

8. Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* (London: Papermac, 1995), p. 257.
9. Mary Waldron, *Jane Austen and the Fiction of Her Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 13.
10. Roger Gard, *Jane Austen's Novels: The Art of Clarity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), quotation from jacket flap and p. 1.
11. John Wiltshire, *Jane Austen and the Body: 'The Picture of Health'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 17f.

Cult of Jane Austen

DEIDRE SHAUNA LYNCH

In 'The Jane Austen Syndrome', Marjorie Garber – a Shakespeare scholar and self-confessed sufferer from the syndrome her 2003 essay describes – contributes to a long tradition of criticism asserting Jane Austen's kinship with the Bard. It is not only the case that this pair represent English literature's most masterful creators of character and dialogue. Nor for Garber do the similarities end when we acknowledge that Austen and Shakespeare are cultural icons, possessed of, and perhaps cursed by, a celebrity independent of their perceived value as writers. 'More than any other authors I know', she asserts, 'Austen and Shakespeare provoke outpourings of *love*.' That last remark registers the contribution Garber's essay makes to a second venerable strain in Austen's reception history, a tradition of commentary on the ardent identifications that the novels inspire. Jane Austen fosters in her readers, as most other literary giants do not, the devotion and fantasies of personal access that are the hallmarks of the *fan*. For a century, therefore, many a commentator has accompanied his interest in the novels with an interest in the extravagancy of audiences' responses to them – an interest, particularly, in how that heady enthusiasm diverges from the level-headed dispassion that is supposed to define a proper aesthetic response. Thus Henry James in 1905 remarks on the rising 'tide' of Austenian 'appreciation' and finds it, he observes waspishly, to have risen, thanks to the 'stiff breeze of the commercial', 'rather higher . . . than the high-water mark, the highest, of her intrinsic merit'. John Bailey (1864–1931) notes while introducing his 1927 'Georgian Edition' of her fiction 'the extraordinary spread of the cult of Jane Austen' and explains the cult's recruitment successes with a paradox: the passage of time, though putting more distance between her era and readers', has increased the intimacy of the author–reader relation. 'She has ceased to be the 'Miss Austen' of our parents and become our own 'Jane Austen' or even 'Jane'.'¹

As Bailey implies when he contrasts his parents' generation and his own, the late Victorian period is when readers began thinking of Austen as an author with whom they might be on an intimate, first-name footing – whom they could love rather than merely esteem. An important product of that sense of connection is 'Janeite', the appellation devotees adopted around 1894 to declare that their hearts belonged to Austen and also, as the hint of possessiveness discernible in Bailey's 'our own Jane Austen' suggests, to declare that *she* belonged to *them*.² (The absence in other authors' reception histories of any equivalent to this cosy cognomen is striking. It is hard to imagine admirers of Shakespeare calling themselves *Willies*.) The genesis of this Janeite cult is usually located with the publication in 1870 by Jane Austen's nephew J. E. Austen-Leigh of his *Memoir of Jane Austen*: the first full-length biography and thus the first text to supply a sense of a private personality behind the published books. Certainly, the influence of this familial, insider's view of the novelist helps explain why practices of Austenian appreciation have tended to be focussed, as we shall see, on the institutions of home and domestic privacy, which is to say why, in certain quarters, tours through country houses or the preparation of a 'Pride and Prejudice dinner party' have become oddly equivalent, as manifestations of Austenian devotion, to novel-reading.

That knowing Austen has from the start involved fantasies of knowing her the way an affectionate family member would help explain, as well, a phenomenon that will be central to this discussion: the fact that since the Victorian era many admirers of Jane Austen have insisted, their swelling numbers notwithstanding, that there is something private and personal in their admiration. Many have testified, that is, to how their Austen love takes them out of the wider world and into a smaller, more select and closer-knit circle (into a 'loyal tribe', a 'haven' or a 'true lovers' knot' – to cite a few characteristic terms from these testimonies). And yet Austen-Leigh's *Memoir* began proffering this illusion of access to the novelist's private story at the precise historical moment when large claims were being made for the *public* relevance of individuals' aesthetic experiences. 1870 also witnessed the British Parliament's passage of the Education Act that mandated the state-wide establishment of elementary schools. In recognising universal literacy as a national priority, this legislation set in motion new initiatives for

the teaching of literature as a national heritage: initiatives (in which Austenians such as Bailey often took the lead) for managing social upheaval with the notion of a changeless, 'classic' Englishness preserved in great books and initiatives for transcoding class difference, so that it would be cancelled by the egalitarian promise embedded in the concept of a shared national heritage and yet refigured simultaneously as the distinction between elite and popular tastes. Indeed, to consider the Education Act together with the *Memoir* (in which Austen-Leigh claims with perverse pride that his aunt's books are too tame for the tastes of 'the multitude')³ is to see prefigured several of the tensions that have shaped Austen's reception history. These are the tensions between, on the one hand, the work that Jane Austen, or an idea of her, does as sponsor to the social relations defining the literary nation or public and, on the other hand, the work that she does as sponsor to the clannish solidarities defining the *club* – another conspicuous institution in the history of Austenian appreciation. These are also the tensions between a popular audience and an academic one, between readers for whom Austen represents domestic privacy, leisure and sometimes shopping and professional scholars/teachers/readers for whom Austen represents career and a connection to the public sphere.

As it turns out, the unstable semantics of the word that Bailey applies to Austen's admirers – 'cult' – nicely register these disagreements about the kinds of converse that Austen's books promote. According to the *New Shorter Oxford Dictionary*, this previously straightforward word for worship developed a 'derogatory' sense early in the last century and became a designation one might apply to 'a fashionable enthusiasm' or 'a transient fad of an in-group'. By the time Bailey used it, 'cult' had acquired, in other words, a semantic shading that Austen's adherents could exploit in order to distance themselves from those *other* people who, it was proposed, enjoyed Austen in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons – injudiciously, cultishly. This, of course, is the strategy for consolidating one's own position in the cultural hierarchy that James exemplifies when he worries out loud over how an opportunistic 'bookselling spirit' has procured Jane Austen a popular audience.

We shall return later to this drive to discriminate between proper and improper Austenian enthusiasms. However, we would be well advised to first read 'cult' straight and by doing so engage in more

depth the intertwining of literary appreciation and religious reverence that shapes Austen-love. Austen's reception history was long influenced by the hagiographic heritage of Victorian-period literary culture and thus by such borrowings from older practices of religious sanctification as also inform, for instance, Thomas Carlyle's proposal in *Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (1841) that Shakespeare was 'canonised, though no Pope or Cardinal took hand in doing it' or Gerald Massey's 1888 poem in which Shakespeare, 'Our Prince of Peace', goes 'no flag unfurled / To make his conquest of the World'.⁴ And there *were* places reserved for women authors within the Victorian sages' temple of culture: those of the saints. In Austen's case, as the artist C. E. Kempe found, even a name had been made ready. The official description of the stained-glass window which Kempe designed and erected in 1900 in Winchester Cathedral (Jane Austen's place of burial) enumerates its figures, who range from St John with his gospel open to the line 'In the beginning was the Word,' to, in the window's head, 'Saint Augustine', 'whose name', we are informed, 'in its abbreviated form is St. Austin'.

The fact that this conflation of a woman novelist and a church father was uncontroversial suggests much about the Victorians' cult of domestic womanhood as well as much, again, about the influence of Jane Austen's nephew-biographer, whose *Memoir* displays few traces of the aunt's wit but many of the writer's clerical office. ('St Aunt Jane of Steventon-cum-Chawton Canonorum' is one name coined to christen the prim Anglican heroine conjured up in Austen-Leigh's pages; Sutherland, *Memoir*, p. xv.) Yet the records left by less stiff-necked admirers are also dotted with comments ascribing 'divinity' to 'Jane', touting the 'miracle' of the novels and aligning the worshipper's reading experience with ecstatic revelation. From about 1870 to 1940, such exuberant testimonies of faith are staples of Janeite discourse. A 1924 essay by E. M. Forster represents a variation on this theme in observing that 'the Jane Austenite [a category in which Forster included himself] possesses little of the brightness' of his idol and instead, '[l]ike all regular churchgoers . . . scarcely notices what is being said'.⁵ Forster's intimation that the content of Janeite rituals may be less significant than the rituals' utility as social emollient – this suggestion that, though perusing the novels might not engender any ideas in the faithful,

it does help pack them into the pews – usefully calls attention to the clubbability that has often accompanied Austenians' vaunted sense of spiritual election. The institutions that Austen's admirers have developed to facilitate their camaraderie are, as suggested above, plentiful and run the gamut from the Royal Society of Literature (during the 1920s the Society's mainly male corps of literati shared papers that did much to give Janeite discourse its hothouse flavour); to the mainly female Jane Austen Societies of the United Kingdom (founded 1940), North America (1979), Australia (1988) and elsewhere, whose combined memberships at the present day number far into the thousands; to the California-based Friends of the English Regency, who identify Austen and the founder of the Regency romance genre, Georgette Heyer, as tutelary spirits for their activities, which consist principally in promoting Regency dancing at science fiction conventions.

In regularly publishing updates on the location of 'Relics', early *Reports* of the Jane Austen Society of the UK also drew on an idiom associated with the cult of the saints (with the difference that the earnestness of the *Reports* contrasts sharply with the penchant for camp and preciousness cultivated by a previous Janeite generation). From its beginnings, the Society kept tabs on the quilts, needle cases and other bits and pieces from the Austen family's domestic lives that the Jane Austen Memorial Trust purchased to 'rest' in the 'sanctuary' of Chawton Cottage (Jane Austen's home from 1809 until 1817) and which the Trust had sometimes had to wrest away from American collectors. With the relic that occasioned the fiercest custody battles, a lock of Jane Austen's hair (bought at auction by the American Alberta Hirshheimer Burke in 1946 and afterward donated by her to Chawton), we approach something resembling medieval Christendom's ritual veneration of the remains of its holy men and women.⁶ And it is notable that Chawton itself, as the property of the Memorial Trust since 1947, honours not only Austen's memory but also that of Philip John Carpenter, a casualty of the Second World War and son of the Trust's founder. At this place, accordingly – part museum, part souvenir shop, part chapel with reliquaries, part haunted house (an upstairs bedroom is presented just as it would have appeared, or so we are told, while Jane Austen was alive) – the novelist is called upon to perform the saint's work of interceding between the living and the dead whom they mourn.

When the characters in the 2004 best-selling novel by Karen Joy Fowler, *The Jane Austen Book Club*, play a game of 'Ask Austen' and make the novelist their oracle, using a 'Magic 8-Ball' they have filled with quotations as their instrument of divination, they likewise endow her with this power to link the mundane and the transcendent.

Holiday-makers embarking on Austenian tourism continue to invoke the cult of the saints whenever they describe themselves as 'pilgrims' and, striving to follow in the saint's footsteps, create itineraries that take them from Austen's birthplace at Steventon, to Bath (where she lived from 1801 to 1805, and where a Jane Austen Centre has recently been established to market this connection), to Chawton, and then, in the final stage of their journey, to Winchester to lay flowers on the grave. There are additional cultural metaphors organising such itineraries. Certainly, literary tourism promises its participants an enhanced understanding of their beloved authors, on the theory (crucial, too, to biographers' methods) that sharing others' experiences of place increases our affinity with them. But the prime mover in Austenian tourism is often a nostalgic, anglophilic notion of 'heritage': the premise that Chawton, Steventon, Winchester and Bath (joined, following the mid-1990s, by the National Trust properties that had served as settings in the screen adaptations of Austen's novels) permit a kind of time-travel to the past, because they preserve an all but vanished Englishness or set of 'traditional' values. In this scheme, different sectors of 'Jane Austen's world' – tasteful, elegant Bath; picturesque, peaceful Hampshire – represent a refuge from a modernity that supposedly lost its ethical bearings as long ago as the invention of the railway. Star players in recent Austen films, houses have in general been powerful forces in organising Janeite affect. (The origin of the UK Austen Society in 1940 lies in fund-raising done to preserve a then dilapidated Chawton Cottage.) This may demonstrate the influence of a sentimental account of Austen's novels that presents them as means by which readers might *go home again* – to a comfortable, soothingly normal world.⁷

What motivates the homecomings of tourists is often the promise of touching things touched by Jane Austen herself or (by walking Bath's Milson Street, say, just as Isabella Thorpe did) of making the novels *real*. The tourism business, however, has an interest in

making as many places as possible into destinations. In the name of the real and tangible, it conveys its clientele to virtual and invisible destinations. Austenian itineraries may include therefore sites where, in a strict sense, there is nothing for an Austenian to see: for instance, the site where Steventon Rectory was *once*. (In 1869 J. E. Austen-Leigh was already finding it difficult to ascertain its location.) When prior knowledge produces an expected landscape (and when, like the Jane Austenite, in E. M. Forster's essay who basks in the sunshine of the familiar, we need 'scarcely notice' what lies before us), our imaginings about Jane Austen authenticate the place, rather than the other way around. Any engagement with Austen's works involves, of course, an interaction between *her* fictions and the fictions about the writer's personality that the reader, abetted by biographies, perforce authors herself. But in the construction of that imagined territory 'Jane Austen's world', the balance between our authoring and her authoring may have gone off-kilter. As many have noted, Austen movies in the last decade have almost overshadowed the books: Austenians touring country houses turned film sets that Jane Austen never saw inspect exhibits of costumes made for the movies, clothing that nineteenth-century people never wore. But as early as 1902, a guidebook welcomed to 'Austen-Land' all those tourists who communed with Jane Austen's mind and heart, 'whether through her works, her biographies, or her letters'.⁸ In the quoted phrase, the conjunction *or* challenges a common understanding of the priorities that should shape audiences' admiration, because it challenges the primacy of what scholars like to call the primary texts. We might all want Jane Austen real in some way, but differ as to which way.

Indeed to academics, many present-day Austenian cultures of appreciation appear alarmingly ready to cast engagement with the texts as just another ritual of appreciation, one only moderately more important than others. Reading, to be sure, does appear rather effete and unsociable when contrasted to more robust ways of performing one's Austenian identifications: i.e., walking the 'Bath of Jane Austen', recreating the 'restrained elegance of Georgian England' in a Manhattan apartment (guidance provided in Susan Watkins's 1996 *Jane Austen in Style*) or wearing period dress while watching other, similarly attired enthusiasts act out imaginary conversations amongst the novels' characters (an activity featuring in

many Austen Society programmes, slotted into the schedule right alongside the quiz games and the lectures on the novels' historical contexts). The powerful identifications that Jane Austen compels produce playful attempts to participate in her world, as well as to merge that world with one's own. Thus the Indiana/Illinois chapter of JASNA publicises an upcoming Austen 'birthday tea' in which guests will enjoy 'old-world elegance' and 'raffle baskets that, defying time and space, have been sent by Austen characters to you, their fans'.

Recent analysis of fan cultures emphasises the challenge that such violations of the canons of aesthetic distance pose to professional scholars, whose claim to prestige is validated by their vocation's protocols of dispassion and objectivity. Indeed, amateur cultures of Austenian appreciation – because they are associated with, variously, unbecoming levity, sentimentality, a determination to integrate fiction into life or a conservative nostalgia – bother many academics. Literary scholar Robert Miles observes that 'Almost without exception the vast library of critical works that has grown up around Austen . . . begins with a gallant effort to rescue the writer from the heritage industry or the Janeites.'⁹ To some extent, that gallantry appears guided by an unattractive logic of exclusivity that runs like this: since she is my Jane Austen, she cannot be yours too.

Although this essay began by aligning the kinds of worship Shakespeare and Jane Austen have received, his reception history seems unmarked by the episodes of insidership and intolerance that have divided Austen's readerships. Surveying his history, we are hard pressed to find signs of an audience believing that their beloved but imperilled author requires protecting from a cult (in that derogatory sense of the term which has since the early twentieth century been used to police deviations from approved ways of participating in an appreciative audience).¹⁰ It also appears unlikely that there is any equivalent in the history of Bardolatry to the description of Austenian reading that the novelist Katherine Mansfield supplied when, commenting cleverly in 1930 on the pleasure-effects engendered by Austen's irony, she observed that every 'true admirer of the novels cherishes the happy thought that he alone – reading between the lines – has become the secret friend of their author'.¹¹ This happy thought about the intimacy of the

reading situation should, over the years, have become more difficult to credit. By rights, its credibility ought already to have begun to decline at that late nineteenth-century moment when Austen-Leigh's *Memoir* transformed Jane Austen into a popular author and when the Education Act launched a history of civic-minded literacy crusades that would, in new ways, link the consumption of classic novels to the demands of collective civic life. The undiminished enthusiasm of the many cultures of appreciation that pay homage to Austen's works indicates, however – as does, in addition, the ongoing contention over the forms that such homage should take – that we believe it still.

NOTES

1. Marjorie Garber, *Quotation Marks* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 203; Henry James, 'The Lesson of Balzac', in *The House of Fiction: Essays on the Novel by Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), p. 63; John Bailey, *Introductions to Jane Austen*, new edition (1931), pp. 23, 30.
2. Lorraine Hanaway, "'Janeite" at 100,' *Persuasions* 16 (December, 1994), 28–9; Brian Southam, 'Janeites and Anti-Janeites', in *The Jane Austen Handbook*, ed. J. David Grey (London: Athlone Press, 1986), pp. 237–43.
3. *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 104. Subsequent references are included in the text.
4. See Tricia Lootens, *Lost Saints: Silence, Gender, and Victorian Literary Canonization* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), pp. 19, 32.
5. E. M. Forster, 'Jane, How Shall We Ever Recollect . . .', *The Nation and The Athenaeum* 34 (5 January 1924), 512. Vivid accounts of the Janeite idiom of divine revelation are provided in Claudia L. Johnson, 'Austen Cults and Cultures', in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, eds. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 211–26 and in Southam's 'Janeites and Anti-Janeites', as well as in the latter's Introduction to *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, Vol. 2: 1870–1940* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).
6. The story of how Mrs Burke, listening to the speakers' bitter complaints about Americans' purchase of Austen relics and of the lock of hair particularly, created a furore at the 1949 meeting of the Jane Austen Society held at Chawton, when she stood

up, declared herself and presented the Society with the lock, has almost passed into legend. When the story is told in the second (1980) number of *Persuasions*, the annual publication of the Jane Austen Society of North America, it almost seems to serve as founding myth for the Society's breakaway origins. Burke's widower, Henry Gershon Burke, was a co-founder of JASNA in 1979.

7. For those attentive to the politics of class and conscious of the history of economic exploitation producing country houses such as Lyme Park (BBC's 'Pemberley'), the notion that this version of the national landscape might represent the authentic home of a normal Englishness is troublesome. See Mike Crang, 'Placing Jane Austen, Displacing England' and Suzanne R. Pucci, 'The Return Home,' in *Jane Austen and Co.*, eds. Suzanne R. Pucci and James Thompson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 111–30 and pp. 133–55.
8. Constance Hill, *Jane Austen: Her Homes and Her Friends*, p. viii.
9. Robert Miles, *Jane Austen* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2003), p. 2.
10. The gender politics encoded in Miles's word 'gallantry' and the gender politics that, as Claudia L. Johnson has commented, have ensured that Austen is 'admitted into the canon on terms which cast doubt on her qualifications for entry' but which demonstrate the canon-maker's gentlemanly chivalry, appear pertinent here, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. xiv.
11. Katherine Mansfield, *Novels and Novelists* (1930), p. 305. Secret friends become a secret society in Rudyard Kipling's 1924 story that helped give the epithet 'Janeite' currency.

Later publishing history, with illustrations

DAVID GILSON

Any discussion of the publishing history of Jane Austen's novels after the writer's death in 1817 must, paradoxically, start with foreign publications issued in her lifetime but apparently unknown to her, since it is with these that we see the development of her wider fame, beginning, perhaps surprisingly, in Geneva.

Pride and Prejudice was first published at the end of January 1813, and a series of connected extracts from this novel in French translation appeared in the issues for July, August, September and October of the Swiss monthly periodical *Bibliothèque britannique*, published in Geneva, these extracts being the first appearance of any part of Jane Austen's text in a language other than English. Similar extracts from *Mansfield Park* in French translation appeared in four issues of the same periodical between April and July 1815, while in November 1815 the first complete French translation of *Sense and Sensibility* was issued in Paris in four volumes by Arthus Bertrand under the title *Raison et Sensibilité, ou Les Deux Manières d'Aimer*, the text being adapted by Isabelle de Montolieu. In June 1816 a French version of *Emma* by an unnamed translator was published in Paris by Arthus Bertrand & Cogez, entitled *La Nouvelle Emma, ou Les Caractères Anglais du Siècle*, also in four volumes, and in September 1816 the first French translation of *Mansfield Park* appeared in Paris from J. G. Dentu, still in four volumes, the translator being Henri Vilmain and the title *Le Parc de Mansfield, ou Les Trois Cousines*; also in 1816 the first American edition of *Emma* was published in two volumes by Mathew Carey of Philadelphia. About half of the first French version of *Emma* was reissued in the following year, 1817, in Vienna, with the addition of a hasty conclusion. All early translations and American editions must be assumed to have been issued without the knowledge or authority of the novelist or her heirs, since no family reference to them has been traced.

Sequels

DEIDRE SHAUNA LYNCH

The sequels, prequels, retellings and spin-offs that Jane Austen's novels have inspired can try the patience and tolerance of the reader who means to be true to her and her example. For one thing, these works are so very numerous. Bibliographies compiled at the end of the 1990s, and currently linked to the website 'The Republic of Pemberley', list over a hundred published books and stories engaging to grant us more of the stylish prose and vivid characterisation that we love in the original. New writers have added to this inventory annually. Never wasting words, practising an exquisite economy on that famous 'little piece (two inches wide) of ivory' that sufficed for her canvas, Austen represents in several accounts of the development of the novel the innovator who trimmed away the flab of the form. Yet through a strange twist of fate she appears to be the cause of verbiage in others. This is the case even though, measured against the other writers who defined the novel for the nineteenth century, Austen wrote very little. There are only the six novels and the two fragmentary beginnings, *The Watsons* (begun and abandoned in 1804) and *Sanditon* (left incomplete at Austen's death in 1817). Speculating on readers' readiness to construe this 'little' that Jane Austen wrote as 'less than enough', the sequel-writers offer us their wares as compensation for that deprivation. None of the novels has escaped becoming grist for their mill.

'Sequel' is a rubric I use loosely in this essay. It covers, for instance, the several books that have provided conclusions for *The Watsons* and *Sanditon*. Following the lead of the bibliographies mentioned above, I also use 'sequel' to label those works which, in either prolonging the novels' action or renarrating it from different perspectives, also transfer their characters into a different generic register – anything from soft-core pornography (as in the 1981 continuation of *Persuasion* entitled *Virtues and Vices*, by the pseudonymous 'Grania Beckford') to fantasy (as in S. N. Dyer's 1996 *Resolve*

and *Resistance*, which imagines a widowed Elizabeth Darcy using Pemberley as the base for a guerrilla movement against Napoleon's occupying army, and learning, with the help of Admiral Nelson, to navigate a fleet of hot-air balloons – 'moon boats' – so as to lead this English resistance to victory). This, of course, is in addition to applying the label to the more numerous books that imagine tamer after-lives for Jane Austen's characters. In the course of demonstrating how the carryings-on of these characters might carry on, the overwhelming majority of Austen sequels preserve Austen's comedy of manners and reduce it to a formula: take 'three or four families in a country village' somewhere in the south of England, some time during the Regency; arrange for strangers to arrive in that neighbourhood, marriageable young men whose ways are vexingly inscrutable; add narrative twists and turns by sending your heroines to balls or Brighton; end with at least one marriage.

Uniformly derivative, this body of material is nonetheless dauntingly diverse. The one generalisation it seems safe to hazard is that it has proven almost impossible to dissociate these attempts to recycle Austen from commercial motives. After all, Austen is good security for publishers' (or film studios') investments. Her audience is ready-made. The author of a sequel is not required, as Jane Austen's contemporary William Wordsworth put it, to create the taste by which he or she (nearly always *she*) is to be enjoyed.

Indeed, the history of Austen sequels – and, in particular, the timing of the up-turns in their production – seems to confirm a cynical understanding of sequel writing as the literati's closest approximation to a get-rich-quick scheme. Continuations of Austen's manuscript fragments begin as a family enterprise in the mid nineteenth century, with the first contributions coming from Jane Austen's nieces: Catherine Hubback (impecunious daughter of Francis, Jane Austen's younger brother), who in 1850 based a triple-decker novel, *The Younger Sister*, on *The Watsons*, and Anna Austen Lefroy (scion of the rival branch of the family headed by Jane Austen's eldest brother James), who evidently some time in the early 1830s began, but did not complete, a continuation of *Sanditon*. The first sequel proper, Sibyl Brinton's *Old Friends and New Fancies*, appears in 1914 – not long, that is, after Henry James issues his famous complaint about the greed of those publishers, editors and producers of 'the pleasant twaddle of the magazines' who find

'dear Jane' so infinitely to their 'material purposes.'¹ The most pronounced upsurge in production of sequels occurs in the late 1990s, timing that suggests, tellingly, that the audience demand these books have recently sought to gratify originated not with a collective rediscovery of the pleasures of Austen's fiction but rather with the 1995 broadcast of the BBC *Pride and Prejudice*. For detractors, the sequels' most irksome aspect might well be how their capitulation to market forces effaces any sense that 'the world of Jane Austen' was ever the creation of a real, distinctive individual. Instead, as sequels spawn sequels (which they do), Jane Austen is more and more thoroughly inscribed into the market's logic of seriality, and her works are more and more thoroughly assimilated to mass-produced Regency Romances – held hostage within a cultural arena organised by the premise that familiarity breeds content, and not contempt.

Of course, the anxieties provoked by the commercialisation of classic literature – anxieties about the fate of originals in capitalism's culture of copies – are nothing new. They fuelled the sociology of culture emerging during Austen's lifetime. By the same token, the sequel itself, far from anomalous, has represented a fundamental element of the history of the novel ever since the form's emergence in the eighteenth century. (After all, Robinson Crusoe, however repentant, could not be allowed to stay at home at the conclusion of Defoe's 1719 novel, but had to undergo 'farther adventures' filling a second and ultimately a third set of volumes.) Bearing this in mind might help us to acknowledge that there are reasons to engage these books – and, in general, the cross-over between classic literature and mass culture they manifest – with some patience and to hold off on accusing their authors of the crime of commercialising Austen. Busy lamenting the sequel writers' impudence and incompetence, their detractors have not got around to exploring why her works appear to have proven more hospitable to sequelisation than those of almost any other novelist.² Yet consideration of the last century of para-Austenian literature might illuminate, for instance, what it is about Austen's plotting – particularly in *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*, the two novels most often inspiring spin-offs – that awakens these desires for a story that would never come to a definitive end. It might illuminate how Austen's works themselves link the pleasure of stories with the pleasure of stories' nostalgic repetition.

Certainly, disappointment (invariably the counterpart of nostalgic repetition) defines most readers' experience of the Austen sequels. (Despite the regimen of posthumous productivity the sequel writers strive to impose on her, that much longed-for *seventh* Austen novel remains elusive.) And, certainly, there are delights in the original that readers are hard pressed to discover in para-Austenian pages: the bracing pleasures provided by Austen's stinging satire; by the undertone of despondency that haunts her fictions' comedy; by her evident faith in the moral efficacy of art. To assess the pleasures one *can* obtain, it is helpful to follow Betty A. Schellenberg and Paul Budra and distinguish between two kinds of sequels.³ There is, on the one hand, the kind that pushes past the original ending to recount subsequent events in the story of an evidently unforgettable protagonist: such an approach involves writing beyond the nuptials ending the courtship plot so as to envision, for example, Elizabeth Bennett as a guerrilla insurgent or, less appealingly, as an unhappily barren newly-wed (the role Emma Tennant's 1992 *Pemberley* reserves for her). There is, on the other hand, the kind of sequel that refrains from meddling with the 'happily ever after' conclusion of the original, but arranges other ways to return to the world of the original novel or to what, more expansively, is frequently called 'the world of Jane Austen': such returns may often involve reorganising the story around the viewpoint of a hitherto minor character.

The first sort of sequel brings to the fore, I want to suggest, the pleasures human beings derive from gossip – that imaginative speculation we collaborate in when, on the basis of meagre evidence (chance remarks or scarcely glimpsed gestures), we spin stories about outcomes and consequences, extrapolating in speculative ways that often leave the evidence far behind. The sequels' debt to the rumour-mill is acknowledged with appealing candour when the letter-writing narrator of an early example of this genre, the 1929 'The Darcys of Rosings,' confesses to her correspondent that her husband, 'the Admiral,' objects to her 'cackling . . . all over the neighbourhood' (about, for instance, the Wickhams' money troubles).⁴ Of course, it is to just such tongue-wagging that we owe the story. Implicitly, readers of sequels in this mode are cast in the roles occupied first by the gossip-hungry residents of Austen's little neighbourhoods of Meryton and Highbury: we too await the

latest news of how, as Mr Bennet might put it, our neighbours have been making sport for us.

One has only to recall the 'ingenious animating suspicion . . . with regard to Jane Fairfax, this charming Mr. Dixon, and the not going to Ireland' that relieves Emma Woodhouse from her boredom (*E*, 2:1) to apprehend how rich a resource gossip provides for Austen's fiction. Jane Austen herself, her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh reported, would, 'if asked, tell us many little particulars about the subsequent career of her people. In this traditionary way we learned that Miss Steele never succeeded in catching the Doctor; that Kitty Bennet was satisfactorily married to a clergyman near Pemberley, while Mary obtained nothing higher than one of her uncle Philips' clerks, and was content to be considered a star in the society of Meriton.' Since its inclusion in Austen-Leigh's 1870 *Memoir* of his aunt, this anecdote has bestowed a seal of authorial approval on sequel-writing – especially as practised by his and his cousins' descendants, who tend to present their special knowledge of the stories' aftermaths as a kind of family legacy.⁵ Yet these books that extrapolate from Austen's texts and recount what their heroines do next are generally regarded as dubious enterprises, as reviews attest. It is as if their imaginative flights invariably leave the 'evidence' that Austen's originals had supplied much too far behind them. One of the more high-minded of the sequel-writers, Joan Austen-Leigh (great-granddaughter of James Edward), declares herself an enemy to gossip in the 'Apologia' to her second *Emma* spin-off: she refrains from 'liberties', she says, and leaves the newly-wed Knightley and Emma 'to their well-earned privacy and peace'.⁶ However, the sequels' inadequacies may be less a function of their indulgence in prying gossip than a function of a florid taste that often makes their gossiping take a melodramatic turn. The after-lives chronicled in the sequels feature sexual dysfunction, adultery and abductions. Sequel-writers have regaled their audiences with the evil-doings of a con-man from India (in 'The Darcys of Rosings'), of a con-woman from France (in Tennant's *Emma in Love*), or of the swashbuckling smugglers of Hastings (in Alice Cobbett's 1932 continuation of *Sanditon*, *Somewhat Lengthened*). The consequence is that these narratives often feel like throwbacks to the Gothic and sentimental novels that Austen loved

to burlesque.⁷ They often feel, in their sensationalism, strangely pre- rather than post-Austenian.

We know that Mrs Elton thought the Knightleys' scheme of residing at Hartfield with Mr Woodhouse 'a shocking plan' that 'would never do' (*E*, 3:17): was she right? We recall that Mr Bennet cautioned his favourite daughter that her 'lively talents would place [her] in the greatest danger in an unequal marriage' (*P&P*, 3:17): was he right? Books such as Rachel Billington's *Perfect Happiness* (1996) and Tennant's *Pemberley* exploit the unsettling undertones one detects in Austen's happy endings and give us pleasure by abetting our prognostications about what, if anything, those undertones foretell. In the second mode of sequelisation, that pleasure, while present, is subordinated to the pleasure of finding that, despite the time that has passed by in the fiction's world and the reader's own world, the everyday lives of Austen's personages continue to go on as usual. Mary Bennet has not left off making moral extracts. Mr Woodhouse still takes his daily constitutionals round the shrubbery. Treated to retellings of Austen's best lines and jokes and demonstrations of the unshakeable staying-power of her comic characters, these books' readers receive a reassuring message about the stability of human personality. Although the sequels' conjectures about what happens next necessarily remind us that time brings changes, books packaged as returns to 'Jane Austen's world' downplay their speculation about unknown futures and play up the comforts of familiarity. It is as if these writers anticipate readers who will resemble Mr Woodhouse in their adherence to routine or resemble Mr Woodhouse's grandsons in asking 'every day for the story of Harriet and gypsies, and still tenaciously [setting Emma] right if she varied in the slightest particular from the original recital' (*E*, 3:3).

They also anticipate readers who like puzzles and quizzes. As several commentators have opined, 'the world of Jane Austen' is frequently viewed through the rose-coloured glasses of nostalgia, mourned as a lost age of placid elegance: confirming this characterisation, the anonymous 'Lady' who continued *Sanditon* in 1975 offers her book as an 'escape' from the 'garishness' of our un-Austenian age and as 'relaxation' in a 'servantless world'.⁸ Yet, as constructed by works such as Joan Aiken's *Mansfield Revisited*

(1984) and Julia Barrett's *Presumption* (1993), 'Austen's world' is to a surprising extent defined not only by retrograde longing but also by a kind of postmodern playfulness and predilection for insider joking. This world's architects often take great delight in arranging for the characters from one Austen novel to consort with those from another or in merging details from her fictions with facts from her biography. Brandons keep company with Darcys, and Wickhams with Crawfords; Naomi Royde-Smith's *Jane Fairfax* (1940) reports on the afterlives of characters from Burney's *Evelina*; Jane Austen's aunt's misadventures with lace and the law are in *Presumption* transferred to the Bennet girls' Aunt Philips. The enjoyment offered by such games of recombination, which nonchalantly treat Austen's bits of ivory as so many puzzle pieces, is of a distinctive kind: when we recognise, reading *Mansfield Revisited*, that Lady Bertram's haplessness as she confronts a charade ('can it be a swan? A peacock? An eagle?') is a reprise of Harriet Smith's in *Emma*,⁹ we receive gratifying proof that we, at least, are not so clueless. That sense of being in the know is, of course, a boon that Austen herself grants those readers who decipher her allusions to earlier fictions or notice, even before she tells them to, that 'tell-tale compression of the pages' which, in the breezy, proto-postmodern idiom of the final chapter of *Northanger Abbey*, assures them that 'we are all hastening together to perfect felicity' (2:16).

To consider how the sequel balances between such knowingness and that particular form of forgetting called nostalgia, and to think about how the wit that is involved in arranging for Lady Bertram to be reborn as Harriet entails both recognition and surprise, is to realise that the author of the sequel faces a more difficult task than *Emma* does when she gratifies her nephews with the same old story. That author needs to provide *some* variation on or renovation of the original. She must refrain from simply reconstituting it, even as, paradoxically, she caters to her readers' demand for more of the same. As, over the years, authors have negotiated this conundrum, the minor character who may be remade as a major character has proved highly serviceable. A grown-up Margaret Dashwood, Georgiana Darcy or Susan Price is a new(ish) character who may nonetheless be enrolled in a marriage plot reiterating her siblings' stories. 'Here we go again,' is the relieved (or disgruntled) response of the reader who finds Susan – sister to the now married

Fanny – being described as a girl who exhibits an offensive 'freedom of manner' and who 'does not improve'; though the words are spoken by Julia Bertram, knowing readers recognise them as vintage Mrs Norris (Aiken, *Mansfield Revisited*, p. 14).

And 'Here we go again' may be just the response Jane Austen solicited. *She* ushered Susan into Mansfield Park and *Mansfield Park* originally; *she* arranged for a cycle to recommence. The evidence of the novels themselves, in other words, suggests that Austen, if not exactly scripting the terms of her future sequelisation, was as happy as her sequel-providers to play with the conventions of narrative teleology and closure. Her narratives often incorporate repetition – the recursive rhythms of everyday life – in ways that stay the forward momentum of the plot and qualify the readers' sense of 'hastening' pell-mell towards 'felicity'. Even in *Pride and Prejudice*, widely considered a model courtship narrative, there is in the third volume a moment when, as Mr Bingley resumes his lease at Netherfield and Mrs Bennet resumes her manoeuvring, Elizabeth thinks with exasperation that time must be going in circles: 'Were the same fair prospect to arise at present, as had flattered them a year ago, everything, she was persuaded, would be hastening to the same vexatious conclusion' (*P&P*, 3:11). We should notice, too, as another instance of this unorthodox narratology, that Austen more than once sets up her novels as though they were the sequels to earlier (untold) stories. *Emma* thus *begins* with a wedding and with its heroine congratulating herself (as any author who had just penned her final chapter would) on the fact that she has conducted the love-story of Mr Weston and Miss Taylor to a happy conclusion.

As a genre sequels are, according to Marjorie Garber, at once 'experientially conservative' – bringing out, as I have observed, the Woodhouse in readers, coddling us in our reluctance to countenance newcomers – and 'theoretically radical' – challenging, with their own weird postmodern metafictionality, some of the literary tradition's sacrosanct convictions about the boundedness of texts and the mechanisms of narrative closure.¹⁰ Admirers of the original novels naturally feel affronted by the sequel writers' refusal to give Austen the last word. But cued by their books' 'theoretically radical' nature, the reader might well permit herself some second thoughts – and wonder whether Jane Austen ever believed she would have it.

NOTES

1. Henry James, 'The Lesson of Balzac', in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage, Vol. 2: 1870-1940*, ed. B. C. Southam (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p. 230.
2. According to Pamela Licalzi O'Connell, 'A World Without End for Fans of Jane Austen,' *New York Times* (13 January 2000) the novels have proved more hospitable than any other classic literature to writers of fan fiction.
3. *Part Two: Reflections on the Sequel*, eds. Paul Budra and Betty A. Schellenberg (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), p. 8.
4. E. Barrington (pseud.), 'The Darcys of Rosings', in *'The Ladies!': A Shining Constellation of Wit and Beauty* (1922), p. 241.
5. *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 119. Francis Austen's great-granddaughter Edith Hubback Brown, writing under her married name, Mrs Francis Brown, published *Margaret Dashwood, or, Interference* in 1929 and *Susan Price, or, Resolution* in 1930. The author biography printed on the dust-jacket of *Pemberley* refers to how Emma Tennant 'grew up . . . hearing about her family's connection to Jane Austen'. For her dust-jackets, Joan Austen-Leigh was photographed with her great-great-great-aunt's writing desk.
6. Joan Austen-Leigh, *Later Days at Highbury* (New York: St Martin's, 1996). *Later Days* indeed permits its audience few glimpses of the Knightleys' wedded life, and those only from a distance.
7. As Judy Simons has pointed out in 'Classics and Trash: Reading Austen in the 1990s,' *Women's Writing* 5:1 (1998); see in particular pp. 35-6.
8. Jane Austen and Another Lady [Marie Dobbs/Anne Telscombe], *Sanditon* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), pp. 326-7.
9. Joan Aiken, *Mansfield Revisited* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1984), p. 119. Subsequent references are included in the text.
10. Marjorie Garber, 'I'll Be Back', *London Review of Books* 21:16 (19 August 1999).

Translations

VALÉRIE COSSY AND DIEGO SAGLIA

The diffusion on the Continent of Austen's novels in translation began as early as 1813 with the first French translation of *Pride and Prejudice*, soon followed by others in French, German, Danish and Swedish.¹ At first sight cultural variety may well seem to prevent the possibility of considering Austen's reception on the Continent as a whole. But if the close analysis of the different translations constitutes a crucial area of Austen scholarship still largely neglected, general observations drawn from the context of European literature in the nineteenth century are necessary, nevertheless, to help readers come to terms with the baffling idiosyncrasies of the individual texts. This explains the structure of this entry, which will offer some general considerations before focussing on a number of examples in French and German.

The 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. As early as 1816 the journal *Vestnik Evropy* ('The European Herald') published a review of *Emma*, largely drawn from foreign sources rather than from any direct knowledge of the novel. After this early and promising notice, however, Austen disappeared from the Russian literary domain until the 1850s, when the 'anglomaniac' critic Aleksandr Druzhinin mentioned her in an essay about English women writers for the journal *Sovremennik* ('The Contemporary'), an overview that also dealt with Maria Edgeworth, Lady Blessington, Felicia Hemans and the Brontë sisters. Nonetheless, these and other occasional mentions of Austen and her work were not accompanied by translations. The first version of an Austen novel in Russian was published as late as 1967.²

Furthermore, one observes that, even in those areas of the Continent where Austen's novels were early available in translation, she herself remained a rather unknown figure as a novelist. Her