FROM CLUELESS TO BRIDE & PREJUDICE AND BEYOND, Austen's novels have been reshaped in our era to appeal to global audiences very different from her original readers in their tastes and priorities, and distant as well from academic critics. These cross-cultural adaptations depend, of course, on the capacity of Austen's central themes and characters to be transposed compellingly into other languages and cultures, as well as other media. In other words, such adaptations implicitly rely on the perceived universality of Austen's primary concerns. An effective transposition of an Austen novel can be enjoyed by a reader (or viewer) who is familiar with neither the source text nor Austen's own historical and cultural context—as long as the adapter reshapes the Austen material in a way that is both comprehensible to and entertaining for this specific new audience.

Considering these adaptations on their own terms can thus be challenging for Austen scholars. Our stock in trade is, after all, close attention to Austen's use of language, the subtlety of her characterization and plotting, and the rich social, historical, and political contexts on which she draws, often unobtrusively: the very elements that are most likely to disappear, or be radically re-envisioned, when her works are imported across significant distances of time, geography, and culture. At the same time, our detailed knowledge of Austen's original texts and contexts allows us to identify important parallels and differences, which in turn reveal the strategies employed by the adapter to appeal to her or his anticipated audience. What we gain from such scrutiny is a fuller appreciation of what is indeed universal—or can be claimed to be so—about Austen's writing, as well as of what is at stake for the adapter in making such a claim. Such an examination is illuminating regardless of whether the adaptation differs profoundly or only moderately from Austen's original.

This essay takes as a case study a group of reworkings of Austen that are cross-cultural in a particular, and somewhat unusual, sense. The target audience for these two advice books and six novels has certain similarities to the one Austen herself had in view: these anticipated readers are English-speaking Christian women partial to love plots. Unlike the predominantly Anglican readers of fiction in early nineteenth-century England, however, the readers addressed by my two writers, Sarah Arthur and Debra White Smith, are evangelical Protestant women in today's United States who enjoy romance novels and romantic films. Sarah Arthur's Dating Mr. Darcy: A Smart Girl's Guide to Sensible Romance (2005), published by Tyndale, a Christian press, coaches young evangelical readers through reflections on themselves and their potential marriage partners, using Pride and Prejudice as a touchstone. Arthur assumes her readers will be familiar with at least a film adaptation of the novel—her guide mentions both the 1995 miniseries and 2005 feature film versions—though she supplies annotated lists of characters and locations in an appendix just in case. Debra White Smith's "Austen Series," published from 2004 to 2006 by the Christian press Harvest House, recasts each of Austen's novels as a present-day romance starring characters of faith. Smith's use of Austen culminates in her nonfiction advice book What Jane Austen Taught Me about Love and Romance (2007), in which she relates the moral dilemmas of Austen's characters to those faced by contemporary evangelicals, including herself.

All these works present Austen's characters, and to some degree Austen herself, as engaging, trustworthy models for Christian behavior in today's world. This effort requires considerable interpretation of Austen's novels and of their author, interpretation that nevertheless takes very different forms for Arthur and for Smith. Even as Arthur argues for correspondences between Austen's world and that of her readers, she calls attention to the challenges of appropriating Pride and Prejudice for this audience, and she works to redress these challenges through a combination of simplified historical commentary, creative readings, and recourse to allegory. Although Arthur understandably glosses over a great deal of the complexity of religious belief and practice in Austen's era, some of her conclusions nevertheless resonate with those of recent scholars who have studied these issues. Smith, in contrast, focuses on the capacity of Austen's characters and plots to remain compelling and inspiring even when detached from their original context and infused with contemporary evangelical beliefs and practices. What Arthur and Smith share is a commitment first to locating within

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Austen’s novels the elements of a Christian romance and then to conveying those elements appealingly to an audience whose reading is guided by faith rather than by an academic understanding of literature.

Making Jane Austen a Christian role model: Dating Mr. Darcy

A “smart girl” who picks up Dating Mr. Darcy sees a cover photo of a pretty, present-day girl, dressed in an Empire-waist gown; the paperback’s pink-and-lime-green color scheme reinforces the hint that this book aims to meld the up-to-date with the pleasingly retro.

Cover of Dating Mr. Darcy
Courtesy of Tyndale House

After several prefatory sections—beginning with Arthur’s “confession” that she has “a crush on Mr. Darcy” (ix)—Arthur presents a five-part series of reflections on topics relevant to the young dater, with each section mixing discussion of the novel and of contemporary Christian life. A section of “Extra Stuff” at the book’s end includes a guided series of reflections, several of which incorporate the prayers attributed to Austen, as well as a scheme for keeping a dating diary based on the qualities elaborated in the book proper.

Central to Arthur’s enlistment of Pride and Prejudice as a dating guide for teens of faith is her contention that these young women’s own search for mates is fundamentally similar to that undertaken by Austen’s characters. In both eras, declares Arthur, “[s]ingles in the dating ‘market’ often have only brief, contrived opportunities to get to know each other,” a situation that affects alike those who are “silly and selfish” and those who are “respectable” (5). Though Arthur does not spell out this definition, to be “respectable” in her terms clearly means to be chaste as well as generally virtuous, much as would have been true in Austen’s time. Not only the dating market but its stock players remain recognizable, Arthur implies: throughout her book, she encourages her young readers to identify who among their own acquaintance behaves like Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy, or Wickham and Lydia.

In Arthur’s hands, Pride and Prejudice itself becomes a conduct manual, demonstrating the consequences of good and bad behavior for the benefit of impressionable readers. Putting Pride and Prejudice to this purpose is, of course, at odds with Austen’s own insistence on distinguishing her fiction from the Evangelical and overtly didactic novels prominent in her lifetime, as well as from conduct books. Yet this essentially didactic approach to Austen’s fiction is hardly unique to Arthur; indeed, it recalls the attitude of Austen’s contemporaries as well as that of some readers today. Austen’s first reviewers, as was typical in the period, emphasized her novels’ capacity not only to entertain but to edify: the British Critic’s 1812 review of Sense and Sensibility, for instance, commended that work for offering female readers the opportunity to “learn from [it], if they please, many sober and salutary maxims for the conduct of life, exemplified in a very pleasing and entertaining narrative” (Southam 40). The didactic strand of Austen’s fiction continues to preoccupy certain scholars as well as popular writers, who repeatedly cast Austen in the role of witty, reliable advice-giver. Unlike Henderson and other guidebook authors, Arthur is not concerned with relating Austen’s world to contemporary American culture generally. Instead, Arthur concentrates on establishing parallels between Austen’s world and the particular subculture—even, one might say, counterculture—of evangelical Christian believers in present-day America. Thus Arthur moves beyond her claim of comparable marriage markets then and now to assert a more substantial and a more focused correspondence between Austen’s world and that of the readers of Dating Mr. Darcy.
Except on a few occasions, Arthur blurs the distinction between Christianity in general and Anglicanism in particular when discussing the religious beliefs and practices of Austen’s era, a blurring that helps her construct her parallels with the faith world of her readers. Yet it is not enough for Arthur’s purposes to identify Austen as having lived in a pervasively Christian world; she aims also to establish Austen as a believer in a sense that will be recognizable to her own young evangelical readers. This effort is evident in Arthur’s interpretation of the three prayers attributed to Austen, a reading that is both carefully couched and creative. “It could be argued,” writes Arthur, “that [Austen’s] prayers indicate that she felt a personal experience of God to be central to the life of faith, even if the language of having a personal relationship with God would have sounded foreign to her” (88, italics original). That Austen’s prayers are rhetorically similar to The Book of Common Prayer—a point made by Stovel, whom Arthur cites—should not, Arthur urges, incline readers to discount them as formulaic or insincere. “Jane may have echoed the formal language of the Church of England to express our need for forgiveness from Jesus Christ,” Arthur maintains, “but her prayers are uniquely focused on the need to acknowledge our sin and turn to him” (89). Arthur’s “Guide to Reflection” works further to make these texts relevant to her own audience by juxtaposing excerpts from the prayers with questions such as “[i]n what ways have I sinned against my loved ones through the unkind things I’ve thought, said, or done?” (155). While vital to Arthur’s project of encouraging spiritual reflection, this insistent personalization of Austen’s prayers is at odds with the texts’ rhetoric, which Stovel has described as “speak[ing] in a shared voice of a generic predicament” (194).

Not only does Arthur attempt to rehabilitate Austen herself as a Christian role model—in the sense of being prayerful, penitent, and God-focused—but she must work against the apparent lack of such explicit role models in the novels themselves. Arthur openly acknowledges that “[i]t may seem ridiculous to speak of faith in Jane Austen’s novels when the author herself doesn’t seem to address the issue,” or does so only in “hints” (86, 89). Arthur’s acknowledgment here is in line with Austen’s earliest reviewers, who expressed relief that she did not follow the Evangelical fashion for overtly pious content and style: the British Critic’s 1816 review of Emma, for example, praised the novel for “not dabb[ing] in religion; of fanatical novels and fanatical authoresses we are already sick” (Southam 71). For Arthur’s purpose, of course, it would be convenient if Austen had indeed cultivated a more “fanatical” writing style, in the sense of incorporating into her novels more explicit and extensive comments on belief and conversion.

Arthur’s strategy for coping with the challenge of Austen’s limited treatment of faith is threefold. First, she milks Austen’s hints: for instance, Arthur asserts that Darcy’s statement that Wickham ought not to be a clergyman constitutes “one of the most important statements about faith to be found in Pride and Prejudice” (102). Second, she argues around characters like Mr. Collins: rather than confronting the implications of Austen’s satirized portrait of him, Arthur takes refuge in a claim that the ordination of a character whom she dismisses as a “weirdo” reflects the practice of “the Church of England of the time” (102), thereby conveniently differentiating between the Christian world she has claimed is present in Austen’s novels and the Anglican church as an institution.

Finally, Arthur asserts that Austen’s writings are not only appropriate but beneficial for evangelicals to read, by introducing an allegorical interpretation of her novels. Arthur encourages her readers to think figuratively, in terms of the “divine romance in which every human character is in the process of being wooed back to the loving heart of God” (85-86). Viewed through this lens, Austen’s characters become “living parables of our relationship with God” (87). This perspective has the effect not only of rendering Mr. Darcy as a type of Christ—due to his “self-sacrificing actions” on behalf of the Bennet family (106)—but of proposing a parallel between Austen and God the Creator. “God is the one who created you,” Arthur reminds her readers, “and he, as the Author of the great story of humankind, has given you a role as one of the characters” (85). At this point, a secular reader of Dating Mr. Darcy may feel that Arthur has left Austen’s actual novels behind altogether. Yet here, too, Arthur’s reasoning is in line with recent scholarly work on religion and the tradition of the novel. Mark Knight and Thomas Woodman, for instance, point out the “deep-rooted similarities and analogies between the novel and religious discourse,” with the most central being “the role of story. . . . Not only is the Bible primarily a narrative, but Christians are encouraged to assimilate their own personal stories in the great meta-narratives of salvation and conversion” (5).

The extent of overlap between Arthur’s arguments and those of recent scholars suggests a commonality of purpose that might seem surprising, given the obvious differences between Dating Mr. Darcy and a work of criticism. Part of this overlap is due to Arthur’s own research, as revealed in her endnotes, and which may come as a surprise given her ostentatiously unacademic writing style, peppered as it is with slang and exclamation points. In another sense, however, Arthur shares these scholars’ concern with illuminating and ruminating on the long-neglected strand of religion in Austen’s works. Arthur does so, of course, not to make an academic argument about Austen or about religion but in order to enrich the faith lives of her novel-reading and movie-watching young audience.
Like Arthur’s, Smith’s central aim is to enlist Austen’s writings in order to inspire spiritually her own readers. However, even in What Jane Austen Taught Me about Love and Romance—the closest parallel among Smith’s works to Dating Mr. Darcy—Smith’s appropriation of Austen is essentially, and unapologetically, ahistorical. Smith structures What Jane Austen Taught Me as an extended meditation on the qualities of love enumerated in 1 Corinthians 13, assigning a virtue or vice to one of Austen’s memorable characters (e.g., Mr. Knightley is patient, Fanny Price is kind, Mrs. Elton is rude). Like Arthur, Smith identifies Christlike characters in Austen’s novels—chief among them, not surprisingly, Fanny Price (33)—and encourages readers to think of God’s direction of their own lives as comparable to that of an author’s: “[w]hile Elizabeth [Bennet]’s story is carefully crafted by Austen, our lives are crafted by God” (103-04). Nowhere in this endeavor, however, does Smith concern herself or her readers with what religion meant to Austen personally, in her time period generally, or in her fictional representations. Smith seems to consider Austen’s novels a kind of collective sacred text, one that can be excerpted and interpreted at will for contemporary readers, without concern for the source text’s internal inconsistencies or contexts.

This lack of anxiety about the appropriateness of Austen’s novels for her audience—at least as interpreted by Smith herself—frees Smith to borrow the elements of the novels she finds most useful and to ignore the rest. Austen first attracted her as a graduate student, Smith explains, because of the author’s “wittiness, her characters, and the dynamics of the plots,” an interest that led to Smith’s own “vision for presenting all her novels with contemporary storylines” (What Jane Austen Taught Me 10). Indeed, Smith considers Austen a mentor in terms of her own professional writing rather than her faith: “you were as much of a writing maniac as I am,” Smith remarks in her closing letter to “Jane,” in which she thanks Austen for “motivating and teaching and for being that good, literary friend I can always rely on” (192). The “teaching” Smith has in mind here is of the writer’s craft, not of a spiritual nature, is borne out by her statement elsewhere in this passage that Austen provides her the “inspiration” to create characters “in a way that wins my own heart . . . and hopefully the hearts of my readers” (192). Smith, in other words, takes Austen as a model for romance-writing rather than for Godly living, even as she shows in this guide that Austen’s characters can be reinterpreted, for the most part in line with the original characterizations, as moral exemplars.

Because Smith’s “Austen Series” takes place in the present day, of course, she can avoid having to grapple openly with what morals or faith meant in Austen’s era. Like What Jane Austen Taught Me, these novels demonstrate Smith’s determination to appropriate what she considers important from Austen’s fiction and to weave in the evangelical content that her own readers expect, which she does for the most part adroitly and even relatively unobtrusively. Indeed, given the latitude her contemporary setting gives her to rework Austen as she sees fit, the degree of Smith’s fidelity to Austen’s depiction of religious life is striking.

With only a few exceptions, notably a pivotal encounter between her Elizabeth Bennet and Darcy characters at an altar rail, Smith depicts little more churchgoing or regular religious observance than does Austen. Perhaps out of concern not to alienate any potential readers, Smith remains vague, too, about the denominations represented by the “community churches” and “metropolitan churches” her characters attend. She quotes from the Bible only once—when a character remembers that “It is not good for man to be alone” (First Impressions 162)—and refers to it rarely, usually in order to equate an anti-heroine with Delilah (Northpointe Chalet 172, Central Park 149, Reason and Romance 204). Except for one, Smith preserves as clergymen the characters Austen designates as such, with only rare additions (she makes her Darcy’s parents missionaries) and small changes (both her Mr. Elton and Henry Tilney characters work as music ministers rather than ordinary pastors). The major exception is Mr. Collins, who in First Impressions becomes the unappealing vice-president of an oil company. While Smith does not shy away from suggesting that some self-proclaimed
Smith makes it quite clear, as is hardly surprising given her anticipated audience, that her heroines and heroes are people of faith, and that this identity is important to each of them personally and especially in the search for a mate. Yet here too she adds less to Austen's characterizations, and does so more subtly, than one might expect. Apart from her Fanny Price character, who bears an appropriately high concern for her own morality and that of the clergy, and her Catherine Morland character, portrayed as a religious seeker, Smith's heroines could all be described in the terms with which Dave Davidson (Darcy) thinks of Eddi Boswick (Elizabeth): “reverent, but not the most demonstrative church member” (First Impressions 269). Smith’s most crucial intervention is to incorporate explicitly a dimension of religious conversion into the transformative changes of heart experienced by certain of Austen’s heroines. Anna Woods (Marianne) turns back to Bryan Brixby (Col. Brandon) after an extended, near-death vision of the “the Giver of Life” (Reason and Romance 293). Amanda Priebe (Emma Woodhouse) repents of her matchmaking in a prayer in which she apologizes for “trying to play God” (Amanda 298). Eddi Boswick, too, asks God to “forgive” her once she realizes how she has misjudged Dave Davidson (First Impressions 248).

On a few other occasions, Smith employs contemporary Christian language for a more pragmatic reason, in order to offer explanations of certain characters’ behavior that will make more sense to her readers than those Austen presents (or, in some cases, leaves to be assumed). Smith’s Mr. Bennet character remains in his marriage because he is “a God-fearing man” (First Impressions 98), while Francine (Fanny Price) assuages her anxieties about Hugh Casper (Henry Crawford) by reminding herself that “God was in the business of changing hearts” (Central Park 296). Most crucially, Kathy Moore’s (Catherine Morland’s) perusal of the diary of the dead Laura Tilman (Mrs. Tilney) reveals that Laura was not murdered by her abusive husband and that she knew and accepted her impending death, being “intimate enough with her Creator to understand when He was calling her name” (Northpointe Chalet 285-86). Indeed, Kathy’s contact with “the thread of holy devotion in Laura’s diary” (286) is as important to her as the power of Ben’s (Henry Tilney’s) preaching in awakening her own sense of faith.

A more ideological agenda is evident in Smith’s handling of two other aspects of Austen’s narratives: chastity and ordination. While Smith does not comment explicitly on the fact, it is evident that for her—as for Arthur—an essential basis for bringing versions of Austen’s narratives to her audience is the common ground between the code of virtue taken for granted in Austen’s novels and the present-day assumption among evangelicals that virginity should be maintained until marriage. Even Kathy Moore, unconventional in some ways, “lived high morals,” the narrator assures us (Northpointe Chalet 176). For Smith, of course, it is important to show not only her heroines but her heroes as well practicing sexual restraint. Unlike Austen, who remains discreetly silent on the subject of her heroes’ sexual experience, Smith makes plain that the godliness of these characters extends as well to their stewardship of their bodies. Nate Knighton (Mr. Knightley), is “wait[ing] on God to bring him his future mate” (Amanda 19), a situation made more explicit in the case of Ethan Barrimore (Edmund Bertram), who has “determined to keep himself sexually pure and as far removed from temptation as possible . . . , allow[ing] the Lord to lead him to his mate when the time was right” (Central Park 23). Ben Tilman (Henry Tilney) even announces to Kathy that he hasn’t been, “you know, active in that way,” and he subsequently puts into practice his convictions by “forc[ing] himself to break away” from a kiss with her (Northpointe Chalet 205, 231).

While most of Smith’s protagonists highly value purity, however, she sanitizes neither the desires nor the behavior of those characters who, in Austen’s novels, sexually transgress or come close to doing so. The promises associated with the purity ring Anna Woods (Marianne Dashwood) received in adolescence from her parents help preserve her from giving in to the blandishments of Willis (Willoughby), an effect the narrator terms a “miracle” (Reason and Romance 176). Linda Boswick (Lydia Bennet) does actually sleep with her Wickham and get pregnant—although she redeems herself for that sin by remembering “the sanctity of human life” and choosing marriage over abortion (First Impressions 255).

Less obvious than Smith’s updating of Austenian virtue to the twenty-first century is her depiction of a world in which ordained preachers are invariably men. Without ever touching openly on the controversial (among some evangelical groups) subject of ordination for women, Smith emphasizes that her clergyman heroes are invested with God’s power. A musical performance by Ted Farris (Edward Ferrars) reveals the extent of his “praise and adoration for his Holy Creator” (Reason and Romance 211). Ethan Barrimore’s congregation tells him “that the Lord’s anointing was evident in a powerful way when he spoke,” a gift later renewed when “[a] holy fire cleanse[s] his soul” of his attraction for Carrie Casper (Mary Crawford; Central Park 88, 326). So talented is Ben Tilman as a preacher that his “insightful messages” from the pulpit initiate a conversion process for Kathy that culminates in her recommitment of herself to Christ (Northpointe Chalet 217).

The effect of all of these embellishments and interventions by Smith is to render the Christian beliefs and practices left essentially implicit in Austen’s novels in a form recognizable to Smith’s own readers, while preserving and amplifying those aspects of Austen’s original texts that continue to resonate with this audience, particularly the concern with feminine purity. The result is novels that could be said to be, in the terms of Sarah Arthur’s subtitle for Dating Mr. Darcy, “sensible
Faithful fans

Like all adapters, Arthur and Smith mediate between Austen’s original texts and their own anticipated readers. In *Dating Mr. Darcy* and *What Jane Austen Taught Me*, this mediating role is taken explicitly by Arthur and Smith themselves, who as authors interpret and explain Austen for the benefit of their faithful audience. This endeavor, which has little in common with academic literary analysis or teaching, arguably shares more with the kinds of Biblical exegesis practiced in churches and in faith-based workshops of the kind Smith leads on the topic of marriage. Moreover, Arthur and Smith’s effort to establish connections between female readers’ partiality for Austen and their faith can be seen as a counterpart to other efforts within the evangelical world to enlist popular culture as a bridge to church life.\(^\text{13}\)

Of course, Arthur, Smith, and their publishers stand to benefit too from capitalizing on Austen’s current popularity. Austen’s name sells merchandise, especially to women. Yet Arthur and Smith’s descriptions of their own interests in Austen suggest a more personal stake as well. Both are self-described Austen lovers who take unashamed pleasure in both the novels and their recent film adaptations. “As much as I love reading your books,” Smith remarks in her concluding letter to “Jane,” “I also adore curling up in front of the fireplace on a winter’s evening with a bowl of popcorn, some hot cocoa, and a Jane Austen movie” (*What Jane Austen Taught Me* 189-90). “You’re missing out,” Arthur exhorts any reader who has yet to encounter an Austen novel (*Dating Mr. Darcy* xi), even as she celebrates her favorite film version. These authors are addressing a community of like-minded women on two levels—Austen fans and women of faith—and their writings can be seen as having a dual purpose as well: proselytizing, if we can use that word, for Austen’s novels as well as for evangelical Christianity.

An academic reader might well object that it is hardly a promotion of Austen’s novels to rework them without satire or to skate over their complexity and that of her historical context. As Deidre Lynch has reminded us, however, “the cultural Jane Austen has been a crossover phenomenon, and acknowledging that Austenmania straddles the divides between high and low culture, and between the canon and the cineplex, can be humbling experiences. We are reminded that we are far from having exclusive title to the real Jane Austen” (5). Arthur’s effort to locate recognizable counterparts in Austen’s characters and in the author herself suggests an interest in providing young women of faith with literary forebears, however contrived these might seem to those more fully acquainted with the religious practices and debates of Austen’s day. By explicitly designating Austen as a kind of muse for herself, Smith too demonstrates a desire to claim this author, in spite of all her obvious differences, as kin.

In this sense, regardless of Arthur and Smith’s specifically religious agenda, they are quite typical of contemporary rewriters of Austen, whose impulse to rework invariably springs in their own accounts from their great enthusiasm for this author (and, in some cases, for particular film or stage versions of her novels).\(^\text{14}\) Arthur’s and Smith’s agenda, of course, prevents them from recasting Austen quite as freely or fancifully as have some of their secular fellow writers. In working to strike a balance between Christianity and romance, Arthur and Smith model for their readers the very approach they advocate in a reading of Austen.

NOTES
I would like to thank Rachel Brownstein for introducing me to Debra White Smith's novels.

1. Throughout this essay, I will use "evangelical" to refer to present-day believers and "Evangelical" to refer to revivalists of Austen's era. Though widely separated by time and place, the two groups can be seen to share significant characteristics. Michael Wheeler has described Evangelicalism in Austen's time as placing an "emphasis upon conversion and a new life in Christ, sanctification and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, mission and acts of love (or 'charity') and a personal life set apart from worldly immorality" (407). Present-day evangelicals are conventionally distinguished as well by a reliance on Biblical authority and a shared commitment to spreading the Gospel.

2. Arthur has made a career of basing inspirational works on popular films: she is the author as well of guides derived from *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

3. Arthur remarks of herself that she "first came to *Pride and Prejudice* through the BBC/A&E television series and [hasn't] quite been the same person since" (ix). Claiming first acquaintance with Austen films rather than Austen novels is fairly common among authors of Austen-related books, especially those with looser ties to the original novels. Such claims also suggest that the author may anticipate readers whose own first experience of Austen was also with a film version.

4. Among her many fans, Smith is known for her several dozen romance novels as well as her pair of advice books, *Romancing Your Husband* and *Romancing Your Wife* (the latter co-written with her own husband). She has also built her name recognition through inspirational presentations and workshops, which her publishers advertise at the end of all of her novels. The author blurb on *What Jane Austen Taught Me* credits Smith with fifty books and a million copies in print.

5. Another Christian re-interpretation of Austen that is worthy of consideration is the 2003 film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, which I will treat in "Jane Austen in Mollywood: Mainstreaming Mormonism in Andrew Black's *Pride & Prejudice*" (part of a planned collection edited by Michael Austin and Mark Decker). See also Lori Smith's 2007 memoir *A Walk with Jane Austen: A Journey into Adventure, Love & Faith*, part of which deals with this Christian author's musings on the importance of religion to Austen.

6. Both Jan Fergus and Mary Waldron examine Austen's relationship to Evangelical and didactic novelists.

7. Barbara Benedict has noted how Austen's titles signaled her choice of subgenre to her original readers (73); more broadly, Benedict makes the bold claim that Austen's intertextuality "suggests that she conceived of her novels in the context of current fiction, as a part of popular literature, and designed her novels to reach the audiences who were reading contemporary novels" (64).

8. On the scholarly side, see for instance Michael Giffin's recent characterization of Austen's novels as "didactic commentaries dedicated to showing how and why a rational neoclassical understanding of self and world is appropriate" (5-6).

9. Other recent popular titles extract from Austen's novels advice that is relevant to Regency manners, to be appreciated by those contemporary readers with an affinity for that period rather than to be applied to their own lives. See Josephine Ross and Henrietta Webb's *Jane Austen's Guide to Good Manners: Compliments, Charades & Horrible Blunders* and Margaret C. Sullivan's *The Jane Austen Handbook: A Sensible Yet Elegant Guide to Her World*.

10. See too Gene Koppel's monograph, which arguably initiated the recent effort to restore to critical view the importance of Austen's Christianity. All of these studies, of course, treat in much greater depth than does Arthur the complexity of theological debates in Austen's day and as rendered in her fiction.

11. Here, Arthur can be seen as continuing the tradition begun by Austen's brother Henry, who in his "Biographical Notice" asserted that his sister's "love of God" remained unflagging even in her final illness and contended that Winchester Cathedral does not "contain the ashes of a brighter genius or a sincerer Christian" (4, 5).

12. The desire to cast Austen as a "friend" is evident as well in contemporary fiction that features Austen as a character: see Wells, "Everybody's Jane: Austen's Adventures in American Popular Fiction, 1996-2006" (part of a planned collection edited by Clare Hanson and Gillian Dow).


14. To take two examples from different ends of the literary spectrum, see Karen Joy Fowler's proclamation of gratitude to Austen, at the end of *The Jane Austen Book Club*, for her "renewable, rereadable, endlessly fascinating books" (288), and Amanda Elyot's statement of thanks in *By a Lady* to Austen and her dramatic adapter, Howard Fast, for having "so greatly changed [Elyot's own] life" (v).

WORKS CITED


Contemporary Romance genre: new releases and popular books, including My Favorite Half-Night Stand by Christina Lauren, Luna and the Lie by Mariana Zapat...Â [close] This group is for Romance lovers of ANY type of Romance: Contemporary, Historical, Paranormal, Regency, etc.! February’s SGoM is Thriller Romance! Follow us on ! And true love waits in haunted outtakes [attics?] And true love lives on lollipops and crisps Just don't leave, don't leave. Are there any clues in "True Love Waits" that indicate that Thom Yorke is not speaking from his own point of view in the first stanza of the song?Â There are other, more subtle indicators of gender in the first verse of "True Love Waits." Anti-feminist quotes like, "I'll drown my beliefs to have your babies," suggest that the speaker is not just female, but not very confident or independent woman, either.Â True Love Waits Meaning & the Christian Purity Ring Program. But there is more to the meaning of "True Love Waits" outside of Radiohead song lyrics.