Hans Christian Andersen, Translation, and World Literature in Victorian British Periodicals

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In a letter to his first English translator, Mary Howitt, Hans Christian Andersen writes on the 24th of October 1845: "Oh you do not know how much good it does my spirit to win recognition abroad."[1] With his first novel *The Improvisatore* from 1835 recently out in Howitt's English translation in two volumes, an enthusiastic Andersen relates that he had just "read" glowing reviews of the translated novel in English magazines. He was, however, more likely "told" about his novel's reception in the English press, as he later admitted to having little to no understanding of English. Andersen mentions that he also received help to examine a few chapters of his novel and the prefacing 35-pages biography, which Howitt had adapted from Xavier Marmier's "Une vie de poète" (1837).[2] At the same time, while his letter was addressed to his translator in Danish, with the hope she would understand his mother tongue, Andersen offers that he could write to her in German, if she preferred – the language from which she had originally translated *The Improvisatore*. The correspondence between the author and one of his significant early English translators would continue via the intermediary language of German, as would be the continuing practice of Howitt's translations such as the two novels appearing under the title: *Only a Fiddler; and O.T., or Life in Denmark. By the author of "The Improvisatore, or, Life in Italy"*, published, as Andersen's first novel in English, by Richard Bentley in the summer of 1845 (Bredsdorff, 1954, p. 45). This lack of linguistic immediacy between the author and his translator has been a central point of critique in the more recent reception of Howitt's translations and her function as gatekeeper for the early dissemination of Andersen's works in English.

Singularly focused on his new-found success with an English-language readership in Britain and the U.S., with global recognition and fame within reach, Andersen at first appears

[1] "O De veed ikke hvor det gjør mit Sind godt at jeg vinder Erkjendelse ude" (Andersen, 1845). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Danish are by the author.
[2] (A German translation, "Dänemark. Andersen nach X. Marmier", was published November 10, 1837, in *Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes* (135), 537–538. https://books.google.dk/books?id=cJUZAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=da&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q=andersen&f=false).

indifferent to the mediating polyphony of languages that characterised his entry into the English literary market. Coinciding with his first visit to England in the summer of 1847, Howitt had also swiftly translated Andersen's German autobiography *Das Märchen meines Lebens ohne Dichtung*, which Andersen had sent to her as soon as it was published earlier in the year. While the autobiography was originally designed to preface and add value to the German edition of Andersen's collected works, in Howitt's English version it functioned to promote the author's literary brand to a new readership and the multiple translations of Andersen's works she was producing at the time.

In the letter from 1845, Andersen shows gratitude for the translator's excellent work and her hand in assuring his growing recognition in England that does so well for his spirit. He goes on to encourage her to also translate his acclaimed fairy tales, which, he thinks, will be well received in England. Indeed, within the following year she would translate and publish a collection of ten of Andersen's tales published as *Wonderful Stories for Children* in 1846. Andersen is, however, in this regard, unsure whether their particular "tone", the way his tales are told in Danish, could in fact be captured in translation – in any translation:

> Yes, I believe that especially in England my literary creations will be received well and with kindness, as here in Denmark. My fairy tales have received unconditional recognition at home. Whether they could be translated in the same tone as they are told in Danish, I do not know. In Swedish it works well, but in German the fragrance has disappeared. They undoubtedly reproduce the story, but the essence, that which has given the fairy tales some significance in Denmark, is the way they are told. It is not so in any German translation. May the English language and your interest, gracious lady, grant them the original impression in their very form.[3]

Andersen is clearly attuned to the fact, as his unfavourable view of contemporary German translations of his tales indicates, that his trademark narrative voice is perhaps too peculiarly Danish to travel into another language unscathed – apart from neighbouring Scandinavian languages. Contrary to his assessment above, we should be reminded that also his fairy tales had enjoyed a remarkably favourable reception in Germany at a time when the Danish

[3] "Ja, jeg troer at just i Engeland vil man, som her i Danmark, blive disse Digtninger venlige og gode. Mine Eventyr have her hjemme vundet ubetinget Erkjendelse; hvorvidt de kunne oversættes ganske i samme Tone de ere fortalte paa Dansk, veed jeg ikke; paa Svensk gaaer det meget godt, men paa Tydsk er Duften borte; naturligviis gjengiver de nok Historien, men det Egentlige, det som have givet Eventyrene en Slags Betydning i Danmark, det er den Maade de fortælles paa; det er ikke ret i nogen Tydsk Oversættelse. Gid det Engelske Sprog, og Deres Interesse, naadige Frue, forunde dem det originale Præg i selve Formen" (Andersen, 1845).

reception was, also contrary to his assessment above, more tempered, if not cold, and far from "unconditionally" positive (see Thomsen, 2025, p. 195).

It is, then, worth considering why Andersen in this early letter to his English translator (one he suspected did not, in fact, understand his Danish and who would most likely translate from German translations) implies that it would be possible for her to capture his original Danish "impression", "tone", and "essence". Certainly, Howitt's ability to capture Andersen's "original" language and intention appears from the very outset lost in (her) translation. We might infer that Andersen, while heavily invested in the quality of the translations of his works (i.e. their ability to render his "original impression"), was less concerned about the possibility of an "identical translation" and more interested in the abstract "impression" a translation might have on new readers and critics; in other words, whether Howitt's translation could capture his original voice *and* whether it would be received well and with kindness by English readers.

His re-evaluation of his works in German translations, as explained to Howitt, appears primarily strategic as a bid to elicit a dedicated translator's support for his mission to enhance his international recognition elsewhere, to bring him joy, and he writes, add a further chapter to "the fairy tale of my life". Andersen was, it seems, keenly aware of what may be gained and what may be lost in translation, and he was invested in conquering a new and potentially global market including the large English-language market across the Atlantic "Weltmer", as he terms it, when writing to Howitt in German on 28 September 1846.

At this stage in his career, with recognition seemingly established in his home country and his collected works appearing in German, Andersen is cognisant of the dynamics of what might turn literature written in a small language into *Weltliteratur* or world literature. In his letter to Howitt, I suggest, he is attempting to focus the translator's attention to the aesthetic, literary form, and the artistic aspiration of his tales; i.e. to pre-emptively manage the reception abroad of what had become his most popular literary genre over the past decade.

His fairy tales, Andersen suggests, are not mere storytelling but present an artistic vision of narrative style and form that is tied to his own particular voice and native language; however, one also senses that he is aware of the fact that to gain recognition abroad something might have to give – in this case, the lack of the translator's direct knowledge of Danish might be less important if the tales may reach a wider, appreciative audience through English. As David Damrosch (2003) has argued, works that are so anchored in their own language as to be seemingly untranslatable will never achieve "an effective life as world

literature": "works become world literature when they gain on balance in translation, stylistic losses offset by an expansion in depth as they increase their range" (p. 289). "Expansion in depth" and "range", is exactly what Andersen was hoping for, as his works were entering into the English language and literary market.

A Parasitic Translator?

While Andersen's fairy tales are to this day one of the most widely recognised contributions to world literature, the critical reception of the fate of Andersen's fairy tales in English has been harsh and, in particular, critical of Mary Howitt's role in the early dissemination of his works in translation. The general assumption is that Andersen has been treated badly by Howitt as well as by many subsequent English translators.[4] The view is perhaps best summarised in an article about Andersen's Victorian translators as follows: "Andersen's literary reputation in the English-speaking world has continued to be undermined by translators who were both incapable of being faithful to the letter of his original work, and (even worse) unwilling to be faithful to its spirit" (Banerjee, 2008, n.p.).

Andersen in English became the world-famous author of wonderful children's stories, the storyteller *par excellence* and not the "stylistic" or "aesthetic" innovator of literary form for which Andersen wished to be recognised – "stylistic losses", it seems in Andersen's case, have been thoroughly "offset by an expansion in depth", as his tales have achieved universal renown.

Hannah Persson, for instance has recently asserted that Howitt's translations did propel Andersen into the English-speaking market: "However, somewhere in the process of translation," she argues, "the original essence of the tales was lost, as Howitt took liberties with the texts that arguably went beyond the scope of translation, changing the tone, the style, and the morals of several tales" (Persson, 2022, p. 190). In other words, the result of Howitt's translations was exactly the opposite of what the author had hoped and prescribed in their correspondence.

Such arguments exemplify the extent to which fidelity to an undefinable authorial "original essence" is still dominating translation studies. Dismissive evaluations of Andersen's fate in the English language continues a tradition for submitting Howitt's motivations

[4] Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen (2003) provides a short overview of the negative critical assessment of early English translations of Andersen that includes Elias Bredsdorff (1954), whose study asserts that "not one has proved able to offer a really congenial English version" (p. 15). Other influential studies mentioned by Pedersen include Signe Toksvig's *The Life of Hans Christian Andersen* (1933) and Reginald Spink's *Hans Christian Andersen. The Man and His Work* (1972).

and intentions in pursuing and securing Andersen's works for herself to a rather harsh personal critique, (mis-)using her correspondence with Andersen to paint a picture of a slanderous, possessive, and failed author, in her own right, who appropriated Andersen's tales to match her own Victorian moral code and to further her own self-image (p. 197); Mary Howitt, it is argued, was, despite her prominent role in disseminating Andersen's works into the English-speaking world market, an unskilled and parasitic translator.

Elias Bredsdorff's classic study *H. C. Andersen og England* from 1954 laid the ground-work for this less than favourable view of Howitt's translations and her own authorship (referring to her as a mere "skribentinde" [penwoman]; p. 42), insisting that she had very limited Danish-language proficiency and most likely translated from the German translations Andersen had already dismissed. Bredsdorff mentions, though, that she had learned some Swedish while residing in Heidelberg, which she used to translate and self-publish novels of Fredrika Bremer. Bredsdorff also reprinted their correspondence outlining the growing sense of distrust and misunderstandings between the author and his translator, especially when it came to financial issues and questions of exclusive rights to Andersen's works for translation.

Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen, on the other hand, in his major survey of Andersen in English translations, shows more understanding for Howitt's own peculiar, personal style, circumstances, and her ability to adjust Andersen's fairy tales to Victorian sensibilities; his is a view of translation much more attuned to the necessarily creative work of translation and the needs and expectations of a receiving culture. In other words, Pedersen's appraisal of Howitt's Victorian translations is closer in spirit to Damrosch's definition of world literature as "writing that gains in translation" (2003, p. 281). While some mistranslations are certainly apparent, Andersen's stories did "gain" a large audience in English, initially through her accomplished imitation of Andersen's narrative rhythm and thorough understanding of an emerging literary market.[5]

One cannot help but think that generations of Danish critics of these early translations of Andersen into English have been motivated by a need to counter an appreciation of Andersen's global fame as exclusively a writer for children (a view of world literature understood as popular dissemination and reach) with a perceived more discerning "Danish" appreciation of his literary qualities (a view of world literature based on universal quality).

[5] Whether due to the ferocious speed of her translations or poor understanding of Danish, Howitt did commit some obvious mistranslations and, to the modern mind, strange choices in rendering Andersen's writing. These have been discussed in detail by Elias Bredsdorff, Viggo Hjørnager Pedersen, and Hannah Persson to whom I shall point for further details about Howitt's translation style and choices.

According to Persson, Howitt was one of the main reasons why Andersen has been relegated to "the nursery" on account of her significant omissions and appropriations of his tales to fit her own personal taste and to cater for the emerging market for children's literature in Victorian Britain: "In doing so, we can see how Andersen came to be known primarily as an author of children's literature in the English-speaking world – despite the fact that he saw himself as an author for all age groups." This, she continues, would be "a source of regret for Andersen for the rest of his life" (p. 191).

Although Andersen's perception of his tales' readership certainly was more ambiguous than regretful, Persson and other critics are undoubtedly right that from around 1847, Andersen became more widely known as almost exclusively a writer for children, famed universally for a smaller number of his fairy tales – a view that has persisted and been reinforced through translations and adaptations ever since; but, as Pedersen reminds us, this change in the reception of Andersen's authorship was already taking place in Germany around 1847 from where Howitt likely took inspiration.

There can be no doubt, though, as Persson and others have evidenced, that judged by today's standards, Howitt's translations are inadequate, committing simple errors of mis-translation due to her lack of proficiency in Andersen's Danish, and exhibit a tendency to adapt Andersen's language and morals to fit her own and a British audience's tastes. At the same time, Howitt was also an enthusiastic translator, who clearly did what she could to establish a good relationship with the author in order to secure his blessing for her translations. She was also a dedicated ambassador for Andersen's works as she sought to place them with recognised publishers and periodicals in Britain. As the early letters Andersen wrote to Howitt indicate, the author depended on a passionate and prolific translator, who would be able to open the right doors to a new market. As with many such interdependent relationships in publishing, it is not straightforward to ascertain who is the parasite and who the host.

By attempting to reconstruct the fate of Andersen's fairy tales in English through an analeptic assessment of Howitt's role in the global branding of Andersen as exclusively a writer of children's literature, we may be simplifying both the function of translation in world literature and Howitt's work as a translator and publicist. While critics have stressed the importance of considering Howitt's personal motivations for securing Andersen's works for translation, the reception of her work has entirely overlooked her role as co-editor of a

significant literary journal, *Howitt's Journal*, which she would also employ in the service of promoting Andersen as a quality writer of world literature.

In the following, I shall argue that in the early-Victorian period, one fact does not necessarily exclude another: Andersen's famous childlike imagination did not preclude his ability to be taken seriously as a modern, innovative writer; and his universal acclaim, with his tales considered prime examples of mid-century world literature, was to contemporary Victorians an expression of his genius *and* his cosmopolitanism. While Howitt, other translators, publishers, and editors would shift their attention to the publishing of Andersen's fairy-tale books targeted a younger audience, Andersen proceeded to be published as a cosmopolitan author of serious literature for artisan and middle-class consumption in the British periodical press, even in Mary Howitt's own *Howitt's Journal*.

There is and has always been more than one Andersen – adjusted and appropriated for diverse readerships. While the book market and lending libraries of mid-Victorian Britain sought to capitalise on Andersen's fame as a writer for children and families, in the booming market for inexpensive weekly and monthly periodicals, Andersen became a figure whose works exemplified the global circulation of literature and literature's ability to refract this new world. While critics have mostly been concerned with the book market for translations to ascertain the reception and dissemination of Andersen's works as world literature, in the following I shall explore the expanding mass-medium of periodicals in the UK as a vehicle for a different "worlding" of Andersen's works coinciding with his visit to England and Scotland and the late-eighteen-forties boom in translations of his novels, fairy tales, travelogues, and autobiography.

Blackwood's Magazine and "The Emperor's New Clothes"

Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine was a monthly literary periodical and one of the most influential and innovative literary periodicals of nineteenth-century Britain. Early in the century, it had published the works of radicals of British Romanticism such as Shelley and Coleridge and in 1899 it serialised Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Throughout the century, *Blackwood's* "was one of the principal periodical organs for new fiction, especially a certain species of short fiction", political commentary, and literary criticism, but it also brought serialised novels including most of George Eliot's (Allingham, 2013, n.p.).

The October issue of 1847 featured a lengthy article entitled "The Works of Hans Christian Andersen". It bore testament to the meteoric rise of Andersen in English trans-

lation and was motivated by the publicity Andersen had enjoyed during his visit to London and Edinburgh over the summer of that year. The article includes a lengthy retelling of Andersen's biography, following Howitt's 1847 translation of *The True Story of My Life*, and a presentation and review of Andersen's works so far published in English. Interestingly, however, the anonymous author introduces Andersen's life and career by considering the translation of his works not in terms of fidelity or aesthetic value, but instead in the context of the expanding market for translated fiction and related issues concerning value judgements of national versus foreign literature:

> If our readers have perchance stumbled upon a novel called 'The Improvisatore' by one Hans Christian Andersen, a Dane by birth, they have probably regarded it in the light merely of a foreign importation to assist in supplying the enormous annual consumption of our circulating libraries, which devour books as fast as our mills do raw cotton. (Works of Hans Christian Andersen, p. 387)

The assertion that the readers of *Blackwood's* would merely have thought of Andersen's first novel in English as pulp ("raw cotton"), as a material product churned out of the expansive and industrial mechanical printing press to satisfy an indiscriminate mass readership, is, we must assume, tongue-in-cheek as the intellectual classes in Britain had generally received Andersen's already famous European novel enthusiastically and with positive discernment. However, the momentary fame of a European writer such as Andersen provides the reviewer an opportunity to reflect on the politics of translation as well.

It is suggested that the British demand for books outweighs local supply, which is one reason, the article continues:

> [Our readers] may have been glad to see that our trade with the North is likely to be beneficial to us, in this our intellectual need. Its books may not be so durable as its timber, nor so substantial as its oxen, but then they are articles of faster growth, and of easier transportation. (p. 387)

The mercantile discourse and the expressed expectation of the advantages of free trade across borders (possibly reflecting a political turn towards free trade in Britain the preceding year), is surprisingly reminiscent of the diagnosis provided by Marx and Engels in their 1848

Communist Manifesto, where cosmopolitan production and consumption is set to replace national "self-sufficiency" or protectionism:

> […] we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And *as in material, so also in intellectual production*. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature. (Marx & Engels, 2013, p. 17, my emphasis)

Yet, despite fulfilling an "intellectual need" in the home market, the article is less enthusiastic about the increasing demand for translated literature. It is suggested that in Britain, works in translation have come to be perceived much more favourably than local literary "products", with unfair distinction simply due to their foreignness and the "essential charm of their novelty" and without essentially offering anything "good nor rare" in themselves. It is further speculated that:

> Suppose one of these foreign books were suddenly proved to be of genuine home production – suppose the German, or the Dane, or the Frenchman, were discovered to be a fictitious personage, and all the genius, or all the rant, to have really emanated from the English gentleman, or lady, who had merely professed to translate – presto! how the book would instantly change colours! What a reverse of judgment would there be! (Works of Hans Christian Andersen, p. 388)

In other words, considering the case in question here, imagine if Andersen's works were revealed to having been written by his translator, Mary Howitt. Then, the article speculates, they would not have achieved similar acclaim. This rumination on foreign literary trade, on a contemporary preference for what is originally foreign without considering inherent literary quality, and on how feeble literary value judgement is compared to other goods, leads eventually to an evaluation of Andersen's works themselves.

At first, the reviewer reveals that they had found them simply belonging to the "literary season" with some "touches of genuine feeling, with traits of character which, though imperfectly delineated, bore the impress of truth;" yet they were: "constructed with no skill, informed by no clear spirit of thought, and betraying a most undisciplined taste" (p. 388).

Such was the first impression of Andersen's works on this sceptical reviewer in *Blackwood's*: a superficial, fashionable foreign import without any real cultivation or substance.

However, now that the reviewer has read Andersen's autobiography in Howitt's translation, their opinion has radically changed:

> [It] has revealed to us so curious an instance of intellectual cultivation, or rather of genius exerting itself without any cultivation at all, and has reflected back so strong a light, so vivid and so explanatory, on all his works, that what we formerly read with a very mitigated admiration, with more of censure than of praise, has been invested with quite a novel and peculiar interest. (p. 388)

The change in aesthetic judgement is, then, initiated by the intervention of the author's biography and its narrative of the formation of a Romantic, uncultivated genius – a strategy of using the author's biography as an interpretive threshold that, as we have seen, Andersen skilfully employed both when constructing his own collected works in German and as pre-texts for his literary tours. The autobiography, in other words, unveils how preconceived judgements and a desire to conform to established local norms may have led this and other Victorian readers astray when faced with Andersen's works. It also highlights how the consumption of literature in translation and cosmopolitanism can be haunted by desires for authenticity, even a nationally or indigenously conditioned authenticity, just as assessments of the translations that enable cosmopolitan dialogue, as we have seen, appear to foreground the capture of on author's authentic or original language.

This treatment of Andersen in one of the leading and most widely circulating periodicals of the early Victorian age, in an article which was rapidly reprinted in *Little's The Living Age* in the US, is of course telling for its use of Andersen as a prime example of the contemporary transnational circulation of literature: it says something for the extraordinary place of Andersen's authorship in mid-century world literature, merely a year after his first English translation. Nevertheless, the discussion of how to discern the real quality of literature in translation – to tell the genuine, real skill, and the truth in books made from raw cotton apart from mere pretence – is further complicated by the inspired decision by the editors of *Blackwood's* to reprint a translation of Andersen's tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" immediately following the review of Andersen's life and works. The translation is identified as Charles Boner's originally printed in the collection *Tales from Denmark* (1847);

although, it is noted, a few sentences have been omitted as the extract would otherwise be too long – another testimony to the less than scrupulous approach to fidelity in translated literature that characterised the period before the 1886 international Berne Convention for the protection of literary works.

We can, of course, only conjecture what a contemporary reader would have made of this dialogue between texts printed in one issue of *Blackwood's*. In contrast to books, the periodical as a print medium is necessarily dialogic. Periodicals are collaborative print objects that are brought together through the collaboration of multiple agents such as authors, editors, translators, advertisers, and in some cases even readers. As intermedial, material assemblies of a wide range of textual and visual forms and genres, periodicals as objects of study are diverse and wide-ranging, and are importantly related to but also different from the book culture we usually imply in studies of literature (Latham & Scholes, 2006, p. 529).

In the crowded pages of a literary journal such as *Blackwood's*, the borders and differences between texts tend to blur. "The Emperor's New Clothes", therefore, takes on a host of new possible meanings in the context within which it materially appears: the profile and status of the journal and its readership are suggestive for the critical frame through which the tale should be perceived and will necessarily be different from the same tale printed in a book of tales directed to a younger audience; the story itself will also have to be read in a different light when placed immediately following a critical review of Andersen's life and works.

The reader of this instantiation of "The Emperor's New Clothes" is, therefore, conditioned to consider whether Andersen's tale about the social capital of aesthetic judgement, about human vanity, and the fabrication of truth reflects back on the review article's negotiation of the genuine, the true Andersen behind the translations and the works themselves. It is in any case suggestive that having read the article on the "Works of Hans Christian Andersen", the reader would immediately encounter the author's own tale about vain sycophants, which so obviously speaks directly to and emphatically deconstructs arguments over fidelity, truth, and aesthetic judgement. "The eye," the reviewer asserts in their discussion of evaluating literature in translation, "is sometimes tasked to discover extraordinary beauty, where there is nothing but extraordinary blemish" (Works of Hans Christian Andersen, p. 387) – an observation that also captures the very plot of "The Emperor's New Clothes". It would not be wholly amiss to propose that the reviewer's assessment of world

literature in translation, whether "raw cotton" or "invested with quite a novel and peculiar interest", was, in fact, initially sparked by Andersen's tale itself.

While book publications of Andersen's tales in English were beginning to find their place amidst a growing Victorian interest in literature for children, periodicals such as *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* printed and reviewed his life and works as significant contributions to a cosmopolitan, modern, border-crossing literature. That such periodicals had a central role to play in the formation of nineteenth-century world literature is clear also from Goethe's earliest considerations of the phenomenon. In 1828, in his journal *Über Kunst und Altertum*, Goethe – often referred to as the originator of our modern conception of world literature – said the following about Anglo-Scottish cultural periodicals such as *Blackwood's*:

> These journals, as they gradually reach a wider public, will contribute most effectively to the universal world literature we hope for; we repeat however that there can be no question of the nations thinking alike, the aim is simply that they shall grow aware of one another, understand each other, and, even where they may not be able to love, may at least tolerate one another. (qtd. in Strich, 1949, p. 350)

With his concept of *Weltliteratur*, Goethe captured a movement of intellectual internationalism powered, at least partly, by the rapid growth and transnational interchanges of European journals and magazines. His concept was designed (though never really elaborated) to meet these cultural dynamics ripe in his time, not only in relation to his own work, but also in a broader political, cosmopolitan context following the French and American revolutions and the writing down of human rights. To Goethe, the wave of internationalism or cosmopolitanism inherent to his conception of world literature is intricately tied to trade and print infrastructures, more generally, as he suggested: "the ever increasing rapidity of human interaction" (Hoesel-Uhlig, 2004, p. 35) – infrastructure here understood in its broadest conception as forms and matter that enable the movement of other forms and matters.

In his conversations with his secretary Eckermann, Goethe related the approaching "universal world literature" (*allgemeine Weltliteratur*) not only to what he diagnosed as the "contemporary, highly turbulent epoch" (*gegenwärtige, höchst bewegte Epoche*) and its "vastly facilitated communications", but also to the "constantly spreading activities of trade and commerce" (p. 35). His conception of a universal world literature is aimed at participating intellectually and culturally in the processes of globalisation, to attempt to grasp the unfore-

seeable ways in which revolutions in transportation and print media change the communication between national literatures. In Goethe's mind, literary periodicals such as *Blackwood's* would go on to play a central role in the approaching world literature. The example of Andersen's appearance in this Victorian journal suggests that his works, including his popular fairy tales, were not merely material and intellectual "goods" benefitting from the infrastructure of cosmopolitan journals but also central to the shaping and critical consideration of such transnational publishing infrastructures.

In 1828, Goethe famously claimed that "every literature dissipates within itself when it is not reinvigorated through foreign participation" (cited in Pizer, 2000, p. 217). The reviewer of the works of Andersen in English translation in *Blackwood's Magazine* would probably agree, and so would Mary Howitt and her husband William Howitt, whose own internationalist journal would feature a range of texts by Andersen in 1847. This final example of Andersen's appearance in Victorian British periodicals will further exemplify that not only were his writings considered prime examples of world literature at the time of his breakthrough in English translations, they were also in themselves considered serious reflections of a modern, cosmopolitan spirit in Europe.

Andersen's travel boots in *Howitt's Journal*

Mary and William Howitt's weekly periodical *Howitt's Journal of Literature and Popular Progress* was short-lived. It ran for only eighteen months from January 1847 to June 1848. Sold for a penny, it was "aimed at the new and growing artisan readerships of the large towns and cities" (Shattock, 2011, p. 79) and it had a circulation that fluctuated between 25,000 and 30,000 copies per week (Shattock, 2021, p. 45). *Howitt's Journal* was a "magazine of popular progress" with an overt reformist political agenda (Maidment, 1984, p. 83). Its contents regularly included a mixture of political articles, a focus on general knowledge, fiction by, among others, Elizabeth Gaskell, well known for her social conscience, and a significant amount of poetry, including translations. Mary Howitt herself was from a Quaker background and both she and William were "radical reformers, intellectuals, feminists, animal-rights activists, abolitionists, and prolific writers" – Mary Howitt, of course, also a prolific and ambitious translator of German and Scandinavian literatures (Pettitt, 2020, p. 252).

We get a sense of the Howitts' aspiration and political ambition for their journal in the first issue published on 2 January 1847, which begins with an "Address to their Friends and Readers". Here the editors explain that the journal will give support to:

> […] all the onward and sound movements of the time […] to the cause of Peace, of Temperance, of Sanatory reform, of School for every class – to all the efforts of Free Trade, free opinion; to abolition of obstructive Monopolies, and the recognition of those great rights which belong to every individual of the great British people. ([W. Howitt], 1847, pp. 1–2).

One pertinent example of how they delivered on their Reformist publishing agenda was the publication of several articles that followed the American social reformer, abolitionist, and leader of the movement for African-American civil rights Frederick Douglass on his two-year tour of Britain and Ireland. In fact, Douglass met a mostly silent and introvert Andersen at the Howitts' in 1847, as Douglass recalls:

> William and Mary Howitt were among the kindliest people I ever met. Their interest in America, and their well-known testimonies against slavery, made me feel much at home with them at their house in that part of London known as Clapham. Whilst stopping here, I met the Swedish [sic] poet and author – Hans Christian Andersen. (Douglass, 1892, p. 298)

The mistaken nationality was possibly due to the fact that Douglass could not follow their conversations in Swedish – when Andersen eventually spoke.

To William and Mary Howitt, the cosmopolitan ambition of their new journal was a central distinction: they wanted to "introduce to our readers whatever is most delightful in the literature of other nations; of America, and of Europe, from France and Italy to the very North", which would count extracts from the novels of George Sand, arguably the most famous French writer in her own time and many stories and other texts by and about Hans Christian Andersen, translated, it is claimed, from the Danish by Mary Howitt herself (Pettitt, 2020, p. 253). In several ways, *Howitt's Journal* embodied the cosmopolitanism and the advancing world literature that Goethe had prophesised would encourage transnational understanding.

While Andersen's *A Poet's Bazaar* from 1842, the genre-hybrid travelogue documenting and fantasising about his grand tour through Europe to Constantinople in 1840–41, was published by Richard Bentley in Charles Beckwith Lohmeyer's translation in 1846, the very first issue of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847 brings a story from Rome entitled "Hans Christian Andersen's Boots" in Mary Howitt's translation. Though it is not mentioned anywhere in the Journal, this is a translation of chapter 13 from the Italy section of *A Poet's Bazaar*, which

features the short tale "My Boots (A truthful account)".[6] Here Andersen employs his fairy-tale formula to contemplate his old, wet travelling boots as they dry by the fire while the Poet is debilitated by a terrible toothache in a wintery Rome. Lying in his bed, cold and suffering a pain that threatens to dehumanise him, he notices his animated pen scribbling on a piece of paper as if moved by an invisible hand. The pen was, in fact, taking dictation from the boots who told their own "autobiography" about their hopes and dreams and the prospect of travelling, of leaving their cold and wet native Copenhagen for the milder and warmer lands of the south. Unfortunately, on their travels south they only encounter more rain and hardship even in Rome, which the aching poet describes as abandoned by foreign visitors, equally cold and rain soaked. Now standing by the fire, they desire nothing more than for their leather to crack and crumble in the heat and return to Berlin, "to repose near to that man who had the heart and courage to describe 'Italy as it is'" (Andersen, 1847a, p. 8). This is a reference to the German writer Gustav Nicolai, who had become widely known for his travelogue, *Italien wie es wirklich ist* (Italy as it really is) from 1834, which had attempted to debunk the Romantic myth of Italy by depicting Rome as dirty, poor, loud, and essentially uncivilised.

The tale's original subtitle – a true or truthful account or story – ironically points to the fact that this attempt to "throw some light upon the Italian Winter of 1840–41" should be read with some caution when it comes not only to the veracity of the story itself, but also to the reliability of the narrator(s) (the pen, the boots, the poet). When the poet awakes in the morning, he realises it has all been but a dream; however, upon seeing the mummified boots by the fire and the grey paper full of ink blots, he decides to write down what is still "legible" (in Andersen's Danish text the poet merely writes down what he remembers from his dream).

These relays of unreliable narrators playfully function to disperse authorship and to put distance between the harsh critique of Rome in the Winter and the poet himself. As he finally asks of the reader, "be so good as to recollect that it is not I, but my boots, which make this complaint of La Bella Italia", he also humorously and critically engages the reference to the other very different travelogue, the seemingly more truthful "Italy as it really is", as this poet and travel writer evidently does not have the "heart and courage" of the infamous Nicolai to criticise the mythologised, Romantic image of Rome.

[6] "Mine Støvler (En sandfærdig Fortælling)" in the original Danish.

Andersen's fairytale travelogue from Rome is, of course, as a "delightful" story from an "other nation" – a good fit for *Howitt's Journal*, and one that engages directly with images and perceptions of foreign lands through its conscious dialogue with the travelogue genre – but here in Andersen's use of the fairy tale formula, it also provides a subtle critical reflection of the truth claims implied in the genre of travel writing. What Andersen's poet, with his debilitating toothache, appears to be suggesting is that perceptions of foreign places are inevitably filtered through the imagination, preconceptions, readings, and even bodily constitution of the conscious or dreaming writer.

Howitt was naturally enthused about the opportunity to bring a delightful story by a famous Scandinavian writer to the attention of their British readership – especially one whose first novel, *The Improvisatore* (1845), Mary Howitt had already translated for an English audience where it was received as part of the new European avantgarde. The inclusion of three of Andersen's tales from his travelogue in their Journal also delivered on the Howitts' internationalist agenda. They demonstrated that Andersen's fairy-tale style, otherwise associated with wonderous stories for children, is equally effective in capturing the poetry of transnational experience and travel as deeply entangled with its material and social conditions whether personified in soggy, dreaming old Copenhagen boots with a story to tell or in the dialogue of Andersen's tale "Pegasus and the Post-horses", where Pegasus represents the aesthetic experience of travel and the Post-horses its less idealised material reality. In Andersen's travelogue-fairytales, Mary Howitt found a ready-made form – and a serious one at that – for their cosmopolitan journal, a journal that itself functioned as part of a contemporary print infrastructure for transnational understanding and Goethean cosmopolitan dreams.

The dissemination of Andersen's life and tales in the Victorian periodical press coincided with and supported the translation of his novels and tales in translation, but the audiences for especially his tales were markedly different from one medium to another. While collections of his stories in book form targeted a younger audience, his tales simultaneously found audiences and different uses among the intelligentsia, the radicals, and reformers who would read and appreciate the widely distributed *Blackwood's Magazine* and *Howitt's Journal*. In the context of such journals, Andersen's tales would take on new meanings and associations, as also evidenced by the fact that Howitt's translation of "My Boots" would not only appear in their cosmopolitan journal in 1847 but also be re-packaged as a story for children in the 1865 illustrated American book publication *Hans Andersen's Story Book with a Memoir by Mary*

Howitt (New York: James Miller, 1865) – prefaced, as the subtitle suggests, with the memoir Howitt had also included in *Howitt's Journal*. In this case, Howitt's translation of one tale published in different media and contexts allows us to see that already in Andersen's own time, English translations did not only relegate Andersen to the nursery, but instead shaped different audiences and, therefore, different "Andersens". Mary Howitt may have taken liberties in her translation and adaptation of Andersen's tales for children, but as a politically-invested journal publisher, she also understood and championed another Hans Christian Andersen for his unique literary style and playful cosmopolitan outlook as a serious contribution to world literature.

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