The European Reception of Jane Austen's Works

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Abstract

This article reviews the reception of Jane Austen's works (principally her six major novels) in Europe, essentially through translation; in keeping with critical consensus, the article proposes that translation is the principal —though not the sole—channel through which Austen's European reception has been consolidated since the early nineteenth century. The article draws on reception-based studies, both quantitative and qualitative, to delineate the history, frequency, language range and literary characteristics of the translations carried out in the two centuries following Austen's death. It contextualises the paucity of early nineteenth-century translation within the broader framework of Austen's own reputation in the English-speaking world and highlights a range of additional factors accounting for Austen's relative lack of early success in Europe. The discussion then goes on to consider the underlying factors that influence the significant increase in the translation of Austen's works in the twentieth century, factors that include the growth of English as a lingua franca, to the detriment of French. It concludes that Austen's European reception mirrors in a fairly direct manner the author's reception in the literary world of the UK/US.

Keywords: Jane Austen; European reception; translation; cultural transmission; literary canonicity.

Resum. *La recepció a Europa de les obres de Jane Austen*

Aquest article revisa la recepció de les obres de Jane Austen (especialment les seves sis novelles més importants) a Europa, principalment per mitjà de la traducció. D'acord amb el consens crític, l'article proposa que —des del principi del segle XIX— la traducció és el canal principal, encara que no l'únic, pel qual la recepció europea d'Austen s'ha anat consolidant. L'article es refereix a estudis, tant quantitatius com qualitatius, basats en la recepció literària per definir la història, la freqüència, la gamma d'idiomes i les característiques literàries de les traduccions fetes al llarg dels dos segles després de la mort d'Austen. Es contextualitza l'escassetat de traduccions del principi del segle XIX en el marc més ampli de la reputació d'Austen al món de parla anglesa i es posa en relleu una sèrie de factors addicionals que poden explicar la seva relativa falta d'èxit a l'Europa del segle XIX. A continuació, l'article sospesa els factors subjacents que influeixen sobre l'augment significatiu de la traducció d'obres d'Austen ja al segle XX, factors que inclouen el creixement de l'anglès com a llengua franca, en detriment del francès, i arriba a la conclusió que la recepció europea d'Austen per mitjà de la traducció reflecteix d'una manera força directa la recepció de l'autora en el món literari del Regne Unit i dels Estats Units.

Paraules clau: Jane Austen; recepció europea; traducció; transmissió cultural; canonicitat literària.

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"It is a truth universally acknowledged that a singular author in possession of a good literary reputation must be in want of a translator", and Jane Austen (1775-1817) has had translators in the hundreds, quite literally. The purpose of this article is to delineate certain characteristics of Austen's reception in Europe since the early 1800s as this has been shaped, in general, by and through translation,[1] and to briefly enquire into the very particular 'figure' of the author that has been configured by means of such transmission. A separate area of reception that I will not discuss here is that of the literary criticism of Austen's works, as produced in a variety of academic contexts and in a range of distinct languages throughout Europe. Whilst this is undeniably an important element in constructing an overview of how Austen is perceived culturally, it is a relatively minor part of the author's general reception, of greater relevance to the specialised assessment of Austen Studies.[2]

What also needs to be established from the outset is that —during Austen's life— the 'good literary reputation' that brings in its wake the 'want' of translators mostly escaped Jane Austen, even within Britain. Despite being known in *refined* circles (the Prince of Wales admired her novels, not that this impressed Austen very much)[3] she was hardly a publication sensation. Indeed, in the years immediately following her death in 1817, she fell —temporarily at least— into the depths of oblivion, a fate that was shared by practically all her contemporaries. But eventually the continuing trickle of what was a minor (though culturally élite) appreciation of her work would become a veritable flood of interest, and, from the mid 1870s, in Britain and in the United States, Austen's literary reputation was consolidated both in popular and academic ambits. Of the nineteenth-century British novelists, perhaps only Dickens still maintains this dual fortune of broad public appeal and ongoing critical interest. But even Dickens yields to Austen in the extent and *viscerality* of the support shown to the writer as a cultural icon and off-spinner of an extraordinary afterlife that contains a plethora of prequels, sequels and screen adaptations, not to mention the many and diverse products of a devoted blogosphere. This is the case for Austen's reception—both popular and academic—in the English-speaking world, but what is the scenario, and how has it evolved, in Europe?

To begin answering that question, we need to first ask ourselves to *which* Jane Austen does this enquiry pertain? This may appear to be an almost surreal question, but it is one that any critical assessment of Austen needs to make. By this, I mean that it is pertinent to examine whether we are discussing the 'canonical' Austen, author of the *Big Six* novels;[4] whether we are speaking of the more expressionistic, rebellious Austen of the juvenilia works; whether we are assess-

1. Clearly, translation is the principle channel through which Austen's European reception has been established. As Mandal observes (429), Austen was transmitted through "a variety of other forums: brief reviews, surveys of literature, encyclopaedia entries, and textbook anthologies".
2. However, see Mandal (429-431) for an account of Austen criticism from Europe.
3. See Sheehan.
4. Austen's published novels are as follows (with date of publication, not of composition): *Sense and Sensibility* (30 October 1811); *Pride and Prejudice* (28 January 1813); *Mansfield Park* (9

ing Gentle Jane, beloved of the Janeites and all latter-day admirers; whether we are referring to the figure of knife-sharp irony and wry social comment that looms large in highly influential mid-twentieth-century academic criticism; or whether —amongst an infinitude of other *whethers*— we are referring to the more shadowy 'cultural' Austen whose spirit infuses the veritable industry of literary works, screen adaptations and blogposts that have grown up over recent years. These are apposite questions, ones that resonate particularly within contemporary Austen studies, and also ones that, perhaps surprisingly, do not always come with straightforward answers. Nevertheless, both to clarify and simplify, the focus of my discussion here is what might broadly be called the 'classical' Austen, a figure perceived primarily as what she really was: an English novelist of domestic fiction with an underlying strand of romantic comedy whose writing took place in the final years of the eighteenth century and the opening two decades of the nineteenth, whose published works (four novels in her lifetime, two immediately posthumously) enjoyed minor success in their contemporary period and then essentially fell into oblivion—more or less—for half a century, only to rise again phoenix-like and with great rapidity to the heights of canonical centrality that has admitted of no abatement (quite the opposite, in fact) since the 1870s.

We also need to make the obvious yet necessary point that the reception of Jane Austen is hardly a new topic. Within the broader tradition of Austen studies, a vast number of critical works on the author have paid particular attention to the various currents of response that Austen has received over time. Merely as representative examples, it is relevant to cite *The Jane Austen Companion* (Ed. J. David Grey, 1986), an essential *vade mecum* for all Austentines, which set the standard for recent critical-reception approaches through its three chapters ("Criticism 1814-1870"; "Criticism 1870-1940"; "Criticism 1939-1983"). These lay down the essential pillars of the author's reception; that is, they establish the tripartite division of the early years; the growth and consolidation of Austen's literary reputation; and Austen's subsequent *morphing* into a cultural phenomenon. This basic approach has been followed by a range of important critical works and can be seen in, for instance, Cambridge University Press's *Jane Austen in Context* (Ed. Janet Todd, 2005), which reflects this as "Critical responses: early"; "Critical responses: 1830-1970"; and "Critical responses: recent". Apart from this now conventional 'periodising' of the response made to Austen's work, it is of interest to my discussion to observe that these studies refer almost exclusively to Austen's reception in an Anglo-American context. And whilst it is basically beyond the scope of this current discussion to extend this consideration to too many other works, nevertheless to emphasise the notion that Austen's popularity is rather unique for a canonical author, the ambit of reception studies in her case is not restricted to academic enquiry (the usual arena for such issues): the general demand for details of her life and writings has led to the production of successful studies such as *Jane's Fame: How Jane Austen Conquered the World*

May 1814); *Emma* (December 1815); *Northanger Abbey* (December 1817); *Persuasion* (December 1817).

(2011), which, in spite of its catchy title, makes a serious enquiry into the author's reception.

What *Jane's Fame* does not concern itself with in the slightest, however, is how this reception took place outside the English-speaking world. Within Austen Studies, traditionally scant attention has been paid—and, one suspects, always as something of an afterthought—to translations of the author's works. For instance *The Jane Austen Companion* makes absolutely no reference to any such topic; *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* (Eds. Edward Copeland & Juliet McMaster, 1997) still something of a standard-bearer of Austen criticism in most undergraduate courses in English Literature in the Anglo-American tradition, entirely ignores the subject.

Though it is hardly surprising that studies within Austen's criticism have attended, so far, primarily to her resonance within the English-speaking literary tradition, this is beginning to change; and although it would clearly be a misrepresentation to suggest that a focus on translation has become central to the critical concerns relating to Austen, recent studies aimed at addressing the novelist's wider literary repercussion have begun, as a necessary element within such an objective, to provide greater focus on the translations made since the early 1800s of her work, all of which is a welcome addition to Austen Studies, and a necessary broadening of its cultural parameters.

Again as examples of work being carried out in this area, recent studies include an interesting series of articles (2010-2012) by Adam Russell, principally on Austen's translation into French, and most especially as this concerns Isabelle de Montolieu and *Persuasion.* Within the Spanish context, Aída Díaz Bild (2007) makes a provocatively titled contribution to the Mandal and Southam study of Austen's European reception (see below), asking whether the novelist is "Still the Great Forgotten?". Closer to home, Victòria Alsina (2008) has made a highly useful and qualitative assessment of Austen's Catalan translations, which both sets out and comments on the author's works currently available in this language. And, bearing in mind that —whilst literary translation is, self evidently, the principal channel through which a writer's reception is established in other languages— other means of transmission are increasingly important, Carmen Romero Sanchez (2008), once more within the Iberian context, has provided a fascinating portrait of the televisual reception of Austen in Spain, in "*A la Señorita Austen*: An Overview of Spanish Adaptations".

In the English-speaking tradition, *Jane Austen in Context* makes some amends for traditional 'translation lacunae' by providing an insightful chapter on 'Translations" (Valérie Cossy and Diego Saglia), setting out in no inconsiderable detail a review of the translations undertaken in Europe of Jane Austen's writings. *The Cambridge Companion to 'Pride and Prejudice'* (Ed. Janet Todd, 2013) also has an informative chapter, with—unsurprisingly— the same title as that by Cossy and Saglia, by Gillian Dow, a translator and Austen specialist. This study builds on the work of Cossy and Saglia and also on that by Mandal and Southam (Eds. *The Reception of Jane Austen in Europe*, 2007) and Mandel (Ch. 37, *A Companion to Jane Austen,* Ed. Claudia Johnson, 2009). These two contri-

butions are, beyond doubt, the most referential works to which all recent reception-related criticism owes its due. They set out in invaluable detail the number of translations carried out in Europe of Austen's various works up to and including 2005, the last year for which—to date—such information has been collected. Indeed, many of the observations made throughout this current discussion are based directly on the information deriving from these studies.

What do these works tell us? Principally, that —wholly in consonance with her domestic fortunes throughout much of the nineteenth century— Austen was only barely present on the European literary scene, and was so primarily though her presentation at the hand of highly adapted French translations, sometimes the basis (rather than the original English) for other renderings. A very telling snapshot of this activity in literary translation can be seen in the table below, adapted from Mandal. As can easily be seen from this tabulated information that sets out translation per period and by title/type of work ("Others" basically indicates Austen's minor works and juvenilia), translation into European languages is only very slight in the period running from 1813 —which sees the first translation into French of selections from *Pride and Prejudice*— to 1900, with a total of 16 works.

Table 1. Translations of Austen's six novels and other writings from 1813-2005. Adapted from Mandal, 424

Title	1813-1900	1901-1945	1946-1990	1991-2005	1813-2005
P&P	4	18	**67**	26	115
Emma	2	8	**34**	24	68
S&S	2	7	**25**	25	59
Persuasion	4	8	**28**	17	57
NA	2	5	**23**	14	44
MP	2	2	**13**	18	35
Others	{0}	1	**12**	24	37
Total	**16**	**49**	**20**	**148**	**415**

This figure is more than tripled in the period 1901-1945, though the 49 works registered in these years are also relatively insignificant, particularly if we bear in mind that, in this same timeframe, Austen had become consolidated as a major figure of the English literary canon. But from 1946-1990, we see a spectacular increase in translation (more than quadrupling the quantity of translation from the previous 45 years and representing an over twelvefold increase on the figure for the whole of the preceding century). Across the board, in every category of work, translation of Austen's writing increases spectacularly. From the 1990s through to the early 2000s —the so-called 'naughties'— translation of literary works falls off somewhat, although this is precisely the period in which major screen adaptation of Austen's novels comes to the fore and presumably must account for the relative decline in literary transmission. This period sees the rapid growth of the writer as a cultural 'icon', increasingly accessed through visual media, and increasingly

perceived as an author whose importance lies in acting as a baseline reference (often linked to in ironic and *post-modernistically* 'playful' ways). Nevertheless, the almost 150 translations corresponding to this period are anything but a trivial figure. In all, from a few years before Austen's death until the mid-2000s, translation of Austen's works into European languages weighs in at well over 400 works.

In the above table, it is also worth drawing attention to a number of interesting indications with respect to individual works. As can be seen, by far the most popular title in Austen's writing is *Pride and Prejudice* (substantially over three times more so than the least popular novel, *Mansfield Park*). *Mansfield Park*'s lack of popularity more or less coincides with its reputation as a difficult and less engaging novel within the English-speaking reception of the work; this in itself is a certain curiosity as the novel is the most morally attuned to the Victorian world that Austen is commonly assumed —quite erroneously— to belong to. Yet the highly political *Pride and Prejudice* (first drafted in the 1790s in the wake of the French Revolution) sublimates its ideology so thoroughly that readers across the decades have been able to focus on —and delight in— its love plot, completely oblivious to its ulterior messages. A further element of interest in the table is the increasing attention given to Austen's non-canonical works (including *Lady Susan*, recently adapted to screen as *Love and Friendship*, or the manifold short works of Austen's expressionist and anarchic juvenilia manuscripts). The translation figure in this category for the nineteenth century is a dramatically paltry zero, which simply reflects that these works were not even made public until the 1870s, and were largely unedited until the 1920s. Yet, as Austen studies exhausts its primary resources (unlike very many of her contemporaries, Austen's major works —at six— are rather few), so critics turn to other texts as a means of extending their enquiries into the writer's universe. This, in turn, is reflected in translation figures, to the extent that the total figure for translation of minor works now exceeds that of translation of *Mansfield Park*.

What can be said for translation into specific languages? Again, Mandal is the key source here. The table below sets out the total number of translations per language. It is worth recalling that this information extends no further than 2005 (since when at least two additional Catalan translations have been published), therefore these figures are now, at best, indicative rather than definitive. Perhaps of most obvious noteworthiness is that translation into Mediterranean-Iberian-Romance languages is particularly high, outnumbering that into Germanic languages.[5] It may be, for such cultures, that Austen's *Englishness* appears more remote and 'exotic' than it does to the culturally more similar north-western European readerships. Whatever the case, of particular interest here is the fact

5. I am grateful to the suggestion from Victòria Alsina (in the conference *II Simposi Dones traductores Dones traduïdes. Jane Austen: dos-cents anys després*, Vic, 05/05/2017) that the Spanish total may actually be an unwitting misrepresentation on Mandal's part, since Spanish translation figures do not necessarily reflect new and discrete translations, but may sometime mask the fact that certain translations are simply re-editions of earlier works.

that the very first translation of an Austen work (into French) precedes the author's death by three years. Indeed, all of Austen's works were available in French by 1824 (data not shown). It is also of interest that a version of *Persuasion* in German was in existence as early as 1822, and that *Pride and Prejudice* is generally the first title translated into another language.

Table 2. Total number of new translations per European language, 1813-2005. Mandal, 426 ("Table 37.2")

Language	Total	First title translated
Spanish	73	*Persuasion* (1919)
Italian	60	*Pride and Prejudice* (1932)
French	40	*Pride and Prejudice* (1813 extracts), *Sense and Sensibility* (1815)
German	32	*Persuasion* (1822)
Dutch	22	*Sense and Sensibility* (1922)
Portuguese	21	*Sense and Sensibility* (1943)
Greek	21	*Pride and Prejudice* (1950)
Romanian	19	*Pride and Prejudice* (1943)
Polish	16	*Sense and Sensibility* (1934)
Swedish	11	*Persuasion* (1836)
Czech	11	*Sense and Sensibility* (1932)
Danish	10	*Sense and Sensibility* (1835-6)
Estonian	10	*Pride and Prejudice* (1985)
Finnish	9	*Pride and Prejudice* (1922)
Serbian	9	*Persuasion* (1929)
Norwegian	8	*Pride and Prejudice* (1939)
Bulgarian	8	*Pride and Prejudice* (1980)
Hungarian	7	*Pride and Prejudice* (1934-6)
Russian	7	*Pride and Prejudice* (1967)
Slovak	6	*Pride and Prejudice* (1968)
Slovene	5	*Sense and Sensibility* (1951 extracts), *Sense and Sensibility* (1968)
Catalan	5	*Pride and Prejudice* (1985)
Latvian	5	*Pride and Prejudice* (2000)
Croat	3	*Emma* (1962)
Icelandic	2	*Pride and Prejudice* (1956)
Lithuanian	2	*Emma* (1997)
Basque	1	*Pride and Prejudice* (1996)
Galician	1	*Pride and Prejudice* (2005)

Leaving the statistics for a while, let us now address certain characteristics in these translation modes and tendencies. An obvious place to begin is by asking just *why* so few translations took place in the nineteenth century. Here, there are many interconnecting factors that appear to have been largely detrimental to a

more rapid and wider diffusion of Austen's popularity. One influential element, now almost totally absent from the general cultural panorama of current times, was the centrality of French as a European lingua franca, the use of which was particularly widespread in the literary arena. This accounts for the fact that the earliest translations were made into French first (and I have already observed that French, and not the original English, was sometimes the language from which translations of Austen's works were made into other languages). But —through precisely this cultural dominance of French literature in nineteenth-century Europe— it also had a consequence on the genre expectations of Austen's early continental readership. Cossy and Saglia (174) suggest that "Jane Austen wrote a kind of novel that simply never existed in French", and that her combination of emotional conflict and socioeconomic rank was entirely misunderstood: "her detailed analysis of the effects of rank and money is incompatible with the sentimental poetics [in French literature of the early nineteenth century], whilst her adherence to the concept of sensibility is alien to the ideology underlying French realist poetics".

Another detrimental factor in Austen's early reception was a general preference —in the turbulent early 1800s in which nationalist ideologies were configuring the states of modern Europe— for historical fiction over the domestic novel, which was often still perceived as trite and vulgar. In stark contrast to Austen's early (relative) obscurity, the most appreciated and widely read British writer was Sir Walter Scott, whose epic historical tales of national struggle were exactly suited to the political climate of the times. This preference significantly misread domestic fiction as a genre distinct from and empty of political narrative, and is emphatically not the view of such writing that now holds currency in literary criticism. But, in the early 1800s, the patently domestic nature of Austen's plots made her work far less appealing —initially at least— than the broad canvasses of Scott's work. Feeding into this particular view of the domestic genre is the concomitant fact of Austen's gender. Put simply, it was far harder for a woman writer (particularly one who appears to write about the feminine world of insignificant women and minor events) to achieve international popularity than it was for a man (particularly one who writes about the masculine world of great men and great events).

Ultimately, however, the single most significant factor that determined the relative paucity of Austen's translations in Europe throughout the nineteenth century was simply that her own reception within Britain was extremely limited. In the fifty or so years that followed her death in 1817, Austen was read only by a very small (if *select*) group of admirers. The readers of High Victorian fiction such as that by Dickens, Gaskell, Eliot, Thackeray or Trollope had mostly forgotten the literature of the Georgian period, and it would not be until 1869, with the publication of *A Memoir of Jane Austen* by James Edward Austen-Leigh, that public interest would be rekindled in Austen's fiction. However, once this interest had been revived, Austen's status as an author of importance grew with great rapidity. In Britain, within only a few years of *A Memoir*'s publication, an entire class of unconditional admirers known as the *Janeites* had developed. This group

contained in its ranks some of the most influential critical and literary figures of the late-Victorian world, many of whom would be directly involved in establishing the first university departments of a new academic discipline called 'English Literature'. By determining the inclusion or exclusion of particular writers and works, the members of the incipient departments of English became, in effect, canon makers for the twentieth century. Jane Austen had resuscitated just in time to become one of the indisputable authors of the new teaching canon. As her canonical position became consolidated, and as her appeal then spread beyond the confines of a more academic readership, it was simply a matter of time before this renewed interest would see itself reflected in greater translation activity, a fact that is clearly borne out by Mandal's research (see Table 1).

Before moving into a consideration of Austen's European translations in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, however, I would like briefly to delineate a few salient general features of the very few translations made in the nineteenth century, all of which were in French, German, Danish or Swedish. Cossy and Saglia (169) make the point that "[t]he early to mid nineteenth-century panorama of Austen's reception and translation in Europe is generally characterised by gaps and absences, as is well exemplified by the case of Russia". This is certainly the case, and is remarkable given the importance of Russian literature throughout Europe in that century. Yet on the whole this simply reinforces the fact that French was such a powerful lingua franca that, we must assume, no further 'localisation' of Austen was required once a French edition was available. Except, of course, for those instances in which the French version, itself a translation, was the source of the new translation, as occurred for instance with the 1836 Swedish version of *Persuasion* (see Mandal 2009: 427).

Additionally, translation was often carried out by well-known writers who, working in a period in which literary sources and influences were far more fluidly incorporated in inventive ways into new works (in emphatic contrast with later times) seem to have had little qualms in producing freer translations that were in greater accordance with their own styles and objectives than with the original text that they were translating. Mandal (427) details these very approaches to translation from writers such as Isabelle de Montolieu, Wilhelm Adolf Lindau, Carl Karup or Félix Fénéon, observing that:

> Montolieu's application of the same sentimental apparatus used in her own novels diminishes the polyvalent richness of *Sense and Sensibility*: not only are the more domestically inflected scenes cut from Austen's original, but episodes of a more "pathetic" nature are inserted or existing scenes are "heightened" emotionally, resulting in a text that more fully approximates the novel of sensibility – Austen's object of satire in the first place!

Whilst this may have had the immediate effect of boosting these authors' own sales, the idea of 'Austen the novelist' that such works would have forwarded, and the extent to which these translations reflect Austen's authorial concerns and

narrative structures are obviously at best discrepant with what a more faithful rendering of her texts could have produced.

In the twentieth century, the quantity, linguistic spread and nature of Austen's European translations changed substantially. Partly, perhaps, as a consequence of greater cultural attention paid to Austen in the final quarter of the nineteenth century in Britain and the US, the first few decades of the twentieth century see the first translation of Austen's novels—though principally *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*—into Spanish (1919); Dutch (1922); Finnish (1922); Serbian (1929); Czech (1932); Italian (1932); Polish (1934); Hungarian (1934-36) and Norwegian (1939). This is clearly indicative of a fairly wide-ranging cultural interest in Austen's writing, or at the very least of a curiosity for the type of writer and the class of novels that she wrote and that had now become such a quintessential part of the English tradition.

The tendency towards greater numbers of translation and towards a greater range of languages becomes still more noticeable in the years following the Second World War. Mandel (427-428) speculates that this may be the consequence of specific political realignments following the war. In this respect, an interest within certain countries in the culture of wartime allies or liberators may have led to the greater appeal of recognised British writers. Other post-war factors may have facilitated an easier acceptance of Austen's narrative concerns. For instance, that "Austen fulfilled East German ideological criteria regarding female emancipation and capitalist exploitation" (once again, Mandal's speculation. 2009: 427). These are intriguing arguments and may well explain some of the causes for Austen's swift uptake throughout post-war Europe. But the most fundamental shift that favours an interest in Austen and that then produces the call for greater intimacy with her works by means of translation is surely the rise of English as the dominant cultural language, a rise that had begun perhaps in the late nineteenth century but which became undeniable with the emergence of the US as a military and economic superpower. As Dow expresses it, even by the 1940s, "English was steadily replacing the French novel in the collective global consciousness, as both nineteenth– and twentieth-century British novelists took Europe and America by storm". Leading this charge, it need hardly be said, was Jane Austen.

Within Austen Studies, an ambit of growing critical interest is the figure of Jane Austen as cultural icon. This ambit considers the ways in which contemporary society reconfigures the often idealised notion of Austen, and by extension how it recreates her works and how it presents them as cultural 'items' or 'products' of a particular society whose attractiveness appears to lie in its *otherness* from that of current times. Whilst this principally occurs through screen adaptation, it can also be seen in the production aesthetics of Austen re-editions, which highlight the *Regency Look* associated with the world of her novels (or, on book covers, simply use photographic images from particularly successful adaptations as a sales feature). An indicator of the fact that this cultural 'figure' has gained interest within Europe since the 1990s, and therefore perhaps also an indicator of how Austen's works are now understood and consumed as *heritage items*, is the packaging and presentation of translated editions of her work across Europe.

> Between 1995 and 2004, no fewer than 124 new translations appeared across Europe... In the reunified Germany, where Austen was once the province of specialists and devotees, she now seems to be drawing attention from a wider readership through the large number of reissues that have appeared since the 1990s. The Danish mass-market publishers Lindhardt & Ringhof bought the copyrights to earlier translations of *Pride and Prejudice, Emma*, and *Persuasion*, repackaging them with covers bearing stills from the films. Austen's popularity is similarly evidenced in neighbouring Sweden, in the sales figures for paperback translations issued by Månpocket, a budget publisher: *Pride and Prejudice* (1996), 18,988; *Emma* (1997), 14,025; *Northanger Abbey* (2001), 10,115 – a normal print run for classics at Månpocket is 7,000. (Mandal 2009: 428)

And so it seems that Austen's ascension into what in postmodern terms might be called cultural *hyperstardom* is reflected in the translation activity that has ensured fuller and broader transmission of her writings in recent decades in Europe.

However, it is not only in the quantity of Austen translations that the twentieth and twenty-first centuries distinguish themselves from the preceding historical period. A profoundly different approach to the nature of translation has resulted in texts that are no longer little more than adaptations, and that seek to convey with linguistic precision and rhetorical fidelity the particularities of Austen's writing. What Dow (126) calls the nineteenth century's "domesticating model of translating" that I have already referred to is gradually replaced by an approach to translation that attends far more closely to the intrinsic qualities of the original and seeks translation strategies that maintain these qualities in the translated version. For Austen's writing, associated as it is with an essential and somewhat intangible "Englishness" (Dow 124; Mandal 2009: 423), this was an element that some nineteenth century translators resolved by simply adapting it to their own sense of the local, resulting in texts that —whilst relatively in keeping with the basic plot lines of the original— were very far removed from Austen's highly distinct literary expression of her world. Dow suggests that Austen translation from more recent decades is essentially in line with Lawrence Venuti's ideals[6] forwarding the preservation of the 'strangeness' of the original text, and thus eschewing the nineteenth-century aim of making Austen's characters "less English, and more like characters who would be known to readers in the literatures of their own countries" (124). In other words, not only is the European reception of Austen's works now provided with translation into a far greater number of languages and not only are these translations made available in editions that are calculated to appeal to a broader readership, but also —and perhaps more importantly, at least in terms of the attempt to convey a more "genuine"

6. "Translation theorists now tend to view the purpose of translation as to provide a guide to the original, by which I mean an accurate sense of the 'foreignness' of the source text. The 'foreignizing translation' ethics of the influential scholar Lawrence Venuti insists on a model of translation that preserves the 'strangeness' of the source language: to adopt any other model, Venuti argues, is to commit ethnocentric violence" (Dow 124).

Jane Austen— this translation activity would now appear to accept as a basic working principle that the essence of Austen's style needs to be recreated if the resulting translation is to serve as a valid transmitter of the author's text.

Two hundred years ago, Jane Austen died. She was not an unknown writer at the time of her death, but she had never even remotely attained the recognition accorded to contemporary writers such as Byron or Scott, and was soon to become little more than an interesting footnote to the literary activity of the Georgian period. The great writers of the Victorian age that followed, and their obvious relevance both to the changing times in which they lived and to the dawning modernity of the coming twentieth century, seemed certain to obliterate Austen's memory further still. But that did not happen; perhaps (again, depending on one's view) through a mere quirk of publication history; perhaps because Austen's inherent literary quality was simply too vital to remain dormant, Austen became recognised as one of the great English writers of the nineteenth century, and has since become one of the central cultural figures in the English-speaking world. As a means of conclusion, it is interesting —though hardly surprising— to trace in Austen's European reception through translation essentially the same patterns and fluxes that hold for her reception in that English-speaking world.

The early nineteenth century sees a minor flurry of activity, then practically nothing. This is in consonance with Austen's relative obscurity at home throughout much of the century. But, following Austen's sudden growth in popularity in Britain (and the US), European translation begins to pick up and, in doing so, to move away from its dependency on French. As the twentieth century progresses, bringing in its wake its cataclysmic social and political changes, so (also depending on one's view) either a growing interest in British culture or the outcome of the status of English —or possibly both— led to still further demand for translation of Austen's writing, including, increasingly so, that of her minor works and juvenilia texts. Eventually, as within the English-speaking world, Austen the novelist becomes Austen the cultural icon, and as her works become transmitted primarily through screen rather than textually, the growth in translation spikes and declines slightly, yet (through the forcefulness of Austen's cultural presence) it still maintains itself at a rate that keeps Austen at the forefront of literary relevance. If Austen has been of service to her translators, it is very much a truth to be acknowledged that translation has also been of great service to her.

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