remain almost the same, the village in "Tante Sophie" is clearly referred to as Vallorbes (in Freeman's story it is simply "a little village"[68]), and some local specificities are also noted, such as its inhabitants gathered around the fountain with the watering trough for the cows and the mention of a "file factory" near the river.[69] In its deliberate joining of two traditions and locales, Valmont/Glardon's creative reimagining of Freeman's story in a Swiss context becomes

66 Auguste Glardon, "Romanciers Anglais Contemporaines: Mary Wilkins," *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* 61 (Mar. 1894): 314–15 ("Comme l'Ecossais Barrie, elle s'est contentée du petit coin de pays qui l'a vue naître, où elle connaît tout le monde, où tout le monde la connaît et elle a su y découvrir des trésors. [...] Issue d'une vieille famille puritaine, sortie d'Ecosse à l'époque des persécutions, elle a conservé intact ce patrimoine de vertu austère, de rectitude de conscience, et de rigidité morale, qui a fait la force de la nation américaine à ses débuts. Seulement, elle y a ajouté ce sentiment exquis d'une gaieté tranquille qui voit partout le côté amusant des choses, ce *quaint humour* qui n'est pas un don vulgaire, même dans la patrie de Walter Scott et de Barrie").

67 Marcel Valmont, "Tante Sophie: Nouvelle," *Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* 60 (October-December 1893): 258 ("Le sujet de cette nouvelle a été emprunté à Miss M. Wilkins, auteur américain dont la Bibliothèque Universelle a publié récemment (août 1893) un intéressant récit: *Herboriste*").

68 Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, "An Independent Thinker," in *A Far-away Melody and Other Stories* (Leipzig: Heinemann and Balestier, 1891), 106.

69 Valmont, "Tante Sophie," 258–59.

a transnational local colour story and testifies to the potential of periodicals as sites of experimentation for translation, fiction (the village tale in this case), and multifarious understanding of authorships. Far from being a unique case, similar practices of rewriting in periodicals can be observed elsewhere: for example, in a German-American context, politicised "rewritings" or "manipulations" into German of Frank Norris's *The Octopus: A Story of California* (1901) appeared in the German-American periodical *Pionie*, issued by the Socialist Cooperative Publishing Association in New York.[70]

Interestingly, Valmont's story omits a key theme in Freeman's story, that is, the religious transgression of the Sunday rest. Esther Gay is initially frowned upon by the community because she does not go to church on Sunday but continues working at her knitting on a holy day; this perceived transgression also endangers her niece's chances of becoming engaged to her suitor. In Valmont, former tutoress Tante Sophie, in overseeing the propriety of the suitor's house visits to her niece who is studying for her final exams, acts arrogantly in front of the suitor (a factory worker) and scares him away. While Glardon/Valmont had highlighted the religious background of Freeman's communities, for his Vaud-based adaptation, his focus arguably was on another feature of Freeman's writing he admired, the "stubbornness" ("entêtement")[71] of her female characters.

Moreover, while both Esther and Tante Sophie eventually win their pride for the sake of their nieces and intercede with the suitor's mothers to allow them to return to visit their nieces, Valmont's story ends on a sentimental note rather than with Freeman's pungent irony. In Freeman's story, Esther both enables the continuation of her niece's courtship and still does not go to church on Sunday, but *this time* it is with the approval of the whole community because she is now busy with a more acceptable activity: the care of a sick neighbour she had generously taken in to live with her. The story ends in Esther Gay's own words, as she remarks, in an ironic way, that she managed to do things her way after all: "Standing at the well, looking up at the windows, she chuckled softly to herself. 'It's all settled right,' said she, 'an' there don't none of 'em suspect that I'm a-carryin' out my p'int arter all'."[72] In Valmont, the final scene focuses on the betrothed reunited by Tante Sophie, who, giving them a bit of privacy, goes into the garden and con-

70 Florian Freitag, "Translation and Periodical Studies: The Pionier's Rewriting of Frank Norris's The Octopus", in *Periodical Studies Today. Multidisciplinary Analyses*, ed. Jutta Ernst, Dagmar von Hoff & Oliver Scheiding, (Amsterdam: Brill, 2022), 276, 265.

71 Glardon, "Romanciers Anglais Contemporaines: Mary Wilkins", 323.

72 Freeman, "An Independent Thinker," 129.

templates the stars, wondering if "in those far-away worlds there are also incomprehensible mysteries and love stories."[73] The very final lines are the narrator's interposition, announcing that the niece did not even take the final exams, possibly implying an engagement.[74] Even if Valmont/Glardon completely re-imagines the final scene of his story, the irony of Esther's final words is not lost to him and actually much appreciated in his 1894 critical essay, whereby he translates Esther's lines in Freeman's story as follows: "[E]lle ne peut s'empêcher de rire doucement 'Tout est arrangé à présent, et pas un d'eux ne se doute qu'en définitive j'ai eu le dernier mot'."[75]

In Charlier's traditional translation of the story, Freeman's subtle irony uttered by the protagonist herself in the final sentence is slightly adapted. While maintaining a sentence indicating that the outcome was, in the end, what Esther had wanted ("wasn't it what she had wanted?"), Charlier adds a further explanatory sentence not to be found in the source text: "How could she have regretted a sacrifice that had made many happy?".[76] This addition is arguably ambiguous–an ambiguity that is not as evident in Esther's final words uttered as her own direct speech. If we read the word "sacrifice" at face value, with this sentence Charlier seems to draw the attention to the fact that Esther ultimately has given up some of her independence and convictions for the common good and to conform to family and societal expectations, and therefore that she has not in fact skilfully navigated social and religious obligations to maintain her own nonconformist, independent contribution to village life. The question, however, can also be read as a rhetorical question, with Freeman's ironic assertion of independent thinking being somewhat preserved.

In Switzerland, Freeman's stories found several outlets for translation in both periodicals and book form. As this section of the essay has shown, Freeman's translators saw common ground between Switzerland and New England essentially in nostalgic modes of village life that they synthesised in paratextual elements (Charlier's preface and title of the translated collection) or in creative rewritings (Glardon/Valmont's Swiss tribute to "An Independent Thinker").

73 Valmont, "Tante Sophie," 283 ("s'il y avait aussi dans ces mondes lointains des mystères incompréhensibles et des histoires d'amour").

74 Ibid., 283.

75 Glardon, "Romanciers Anglais Contemporaines: Mary Wilkins," 324.

76 Freeman, "Le Tricot d'Esther," 232 ("n'était-ce pas ce qu'elle avait voulu ? Comment aurait-elle regretté un sacrifice qui faisait tant d'heureux ?").

Conclusion

The examination of Freeman's translators and their modes of translation into French expands our understanding of local colour fiction beyond strictly national traditions towards a transnational frame of reference. It illuminates multiple agents and hubs in the literary field that were crucial in the early international circulation, adaptation, and impact of this genre, notably literary periodicals with their intrinsic power of functioning as transnational networks on many levels. In France, Freeman's work in translation featured only in periodicals, and in the prestigious and internationally oriented *Revue des Deux Mondes* was translated by the established novelist and critic of American literature Thérèse Bentzon. Bentzon, however, did not capitalise on Freeman as much as she capitalised on other local colour writers such as Jewett. While praising the simplicity of Freeman's language as more conducive to foreign translation, Bentzon also assumed a more difficult cultural barrier to overcome: the staunch Calvinism of her characters that, in her view, made them less relatable to French readers. In Switzerland, Freeman's fiction was disseminated in two important literary reviews (*Bibliothèque Universelle et Revue Suisse* and *La Semaine Littéraire*) keen on wider European and American trends thanks to three different translators: one of them (Charlier) also edited a book of her stories and another (Glardon) creatively turned one of them into a Swiss regional tale. These retranslations of Freeman in France and Switzerland testify to the malleability of the village tale and how transnational circulation and adaptation are as intrinsic to the genre as supposedly its distinctively local character. Putting translations centre-stage increases the understanding that texts are already automatically part of transnational networks that they contribute to shaping. Examining translators' own imprint and strategies to localise foreign literature shifts received hierarchies of authorship in favour of more nuanced, multiple, and at times collaborative understandings of authorship.

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