

Wilson. For it will add what escaped them: the sensitiveness and intensity with which Shakespeare exploited the vocal music of his day.

**De Voogd, Peter, and John Neubauer, eds. *The Reception of Laurence Sterne in Europe*. London: Continuum, 2004. 332 pp.**

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The ambitious series bearing the general title *The Reception of British Authors in Europe* (series editor: Elinor Shaffer) published in the Athlone Critical Traditions Series by Thoemmes Continuum made its début last year with a volume on the reception of Virginia Woolf. Second in the series, *The Reception of Laurence Sterne in Europe* traces how the writing of Sterne crossed the English Channel to affect national literatures from the Iberian Peninsula to Scandinavia, from the Netherlands to Russia. The authors of critical articles on national receptions provide guidance to this journey across the continent and reveal how, transcending national, cultural and political barriers, Sterne's works changed generic conventions of the novel as well as conceptions of sensibility. The volume opens up new cultural vistas from the eighteenth century to the present in investigations related to the historical and theoretical aspects of the European novel, ensuring that the approaches should be as multifaceted as the whimsical eighteenth-century author himself.

Scholarly articles on the national receptions reveal Sterne's deep-running impact on the European novel tradition through metafictional devices, humor, wit, parody, self-reflexivity and the "sentimental" style. John Neubauer and Neil Stewart demonstrate that, beginning with the early nineteenth century, critical theory ceased to regard *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* as a curious exception in the European novel tradition, and trace how Friedrich Schlegel, György Lukács and Viktor Shklovsky acknowledged the paradigm shift in their theoretical approaches to the genre ("Shandean Theories of the Novel: From Friedrich Schlegel's German Romanticism to Shklovsky's Russian Formalism"). W.G. Day investigates eighteenth- and nineteenth-century popular fascination with *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* and *Tristram Shandy*. The novels initiated a veritable literary cult on the continent, creating a flourishing market for busts and portraits of the author, prints representing scenes from the books, as well as a range of Sternean paraphernalia such as book markers, porcelains and snuff boxes ("Sternean Material Culture: Lorenzo's Snuff-box and his Graves"). Early imitations and later Shandean influences show how deeply the new modes of narrative discourse initiated by Sterne have been integrated into the various national traditions, modernising literary idioms and, especially in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, even becoming vehicles of the expression of a wide range of political sympathies.

Early receptions are given special emphasis in the volume: the authors have carried out a thorough investigation about the pioneering first translations and imitations. Special treatment is given to how Sterne fared in France, early and later reception being treated in two different articles (Lana Asfour: “Movements of Sensibility and Sentiment: Sterne in Eighteenth-Century France” and Anne Bandry: Romantic to Avant-Garde: Sterne in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century France”). The early reception history is not foregrounded, of course, on account of the setting of *A Sentimental Journey*, but rather because France was the first continental recipient of Sterne’s work and a steady provider of contemporary criticism. In eighteenth-century France, Sterne represented a challenge to the rules and regulations of neo-classical aesthetics and provoked the disdain of literary authorities. Voltaire, for instance, reserved his admiration for the *Sermons*. His opinion about *Tristram Shandy* fell short of praise, although he showed respect for the “unpolished genius” commensurate to Shakespeare (Asfour 19). Voltaire regarded Sterne’s increasing popularity with the reading public as part of the phenomenon of “anglomanie,” which he consistently snuffed at. Fascination with English literature also swept through the German-speaking world in the 1760s (Large 70), Sterne winning the admiration of Herder, Wieland and Goethe, and contributing to the emergence of the German comic and sentimental novel (74).

A pattern of the history of first translations reveals much about the foreign language speaking habits of the period: French was the intermediary language for reading and translating his works in Poland, Italy and Spain; early Scandinavian and Russian translators worked from the German, while in Hungary both the French and the German versions as well as the English original are identified as source texts for the earliest translations. In her thoroughly researched article about the difficult passage of Sterne in eighteenth-century Hungary (“Sterne in Hungary”), Gabriella Hartvig gives an overview of the reception history from the early nineteenth-century imitation of *Tristram Shandy* by Ferenc Verseghy and translations of the *Letters of Yorick to Eliza* and *A Sentimental Journey* by Ferenc Kazinczy and Gábor Döbrentei, to the complete translation of *Tristram Shandy* by Győző Határ in 1956. Reading the article one may come upon striking parallelisms between two of Sterne’s most influential translators, Kazinczy and Határ. Kazinczy started reading and translating Sterne while serving a prison sentence for his complicity in the anti-Habsburg plot of the Hungarian Jacobins in the last decade of the eighteenth century. In the years following his release, he integrated the publication of his translations of Sterne into his efforts of modernizing the Hungarian language and Hungarian literature (183-85). Ironically, the translation of the complete *Tristram Shandy* was done by Határ in 1954, after having served a two-and-a-half year prison sentence during a bleak period of communist dictatorship, as part of the joint effort of intellectuals and publishers to reintroduce English literature in the consciousness of the reading public (187-88). Kazinczy was wrestling with language difficulties, working from the German and French translations, and only “divining” the meaning of the English text (184). Határ faced a slightly similar quandary: his dilemma was whether to imitate eigh-

teenth-century English by using archaisms, when Sterne's language was almost modern when compared to the differences between eighteenth-century and modern Hungarian. In some instances, he also had to resort to "divining," although in the case of Határ the reason was not an insufficient mastery of the language, but certain blank spaces in his familiarity with the cultural specificities of eighteenth-century England (189). Finally, both were creative writers, and translations were eating up energies that might have been spent, if it were not for unfavourable political circumstances, in producing original works.

Many of the contributors to the volume tackle further relevant questions about the changing notions of translation. These concern, on the one hand, the conflicting interpretations of the task as "corrective" embellishing or accurate rendering of the original text: such were the dilemmas of the French, German or Polish translators. In other cases, "translation" becomes instrumental in the fashioning of national cultural narratives. The resistance of Sterne's work to snug categorizations contributed to its interpretation as a vehicle of specific cultural and political situations. In the case of Croatian reception, for example, Sterne represented the state of cultural liminality that characterized the situation of Croatia as a political and cultural "borderland" (Jukić 166). Thus, his writing also provided an "interpretative frame" for a quest for national identity (171). That Sterne's work yielded to cultural recycling explains, to a certain extent, the sympathies and affinities of many Eastern European national cultures with Sterne.

*The Reception of Sterne in Europe* holds a wealth of fascinating discoveries that can only be furnished by thorough library and archival research, the accuracy of which is guaranteed by philological expertise. The authors have made investigations to provide precise bibliographical data, a testing task in the case of the earliest translations, carried out detective work about the forgeries and offered insightful interpretation on the imitations. The reception histories that make up the volume offer additional information about contact and interaction between national cultures of the kind usually missing from national literary histories, and persuasively argue for the centrality of Laurence Sterne in the eighteenth-century European "Republic of Letters."