

Introduction

When we first planned a conference to celebrate Jane Austen's 250th birthday, we hoped that the conference would do justice not only to Austen herself, but also to the range, scope and diversity of Austen Studies in 2025. With that in mind, we chose the theme 'The Global Jane Austen', in the hope that this would encourage the submission of papers on all aspects of Austen's writing and life, her posthumous reception, her influences, and her writing alongside that of her contemporaries. We were particularly keen to see papers on adaptations, translations and creative responses to Austen's work (written and/or performed in all languages), material and textual transmission of her works, and papers on her reception and reputation in countries outside the Anglophone world. We also hoped that we might see some discussion of the Global within her works, and those of her contemporaries.

We could not have dreamed of the enormous enthusiasm generated by the conference, or the richness and variety of the abstracts received, which follow in this booklet. These cover almost the entire range of approaches to Austen's work currently in use in Austen Studies, including close textual analysis, historicist literary criticism, Marxist criticism, theories of influence, book history, reception studies, the material, archival and linguistic turns in literary criticism, postcolonial studies and translation and adaptation theories (among others). There are personal reflections on the importance of Austen in readers' lives, and for fans and reading communities more broadly. The abstracts included are in alphabetical order by presenter surname, and represent the papers delivered in person at the conference between 10th and 12th July, 2025 at the University of Southampton. As organisers, we could not have hoped for a better programme, and we are delighted to present the abstracts here.

We are very grateful for the sponsorship of the Bibliographical Society, the Society for the History of Readership, Authorship and Publishing (SHARP), the British Association for Romantic Studies (BARS), the Southampton Century for Nineteenth-Century Research, and the Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities.

Gillian Dow (University of Southampton) and Katie Halsey (University of Stirling)

Antinucci, Raffaella. Parthenope University of Naples. ‘Adaptation and Serialisation of an Austenian Classic: the Case of the Webseries *Emma Approved* (2013-14)’

Since the years following its publication, *Emma* (1815) has been subjected to forms of appropriation and ‘remediation’ that have highlighted the rhizomatic nature of the Austen ‘sign’, capable of manifesting itself in times and cultures very distant from that in which the six novels were written. In particular, in the wake of the great success of the British TV series *Pride and Prejudice* (1995), the film adaptations of *Emma* have experienced unwavering popularity, both when they were based on historical and social reconstruction (the American feature film *Emma* of 1996, the 1996 ITV series, the 2007 BBC series, and the latest film by Autumn de Wilde released in 2020), and when they were guided by the principle of spatial-temporal ‘updating’ (*Clueless*, *Girls in Beverly Hills*, 1995; *Aisha*, 2010). Indeed, precisely those adaptations that have moved further away from the historical setting have proved to be among the most interesting ones from a stylistic and formal perspective. These include Bernie Su’s American webseries *Emma Approved* (2013-14), produced by Pemberly Digital in the wake of the success of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2012-13), the first example of an interactive rewriting of *Pride and Prejudice*. Structured in 72 episodes ranging from four to eight minutes in length, *Emma Approved* was the second of its kind to win an Emmy for Best Interactive Original Programme in 2015. The analysis of the webseries demonstrates the extent to which, by exploiting the potential of such a contemporary format, certain components of Austen’s style, such as the overlap between the perspective of the narrator and that of the protagonist, the “creative” power of the unsaid as an essential element in the meaning-generating process, and the perception of a ‘community’ of which the reader also feels a part, can be transposed through new media and narrative forms.

Avery Jones, John. ‘Five Topics Global Readers Need to Know about Jane Austen’s England’

The problem facing readers in other countries is to understand some of the legal background of the novels. For example, English readers will be familiar with tithes and may have some idea about entails but these are likely to be a mystery to readers in other countries. This proposal is to give a short explanation of a list five topics that will help global readers understand the novels better, including illustrations from the novels of why they matter. The provisional list is:

1. Property settlements: life tenants, entails, remaindermen; barring entails; marriage settlements; portions for younger children.
2. Married women: engagement; divorce; minimum age of marriage; parental consent; Gretna Green; rights to property; widows; jointure; dower.
3. Clergy: rectors and curates; tithes; advowsons; sale of the right of next presentation; minimum age for priests and deacons.
4. Wills: real and personal property; witnessing; deathbed promises; death duties.
5. Selected sundry other topics: barristers, solicitors and attorneys; magistrates; adoption; procuring naval promotion by ‘interest’; taxes on luxury expenditure such as carriages (and their types) and male servants; inflation between novels written in the 1790s and those written later.

Baiesi, Serena. University of Bologna. ‘Jane Austen’s Unfinished Works: New Directions and New Dimensions’

In recent times the unfinished novels by Jane Austen have attracted new attention from the critics as well as from the audience, especially when revisited and adapted for the theatre and the screen.

Works such as *Catharine, or the Bower* (1792-3), *Lady Susan* (1795?), *The Watsons* (1803-4?) and *Sanditon* (1817) were all published till well after the author's death, and have never received nearly as much attention as the six novels that appeared between 1811 and 1817.

However, these unfinished texts offer new interpretive challenges for several reasons, since they disclose striking alterations from Austen's previous narratives in terms of experimentation with content and language. In particular, what it is more interesting is how Austen is revealing new emphasis of her less conservative ideas about female and social manners.

The unfinished works also problematize the romance plot by presenting undefined and unstable states of mind that underlines its play-acting attitude that invite new interpretation and adaptation for theatre and films. In particular, these texts draw attention to how the romance plot is much inflected by the financial condition in which young marriageable women found themselves during the Regency Period [see J. Wilkes, *Unfinished Austen*].

In my paper I would investigate why and how these unfinished texts have aroused much interest of modern readers and writers for theatre and for the screen, who are eager to complete or to amplify themes and issues drafted by Austen in her later manuscripts.

Developments on screen include Whit Stillman's *Love and Friendship* (which is actually based on Austen's *Lady Susan*) issued in 2016, and Andrew Davies's more recent continuation of *Sanditon*, which are the case studies I will discuss in my presentation since they both attempt to problematize and develop unanswered questions concealed in Austen's unfinished tales.

Ballaster, Ros. University of Oxford. 'Jane Austen and *La Belle Assemblée*'

The first number of *La Belle Assemblée*, or *Bell's Court and Fashionable Magazine* of February 1806 promises to lead its reader through the world of fashion:

We shall furnish him with a chart that will govern his voyage in all the varieties of the course. We shall begin from the very point of embarkation. He will see a young country girl, with decent manners, good morals, and a careful education, enter upon a fashionable course. He will see her carried through the different scenes of the Beau Monde, and guided by a gay, seducing, artful woman of fashion. He will perceive, that the patroness understands her work, and is competent to the undertaking. She will point out examples instead of giving precepts; and presenting scenes and characters, leave her young pupil to draw her own inferences. In one word, and what includes the whole art of instruction, she does not teach her pupil, but leaves her more wisely to instruct herself.

This introduction to the journal and its contents was titled 'The Beau Monde or History of the New World. Chapter the First.' As though it were a work of fiction, of a type very familiar to readers of the period: the courtship to marriage plot of the young girl coming to adulthood.

This paper will look at the resourceful female design that shaped this high fashion journal and Jane Austen's novels. I will give a few examples from my book due to be published Spring 2025 from Pan Macmillan (Jane Austen's Fashion Diary) in which I set colour fashion plates from *La Belle Assemblée* alongside passages from Austen's works to visualize some of Austen's most striking scenes and characters. I explore and explain the choices available in terms of textile and style whether according to season (Austen's novels are carefully plotted by chronology), place (seaside resorts, London, small towns, balls, drawing-rooms) or activity (walking, travelling, riding, painting, dancing).

Barangé, Jeanne. Bordeaux Montaigne University. ‘Jane Austen and the Global Literary Export of “Englishness”’

When thinking of ‘Englishness,’ Jane Austen is one of the figures that quickly comes to mind. In Brian Southam’s words, ‘of all novelists, [she] is the Anglocentric, narrowly and specifically concerned not with Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, but only with England, the English, and Englishness.’¹ Jane Austen has indeed been part of the selective list of writers whose names have a particularly evocative power when it comes to English national identity, and her novels have long been recognised as epitomising the elusive, yet enduring notion of ‘Englishness,’ to both English and foreign readers.

Many scholars of nationalism such as Benedict Anderson have now established that the nation is an invention². But, as Anne-Marie Thiesse explains in her *The Creation of National Identities*, the nation survives ‘only through the collective adherence to this fiction.’ The international popularity of Austen’s novels has prompted enough of a ‘collective adherence’ to her representations that her version of Englishness has spread across the globe. Literature, and more specifically literature which generates as wide and enthusiastic a readership as Jane Austen’s indeed played a significant role in the construction of English national identity, and its subsequent definition.

As Thiesse writes, ‘national sentiment is spontaneous only when it has been perfectly internalized’. Through selected close-readings of her novels, this paper will demonstrate that Jane Austen’s literary concern for national definition has played an essential role in the process of internalisation described by Thiesse. Accordingly, I will show that in a context of growing interest in national definition across Europe, Jane Austen’s depiction of national life has made her a ‘spontaneous’ answer to the question of Englishness, both in her home country and abroad.

Barchas, Janine. University of Texas at Austin. ‘New Images of Austen, or Behind the Scenes of the First Graphic Biography’

The Novel Life of Jane Austen is an illustrated biography that focuses on the relationship between the Austen sisters. This transatlantic collaboration between Austen scholar Janine Barchas in Austin, Texas, and graphic novelist Isabel Greenberg in London has resulted in a unique book that has been lauded as “Truly delightful, charming, and funny.” Janine will walk us through the creative process behind this ecstatically-drawn and painstakingly-researched graphic biography, sharing favourite scenes and moments from the book and celebrating both its publication and Austen’s 250th!

Batchelor, Jennie. University of York. ‘Jane Austen in the World of the Nineteenth-Century Magazine’

Nineteenth-century periodicals most commonly feature in Austen scholarship in the form of the Reviews where a relatively small numbers of much-cited appraisals of her novels appeared. However, periodicals and especially magazines played a much bigger role in the curation of Jane Austen’s legacy than has been commonly allowed. This is true even, perhaps especially, in those decades when Austen is traditionally understood to have partly fallen out of critical favour and consciousness. This paper will shed light on how Austen was remembered and celebrated in a range of nineteenth-century periodicals in Britain and beyond.

Batterbee, Megan. ‘Adultery, Abduction and Elopement: Questioning Sexual Consent in Jane Austen’s Novels

A woman’s ability to consent is a central construct of eighteenth-century literature, particularly Jane Austen’s novels. Her written romantic entanglements encompass myriad forms, with the normative path from courtship to marriage shown as aspirational for Austen’s heroines. However, alongside her characters’ prosperous marriages, Austen’s worlds are still dangerous places for women, who suffer from a lack of suitable education, are kept from knowledge necessary to protect themselves, and are vulnerable to the manipulation of courtship rituals for illicit ends. Austen deviates from her contemporaries’ depictions of sensational, graphic violation. Instead, there is an omnipresent threat of sexual violence which can be found in the shadows of ballrooms, etiquette of drawing rooms, and grounds of country estates. This paper examines nuances of verbal discourse, distinctions in body language, and personal and public perception of male and female conduct and culpability in order to question what differentiates the elopements of Austen’s characters from the abductions in novels of the earlier century by. Austen’s insightful and critical analysis of the dynamics of consent continues to resonate, as is exhibited in the continual adaptation, retelling and reimagining of her novels into the twenty-first century. By examining the novels, contemporary critical reception, and modern reimagining of Austen’s work, this paper demonstrates the ambiguity surrounding consent as a key component of Austen’s literary legacy. ’

Bautz, Annika. University of Surrey. ‘Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*: Illustrated for Late Victorian Readers’

This paper explores the ways in which illustrations to late nineteenth-century editions of *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) shape the reading experience. As competition between publishers of different Austen editions intensified, illustrations became one way of giving an edition an edge over another. This paper takes two late nineteenth-century editions of *Sense and Sensibility* as case studies to explore how illustrations interpreted Austen’s texts and influenced readers’ experiences. These editions were priced at 6d and 5s respectively, aimed at opposite ends of the market, with illustrations that guided readers in very different ways: John Dicks’s mass-market edition with Harry Evans’s illustrations suggested a sensational and moralistic story, and contained none of the humour and irony that Macmillan’s more upmarket edition, illustrated by Hugh Thomson, focused on. While our twenty-first-century readings chime much more with Thomson’s rendering, it was Evans’s that was the mass-market edition and so shaped thousands of late nineteenth-century readers’ encounters with Austen’s novel.

Benis, Toby R. Saint Louis University. ‘Natural History and the Global Jane Austen’

William Smith’s 1815 *Map of the Strata of England, Wales and southern Scotland* reimagined the nation. Published only months after Napoleon’s final defeat at Waterloo, Smith’s map offered a view of Britain distinguished not by its towns, rivers, or great estates, but by the layers of rock beneath the surface. Smith’s organizational timescale was not that of the empire or the Bible, but the “deep time” of Earth’s transformations.

This presentation explores Austen’s *Persuasion* (1817) in the context of geological discoveries by pioneers like William Smith and Mary Anning. Anning was a Lyme Regis fossil collector and dealer. The coastal town of Lyme was the epicenter of early fossilological discoveries as

well as the backdrop for a pivotal interlude in *Persuasion*. Bath, *Persuasion*'s concluding location, likewise was an important setting for geological inquiry and early mapping efforts.

In her final completed novel, Austen details the visible evidence of geological upheaval along the southwest's coastal cliffs. This backdrop puts into perspective the perils of young women, dependent on marriage for future stability but also under great pressure not to "throw themselves away" by marrying disadvantageously. The physical nomadism visited upon the aristocratic heroine, Anne Elliot, suggests an analogy between Lyme's falling rocks and the unstable footing of unmarried genteel women. This geologic backdrop also ironizes the naval officers' views of themselves as masters of the globe.

Birrento, Ana Clara. University of Évora. 'The Modern Adaptation and Global Reach of *Pride and Prejudice* through *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*'

The paper explores the modern adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* through the innovative web series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, examining its impact on global audiences and its contribution to Austen's enduring legacy. *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, created by Bernie Su and Hank Green, reimagines Austen's classic novel in a contemporary setting, utilizing the format of video blogs (vlogs) to engage a digital audience. This adaptation not only modernizes the characters and themes but also leverages social media platforms to enhance viewer interaction and participation.

The study analyzes how *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* maintains the core elements of Austen's narrative—such as social critique, romantic tension, and character development—while adapting to the cultural and technological context of the 21st century. By bridging the gap between traditional literature and new media, the series demonstrates the versatility and relevance of Austen's work in contemporary society.

Furthermore, the paper explores the global reception of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, highlighting its success in reaching diverse audiences across different cultural backgrounds. The adaptation's innovative use of transmedia storytelling, including supplementary content on social media platforms like Twitter and Tumblr, allows for a more immersive and interactive experience. This approach not only broadens the accessibility of Austen's narrative but also fosters a sense of community among viewers, who engage with the story and its characters in real-time.

The paper also considers the academic implications of *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, discussing its potential as a tool for teaching Austen's work in a modern context. The series serves as an example of how digital adaptations can revitalize classic literature, making it more appealing and relevant to younger generations.

In conclusion, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* exemplifies the enduring appeal of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and its ability to transcend cultural and temporal boundaries. By embracing modern technology and media, this adaptation reaffirms Austen's place in the global literary canon and highlights the continued relevance of her insights into human nature and social dynamics.

Blackwell, Anna (University of Nottingham), **Dr. Lucy Hobbs** (De Montfort University) and **Prof. Justin Smith** (De Montfort University. Panel: 'Adapting Jane Austen for Educational and Public Engagement')

This panel offers an overview of a 12-month AHRC follow-on funding project that produced educational resources for the Educational Recording Agency and Jane Austen's House at Chawton, applying digital tools to television adaptations in order to improve access to Austen's novels for new audiences.

The project drew on the screenplays of Andrew Davies, the archive of producer Sue Birtwistle and related materials held in De Montfort University's Special Collections department. These archives contain multiple digitised versions of Andrew Davies scripts, Birtwistle's production notes, correspondence and a range of publicity and press materials. From these rich sources, the project produced digital educational resources for publication on ERA's website (<https://era.org.uk/literary-archive/>) for *Pride and Prejudice*, and for installation at Jane Austen's House, Chawton and on their website, focusing on *Northanger Abbey*.

For ERA the teaching materials comprise a downloadable study pack and an online digital tool which links encoded extracts from the available scripts of two award-winning adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* (Davies's 1995 BBC TV series and Joe Wright's 2005 film version adapted by Deborah Moggach) alongside comparative key scenes from Austen's novel (a GCSE set-text), demonstrating ways in which digital intertextuality facilitates engagement with the source. These scenes are illustrated with clips from both screen versions supplied by ERA from its licenced BBC Literary Archive.

For Jane Austen's House the project prepared a multi-media exhibition ('Austenmania') in Summer 2025 (celebrating Austen's 250th anniversary), featuring digitised extracts from selected novels, comparative scenes from the scripts, production memorabilia and interviews with screenwriter Andrew Davies and television producer Sue Birtwistle. Dedicated A-level support materials for *Northanger Abbey* (2007), a popular AQA recommended coursework text, include a key scene breakdown of Andrew Davies's adaptation process benefitting from four extant screenplay drafts and illustrative film clips.

We worked with the English Association to arrange two focus groups in Spring 2025, and through teacher CPD opportunities via the ERA, to trial the educational materials with teachers, examiners and other stakeholders, and have incorporated feedback capture into their design to assess their effectiveness in use from September this year.

Digital Humanities methodologies provide valuable techniques for cultural preservation and transformation enabling greater access and enhanced experiences for visitors to heritage sites, and innovative ways of engaging pupils in schools with classic literary texts through screen adaptations.

Paper 1 – Anna Blackwell's paper sets out our approach to the texts and the adaptations, negotiations with key stakeholders, and the decision-making processes behind selecting key scenes for pedagogical purposes. This will include a discussion of the differing agreements our project partners have with the BBC over using copyrighted material. Lastly, Anna will reflect on the way that these scenes allow one to explore the adaptive process, by focusing on the interplay between Davies' screenplay, production notes and other significant on-screen elements including performance, soundtrack, editing, location, costuming, choreography and props.

Paper 2 – Lucy Hobbs demonstrates how the design of the digital tools has been tailored to meet the different needs of the project partners' end-users: students heading into their study of literary texts at GCSE and visitors to a creative heritage venue dedicated to a single author. In terms of the content produced for the ERA, Lucy will discuss the extra dimension given to literary study by introducing selected scenes from adaptations and how the creation of the educational resources around these can engage and enhance students' visual literacy.

Paper 3 – 'Road-testing and the feedback loop'

Justin Smith's paper outlines the road-testing of the resources involving the project partners, teachers and the English Association. Designing materials that incorporate iterative feedback

has been key to this enterprise and impact-gathering is hard-wired into the process. Finally, this presentation makes some observations about recent work by Kamilla Elliott (<https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apad012>) and by Eckart Voigts (<https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apaa013>). Reflection is offered on the contribution of this project's work to literature pedagogy in the digital era and on opportunities for developing these applications more widely in the age of AI.

Bray, Joe. University of Sheffield. 'Transparencies in the East Room'

Among the objects in the East Room dear to Fanny Price are 'three transparencies, made in a rage for transparencies, for the three lower panes of one window, where Tintern Abbey held its station between a cave in Italy, and a moonlight lake in Cumberland'. In this paper I will examine the short-lived rage for printed transparencies at the turn of the nineteenth century, and explore the significance of this art form, and these three scenes in particular, for Fanny's experience at Mansfield Park.

Brideoake, Fiona. American University. 'Everywhere Englishness in Autumn de Wilde's 2020 *Emma*.'

From its opening scene, Autumn de Wilde's 2020 film adaptation of Austen's *Emma* underscores its status as a period drama anchored in both a highly stylized Englishness and a globalized digital aesthetic. Viewers are immersed in a rural soundscape as Emma and her retinue glide across the grounds at dawn, a manservant guiding them to the conservatory by lantern. De Wilde's *Emma* is as cultivated a hot-house flower as the blooms she selects for Miss Weston, her horticultural endeavours more suggestive of contemporary crazes for imported exotic flowers than for English shrubberies.

In my proposed paper, I will argue that de Wilde's adaptation thematizes Austen's contemporary status as both an icon of Englishness and a globalized, hypercanonical commodity. De Wilde foregrounds this tension in the film's opening text, which stamps a period after its title in a gesture recalling the stylization of Baz Luhrmann's 1996 *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*. Austen's novel is similarly foregrounded and transformed in an adaptation that exports hyperbolic English historicity to a global audience. Highbury is marked by tropes of rural authenticity, from seasonal title cards to its country ballads and the early-modern inflections of its dancing scores. Hartfield's interior is instead a pastel confection as visually laden as its tables of pastries and imported fruits, evoking both the eighteenth-century proliferation of consumer goods and the stylized aesthetic of the music videos for which Wilde is known. Emma's rigid ringlets and high ruffled collars ostensibly insist upon temporal and aesthetic alterity, even as the red cloaks of Miss Goddard's pupils recall the dystopian futurity of Margaret Atwood's *Handmaidens*. Anya Taylor-Joy's preternatural beauty embodies this glossy fusion of past and present, as does Mia Goth's wide-eyed Harriet, whose off-kilter beauty more recalls the contemporary catwalk than the conventional period drama. Cast members further carry with them intertextual echoes of globalized 'Englishness, from Bill Nighy's Mr. Woodhouse; Miranda Hart's Miss Bates – as awkward and well-meaning as the aristocratic Chummy in *Call the Midwife* – to Josh O'Conner's Mr. Elton, with his echoes of *The Crown*'s pompously beleaguered Prince Charles. De Wilde's *Emma* thus emblemizes Austen's status as an icon of commoditized and highly mobile "Englishness," in which the putatively local and winsomely global comeingle as do the stylized objects of Emma's social domain.

Brodey, Inger. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ‘Jane Austen’s (Vicarious) Travels’

Austen was not as sheltered as many scholars and biographers have claimed. While she herself never left England, she travelled all the way to North America, China, and both the West and East Indies, when one considers Austen’s vicarious traveling through her correspondents (such as Eliza de Feuillide Austen, the naval brothers, and Fanny Palmer Austen) as well as in her reading. I will use the features on the new Jane Austen’s Desk site (beta.janeaustensdesk.org) to show how broadly she travelled (in this vicarious way). These events and associated ideas helped shape her three mature novels. I argue that in these last novels, Austen develops a new model of travel available to women as well as men.

Buck, Pamela. Sacred Heart University. ‘Fashion and Transnational Identity in Soniah Kamal’s *Unmarriageable: Pride and Prejudice in Pakistan*’

In *Fashion and Orientalism*, Adam Geczy contends that fashion is the best marker for understanding how national identity is shaped and transformed. I argue that Soniah Kamal’s novel *Unmarriageable*, a postcolonial adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* set in contemporary Pakistan, uses fashion to define the country as a transnational entity. Kamal satirizes society’s reliance on Western fashion to bolster social status. At an elite wedding, Alysba Binat observes, the couple expresses love through a shared interest in French luxury goods. While fashion signals upward mobility, it perpetuates class discrimination, and the Bingla sisters assess Jena Binat’s worth as their brother’s partner through her clothing. The preoccupation with fashion reduces women to commodities, and Mrs. Binat advises her daughters to seek proposals as they would designer shoes. In contrast, Kamal poses a transnational identity through Alysba, whose American blue jeans and Indian sandals represent her blending of local and global perspectives. At Darsee’s home, named Buckingham Palace, she is impressed by his paintings of dervish costumes. This Eastern fashion symbolically redefines a national British space as a global one that emphasizes connection. Mrs. Binat, who starts a clothing line, creates South Asian designs for an international community. Her House of Binat label aligns her with high-end fashion houses abroad but also suggests that she brings fashion home to Pakistan. Through her use of transnational fashion, Kamal reimagines colonial notions of national identity as networks of circulation and exchange and redefines Pakistan as an emerging global nation.

Butler, Cheryl. University of Winchester. ‘Glocalism & Jane Austen’

One of the interpretations of glocalism relates to “individuals, households and organisations maintaining interpersonal social networks that combine extensive local and long-distance interaction”. It is perhaps obvious to point to Jane Austen’s links to the wider world via the international careers of her sailor brothers but closer to home the women Austen was acquainted with also brought her in contact with other countries and cultures, international trade and the impact of growing imperialism. This paper will look at three women who were part of Austen’s Southampton social network: Ann Newell next door neighbour but also an absentee landowner of plantations and the owner of slaves; Mary Lance who Austen observed – very perceptively – thought more of her piano forte than her children and liked to be rich, was a woman born in Constantinople and buried in Paris; and Anne Middleton the mixed-race plantation heiress born in Jamaica, married in India, who had her private life splashed across national newspapers. Woman who could easily find themselves portrayed among the characters found within the pages of *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and ‘Sanditon’ (and in one case probably the

inspiration for Andrew Davies's television re-imagining of the latter). This paper will examine how Austen experienced the globalized world on the pavements of Southampton.

Butler, Emma, and Andrew McInnes. Edgehill. 'Sex, Sand, and Sea Monsters: A Ridiculous Austen Roundtable Conversation'

This roundtable conversation explores recent Austen adaptations which sexualise the seaside. Brief presentations on Andrew Davies' *Sanditon* (from Emma Butler), and the Netflix *Persuasion* (from Andrew McInnes) will open up a discussion on representations of the sea and seaside; queer, camp, and heteronormative sexualities; health, economics, and class; and monstrosity. Emma and Andy will connect these adaptations to Austen's original texts through a shared interest in ridiculousness, theorised as a combination of silliness, lowness, and vulnerability.

Emma will explore the satirical invalid figure within Austen's *Sanditon* and the representation of the seaside as a healthy environment. She will also focus on how the seaside resort is portrayed in Andrew Davies' adaptation, how the invalid trope is adapted, and how Davies makes sea-bathing sexy.

Andy will focus on the addition of Anne Elliot's octopus dream in the Netflix *Persuasion* adaptation and how it aims to uncover Austen's original interest in Anne's feelings of suffocation, her sexual awakening, and the role of the sea in the novel.

Disclaimer: Although our title suggests otherwise, we do not aim to discuss the Austen-horror mash-up *Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters*, though we are open to this text becoming part of our wider discussion in Q&A.

Capatani, Maria-Elena. University of Parma. 'Jane Austen (Sort of...): Subversive Retellings in Twenty-First-Century British Drama and Theatre'

Since the 1980s, the British stage has seen a persistent return to the nation's literary and cultural heritage as a means of exploring present-day issues. On this basis, this paper explores a hitherto neglected area within this broader field – that of the remediation of literary works, figures, and themes from the Romantic age. More specifically, it focuses on one of the most iconic female writers in literary history, Jane Austen, whose narratives still haunt the cultural imagination, both nationally and globally.

Isobel McArthur's all-female (and feminist) rendition *Pride and Prejudice* (*sort of)* (2018) is an irreverent retelling which juxtaposes Austen's novel with pop anthems, karaoke, and innuendos, while re-imagining the preoccupations of the original characters by exploring questions such as gender struggles, sexism, and status from a new angle. In the same vein, Wade's playful *The Watsons* (2018) features 'all things Austen', as well as metatheatrical games, philosophical conundrums, present-day songs and references. Like its source, Wade's appropriation is unfinished, but her contemporary heroine is not a passive figure left suspended by the author, rather a powerful creator of her own destiny. If Wade briefly hints at a lesbian affair, Zoe Cooper goes further in her openly queer take on *Northanger Abbey* (2024), which celebrates the same-sex relationship between Cath (Catherine Morland) and Iz (Isabella Thorpe). Through metatheatrical strategies, Cooper's characters retell and re-enact their story and frequently swap roles, prompting hilarious contradictions.

McArthur, Wade, and Cooper remix and remediate Austen by unleashing her hypotexts and creating subversive concoctions of Romanticism and contemporaneity. At the same time, they re-negotiate women's position in the world as writers, characters, and readers, while providing the audience with elaborate theatrical meta-scapes and throwing light on the intersections between queerness and appropriation.

Clery, Emma. Uppsala University. '*Sense and Sensibility*, Southampton, and the East India Company Connection'

Jane Austen's breakthrough into public authorship with *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811 came shortly after her time in Southampton, from 1806 to 1809. There she had mixed in the large community of former and current East India Company employees in the port city, while living in the household of her brother Frank, and Royal Navy officer. She, her widowed mother and her sister Cassandra provided company and support for Frank's wife while he undertook long voyages protecting convoys for the East India Company.

Every aspect of Jane Austen's conjuncture with the British Empire has come under scrutiny in recent years, and yet I would argue that the depth and significance of the Austen family's India connection is still underestimated. This paper will trace the way in which her literary apprenticeship in the 1790s coincided with the impeachment and eight-year trial of Warren Hastings, the EIC's Governor General in Bengal, which took on the dimensions of a moral examination of British sovereignty in India. Hastings was closely linked with the Austens, not only through his friendship with Jane's aunt and uncle Hancock, and his dealings with Reverend George Austen regarding his own son's education and financial gifts as godfather to Jane's cousin Eliza, but also through his interventions to promote the careers of Jane's brothers, most notably Frank whose career as a naval officer was launched with Hasting's aid. The Hastings trial, perhaps to an even greater extent than the concurrent abolitionist campaign, presented Austen with an inquest into the rights and wrongs of empire, with close familial implications.

Traces of that experience and these connections can be found in Austen's early manuscript writings. The paper will trace allusions to India in 'Jack and Alice, a novel' (1790), 'Catharine; or, The Bower' (1792) as well as in *Sense and Sensibility*, first written in the 1790s and published in a revised version some 15 years later. It will argue that the characteristically subtle indirection of her references to empire, manifested in her first published work, was a strategy forged in response to its personal nearness.

Codecà, Chiara. 'Translations, Identities and Literature: Reading Jane Austen in Italy (Though Not Necessarily in Italian)'

By September 2024 a quick search online gives us fourteen different Italian editions of *Pride and Prejudice*, all available, each translated by a different translator for a different Italian publisher. This plethora of inevitably slightly different versions of the same text doesn't surprise an Italian reader: traditionally, Jane Austen's works in Italy have always been filtered by translation. But how does that fact influence Austen's reception and success? And what is the impact of the ever-growing number of young Italian readers who avoid translations entirely, discovering Jane Austen in the original language?

My research investigates the relationship between language and identity, both within the Italian fandom of Jane Austen and outside of it; said complex relationship contributes to the shaping of new transcultural practices characterized by adaptability, socio-economic factors and cultural constructs. I examine the reasons why a percentage of Italian readers choose to read Jane Austen both in English and in Italian, and how that connects to fan practices and to the way adaptations in any media of Jane Austen's works are received in Italy. Therefore, in this paper I explore the multifaceted dialogue among linguistic, literary, and fan studies within the frame of Austen's reception in Italy today, considering that translations influence the creation of shared narratives and memories, and that today's multi-faceted scenario includes unofficial fan translation, dubbing and subtitling.

Comerford, Jennifer. Northwestern University. 'Mr. Bingley and the Sugar Trade'

It is a matter of common knowledge that Austen references slavery in *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*. Yet because the Bingleys in *Pride and Prejudice* come from northern England, critics have often speculated that their money comes from cotton factories. This paper argues that Jane Austen links the Bingleys' wealth to slavery in ways her contemporary readers would have discerned. In *Longbourn* (2013), an adaptation from the perspective of a servant in the Bennet household, Jo Baker explicitly attributes the Bingleys' wealth to slavery and sugar. While this attribution may seem like an extrapolation (however historically appropriate), I argue that Baker's novel reattunes our attention when we return to Austen's text. Evidence abounds. Located decidedly in the north, Liverpool was the most significant port in England for the slave trade in the second half of the eighteenth century; prone to indolence, the Hursts evoke tropes of the "lazy creole"; Bingley's careless writing habits caricature the "freedom" eighteenth-century penmanship manuals promoted for expediting trade; and, most strikingly, associations between Bingley and "sweetness" proliferate. Through contemporary discourses on sugar boycotts and penmanship, this paper draws together the implications linking the Bingleys to slavery and sugar. Beyond highlighting this connection, this paper advances a broader argument about how adaptations like *Longbourn* help us critically reengage with Austen's novels. 250 years after Austen's birth, this paper considers how we, as readers perhaps too familiar with her work, can refresh our critical approach to notice aspects of the text that were there all along.

Constandache, Ioana. 'From Gothic to Grace: Jane Austen's Neo-Augustan Defiance of Romantic Ideals'

The paper investigates the subtle yet profound distinction between Jane Austen's works and the broader Romantic movement in English literature during the early 19th century. While Austen's novels, particularly *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma*, were published contemporaneously with the towering poetic works of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley, they distinctly diverged from the sensational and often formulaic Gothic fiction popularized by Minerva Press. Austen's narratives eschew the dark, dramatic excesses of Gothic romance in favor of meticulously crafted, morally grounded depictions of everyday life and human relationships. This analysis explores how Austen's adherence to Augustan values, characterized by rationality, emotional restraint, and social critique, positions her as a bridge between Enlightenment ideals and early 19th-century concerns, particularly regarding the corrupting influence of wealth and societal expectations.

The paper further highlights the innovative simplicity of Austen's plots, which focus on the inner moral dilemmas of her characters, devoid of supernatural interventions or contrived suspense. It suggests that Austen's subtle critique of societal norms, especially through

characters like Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, reflects her nuanced engagement with contemporary social issues, including inheritance laws, the institution of marriage, and the moral hazards of financial dependence. This portrayal positions Austen as a distinct voice of moderation and introspection amid the emotional tumult of Romanticism, offering a "neo-Augustan" literary approach that foregrounds the everyday over the epic, and reason over passion.

Cossy, Valérie. Université de Lausanne. 'Humanity, Gender, and the Novel on Both Sides of the Channel'

More than 35 years ago, Claudia Johnson's *Jane Austen, Women, Politics, and the Novel* made it possible for 20th-century readers to recover what had become gradually invisible: Austen's involvement as a creative writer in the heated debates and controversies of her time. The novelist and her original readers had in common "a lexicon of politically sensitive terms, themes, and narrative patterns", which Johnson made it possible for us to recognize through the six novels. She showed how Austen was uniquely capable of using politically charged material by opening it up to the scrutiny of readers, while maintaining her novels free from narrowly partisan loyalties: "Austen was able not to depoliticize her work [...] but rather to depolemize it." Following in Claudia Johnson's footsteps, which have been particularly influential for my generation, I would like to suggest yet another issue treated by Austen in a similarly independent but progressive way.

One must consider Austen's self-consistent emphasis on the common humanity of men and women through her main characters as singular or, even, as a feature of her novels likely to make them stand out in her own time. Between the end of the 18th century and the time when they appeared in print, Austen was writing against a backdrop of increasingly problematic cultural ideology regarding the representation of gender. Casts of characters were usually divided by binary gender stereotypes, such as those extolled by Mrs Elton but deemed unbearable by Emma. Few went as far as Austen in questioning the pseudo self-evidence of a fundamental gender gap between men and women. Few so unremittingly exposed as absurd an alleged gender difference of the human mind.

Virginia Woolf used to say of Mary Wollstonecraft's books that we risk overlooking how daring they were because "their originality has become our commonplace". The same can probably be said of Austen's. Representing men and women on perfectly equal terms as human beings or "rational creatures" (to use a phrase cherished by both) has become our commonplace. Such equal men and women – commonly defined by humanity, by their use of the human understanding, by a common susceptibility to feeling, and by a common capacity for articulating a moral judgment of one's own – needed to be invented by 1800. Without being generally identified as "radical" in the same way as Wollstonecraft, Austen's take on gender must however be regarded as such. The concept of "humanity" structures the invention of her characters in a way comparable to how it had fixed the philosophical horizon of Wollstonecraft when articulating the "Rights of Woman".

The conservative resistance of the time against the representation of humanity as commonly shared by women and men is particularly visible when considering the way Austen's novels were treated on the continent in the very successful adaptations of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion* by Isabelle de Montolieu (1815; 1821) or in the well distributed digests of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* by the *Bibliothèque britannique* (1813; 1815). These texts in French constitute early records of how Austen might have been read and of how Austen might have caused trouble in her own time. While Elinor Dashwood, for instance, typically appeals to non-gender specific categories when vindicating herself in front of her sister – "My

doctrine has never aimed at the subjection of the understanding”⁴ – Montolieu framed her adaptation of the novel – *Raison et Sensibilité ou les deux manières d’aimer* – in a recognizably “feminine” subgenre, making it clear in a preface of her own that the novel is mainly about sentiment and that “there are hiding places in a woman’s heart that only a woman [author] can know of”. Or, equally reinforcing gender difference and gender assignments when making use of Austen material, the editors of the *Bibliothèque britannique* transform Elizabeth Bennet into a meeker and much more polite and embarrassed “heroine” – with even downcast eyes (“*les yeux baissés*”) – when facing Mr. Collins’ proposal, himself turned into a respectable suitor...

We do not know of any reaction by Austen to these “translations” of her work. A woman whose views on humanity and gender are comparable to hers, however, is Isabelle de Charrière (1740-1805). As a writer and speaker of French, she read the *Bibliothèque britannique* and occasionally corresponded with its editors, and she also commented on Isabelle de Montolieu, whom she knew personally when her incredibly successful publishing career began. Even if Charrière died before she could have read a single line by Austen, her letters are helpful to understand what was ideologically at stakes in the modifications brought to Austen’s characters in the translated texts.

My presentations is going to focus on some extracts from these early adaptations in French of Austen’s novel. These texts, together with Isabelle de Charrière’s writings, can make us understand how Austen’s novels simultaneously adopted and undermined the “sensitive terms, themes, and narrative patterns” which used to regulate the representation of gender. Reading Austen’s novels in the light of their contemporary adaptations in French gives the measure of her philosophical stance on the humanity of women.

Coulombeau, Sophie. University of York. ““The Book of Books”: The *Baronetage* Revisited”

This paper poses a theory about the creative genesis of Sir Walter Elliott’s *Baronetage*, the figurative device which looms so large in the first and last chapters of Austen’s *Persuasion* (1817). In the service of a brilliant argument about *Persuasion*’s cross-fertilisation of aristocratic and naval charactonyms, Janine Barchas has suggested that in describing Sir Walter’s “book of books” Austen was “probabl[y]...gesturing towards” a specific edition of Debrett’s *Baronetage* published in 1808 and republished in 1815.¹ My paper considers a different possible provenance. Exploiting the capabilities of the Reading With Austen project and the resources of Chawton House Library, and building on the curatorial acuity of Gillian Dow and Katie Halsey,² I argue that a more likely candidate to have inspired Austen is the two-volume edition of the New *Baronetage* of England, printed for William Miller and Edmund Lloyd in June 1804. A set of this edition was kept in the library at Godmersham Park, which Austen used intensively for two months during late 1813;³ moreover, selected entries are annotated by hand in precisely the fashion that Austen attributes to Sir Walter. In my monograph-in-progress, *The Point of the Name: Onomastics, Identity and the Novel, 1759-1817*, I position such creative engagements with the *Baronetage* - the annotator’s, Jane Austen’s and Sir Walter’s - within a broader eighteenth-century culture of dialogue and exchange between onomastic philosophy, information management, and the novel. In this paper, I want to simply introduce the annotated Godmersham Park *Baronetage*, present my theory about the identity of its annotator, ask how it might alter the picture we currently have of *Persuasion*’s composition, and consider its biographical and literary implications.

Cousin, Juliette. ‘Jane Austen Rebooted: Memes, Merch, and Fanfiction – Adoration or Abomination?’

This presentation explores how memes, fanfiction, and commercialization refresh and shape the reception of her works. Austen-related memes adapt her novels to modern sensibilities, providing humorous reinterpretations that critique social norms and power dynamics. I will analyze examples of memes that parody romantic expectations and social hierarchies, exploring their influence on how new generations engage with Austen. Alongside this, “Austenmania” —the commercialization of her image through themed merchandise, fashion, and immersive experiences—alters perceptions of her work and fuels a thriving economy surrounding the author.

I will also examine Austen-inspired fanfiction on platforms like AO3 and Wattpad, where writers reimagine her universe with modern plots, diverse characters, and contemporary social issues. Drawing on Linda Hutcheon’s theory of adaptation, I will discuss how these creative reinterpretations extend Austen’s legacy while challenging traditional readings of her texts. By analyzing memes, merchandise, and fanfiction, this presentation aims to show how Austen’s work evolves with contemporary values, prompting reflection on whether these adaptations represent faithful homage or creative betrayal, and how they reshape our understanding of her classic novels in today’s context.

Cronin, Richard. University of Glasgow. ‘Jane Austen and Re-Reading’

Jane Austen, like many other novelists, is very widely read. It is more unusual that so many of Austen’s readers read her novels over and over again. I will discuss what it is that makes Austen’s novels so re-readable.

Curran, Louise. University of Birmingham. ‘Notions and Facts: The Letters of Hester Lynch Piozzi and Jane Austen’

This paper examines the ‘flight & fancy & nonsense’ of Hester Lynch Piozzi’s epistolary style and explores its influence on Jane Austen’s letters. Austen quotes this phrase, taken from Piozzi’s 1788 edition of Samuel Johnson’s letters (part of her brother’s library at Godmersham), in a letter of 1808, and at one point in 1799 desires to write the whole of one letter ‘in [Piozzi’s] stile’. A central concern of this paper is the distinction Austen makes between letters as vehicles for news and modes of formal, often mock-epistolic, experimentation, an aspect of letter-writing that also preoccupies both Piozzi and Johnson. ‘I flatter myself I have constructed you a Smartish Letter, considering my want of Materials’, Austen writes to her sister in 1807, ‘But like my dear D^r Johnson I beleive I have dealt more in Notions than Facts.—’ The correspondence of both writers plays around with ‘notions’ and ‘facts’ whilst registering a deep ambivalence about distinguishing too readily between the two. William McCarthy has described Piozzi as an ‘innovator’ in her ‘promotion of the personal letter to literary status’. I will end by considering the import of this statement in the light of these connections.

Daniell, Alison. University of Southampton. ‘Jane Austen and Coverture’

Jane Austen’s novels famously focus on marriage, including its economic and social minutiae. Whilst much Austen criticism in this area has concentrated on the interplay of economics, social status and love, there has been no specific consideration of how Austen addressed coverture within her work. Coverture was a doctrine of English common law that existed from the Middle Ages until the nineteenth century and, essentially, removed a wife’s legal and economic personality. It was an inevitable and inextricable result of matrimony: all women

became *covert* upon marriage and remained so unless they were widowed or divorced. Consequently, any novel discussing marriage is also addressing coverture.

Using *Pride and Prejudice* as its core text, this paper argues that Austen – like Burney and Wollstonecraft before her – sought to challenge the gendered power structure inherent in the doctrine. This was done by disrupting two key elements of coverture: firstly, that wives must disappear as separate entities from their husbands upon marriage and, secondly, that it represented a fair exchange of economic rights and burdens. In the Austenian model, the true value a wife brought to her marriage was not her marriage portion (which disappeared into her husband's control) but was located instead in her continued existence as an agentic, unique individual within the spousal partnership. Further, this recalibration by Austen of the value afforded to wives is one reason why retellings of the novels remain relevant to women today, an age when economic parity between the sexes has yet to be achieved.

Dashwood, Rita. Ghent University. 'A Real-Life Anne De Bourgh? Christian Dalrymple of Newhailes and the Wealthy Heiress in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*'

At the end of 1791, Christian Dalrymple (1765-1839) was surprised to find herself the new owner of Newhailes, her father's estate, instead of seeing it revert to a male cousin, as she had expected. An enthusiastic diarist, she left behind daily entries that detail her experience of managing Newhailes over the course of the forty-seven years in which she was its owner. Her diaries reveal a complex woman who in some ways appeared to follow prevalent stereotypes attributed to wealthy single women towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and who in many others actively counteracted them. Following her discharge of the role of property owner throughout almost five decades through the analysis of her journals reveals interesting similarities between the themes that characterised her own experiences and those that preoccupied contemporary female authors of realist novels, including Jane Austen, particularly in her most popular novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813). In becoming heiress to Newhailes, Christian inherited a library that was described as the most important contemporary collection to survive from the period of the Scottish Enlightenment, and one of the books she records reading in her diaries is precisely *Pride and Prejudice*. However, if Christian was hoping to find in the portrayal of Anne de Bourgh, a fellow wealthy, single heiress, the qualities she was attempting to embody in her own property management, she would be disappointed. Yet, as this paper will argue, Austen was interested in many of the same themes that characterised Christian's life as a property owner, namely the tensions between conservation and the renewal and reinvigoration of improvement, as well as similar strains between tradition and regeneration in the property owner's relationships to her own family, the people working and living in the estate, and her prospective heir. Centring these tensions in Austen's novel alongside my case study will allow me to shed light on Austen's apprehensions around morality and women's ownership of property.

Del Balzo, Angelina. Utah Valley University. "'Scheherazade's Head' and the Ottoman World of *Persuasion*'

In *Persuasion*, Jane Austen suspends the revelation of Mr. Elliot's dastardly past behavior by Mrs. Smith. Postponing the twist, Austen's narrator says, "Mr. Elliot's character, like the Sultanness Scheherazade's head, must live another day." Unlike Scheherazade, however, Mr. Elliot's borrowed time is almost up. The wronged Mrs. Smith may make an unlikely despotic Sultan, but the gender dynamics in the novel are not unlike the Ottoman sultanate suggested by this reference to the *Arabian Night's Entertainments*. Bath society evokes the world of the

Ottomans, whose own hamams were already a cliché of travel writers. Captain Wentworth is surrounded by his harem of women, including his *gözde* Louisa Musgrove, and Lady Russell commands power in Sir Walter's household like any Valide Sultan. Captain Benwick and Anne bond over *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos*, both inspired by Lord Byron's travels in Turkey. This paper will read *Persuasion* in both the historical context of English interactions with the Ottomans during the Napoleonic Wars as well as a novel structured by the conventions of the Oriental tale and travel narrative. In doing so, I re-orient analysis of Austen's global engagement toward the Middle East, illuminating the novel's interrogation of gender and power.

Dempsey, Danielle. Villanova University. 'Sense, Sensibility, and Subversion: *Intermezzo* by Sally Rooney as a Gender-Swapped Austen Adaptation'

Reviews of Irish author Sally Rooney's four bestselling novels are rife with comparisons to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novelists, most frequently Jane Austen. Both authors write about domestic spaces, social pressures, and interpersonal and romantic relationships, but where Austen engages with Wollstonecraft's contemporaneous ideas about womanhood, Rooney's subject is post-recessionary Irish masculinity. By focusing on embodied readings of *Sense and Sensibility*, especially Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl," Rooney's *Intermezzo* (2024) reads as a modern adaptation featuring two brothers striking their own balance between sense and sensibility, or normality and feeling, as Rooney might put it. Of particular importance is Sedgwick's subversive argument that Elinor's "unitary self-containment of the strong, silent type, can never be stable" (832). Elinor pathologizes her sister's excess sensibility, and in doing so, fails to recognize her own limitations – namely, the propriety that she addictively uses as a shield against her emotions, which are bound to explode, as repressed emotions eventually must. In Sedgwick's reading, Elinor's repression is a greater danger than Marianne's sensibility. Elinor's addiction provides a framework for reading Peter Koubek, the older brother in *Intermezzo*.

Dooley, Gillian. Flinders University. 'Jane Austen's Global Music'

The Austen Family collection of sheet music contains a mixture of printed publications and manuscript copies in various hands, mainly in bound volumes. It includes over 500 separate pieces of music, about one-third of which are in Jane Austen's handwriting. 18 albums of this music were digitised by the University of Southampton in 2015 and can now be viewed on Internet Archive, while some newly discovered albums have become available in different collections since that time.

Among Jane Austen's own music there are many songs and instrumental pieces that originated outside England, from Western Europe – France, Italy, and Germany – as well as Scotland and Ireland. Other pieces describe or reflect on events and situations in places as distant as Serbia, India, and America. Many songs imagine in various ways the lives of sailors serving abroad, and of their partners and families waiting for their return. Taken together, this miscellany of music provides a snapshot of not only musical culture of the time, but also the global reach of British ambitions and enterprises during Austen's lifetime.

In this paper I will discuss a sample of these diverse musical sources to situate Austen among musical amateurs of her time, especially within her family, as a consumer and a performer; to gauge how this music reflects her opinions and knowledge of the world beyond England; and more generally to see how English music culture was influenced by historical events and musical fashions from overseas.

Duke, Emma Marie. University of Texas, Austin. ‘Jane Austen’s Byron: Copying the Gothic’

My paper will reconsider Austen and Byron’s literary relationship through a discussion of copying and manuscript culture. I will focus on Austen’s manuscript copy of Byron’s poem “Napoleon’s Farewell.” This poem, its early manuscripts and printings, and the connections it draws to Austen’s and Byron’s other works, all combine to reveal a shared interest in manuscript culture and its tensions not only between the public and the private, but between the existent and the imaginary.

The University of Southampton houses two important examples of Austen copies: the Austen family music books, and Austen’s manuscript copy of “Napoleon’s Farewell.” Copying, of course, needn’t be pejorative. As Christine Kenyon Jones argues in her recent *Jane Austen and Lord Byron: Regency Relations*, Austen makes Byron’s poem new in many ways. My paper pays close attention to early iterations of “Napoleon’s Farewell” in both manuscript and print. What does it mean for Jane Austen to have copied Byron’s poem in her own hand, and how might the copied manuscript poem fit into her larger corpus? I read Austen’s manuscript as both a verbal and a visual innovation, in context with visual copies like Cassandra Austen’s pictures. Through copying, “Napoleon’s Farewell” becomes Austen’s poem, just as much as Byron’s.

“Napoleon’s Farewell” represents a nexus between Austen’s and Byron’s work. When connected with other works like Byron’s *The Giaour* and Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, it reveals surprisingly similar interests in manuscript culture and fictionalized documents. Both Austen and Byron ask their readers to imagine hand-written documents that do not exist. These gothic, ghostly manuscripts haunt the pages of their works. By bringing Austen’s and Byron’s real, hand-written manuscripts into conversation with their imagined manuscripts, my paper will explore their shared artistic interest in manuscript culture.

Dunford, Lizzie (Director, Jane Austen’s House), and **Sophie Reynolds** (Head of Interpretations, Collections, and Events, Jane Austen’s House).

Panel: ‘Jane Austen’s Space and Art of Writing’

What might it mean to return Jane Austen’s writings to the domestic spaces in which they originated and grew? What might it mean both for how we understand her writings and the space now designated a writer’s house? How far can we ground the imagined in its materials, making connections between the space in which the writer writes—a room, perhaps? the space upon which she writes—sheets of paper? and the imaginary space her characters inhabit? Might a materialist imagining provide new insights into the immaterial dimensions of both creation and reading? In Austen’s case, we have the written trace and the various spaces of writing—manuscript evidence for how she composed and the spaces where she worked, which include the space of the paper, her writing table, and the very room where some at least of her novels were written.

Our presentations will consider Austen’s space and art of writing from three perspectives: heritage politics and the function of the writer’s house in the twenty-first century; the practicalities of establishing a permanent exhibition of writing within the writer’s house; manuscript as performance space.

Farese, Carlotta. University of Bologna. ““Many Thanks for your Kind Care for my Health”: Illness and Hypochondria in Austen’s Biography and Fiction”

Illness and disability played an important role in Jane Austen’s biography and family life. Moving from the story of her long-forgotten disabled brother George, the ubiquitous references to “maladies” (real or invented) in the letters, and her reluctance to discuss her own health issues, this paper will reflect on the ongoing tension between health and sickness that pervades Jane’s writing and on the ways in which such tension produces, through her novels, a vast array of characters embodying different attitudes towards illness and invalidity. The paper will provide a provisional and tentative inventory of the categories informing Austen’s taxonomy of illness and the ways in which characters relate to it: sometimes illness/invalidity is the punishment for the character’s hybris, sometimes the symptom of a troubled psychological condition, sometimes a form of emotional blackmail or a way used by hypochondriacs to justify their moral weakness, sometimes a challenge characters face with pride and dignity.

Faulkner, Sarah. University of Washington. ‘Festive and Functional: How to Create Your Own Austen 250 Event’

Austen scholars have grappled with the overlap between scholarship and fandom since the 1995 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (and even earlier, as Devoney Looser and Janine Barchas have recently pointed out). As many of us hope to plan further events commemorating her 250th birthday after the Global Jane Austen conference, we may be wondering how to create public-facing events that honor public needs for both scholarship and merriment. We may be wondering: Who attends academically hosted anniversary events? Who reads new editions of her works? Who watches viral TikToks about Mr. Collins? And should all these groups come together?

These are questions I have grappled with over the last ten years, particularly since I planned an Austen bicentenary event in 2017 titled “JaneFest” at the University of Washington’s campus. This event drew over 800 adoring fans—but few traditional scholars. However, a Mary Shelley “FrankenReads” bicentenary event the following year drew mostly scholars—and few adoring fans. There were clear reasons for the chasm beyond the popularity of each female author with the public. At JaneFest, there was dancing, tea, food, a fashion show, trivia, visits to Special Collections to see first editions, and a costumed Regency Ball. At FrankenReads, we had similar festival-style activities—screenings of *Young Frankenstein*, Regency costume display, ‘Draw the Monster’ activities—yet the draw of the event’s academic lightning talks and the overall response from fans was much lower. This solidified that Austen has the potential to connect with adoring audiences—current and prospective—in a way that is markedly different from any other author, particularly through a festival-style approach to her work (and events about her work). How do we wield and utilize this power to bring the greatest appreciation, knowledge, and enjoyment of her works to as many people as possible?

In this paper, I will argue that scholars should continue to lean into the festival-style approach to public-facing events surrounding Austen, while not relinquishing academic rigor. I will speak from my experience planning the festivals above, plus my two years’ experience as a Program Manager at Humanities Washington, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating meaningful public humanities programs across Washington state. I hope to offer my fellow attendees a lively discussion about who belongs at Austen events, as well as a few actionable steps toward creating meaningful Austen 250 events at their own campuses and organizations across the globe in the remaining months of 2025.

Favret, Mary A. Johns Hopkins University. 'Austen's Disappointments'

She was disappointed, and angry with herself for being so. "Could I expect it to be otherwise?" -- *Pride and Prejudice*.

For all the pleasure they have given readers for the past two centuries, the novels Jane Austen wrote are shot through with disappointment. Desire bumps against unyielding circumstance, expectation and actuality fail to align, and the rare moments of satisfaction are undercut by constraint, compromise or inconstancy. From bricks of disappointment Austen builds her world, or rather, worlds: for disappointment allows a simultaneous recognition of the given world and of worlds that might be, as Elizabeth Bennett suspects in the quotation above, "otherwise." For Austen's heroines especially, disappointment suggests the sort of "nonacceptance" and "testing of reality" that Rei Terada identifies in her reading of Hannah Arendt. This paper studies both how profoundly disappointment structures Austen's fiction, and how her shifting treatment of disappointment aligns with a larger culture of disappointment in Regency Britain.

Ford, Susan Allen. Delta State University. 'Reading the Americas with Jane Austen'

While the East Indies fired the imagination of the young Jane Austen, the imagination of the mature writer seems to turn toward the Americas. Where might Jane Austen have formed her ideas about the Americas? Some of what she knew would have come from letters and conversation with her two naval brothers. Her reading—substantial and varied—would have encouraged her genius to roam. What then can we learn from the discourse on transatlantic issues available to her through imaginative and discursive writing—the novels, poetry, travel narratives, and political treatises—that she read (or probably read). Fiction by Charlotte Smith and Mary Brunton, poetry by William Cowper and others, Anne Grant's *Memoirs of an American Lady*, Thomas Clarkson's *The History of . . . the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade*, and more provided images of the natural world, investigations of mores and morals, depictions of class and social change, and polemic having to do with slavery, abolition, and the complicated politics of British imperialism. This presentation will focus in particular on the representation of slavery and arguments about abolition that she encountered.

Friedman, Emily C (Auburn University) and **Emily Kugler** (Howard University). 'Playing Austen: An Interactive Workshop'

We argue that the most exciting and capacious adaptations of Austen and her world are the ones you can play. Since Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield discussed games like the massive online roleplaying game *Ever*, Jane at Chawton over a decade ago, there has been an explosion of both digital and analog games inspired by Austen's works and world. In addition, a new form of storytelling, "Actual Play" performances, uses roleplaying games and their elements of chance to shake up narrative expectations, and explore character and setting in new ways.

We have argued in both major gaming publications as well as scholarly articles that these games and performances allow us new ways to imagine Austen's work. In particular, they grapple with (and sometimes find creative solutions to) what is now known as the "Bridgerton problem": as Patricia Matthew put it, "I don't really know what "right" looks like for Black characters in an England that in 1813 had abolished the slave trade but not slavery."

In this workshop, we (with the help of game critics and actual play performers) introduce a variety of these games, including samples of play. Depending on availability, this may be structured as an hour-long Actual Play performance by experienced player-performers with half-hour talkback and supplemental materials, or a series of walkthroughs of character creation and other notable gameplay features of a variety of games led by Friedman and Kugler.

Fullerton, Susannah. ‘Around the World with Jane Austen’

Over the past 20 years Susannah Fullerton, literary tour leader, has taken hundreds of people to places associated with Jane Austen. And, as President of the Jane Austen Society of Australia (JASA), she has visited Jane Austen societies around the world. Literary travels have taken her from ‘Steventon’ in New Zealand, to an old gaol in Sydney, to the world’s first joint meeting between JASA and the Jane Austen Society of Italy, to meetings of Jane Austen societies in Ireland, Scotland, England and North America, and to sites associated with Austen’s life and novels. Her role as literary tour leader has been enlightening in revealing differing reactions to places on the Austen pilgrimage trail.

This talk will discuss the places visited, with their varied Austen associations, and will examine the concept of literary tourism. What is it that tourists hope to find, or feel, as they walk the Cobb at Lyme, gaze on a tiny writing table at Chawton, or view antipodean buildings enriched by small connections with a favourite author? Why does strolling Bath’s Gravel Walk prove so thrilling to some, while leaving others cold? How should important literary objects be displayed to enhance the tourist’s viewing experience? What has made some objects appear almost sacred (such as that round table at Chawton), while others (such as Austen’s writing slope) fail to generate the same excitement.

Two hundred and fifty years after Jane Austen’s birth, tourism in her name is big business. This talk will examine its power, its future and the satisfaction that it brings.

Furukawa, Hironori. Keio University. ‘Persuasion as an “Inverted Story”’

The narratives of the six major novels authored by Jane Austen are constructed in a very similar manner to those of modern crime fiction, particularly detective fiction. She is skilful in constructing sophisticated narratives which use intricate plots to keep the reader in the dark. In most of Austen’s novels, secrets are revealed by the heroine, who plays the role of “amateur detective”.

On the contrary, in *Persuasion*, the goal of the story is apparent from the beginning. The characteristic narrative is opposite to that of, for instance, *Pride and Prejudice*, where the reader is kept in suspense and continuously confronted with new enigmas. This paper aims to show that there are some aspects in *Persuasion* that can have a similar ground with a specific type of mystery called “inverted” story, such as Francis Iles’ classic *Malice Afterthought* (1931) and Ruth Rendell’s *A Judgment in Stone* (1977).

Persuasion was received by critics with mixed opinions. While Joseph Wiesenfarth states that “Mrs. Smith’s exposure seems unnecessary,” D. A. Miller regards her “as important as Anne herself” (*The Errand of Form*, 1967, and *Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style*, 2005).

By applying the concept of inverted story, the significance of Mrs. Smith’s role of disclosing Mr. Elliot’s true personality will be reevaluated. Based on this evaluation and the analysis of Anne’s wavering but cool-headed feeling towards Captain Wentworth and Mr. Elliot, this

paper will clarify Austen's grand design in describing the love affair of one of her most mature heroines.

García Soria, Cinthia. 'Jane Austen in Hispanic America – Who are Still Forgotten?'

For almost 200 years, Jane Austen was hardly known in the Spanish speaking countries and almost a century passed by before her works were first translated into Spanish. Not unlike in happened in the rest of the non-English speaking world, at the end of the 20th century, screen adaptations of her works and the arrival of internet overturned that situation, and now Austenmania also speaks Spanish: almost all her works have been translated into that language. However, an almost colonialist situation still prevails, since despite Austen has become one of the most popular English writers in Hispanic America, one can hardly find Spanish translations of her works made for Hispanic American readers as translations made in Spain dominate the market. Although people rarely consider translations and translators, lately a controversy arose in Hispanic America regarding the quality of some translations and why we are so overwhelmingly offered editions in Spanish from Spain instead of that of our own region. What are those few Hispanic American translations? Who are the Hispanic American translators? Which characteristics stand out in their translations? Why has the region has been almost ignored, notwithstanding the growing popularity of Austen among the largest Spanish-speaking population in the world?

Goodwyn, Helena. Northumbria University. "“Her Novels are Held in High Esteem and May be Safely Recommended”: Jane Austen in Late-Nineteenth-Century Children's Periodicals'

Building on the work of Wilson (2022), Cano-López (2014), and Phegley (2004), this paper considers the presentation of Jane Austen in periodicals for children and young adults published in late-nineteenth-century Britain.

In November 1880 *The Girls' Own Paper* ran a competition inviting readers to submit essays 'upon the life of some famous English woman born in the eighteenth century'. Of the 500+ responses the paper received Austen was the 9th most popular topic, after: Hemans, Fry, More, Burney, Summerville, Martin, Elliott (Charlotte), and Edgeworth. First prize went to a young woman living in the Punjab in India, for her essay on Hannah More, the second to a young woman from Manchester, England, for her writings on Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi. Another commendation went to a girl based in Stellenbosch, Cape Colony, South Africa, and another in Jamaica, West Indies.

This glimpse into the hierarchies of tastes from young women around the world gives us a sense of where Austen stood in terms of popularity not just as a source of entertainment for young readers but also in relation to authors deemed worthy of study.

Elsewhere and repeatedly, in *The Girls' Own Paper*, and other periodicals of the period, we see *Duologues and Scenes from the Novels of Jane Austen* by Rosina Filippi (Mrs. Dowson) recommended in the 'answers to correspondents' column as suitable material for 'schoolgirls' wishing to perform. This paper will examine the framing of Austen as 'suitable' and 'safe' for child readers in late-nineteenth-century periodicals

Graham, Peter. Virginia Tech. 'Jane Austen & Lord Byron: Empiricists and Imaginists'

One of the many strengths of Christine Kenyon Jones's *Jane Austen and Lord Byron: Regency Relations* is its brilliance in exploring and excavating the lives of its two title characters and the period they inhabited. I particularly admire how the remarkable parallels discernible in

unearthed details are presented as topically organized narrative without being forced into an overarching agenda or seen, and maybe distorted, through a critical lens. If as there's a critical methodology, it's the empiricism of John Locke.

In taking an empirical approach, Kenyon Jones is in the good company of Austen and Byron, both of them great British empiricists. Jane Austen and Lord Byron are observers who see clearly and who say what they see with clarity, keen and honest students of things as they are.

That said, they're also great British imaginists, even though when Austen uses that term in *Emma* it's not particularly complimentary. I aim to explore some different sides of this balancing act as seen in the works of both writers and to make comments on fact, truth, candor, cant, irony, fiction, figure-cutting, and novels, all topics of keen interest to both. I also hope to speculate a bit on what they might have thought of one another if Byron had read Austen (as far as we can tell he hadn't) and if Jane Austen had survived to read *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, his jocoserious masterpieces.

Greenfield, Sayre. University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg and **Linda Troost,** Washington & Jefferson College. 'Austen Beyond Austen'

This paper will focus on scene setting through details of material life and the evocation of color in recent adaptations of Austen that resituate her novels into specific cultural or ethnic contexts.

While Austen's letters abound with details of clothes, fabric, food, and color, her novels are remarkably—and quite intentionally—sparing of them (her stingy use of color words is especially surprising). When we do get such details, they usually mark shallow characters or doubtful behavior. In contrast, recent fictional adaptations of her novels revel in such details. These updates move beyond Austen into largely urban settings and diverse cultures, and they emphasize the material conditions of modern life in a way that Austen does not, abounding in sensory descriptions of clothing, food, furniture and evoking a wide color palette.

There are several forces creating this un-Austenian excess of detail: (a) a desire to make a specialized ethnic, regional, or cultural milieu accessible to a wider audience; (b) a wish to spark recognition among those who are insiders to that milieu; and, finally, (c) the visual impact of recent film adaptations that fill in material details in eye-catching and memorable ways, both those that use a Regency setting (for example, Autumn De Wilde's *Emma*) and those that provide updated ones. Modern novelists, coming to the written page from such a sensual approach to Austen, can have no inclination to resist suffusing their texts with details that will make each one appealing and culturally distinctive for the 21st century reader.

Grundy, Isobel. University of Alberta. 'Jane Austen from China to Perpetuity'

Global Jane Austen is clearly a paradox. As a warm body in petticoats and bonnet, Austen covered a modest range: between Devon in the south-west and London eastwards or the Lake District to the north. But as an enquiring brain, her range was wide. She read about Jamaica and China and Iceland. From China to Peru, as her "dear Dr Johnson" put it, she examined human "Hope and Fear, Desire and Hate," as differently shaped by the endlessly various human environment.

So I want to look at adapters, translators, and other presenters of Austen around the globe, how other writers world-wide have been likened to her, at how readers worlds away from Regency

England have responded, at how Austen's writings have travelled to distant times and countries, including imaginary ones.

Much of my material comes from "Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles" (orlando.cambridge.org.) This documents Austen being read in China, India, the USA, Ireland, several European countries, and every component of today's United Kingdom.

She has been traduced in end-times imagined by a Canadian, and has inspired both fiction set in Manhattan by a Jewish-English-Indian-American, and meta-fiction by an English expatriate in France. She gave the name of Steventon to a sheep-station in New Zealand and her own name to a private car operating on the front line in World War Two. *Pride and Prejudice*, whose earliest French translations were (says the British Library blog) "an irony-free zone", has seen its newly-married heroine riding on an elephant in *Bride and Prejudice*. Its first, Hollywood, filming was billed as "Five Gorgeous Beauties on a Mad-Cap Manhunt!" Adapted by Deborah Moggach, it proved equally baffling in different ways to two different audiences in Israel: one of Jews and one of Arabs. Global Austen indeed.

Guardini Vasconcelos, Sandra. University of Sao Paulo, **Renata Cristina Colasante**, and **Maria Clara Pivato Biajoli.** Federal University of Alfenas. Panel: 'Jane Austen in Brazil'

Introduction:

Jane Austen's enduring popularity transcends the boundaries of time and geography, captivating readers across cultures and generations. While her novels are firmly rooted in Regency England, their themes resonate with audiences worldwide. Austen's influence extends far beyond her native land, permeating literary traditions and sparking creative responses in countries as diverse as Brazil. In this panel, we aim to discuss Austen's legacy in Brazil, exploring translations, adaptations, and creative engagements that have emerged within the Brazilian context.

Description:

Brazil's encounter with Jane Austen's works began in the nineteenth century, as her novels found their way into the hands of Portuguese-speaking readers through translations. Sandra G. Vasconcelos will investigate the history of one such translation: *A Família Elliot, ou a inclinação antiga*, the Portuguese translation of *Persuasion* made from Madame Montolieu's French translation *La Famille Elliot*. Published in 1847 in Lisbon, Portugal, the novel was advertised in Brazilian newspapers and could be found in circulating libraries in Brazil. While little else is known about this edition, except that it was translated from the French by a certain M.P.C.C. d'A., its title did not give away this was an Austen novel. *A Família Elliot* constitutes a paradigmatic instance of the transatlantic circulation of her novels in that period and evidences the complex network of mediators acting in that process.

Building upon the exploration of Austen's works in translation, Renata Cristina Colasante will shift the focus to Austen's personal correspondence and discuss the translation process of *Cartas de Jane Austen*, the rendering of her letters into Brazilian Portuguese, published in 2023. The presentation will address the intricacies and challenges of translating the correspondence, the decisions made, and the overall process leading to its publication. She hopes to offer insights into the creative aspects of translating literary works, particularly letters, and the importance of decision-making in conveying the essence of the original text to a new audience. She also examines the paratexts and visual elements that were aimed to enhance the reader's engagement with the material. By sharing this experience, the presentation contributes to understanding the role of translation in expanding Austen's literary legacy.

Maria Clara Biajoli will showcase an array of Brazilian adaptations inspired by Austen's works, ranging from photographic novels to television dramas and musicals. These adaptations offer

a fascinating lens through which we can explore the intersection of Austen's narratives with Brazilian cultural sensibilities and creative practices, particularly after the success of the 2005 movie adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* that sparked a local Austenmania. For example, the Globo network soap opera *Orgulho e Paixão* (2018) not only translated Austen's story into a highly popular visual medium but also infused it with elements of Brazilian history, popular culture, and social commentary. Similarly, the musical *Nuvem de Lágrimas* (2015-2016) reimagined Austen's themes and characters within distinctly Brazilian rural settings and country music, inviting audiences to reconsider familiar narratives through a new cultural lens. With these presentations, our panel intends to contribute to the ongoing conversations about Jane Austen's global legacy. With their focus on the Brazilian context, we seek to highlight the richness and diversity of Austen's influence beyond the Anglophone world, demonstrating how her narratives are interpreted, appropriated, and recreated to engage readers across cultures and generations.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, our panel offers a comprehensive exploration of Jane Austen's impact on Brazilian literature and culture. By examining translations, adaptations, and creative responses, we aim to illuminate the dynamic interplay between Austen's legacy and Brazilian creative expression. From historical translations to contemporary adaptations, Austen's presence in Brazil serves as a testament to the enduring relevance and adaptability of her work within the global literary landscape. As we continue to explore Austen's influence in diverse cultural contexts, we gain a deeper appreciation of the power of her work and its appeal. We look forward to engaging in fruitful discussions and sharing insights that may contribute to a larger understanding of Austen's enduring legacy in the world.

Hathout, Shahira A. Trent University. 'Jane Austen's Quantum Hauntings'

This paper underscores the material and discursive performativity of Austen's novels. This aspect animates her work and makes it relevant through time and space. I discuss Austen's work within the context of the Anthropocene, locating what Karen Barad terms "quantum temporality" (2017) and "spacetime mattering" (2007) that unlock the past and reveal the different entanglements of matter and meaning in time and space. Toward this end, I explore how references to matter and nature can be perceived outside the realm of symbolism and representation but as agents actively participating in shaping the world. Focusing on novels like *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Persuasion* (1817), and *Mansfield Park* (1814), I argue that the presence of these quantum values contributes to the posthumanist performative dimension of Austen's work by making it relevant in the contemporary moment as it uncovers overlapping social, environmental, and political uncertainties that haunt the present and thus allows us to reconsider and potentially rewrite the future. Read from this agential realist posthuman perspective, Austen's subtle narration, I suggest, not only draws attention to dangerous hierarchical dualities like mind / body, reason / passion, nature / culture, it also unsettles these dualities by revealing political, historical, imperialist, and economic valences that (re)shape our perspectives as readers. It also allows an inseparable "ethico-onto-epistemological" (Barad 2007) imperative to emerge and rethink an uncertain human world in an ongoing state of becoming with everything (human and nonhuman) it encounters.

Hausback, Morgan. University of St Andrews. 'A Good or Bad Mother? The Silliness of Mrs. Bennet's Maternity in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*'

This essay, titled "A Good or Bad Mother? The Silliness of Mrs. Bennet's Maternity in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*," uses the critical lens of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* to analyze Mrs. Bennet's character and motivations in *Pride and*

Prejudice. Scholarship on Mrs. Bennet has often portrayed her to be silly, meager, and dependent, but I seek to reveal how Mrs. Bennet's "silly" qualities ultimately aid in her maternal purpose. In Wollstonecraft's *Vindication*, she radically envisions a version of enlightened motherhood, in which women are raised to be rational and virtuous creatures, who in turn would raise their daughters in the same way. While Mrs. Bennet does not meet Wollstonecraft's expectations as a rational mother, I argue that Mrs. Bennet utilizes her silly qualities, such as excessive chatter and over involvement in her daughters lives, to ultimately succeed in her maternal purpose, which is to see her daughters married. Silliness is a source of agency for mothers during this time period, and rather than being scrutinized as a figure who fails her daughters, my paper insists that it is the institution of marriage and societal expectations which Mrs. Bennet must adhere to that influences her occasionally foolish behavior and character. It is not Mrs. Bennet who fails her daughters, but it is societal expectations that doom Austen's women in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Henderson Harner, Christina. 'Legacy and Belonging in This Motherless Land, *Mansfield Park*, and the Nineteenth-Century British Estate Novel'

In *This Motherless Land*, a 2024 decolonial retelling of *Mansfield Park*, Nikki May engages the complex legacy of the British estate novel. As John J. Su observes, "At least since Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814), the English estate has been positioned ... as a crucial site of cultural debates about national identity. ... The endurance of the estate creates the illusion of national continuity."

When May's protagonist, Quiet Funke, travels from Nigeria to England for the first time, she finds a family estate that supports no such illusions of national, or familial, continuity. The building itself is in dismal shape and, as in Austen's novel, the family's relationships are often tense and complicated. As the story moves back and forth between Nigeria and England, May interrogates questions of legacy and definitions of home and family.

This Motherless Land, I will argue, builds on and responds to the tradition of the estate novel, revealing unexpected connections and rewriting notions of home and belonging in a global, postcolonial context. The spaces the protagonist moves between—from the storied, but weary estate to port cities to bustling capitals—reflect, shape, and at times, challenge her understanding of her individual, family, and national identities. I will also examine how the novel speaks back to the imperial context of *Mansfield Park*, as discussed by scholars ranging from Edward Said, to Susan Fraiman to, more recently, Marsha Huff.

Hershinow, Stephanie Insley. Baruch College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. 'Global Free Indirect Discourse'

Jane Austen did not invent free indirect discourse, but she is widely heralded as a master of the technique, exploring its narrative possibilities and largely responsible for its proliferation in ensuing English novels. Where can we find this hallmark technique in the proliferation of Austenalia as we approach her 250th anniversary? In this paper, I survey a number of recent "global" Austen adaptations—including works by Nikki Payne, Sonali Dev, and Karen Tei Yamashita—with an eye to how they take up Austen's signature narrative technique. We tend to consider how adaptations and retellings both cling to and reimagine plot, but I argue for attention to the ways some adaptations offer a form of translation and interpretation on the level of style or even of the sentence. I will also consider the translation of FID across media (especially in audiobook narration and film adaptation). Throughout, I suggest that FID is a more contested terrain, provoking considerably more scholarly debate, than we might lead our students to believe when we teach them to locate it in Austen's novels. We might ask whether

FID is translatable at all. But ultimately I'll offer a capacious account of FID, one that sees it operating in a number of Austen-inspired works, bringing her storytelling gifts to new audiences around the world.

Hiromoto, Yuka. 'Jane Austen and the *Baronetage*'

My presentation offers a rereading of the fictional *Baronetage*, that looms over the opening of *Persuasion*, in view of a copy of *The New Baronetage of England* (1804) included in the Knight Collection in Chawton House Library. This volume in duodecimo, which contains multiple marginal comments on over twenty pages, would be likely to evoke in the mind of Austen's readers the pages of the *Baronetage* in *Persuasion*, which is similarly in duodecimo, to which Sir Walter Elliot fondly inserts additional information about his family pedigree. Although it is difficult to identify the handwriting in *The New Baronetage* as Austen's, the heaviest annotations in the copy are found on the pages on Austen's relatives, the Bridges family, where the name of Elizabeth, the wife of Austen's brother Edward Knight, is surrounded with a square and annotated with details about her marriage and issue.

Janine Barchas (2012) explores the genealogies registered in the third edition of John Debrett's *Baronetage of England* (1815), which she discusses infiltrated into the plot and characterisation throughout *Persuasion*. This presentation, however, turns its attention from history as fact towards history as act. I would suggest that the novel's depiction of the mechanical listing of the *Baronetage* unexpectedly becomes an arena of annotation and commemoration. By comparing the added notes in *The New Baronetage* and the *Baronetage* in *Persuasion*, I will argue that the *Baronetage* is a metonymy of not only the patriarchal Sir Walter but also of private consumers of the past and history in general.

Hofkosh, Sonia. Tufts University. 'Against Relevance'

This paper will reflect on the question of how Austen's writing speaks to the present moment, a question posed more and more urgently for literary scholars and other humanists, both locally, in response to shifting priorities in higher education, and globally, under conditions of political, economic, and ecological precarity. What is the relevance of Austen's fiction now? How do novels so narrowly focused in the individual experience of a young, middle-class, white woman in an English country village appeal so persistently to a wide range of readers around the world? What, in the parlance of today's students, makes Austen so "relatable" over time and in various places to readers across identity categories including gender, race, class, age, culture, and nation?

I approach the question of the relevance of Austen's writing by considering how Austen raises the question of relevance in her novels, especially in *Emma*, where what counts as relevant to the narrative, how value is determined and meaning constructed, is a question that can only be answered by a reading attuned to what might be construed as irrelevant, what is deemed excessive or put aside or does not speak to us in a language we recognize, but which may be of interest, even of more interest, to thinking about Austen's importance in the current era of adaptations, sequels, and mash-ups. This paper will focus its exploration of the function of irrelevance in *Emma* in the figure of Miss Bates, who is arguably among the least "relatable" characters in Austen's writing--although in Highbury she enjoys "a most uncommon degree of popularity," readers have almost universally found her "tiresome," "trivial," "unbearable," or "abject." And yet Hetty Bates has something significant to tell us about how Austen's novels speak to the current moment in multiple voices that may not conform to or may even refuse the limits of the (local) concerns or (generic) expectations that have historically been ascribed to them.

Hsieh, Jung-Hsin. King's College London. 'The Afterlives of Jane Austen's Wartime Narratives in Katherine Mansfield's Short Stories'

In modernist critical discourse, Jane Austen's novels are characterised by a detachment from modernity. Caroline Austen declares finding 'absolutely nothing' in Austen's novels regarding the 'great strifes of war and policy which so disquieted Europe for more than 20 years' (p. 173). Likewise, American literary critic Oscar Firkins perceives Austen's novels as bearing 'no politics, [...] no class problems, [and] almost no landscape'. My research investigates expressions of nostalgia for eighteenth-century literature and culture during the British modernist period (1900-1945), specifically examining the modernist literary recovery of eighteenth-century women's writings. This paper explores the ambivalent literary relationship between the novels of Jane Austen and New Zealand-born modernist writer, Katherine Mansfield, focusing on how Mansfield's short stories engage with wartime dimensions and afterlives in Austen's works.

I argue that wartime elements in Austen's novels are evident in the shifting gender relations caused by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. By looking at shifting interclasses and gender relations in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*, my paper will analyse how the ostensibly absent wartime dimensions in Austen's novels are reworked in

Mansfield's short stories surrounding warfare, including 'An Indiscreet Journey' and 'The Garden Party'. During the First World War, Austen's novels represented 'calm, order, and decency', serving therapeutic purposes for British soldiers. At the same time, however, Austen's wartime narratives were reappropriated in Mansfield's short stories to reflect 'new thoughts and feelings' shaped by the First World War, offering an alternative to the modernists' nostalgic fascination with the eighteenth century.

Hughes, Bill. 'Jane Austen's Localisation of Universal Pragmatics: Rational Evaluation, Strategic Concealment, and Particularity in *Sense and Sensibility*'

Many eighteenth-century novels are concerned with the kind of authentic ideal speech, unconstrained and mutually rational, theorised in the later work of Jürgen Habermas. This reflects the contemporaneous popularity of the dialogue as a genre and the material institutions of the public sphere that fostered such free and rational discourse. In authors such as Maria Edgeworth or Robert Bage, who extended Enlightenment values to a concern for rational companionship between the sexes, this is often clearly gendered and expressed dialogically.

Jane Austen continued this tendency: her novels feature embedded dialogues where moral claims and aesthetic values are earnestly evaluated. Austen appears to be firmly committed to the global, universalist principles that sustain rational discourse. But Austen also reveals that anti-dialogic speech, unlike the use of strategic action by the powerful as a hegemonic tool, may also be a necessary instrument for the defence of female autonomy where ideal speech would be censored or punished. There are other ways, too, by which she qualifies the universalism of ideal speech, localising it according to aesthetic values or ethical ends.

This paper shows how the dialogic pragmatics in *Sense and Sensibility*, whose very title suggests a dialogue, are revised and localised. In the novel, there are fervent conversations concerning taste and ethics, formally homologous with the many contemporary printed dialogues on these themes. However, Austen modifies the universalism of Enlightenment rationalism and diverts the dialogue into specific ends, generating a dialectic of the global and the particular.

Hurley, Sarah C. Co-Authoring Austen: Guy Andrews' *Lost in Austen* and the Janeite-Centric Narrative."

Although many Austen scholars have studied the Janeite, or self-identified admirer of Jane Austen's fiction, as a real-life phenomenon of Austen's popular reception, less attention has been given to contemporary Austenian fanfiction containing a Janeite *protagonist*. The Janeite protagonist is a fictional character based upon the real-life Janeite whose narrative development hinges upon some revelation related to Austen's life or fictional works. Surprisingly, despite the Janeite protagonist's respect for Austen as a "divine" literary and historical figure, almost every Janeite-centric narrative challenges Austen's authority as fictional creator, disputing traditional ideas about singular, divine authorship. "Let Other Pens Dwell" examines the Janeite protagonist as a metaphor for the real-life Janeite through a close reading of Guy Andrews's ITV miniseries *Lost in Austen* (2008). Ultimately, I argue that the Janeite-centric narrative is a fictional allegory for the ways in which real-life Janeites immerse themselves in and subsequently revise Austen's fictional landscape, suggesting that authorship is an inherently intertextual, collaborative, and ongoing process.

Jaëck, Nathalie. Bordeaux Montaigne University. 'Confinement vs. Perspective: "Truth Universally Acknowledged" in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*'

In this paper, I propose to study the contrast and the paradox between Jane Austen's forceful claim, in a letter to niece Anna, that "three or four families in a country village is the one thing to work upon", and the global relevance of her work.

While Carlyle dismissed her work as "mere dishwashings", and Emerson judged that "never was life so pinched and narrow"; while Charlotte Brontë herself, in an 1848 letter to H. G. Lewes, described Austen's texts as "carefully fenced, highly cultivated gardens, with neat borders", and declared that she "would hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant, but confined homes", it seems that Jane Austen has managed to turn such strict confinement into universal appeal. I will try to argue that her elaborate literary treatment of the notions of distance and perspective is one of the answers to her universal reach, through a specific study of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*.

After showing how indeed she settles in deliberate short-sightedness, how she creates a poetics of confinement, I will show that she stages the sense of distance, both in the stories, and in the narration. While her heroines travel the distance, and abolish differences and hierarchies, even from within the confines of their elegant homes, her omniscient narrators escape the theoretical boundaries of their personae, as Jane Austen comes up with a highly original, ground-breaking narrator. Though the themes and landscapes are all well and truly English, the narrative voice achieves "truth universally acknowledged" to quote from the first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*, as it ironically mingles omniscience and multiple perspectives, as it uses omniscience as a *trompe-l'oeil*.

Johnston, Freya, Thomas Robertson, and Joseph Turner. University of Oxford. Panel: 'Jane Austen's Place'

The concept of the 'global' as 'relating to or encompassing the whole of anything or any group of things, categories, etc.' appears to postdate Austen; however, synonyms such as 'universal' might be classed among the satirical key words in her novels, contributing to jokes about proportion, scale, and the limits of human perception.¹ One of the most famous and most

frequently quoted opening lines in the world expresses a ‘truth’ that is said to be ‘universally acknowledged’, phrasing which invites the reader both to join in and dissent from any such acknowledgement.

In her sense of place Austen offers a similar mixture of commitment to and departure from truth. Since *Mansfield Park* is the only one of her novels that we know she chose to name after a place (‘*Northanger Abbey*’ and ‘*Sanditon*’ were not her titles), it is striking that she also chose to set it largely in Northamptonshire, a county she had never visited herself, nor would ever visit. The county she knew best of all, her native Hampshire, does not provide the chief setting for any of her major works, although being displaced from Hampshire between the years 1801 and 1807 shaped the course of her personal and professional lives. References to Northamptonshire in letters from the start of 1813, by which point *Mansfield Park* had probably been under way for almost two years, show the lengths to which Austen would go to ensure the representation of real places in her fiction was true to life. While she thanks Martha Lloyd ‘for your enquiries about Northamptonshire’, she asks her sister Cassandra ‘If you c^d discover whether Northamptonshire is a Country of Hedgerows’.

A year after completing *Mansfield Park* and three months after it had finally been published, Austen advised her niece Anna, who was then writing her own work of fiction, that:

we think you had better not leave England. Let the Portmans go to Ireland, but as you know nothing of the Manners there, you had better not go with them. You will be in danger of giving false representations. Stick to Bath & the Foresters. There you will be quite at home.—

It may be that Austen was simply counselling a younger, less experienced, and less skilful novelist not to venture into unknown territory and expose her own ignorance. She may also have thought that Ireland and the Irish posed more challenges to an English writer than the fictional representation of another English county, visited or unvisited. Austen’s novels don’t travel to Ireland themselves, although one of her favourite authors, the Anglo-Irish Maria Edgeworth, lived there and wrote many stories and novels about the country and its ‘Manners’. Ireland does feature by way of a background plot to Jane Fairfax’s story in *Emma* (a copy of which Austen sent to Edgeworth herself, not that she appreciated the gift). However, what we learn about that country in the novel does not derive from anyone with personal knowledge of the place, and the whole point of its being mentioned at all is that Jane Fairfax will not be going there (however much she might like to) but rather to Highbury, as Miss Bates informs the heroine in her usual style, diffuse and breathless but full of telling, historically specific information that is easily overlooked.

‘Place’ itself is one of those words that appears so frequently in Austen’s novels as to seem potentially unremarkable or pedestrian, but in its various senses the word bears on much that is distinctive about her novelistic art. ‘To take place’ is one of her favourite ways of describing something as having happened, a locution that points to the situation of events in her novels in specific, local settings; but the habitual reference by her characters to such settings not by name but simply as ‘the place’ produces a countermanding sense of vagueness. Precision and fuzziness similarly characterize her famous remark, again to Anna Austen, about her favourite subject for fiction:

You are now collecting your People delightfully, getting them exactly into such a spot is the delight of my life;—3 or 4 Families in a Country Village is the very thing to work on—& I hope you will write a great deal more, & make full use of them while they are so very favourably arranged.

It is the business of the novelist to ‘place’ her characters — or have them seem to place themselves — ‘exactly into such a spot’. The ‘place’ of a character might simply be their seat at the dinner table, but the word also possesses disquieting suggestions of rank and social class, as when one of the Musgroves observes to Anne Elliot ‘how nonsensical some people are about their place’, a remark that identifies a failing from which its speaker is not unambiguously exempt.

This panel will consider fictional and real places, and the relationship between them, in Austen’s work. Attention will be paid to locations such as Ireland in *Emma*, the Lake District in *Pride and Prejudice*, and Italy and Antigua in *Mansfield Park*: places that are summoned up, but never visited, in the novels. Indexing Austen’s works in his edition of *The Novels* (1923), R. W. Chapman made an apparently straightforward distinction between ‘Real’ and ‘Feigned Places’, only the first group of which had the privilege of a ‘General Index’ at the end of the fifth and final volume. But Austen herself seems to have been keen to confound such a distinction. Commenting on the ‘exact topography’ that is given to Highbury, ‘as if locatable on a map’ — ‘only sixteen miles off’ London, nine from Richmond, and seven from Box Hill — Barbara Everett describes it as ‘a romance place’, one that ‘is real, but nowhere’.

Jones, Rita. Lehigh University. ‘Understanding Austen in Felt, Porcelain, and Embroidery: How Austen Products Expand Austen Fans’

It is nearly impossible not to come across a Jane Austen-inspired or -themed product when moving through the world. Socks, mugs, t-shirts and sweatshirts, escape room books, and birthday cards feature Austen’s likeness, book titles, and quotations. With the ubiquity of these products, we see the profitability of Austen: thoughts of her *sell well*. But they also suggest to us a way in which consumers—whether buying for themselves or a gift for another person—decorate their lives with Austen’s stories. Someone wearing a t-shirt emblazoned with “Run Like Mr. Collins Just Proposed” creates a badge of knowledge and a direct path into important conversations about gender equity and class.

In this paper and accompanying visuals, I will explain the many ways that consumers use Austen to stylize themselves as both “being in the know” as they simultaneously invite more people into Austen’s universe. Having a felted likeness of Austen on a Christmas tree opens up conversations about who she is, what she wrote, and why the person wants Austen to adorn the tree. Rather than making Austen’s ideas mundane, the proliferation of products invites a thoughtful conversation about her work, and these conversations extend globally, as people can purchase these products not only from any phone but also in a store near you.

Keen, Stephen A. ‘Fresh Starts: An Appreciation of the Opening Chapters of the Novels of Jane Austen’

How to begin is a question every writer must face, and we can learn something about a writer’s craft by how she addresses this question. In the case of Jane Austen, surveying the opening chapters of her six completed novels allows us to appreciate how she learned to fashion her beginnings to suit the subsequent story. In some novels Austen introduces the heroine immediately and presents a character flaw that she will surmount in the story. In other novels Austen introduces the heroine through her relationship to other characters and foreshadows the role such characters will play in the story. Austen avoids becoming formulaic by varying the length and tone of each approach to suit the story that follows.

Austen takes a unique approach in *Pride and Prejudice*. As the first half of the novel will tease readers by pretending to defy the conventions of a classic comedy, the novel begins with Mr. Bennet teasing his wife by pretending to defy social conventions. After the teasing runs its

course and the story returns Elizabeth to the status quo at Longbourn, Austen initiates a new plot to arrive at a conventional ending.

Kelly, Gary. University of Alberta. ‘What Nurse Rooke Knew’

When Miss Anne first encounters Nurse Rooke, she doesn’t notice her. Nor do we—a typical Austenian reader trap, for little does Miss Anne (or do we) know how important what Nurse Rooke knows will be to her (and hence our) happiness.

Nurse Rooke stands out among Austen’s marginal, or even liminal characters, forerunner-representative of a profession barely in formation, one that in a few years would be developed into a major, ground-breaking, breakthrough profession for women, especially working-class women, by century’s end a force mobilized for domestic and imperial surveillance, control, and transformation, the frontline of battles against sickness, disease, poverty, and so much more, as the COVID pandemic tragically illustrated. Once sent from Britain to domesticate, pacify, and help ‘civilize’ colonies near and far, ex-colonies are now the recruiting-ground for modernized, trained, and professionalized Nurse Rookes the metropolis can no longer supply, resulting in a double and more vicious colonization depriving their home countries of the necessary health workers those countries have educated and trained for their own needs.

More recently, too, nursing has become a major focus for new epistemologies and sociologies, studies in embodied cognition, medical humanities, popular romance, feminism. In terms of distinctions and hierarchies of class and gender, nursing has also become—and Nurse Rooke as Austen presents her seems to have intimations of this—nursing has become a focus for studies of ‘manual work’, especially on and with others, as complex interaction of knowledge, affect, ‘touch’—humanity, with the humanities therefore intrinsic and essential for its everyday practice. This paper converges what Nurse Rooke knew as plot-instrumental in the novel with the other knowledges later Nurse Rookes would require and confer on us.

Kenyon Jones, Christine. King’s College London. ‘Jane Austen and Lord Byron: Reading each other’

This paper considers Austen’s and Byron’s reading of each other’s work and the effects of this on their writing. The records of at least some of Austen’s encounters with Byron’s verse are quite clear, and the paper discusses her comments on ‘The Corsair’ (in a letter to Cassandra in March 1814) and on ‘*The Giaour*’ and ‘*The Bride of Abydos*’ (as discussed by Anne Elliot and Captain Benwick in *Persuasion*); together with her copied-out version of Byron’s poem ‘Napoleon’s Farewell’ (published anonymously in *The Examiner* in July 1815). The paper also makes the case for Byron’s having read Austen, citing their common role as authors published by John Murray; Murray’s letters to Byron mentioning Austen; Byron’s ownership of copies of at least three of Austen’s novels; his positive response of a humorous skit which imitates Austen’s writing, and his turn in his *ottavarima* works from 1817 onwards to a more novelistic and dramatic form of expression which shares Austen’s trademark technique of free indirect discourse.

Kincade, Kit. Indiana State University. ‘The Man without Rival: Edward Ferrars as the Imperfect Hero and Gentleman’

If *Sense and Sensibility* is Jane Austen’s version of the mundane gothic, and Colonel Brandon her hero/villain for Marianne Dashwood’s story, then what do we make of Edward Ferrars’ story and character construction? There are two curious features about him that are connected both to each other and to how we interpret him as a gentleman and a gothic figure. First, he has

a weak character generally, being diffident and awkward both publicly and privately. This has resulted in him being one of the two most disliked heroes in Austen's canon, causing more active dislike for him than Edmund Bertram, the runner up for least liked. Second, he is the only hero with no rival for the heroine's affections. Why he is disliked and the fact of having no romantic competition are both byproducts of his unsoundness of character that causes his ineptitude and thoughtlessness. How these are related to his status as a gentleman and his connection to the Gothic become apparent through his relationship to his family, particularly his mother.

Edward's path to being a suitor in any romantic story, much less one with a Gothic framework that requires surviving threatening trials, is not caused by one devastating action that triggers a series of seismic events including the death of one or more people involved. I will argue in my paper that Edward's arrival at his current status and situation is caused by the constant trickle of the pettiness of an overbearing and controlling mother who wields financial authority and social betterment over all of her children. Her actions have been as negatively formative in the lives of her children as General Tilney's domineering presence has been to his. Defying literary expectation (as defined by critics) for novels to be realistic and from the romance tradition, especially the Gothic, to be idealistic and even fantastical, was the actuality of what authors produced and readers desired. Gothic was disparaged because it failed to present reality, particularly lived experience, accurately. And the trappings of the form, with the inclusion of the supernatural, was the most obvious point of contention. But what the Gothic really delivers for readers is the verisimilitude of fear, anxiety, and isolation. I will explore how Austen has taken the feel of truth of these experiences and provided a domestic and commonplace catalyst for these reactions. Edward endures the daily humiliations of a twenty-three-year-old man who is under the social and financial control of, and even lives primarily with, his tyrannical mother. Typically, it is the father-figures in the Gothic who are the villains and young women who are victimized, but Austen has flipped genders on this Gothic narrative, thus presenting him as gender neutered by his mother's actions. Edward's diffidence, his inability to fully control his emotional responses, and his romantic sense of honor and responsibility are the result of navigating a world that is both tinged gothic and a masculinity that is constructed as neutered. It is for these reasons that Austen has not matched him against another suitor.

Klein, Ula Lukszo. 'The Queer Imperial Economics of *Persuasion*'

In many ways, *Persuasion* appears to be the most conventional type of heterosexual romance novel, focusing on upper-class woman Anne Elliot and her reunion with the love of her youth, Captain Frederick Wentworth. In spite of the apparent heteronormativity of the novel, like many of Austen's works, it also contains an implicit critique of the marriage plot and heteronormativity. Elizabeth and Walter Elliot, and Lady Russell are all unmarried and represent a critical resistance to marriage that could be interpreted as a queer ace/aro identity. Mary Musgrove views marriage as a means to social position, in many ways also espousing an aromantic orientation. Finally, Mr. Elliot, the villain of the novel, is represented as completely uninterested in marriage for love; his one intimate relationship is with a man, and even in that relationship, he uses the deep friendship with Mr. Smith as a way of defrauding him. I argue the novel makes a complex argument about heterosexual romance, companionate marriage, and desire; rather than unilaterally reinforcing heterosexual romance as an aspirational end, the novel proposes that most of the characters are uninterested in or unsuited to romance and companionate marriage. Marriage itself, as an institution and social construct, is revealed to be only appropriate, relevant or successful for a small portion of the population. The positive representations of the British Navy and correlated strong relationships between the Naval men

themselves as well as their happy marriages (such as those of the Crofts and the Harvilles, as well as Anne and Wentworth) to an extent emphasize the biopolitics of empire—success in the global imperial sphere is predicated on Naval strength which itself must be built upon successful marriages. In this presentation, then, I will explore how the novel critiques the institution of marriage and its role within systems of domestic social mobility as well as global imperial economics.

Kramp, Michael. Lehigh University. ‘Jane Austen and the Global Future of the Humanities’

Two of the truths most universally acknowledged in academic discussions are the global “crises” of the humanities and the enduring allure of Jane Austen. The data on the humanities are clear. Since 2002, the number of students completing humanities degrees has declined. Austen’s diverse cultural appeal offers a mechanism through which to communicate the efficacy of the humanities to different publics.

Austen allows us to demonstrate key and accessible lessons or experiences of the humanities that are versatile and enduring: (1) knowledge is a process that involves ignorance, (2) relationships are messy, (3) change affects everyone, (4) resiliency can be disturbing, (5) living in community is hard, and (6) there is no script for happiness. Austen’s six-completed novels provide the bases for these foundational humanities lessons, and artists, practitioners, and activists throughout the world illustrate the effectiveness of her work for sharing ideas and impacts of the humanities.

Austen is a distinct cultural figure that serves as a valuable resource for communicating impactful lessons of the humanities to public audiences. Her stories offer a safe, unthreatening, and effective mechanism for fueling public discussions of the work and efficacy of the humanities for four reasons: (1) she enjoys vast popularity, (2) her popularity is diverse and malleable, (3) her popularity endures within elite spaces of academia while it continues to extend into new public, commercial, and political arenas, and (4) her popularity is global, matching the global crises in the humanities and the global issues addressed by and through the humanities.

Kruger, Misty. University of Maine. ‘How to Make a Monster: Specimens from Austen’s Teenage Writings’

Austen fans across the globe enjoy her novels and their adaptations because they can identify with her flawed-but-admirable heroines or swoon over her imperfectly perfect heroes. From Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy to Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth, Austen shows fans that it is all right to be wrong sometimes as long as you learn from your mistakes. That is what makes us human. However, as a writer Austen did not begin with this mindset. On the contrary, her teenage writings provide readers (at first her family and friends—now the world) with characters who are flawed, but *not* admirable, and simply imperfect. Sometimes the entire point of a piece from Austen’s juvenilia is merely to show that people are bad, and they don’t care about learning from their mistakes. They enjoy making them, and they continue on their (self-) destructive paths as long as they can get away with their immorality and misdeeds. In this paper I explore how applying monster theory to Austen’s juvenilia helps us see the characters in the teenage writings as monsters, or at least the worst specimens of humanity. I will address Austen’s murderers, alcoholics, and a motley crew of criminal minds to show that the young Jane had a jolly good time mocking the best of humanity by giving her audience its opposite. I

will also address why this is a good reason to read and study Austen's teenage writings as a foundation for understanding her later works.

Kubo, Yoko. 'Beyond Satire: Exploring Physical Ailments in Jane Austen's Female Characters'

In October 2021, the UK Government introduced new policies addressing menopause support for the first time, including changes to prescription charges and the establishment of a new menopause task force. Menopause symptoms are generally defined as the physical and emotional changes experienced by women during the decade or so following the mid-40s, when female hormones decline rapidly. These symptoms can include mood swings, hot flashes, severe headaches, loss of appetite, and increased appetite, all resulting from hormonal imbalances.

While women's illnesses and disorders in Jane Austen's novels are often attributed to psychological factors, Austen's portrayal of these women, particularly those who faint, is often seen as satirical. However, when considering women who refuse to eat or deliberately avoid food, it is possible that Austen may have been inadvertently depicting symptoms of anorexia or menopause in a modern context. Although the concept of anorexia nervosa was not formally recognized in Austen's time, her descriptions of characters exhibiting disordered eating behaviors could be interpreted as early representations of such conditions through a contemporary lens.

This presentation will delve into the potential significance of menopause during Austen's lifetime by examining the depiction of 'food' and 'illness' in her novels, including her juvenile works. By considering her early death at the age of 41, generally attributed to Addison's disease (a condition caused by a decrease in adrenal hormone production), and by situating her work within its cultural and historical context, we can gain fresh perspectives on the experiences of women during her time. Moreover, by examining how these experiences have been represented and reinterpreted across global cultures and historical periods, we can contribute to ongoing discussions about the enduring relevance of Austen's work.

Lämsä, Camilla Wallin. Linköping University. 'Darcymania in the Digital Sphere: Memes, GIFs, and Ironic Attachment to Character'

In late 1995, Martin Amis proclaimed that "Austen fever, or more particularly Darcymania, is upon us." My dissertation, *Yearning Hours: Desire, Darcymania, and Ironic Attachment in the Jane Austen Fandom*, interrogates the reception and reinterpretation of Mr. Darcy on the platform Tumblr. The paper will explore how Tumblr users reimagine and relate to Darcy through digital creations such as memes, hashtags, and GIF sets, crafting their readerly identities in relation to this character. Utilizing gender and queer theory, and Rita Felski's concept of "attachment" to character, I examine contemporary Darcymania within the context of postfeminist masculinities and online performances of gender and affect. The fascination with Darcy among young fans today is both intricate and contradictory, encompassing collective, ironic, partial, and queer attachments. Key to the analysis is Darcy's iconic "hand flex" shot from the 2005 adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*, which figures as an emblem of restrained sexual desire among younger fans. Additionally, I consider how the visual culture and unique affordances of Tumblr influence the characterization of this "fanon" Darcy, as well as how younger Austen fangirls engage with the conventions of period drama through performances of nostalgia, camp, and anachronism. The paper reveals the complex ways in which Jane Austen's cultural influence endures and evolves online.

Li, Saihong. University of Stirling. ‘Social Class and Sustenance: Translating Food Narratives in Jane Austen's *Emma*’

Jane Austen's novel *Emma* provides a vivid portrayal of the class structures and sustenance in Regency-era England. The food narratives in *Emma* serve as a mirror reflecting the hierarchies, norms, and aspirations of the societies in which they are set, highlighting the enduring relevance of Austen's themes in a global context. Originally published in 1815, *Emma* was first translated into Chinese in 1949. This research utilizes a self-built diachronic corpus of six different Chinese translations of *Emma* spanning from 1949 to the present. By applying Actor-Network Theory (ANT), this study explores how the translation process is influenced by a network of actors, including translators, publishing industries, cultural expectations, and ideological systems. ANT contextualizes the translator's role within this intricate network of cultural, material, and ideological forces, showing how each translation reflects not only linguistic adaptations but also interactions with broader socio-cultural norms, market pressures, and the expectations of Chinese readers over time. Throughout the translation process, Austen's characters, settings, and themes do not merely undergo linguistic transpositions but experience a cultural rebirth within the Chinese context. This transformation introduces new strata of meaning and interpretation, including the creation of allusive equivalents when faced with non-conceptual, unfamiliar food items. The study shows each translation reflects a unique interaction between historical context, cultural norms, reader expectations, material realities, publishing industry forces, and ideological systems. The evolving network within which these translations were produced shows how both the translation of food and the broader social structures are constantly negotiated and reshaped across time, resulting in different representations of Austen's world in each Chinese version.

Looser, Devoney. Arizona State University. ‘Almost *Pride and Prejudice*: The Wild Films that Never Were’

This talk considers some of the wild stories of never-made twentieth-century *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations, building on my previously published work on the silent P&P from Ideal Pictures (1917) and on the never-made MGM P&P musical of the late 1940s, which was to have starred Judy Garland. I dig deeper into what we know about these productions and consider what “might have been,” had they reached the screen.

MacLean, Katie. University of Stirling ‘Crossdressing in Stage Performances of Jane Austen's Novels, 1897-2025’

Recent adaptations like Isobel McArthur's *Pride and Prejudice Sort of** and *Crosstentatious* use male and female crossdressing to satirise Austen's novels and investigate their queer subtexts. However, this is not a convention of modern theatre. In *The Making of Jane Austen* (2017), Devoney Looser identifies an 1899 performance at Wellesley College, Massachusetts as one of the earliest recorded performances of Austen's work, during which a woman played Mr. Darcy. My paper will present archival materials and photographs of cross-dressed productions at Radcliffe College, RHUL, Oxford, Goucher College, and the Scottish Theatre Archive. It will show that as early as 1897, women and girls were not only identifying queer themes in Austen's work, but achieving independence and transgressing gender roles through performance of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Mandal, Anthony. University of Cardiff. ‘Stats and Sensibility: Making Sense of Jane Austen through the Orlando Textbase’

In her landmark feminist study of authorship, *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf noted: 'masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice.' While Jane Austen is rightly recognised for her iconic writer of enduring literary masterpieces, she was also the beneficiary of a female literary marketplace that enabled her own talents to bear fruit. This environment was a vital crucible for women's literary expression, shaped by hundreds of writers—some of whom we remember to this day, like Austen; others who have been forgotten.

My paper takes as its starting point work I am currently engaged in co-authoring the second volume (1790–1900) of *The Feminist History of Women's Writing*, which draws on the Orlando textbase of women's writing. We are using Orlando, a born-digital cultural history of over 1400 women writers that make up 8 million words of text, to explore large patterns of activity, including authors' social networks, the nature of professionalisation and relationships between genres. Alongside other archival and bibliographical resources, these data will be brought together comprehensively to explore women's relationship to and position in literary production from the middle ages to the present day. In my talk, I will provide some examples of the data and how they might be read in relation to existing narratives about Austen and literary production during the early nineteenth century.

Massei-Chayamo, Marie-Laure. Université Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne. 'The First Doctoral Thesis on Jane Austen: Leonie Villard's "Jane Austen, Sa Vie et Son œuvre (1775-1817)", 1915'

In 1915, at the Sorbonne, Léonie Villard (1878-1970) defended the first doctoral thesis on Jane Austen in France, published under the title *Jane Austen, sa vie et son œuvre (1775-1817)*. If William Henry George Pellew (1859-92), an American scholar, wrote the first dissertation on Austen entitled *Jane Austen's Novels* (1883), his 48-page work cannot really be considered "as the culminating project for a doctoral degree in English literature" but rather as "a long essay", as acknowledged by Devoney Looser in *The Making of Jane Austen* (p. 188). The same applies to the second academic work on Austen, published in Germany in 1910 by Julius Frankenberger, "Jane Austen und die Entwicklung des Englischen Bürgerlichen Romans im Achtzehnten Jahrhundert". Can Léonie Villard's work thus be considered as the first PhD thesis on Jane Austen in the world? Although Villard modestly stated that she only intended to offer a "new biography of the novelist", her PhD thesis actually goes much further as it not only displays a remarkably high standard of scholarship but also shows that Léonie Villard rightly understood, from the outset, the importance that Jane Austen would take on in world literature.

Matherne, Samantha. Harvard University. 'Austen and the Sociality of Wit'

As much as the wit of Jane Austen's characters and prose is celebrated, Austen herself proceeds with caution. For every instance in which the wit of Elinor Dashwood or Elizabeth Bennet is valorized, we find instances of wit gone wrong: Emma Woodhouse's ridicule of Miss Bates at Box Hill and Mary Crawford's mocking of the clergy, to name but two. In this paper, I offer a philosophical framework for thinking through wit in Austen's novels that takes its cue from the German Romantic Friedrich Schlegel's analysis of wit as "logical sociability" and "absolute social feeling." Though there is no evidence that Austen and Schlegel read one another, I make the interpretive case that Austen's attitude toward wit can be productively read in light of Schlegel's philosophical idea that wit should foster sociability and social feeling. To this end, I argue that Austen critiques wit that leads to social alienation and reinforces social hierarchy,

and praises wit that fosters community. More specifically, I make the case that, for Austen, the community fostered by wit is a community of a particular sort: a community that balances serious moral respect for, and playful aesthetic engagement with, others. I, moreover, examine the social dynamics in her novels in which wit successfully fosters this kind of moral-aesthetic community with an eye to articulating how the wit of her novels functions in fostering this kind of community more globally.

McIntyre, Hannah. Lehigh University. ‘Austen in Aotearoa’

In 2011, Jonathan Dove and Alisdair Middleton adapted *Mansfield Park* as a chamber opera, which debuted in Aotearoa New Zealand, in April this year. Witnessing this performance drew my attention to how the elements of political criticism in *Mansfield Park* have a significance that extends beyond nineteenth-century Britain.

This adaptation eliminates the entire section in Portsmouth, so virtually the whole narrative is situated within Mansfield Park, focusing on the significance of that setting and heightening the claustrophobia that permeates the original text. The overcrowding of the small stage and the minimal variation in sets contribute to the stifling atmosphere and intensify the social and political uneasiness of the novel. Having the New Zealand Opera production staged at The Settler’s Country Manor in Waimauku, (a building constructed by pioneer farmers on land originally settled by Tāmaki Māori) suggests an intriguing parallel between British aristocratic wealth and the colonial history of New Zealand. *Mansfield Park* is the Austen novel that most explicitly acknowledges the ethically suspect sources of wealth which support prosperous British families with repeated references to “the Antigua estate” and Fanny’s unanswered question about the slave trade left to linger over the text.

This production demonstrates not only how Austen’s works can be adapted and recontextualised in different cultural spaces but also how being able to tell this story outside its original context can give New Zealand audiences a better understanding of the legacy of our colonial history.

McMaster, Juliet. University of Alberta. “Jane Austen in my Life”

Besides recalling the “Jane Austen Bicentenary Conference” which she organized at the University of Alberta in 1975, where the three founders of the Jane Austen Society of North America first got together, Juliet reflects on the manifold ways that Jane Austen has coloured and affected her life - not just as a scholar and teacher, but in her other lifetime roles as daughter, wife, mother, athlete, and illustrator.

Meeuwis, Michael. University of Warwick. ‘Reading What’s Not in Austen, Now’

Jane Austen’s major novels craft a style as much through suppression as through direct narration. Conveying what a community and its members notice and fail to notice, the novels pose interpretative problems that encourage readers to note what appears beneath the surface of community discourse and perception. My talk inventories Austen’s juvenilia and shorter fictions to establish the writer’s interest in the global geopolitics and material culture largely disavowed or suppressed in the major novels. I read the style of these novels as seeding active interpretation in the reader through suppressing what appears more abundantly in these shorter fictions. The narrator withdraws as Jane Fairfax compares her fate in the “governess-trade” to those transported by the slave trade (235). This scene unfolds completely in dialogue. The narrator does not tell us what to think. Is this sly wit? Scathing critique? And who is the target: those present, for not understanding the nature of what we would call Jane’s precarity? Jane herself, for confusing a fall into practical employment with plantation slavery? Austen’s first

readers were aware of slavery—and, equally, knew the granular social misogyny abrading the value of women’s lives. What does it mean to sympathize with Jane Fairfax? The narrator’s silence structures an interpretative quandary that continues into our own time. I establish how, centuries before what our Twitter era calls subtweeting—reposting a message without commentary, inviting the reader’s response but not confirming it—Austen crafted fictions that invited readerly scepticism without necessarily confirming where it should be directed.

Mikinski, Madeleine. University of York. ‘Reimagining Silence: Conversation, Conformity, and Credit in *Mansfield Park*’

This paper explores the ways that, throughout *Mansfield Park* (1814), silence operates as a multifaceted, intentional discursive mode, simultaneously punitive and aspirational. On the surface, this silence stems from Sir Thomas Bertram’s obsessive insistence upon “honour and decorum.” Chatty, inquisitive characters like Mary Crawford are met with a silence intended to punish indiscretion while modelling “decorous” behaviour, conditioning the transgressor into conformity. While this quiet ensures “the repose of [Sir Thomas’s] own family-circle,” I also argue the silence is a deliberate effort on Sir Thomas’s part to discourage speculation on the colonial origins of the family’s wealth, part of a stated need to grow his own “respectability and influence.” The household’s silence—not merely in the face of Fanny’s “question about the slave trade,” but throughout the novel—epitomises what Carl Wennerlind has termed a “social imaginary.” This imaginary was enabled by credit’s growing ability to distance investors from the daily operation of colonial corporations, just as the Bertram women and Edmund are distanced from the management of their Antigua estate. Sir Thomas’s “decorous” silence replicates this imaginary in miniature, enabling Austen to engineer a subtle, discomfiting commentary on the convergences of credit, society, and silence in Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century. While other Austen novels place conversation at the heart of sociability, *Mansfield Park* rejects this premise, suggesting that the choice not to speak is itself a powerful and compelling form of communication.

Minamoto, Tomomi. Waseda University. ‘Self-esteem and Moral Education in *Arrogance and Virtue*: A Study of a Contemporary Japanese Adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. ‘

Pride and Prejudice (*P&P*) is one of the most popular translated novels in Japan, but the number of adaptations seems to be much smaller compared to the number of translations. *Arrogance and Virtue* (*A&V*), published in 2022, is one of the latest Japanese adaptations of *P&P*. The author Mizuki Tsujimura states that she was inspired by *P&P* when she conceived the novel. However, the two works do not seem to have much in common. Although both share a marriage plot, the sense of humour in *P&P* is completely absent in *A&V* and the character developments in the two are very different.

In this presentation I will first explore the social circumstances in which *A&V* is set and then illuminate the process of the protagonists’ psychological development. The Japanese marriage market has rapidly shrunk over a couple of decades. One of the main causes is often attributed to a hesitance in younger generations to get romantically involved, which leads to lower chances to find the right partner to marry. The protagonists in *A&V*, Kakeru and Mami, are examples of those who meet through a marriage-seeking app. Some of the self-reflection and moral enlightenment they experience are similar to what Elizabeth and Darcy go through in *P&P*, while others are not. This paper will closely examine the similarities and differences between the two works regarding the characters’ self-esteem and moral education.

Mizuo, Ayako. Ryukoku University. ““All Cleverness is met here with a general suspicion”: Sisterhood, Female Creativity, and the Ethics of Care in Gill Hornby's *Godmersham Park*”

The 20th and 21st centuries saw a dramatic upsurge in the Jane Austen industry – biographies, critical works, biofiction, and Austen-inspired stories and adaptations. Gill Hornby's *Godmersham Park* (2022) spotlights on Anne Sharp, the governess of Jane's niece Fanny and an amateur playwright. In spite of her possible contribution to Jane's literary creativity through their friendship, Anne has rarely been brought to the fore in Austen-inspired stories or biofiction. As in *Miss Austen* (2020), Hornby's other work of biofiction which focusses on Cassandra Austen, *Godmersham Park* not only unveils Anne's tough spinsterhood as a governess in early-nineteenth century England but foregrounds the sisterhood among women living through hardship, specifically the literary sisterhood among women living through hardship, specifically the literary sisterhood between Anne and Jane. A biofictional approach to sisterhood and female autonomy in *Godmersham Park* can be examined through the viewpoint of ‘the ethics of care’ as theorised by Carol Gilligan, a psychologist and ethicist. Gilligan's redefinition of the act of care and caring debunks the conventional relationship between self and other. Spotlighting sisterhood in *Godmersham Park* from the perspective of the ethics of care destabilises the idea that Hornby simply focusses on the governess as an invisible woman buried in history. Instead, I argue that by foregrounding the aspect of Anne as an amateur playwright, Hornby champions the significance of Anne in encouraging female creativity of Jane's fictional writings.

Drawing on the ethics of care, my paper discusses the way in which female creativity is represented through the sisterhood between Anne Sharp and Jane Austen in *Godmersham Park*. I then explore the way in which their literary sisterhood is demonstrated in Austen's works. I argue that such an alternative reading of Jane in terms of sisterhood and female autonomy has significance for recent Jane Austen scholarship.

Moon, Nina. Governor's State University. ‘Reading for Contrary Purposes: Unsettling Domestic Intimacies in Janet Schaw's *Journal of a Lady of Quality*’

This paper takes up Christina Sharpe's call for new methodologies for engaging the colonial archive: “We must become undisciplined. The work we do requires new modes and methods of research and teaching; new ways of entering and leaving the archives of slavery.” Indeed, recent scholarship by Sarah Marsh, Devoney Looser, and others excavates Austen's links to slavery and abolitionist movements, offering crucial evidence of Austen's engagement with questions of race and slavery. This paper will offer a critical, against the grain reading of Janet Schaw's *Journal of a Lady of Quality* (1774-6) as a test case for reading late 18th and early 19th White women's writing as deeply entangled in narrativizing Black bodies and the Black experience. Whether reading Schaw alone or alongside Austen and other contemporary writers, critical questions emerge about the ways in which we can make visible the machinations of race, gender, and slavery without recapitulating the violence they enact. Schaw, a Scottish woman who travelled to the Caribbean and the Carolinas, begins her epistolary account while still in harbor with an abolitionist-inflected account of an African-descended enslaved man who is “laid in irons.” As she travels deeper into the colonies, however, her sympathies seem to undergo a marked shift as she becomes socially embedded with the plantation owning class with whom she resides. My reading of Schaw suggests ways we can read her representations of Black figures as producing a disruptive excess, through which it becomes possible to glimpse Black men and women's everyday practices of resistance and refusal that the text cannot entirely efface.

Moss, Hannah. National Trust. ‘Jane Austen, Art & Place’

In March 2024, *The Hampshire Chronicle* reported on the divisive plan to erect a statue of Jane Austen in the grounds of Winchester Cathedral to mark the 250th anniversary of the author's birth. The life-sized sculpture, designed by Martin Jennings and set to be unveiled in 2025, was described as risking the 'Disneyfictation' of a place of worship by making it a hotspot for tourists taking selfies. For Phil Howe of *Hidden Britain Tours*, the commodification of Austen's image is something associated with Bath, but not Winchester.

As a city rich in history, public works of art are not uncommon in Winchester, and in 2022 a statue of Licoricia of Winchester by Ian Rank-Broadley was unveiled on Jewry Street – the same year that a report by Art UK found that of 13,500 public sculptures in the country, only 17% depict women. In recent years, successful campaigns have seen funds raised for sculptures of Mary Anning, Aphra Behn and Mary Wollstonecraft. Where the controversy surrounding Maggi Hambling's Wollstonecraft sculpture was largely relating to the preference of a symbolic depiction of femininity over direct likeness, the debates surrounding the Austen statue are more centred around the suitability of place, and the ways in which people will engage with a work of public sculpture.

For Elizabeth Proudman, a statue would not be in keeping with the Inner Close; an area historically maintained as a private monastic space. However, the Inner Close has changed significantly over time. Reverend Canon Dr Roly Riem argues that: 'The Inner Close should be seen, then, not only as the former site of two medieval cloisters, but also as a swathe of gardens, some parts of which have recently been opened for the pleasure of the public.' The Very Reverend Catherine Ogle adds that the artwork will 'bring additional meaning to a place', with the depiction of Austen adding another layer of history to the site.

This paper, therefore, aims to consider the significance of place, and the ways in which viewers respond to works of art through the lens of Austen's novels, and her own encounters with art as she engages with similar arguments around likeness, legacy, emotion and suitability of place contended with to this day.

Nagle, Christopher. Western Michigan University. 'Austen's Global Soundscapes: Playlists for Voice & Music'

This paper will explore the idea of what I'm calling (after Marian Wilson Kimber) Jane Austen's Global Playlist: the way that certain distinctive musical traditions contribute to a soundscape that both informs and actively contributes to a shifting sense of "voice" for Austen in the contemporary world of adaptations, remixes, and retellings in diverse global cultures. Unlike a more traditional playlist that would include works from Austen's era, I will focus on some examples drawn from the temporally and culturally diverse array of musical intertexts that have come to supplement and even collaborate actively with new adaptations of Austen's fiction. It is increasingly common for contemporary composers and adaptors to score, select, and embed music in 21st-century adaptations that seems to best reflect an Austenian tone, mood, theme, or texture, fundamentally shaping the voice of Jane Austen for today's audiences. These playlists can be grouped into genres of their own, ranging from Bollywood Austen to Gaelic Austen to Black Diasporic Austen to Jukebox Austen, with elements featured in stage plays and both film and TV productions. Each of these distinctive musical traditions inevitably produces through its convergence with Austen adaptations and retellings a variety of unsettling shifts in temporality, cultural dislocation or juxtaposition, or ironies of style and tone. What interests me about the dominant trends in current adaptation practice is their insistence on translating Austen's voice through music—especially in live performance on stage and recorded performance in film and TV—an act of translation that I call *narrative attunement*,

suggesting both the sense in which “carrying a tune” and “tuning in” might resonate with an audience asked to make sense of music’s often unexpected role in meaning-making. I argue that this widespread practice of musical embeddedness marks the way in which Austen’s audience today “hears” her voice, in layers that refract what once was simply understood as a narrative innovation in one literary medium: free indirect discourse.

Nedregotten Sørbo, Marie. Hivolda. ‘The Challenges of Translating Austen, with Samples from 150 Years of Norwegian Translations’

Whether studying translations of Jane Austen’s novels, or attempting to translate them, it becomes clear that there are considerable challenges involved. These issues have to do with the imperfect correspondence between languages, but also with translators’ perceptions and readers’ expectations. For these reasons, a translation will never be an exact equivalent of the original and will often invite debates about whether we (mis)understand the translated author. In this paper, I will investigate some key concepts and short passages from Austen’s novels and see how they fare in Norwegian translations. All quotes will be back translated into English, and no knowledge of Scandinavian languages is needed. The Norwegian translation history spans from an early *Persuasion* in 1871 to *Sanditon*, *Lady Susan* and *Northanger Abbey* in recent years, encompassing thirteen versions of the novels and juvenilia. I address this field from a double perspective, as translation scholar (*Jane Austen Speaks Norwegian: The Challenges of Literary Translation*, 2018) and as translator (*Northanger Abbey*, 2022).

Nixon, Lauren. Nottingham Trent University. ‘“Hardly Any Veal to be Got”: Reconsidering and Reframing Wartime in Jane Austen’s Fiction’

In her 2009 monograph, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Wartime*, Mary Favret demonstrates how both the literal, geographical and temporal distance of wartime impacted and skewed reality and knowledge in the domestic sphere. This dislocation and disruption in news and information, as Favret has demonstrated, became the cause of significant anxiety and distress for civilians. Reports of British advancements and victories could never be a certain reflection of the current state of conflict, nor could a letter confirming the safety and wellbeing of a beloved son, brother, husband, nephew or friend be any assurance or comfort, due to the significant delay in news. Although historically critics and readers have critiqued a perceived absence of war in Austen’s novels, the disruption of wartime across the British social sphere is constant throughout her fiction. From the scarcity of veal at the market and Elinor Tilney’s horrified response to Catherine Morland’s news from London in *Northanger Abbey* (1818) to the social disruption of touring militia companies in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Austen’s fiction continually explores and exposes the domestic realities of wartime. This paper will reconsider and reframe Austen’s literary engagement with large-scale global warfare, and demonstrate how Austen’s works can be considered within a larger tradition of women’s wartime writing in the long eighteenth century.

Ouyang, Jingyi. University of Bristol. ‘“A Higher Sphere of Society”: How Jane Austen’s legacy fashions the Silver Fork Novel’s Materiality’

This paper will discuss the Silver Fork novel's response to Jane Austen's literary legacy, which is expressed and practiced by this genre's exploring of narrative boundaries of the novel through its intensely material narratives. The Silver Fork novel, a genre that flourished in Britain during the 1820s and 30s and has since died out, is famous for its plotlessness and lack of inner life of

characters, as well as for its unrestrained and supposedly superficial depiction of the material life of the aristocratic society. This essay would like to argue that this remarkable feature of the Silver Fork novel stems in part from an 'inflation' in Austen's work, that is, the discrepancy between the class in which Austen's contemporary and later readers placed her characters, and the class that the financial amounts described in her novels themselves actually suggest. In other words, the money in Austen does not have the effect and impression it should do. Austen's relative silence on material life led Silver Fork novelists to misinterpret the society she depicted and to openly proclaim their own cause of transferring her 'familiar narrative' to a 'higher sphere of society', demonstrating both the genre's inheritance from Austen and how they would explore the boundaries of the English realistic fiction tradition with their material depictions. This paper understands the strangeness of the Silver Fork novel, a genre long dismissed and almost erased from the English literary history, by exploring its creative response to Austen.

Parker, Kerry. University of Southampton. 'The Treatment and Significance of Bad Marriage in the Courtship Novels of Jane Austen and the Broken-Marriage Fiction of Lady Charlotte Bury (1775-1861)'

While Jane Austen negotiated anti-Jacobin attitudes in the 1810s by forbearing to enquire too closely into the subjective experiences of badly-married women, her fiction detailed ubiquitously the financial operations of inheritance, dowries, and marriage portions which had blighted the lives of women in England for generations. While generating sympathy for socially-vulnerable women under cover of a politically-orthodox mode, she simultaneously rejected the mythology of matrimony through the prism of wit and satire: the cultural impact of Austen's moral-domestic agenda, as documented comprehensively by literary scholarship, is nevertheless unequivocal. I contend that when she protested in *Mansfield Park* (1814) with uncharacteristic force about the sexual double standard, she was heard especially clearly by the popular women-writers who followed. Direct contemporary, Lady Charlotte Bury (1775-1861) – who would be recruited by commercial-publisher Henry Colburn in 1827 – used her intimate knowledge of dynastic-marriage, separation and divorce amongst socially-elite women to lobby through fiction at the beginning of the Regency for the reform of matrimonial law. Bury consistently defined marriage exclusively in terms of wives' change of legal status from feme-sole to feme-covert, moving figures such as Austen's 'two Elizas' and Maria Bertram centre-stage to raise women's awareness of their social and legal vulnerabilities. This hitherto uncharted line of literary descent suggests both the indebtedness of progressive women novelists of the long-Regency to their culturally orthodox predecessor and, as early-feminist-activists campaigned for the reform of matrimonial law, the existence of an unexpected interdependence between early nineteenth-century practitioners of popular and diverse cultural forms.

Peterson, Lesley. 'Global Steventon: Empire and Periphery in the Steventon Family Theatricals and Jane Austen's Creative Response'

This presentation considers Jane Austen's early writings as creative responses to two popular works that brought Britain's relationship to the world beyond her borders onto the improvised stage at Steventon: *High Life Below Stairs* (Townley, 1759), a farce set in London that dramatizes white British anxieties about the disruptive effects on the metropolis of West Indian culture (including the ownership of enslaved people); and *The Sultan* (Bickerstaffe, 1775), a farce set in a Turkey harem that dramatizes British fantasies of global superiority and dominance. Both texts call for some actors to don blackface. Austen's comedy "The Visit"

(1788?) is a response to *High Life*; “Jack and Alice” (1790?) updates *The Sultan* by sending one character to an *Indian* harem.

High Life and *The Sultan* were the last two theatricals at Steventon, performed in December 1788 and January 1789—right during the time when Austen was writing many of the pieces collected in *Volume the First* (1787–90). Also at this time, Europe was in turmoil, Abolitionism was gaining traction, and Britain was growing rich from trade with both the West Indies and the East Indies. Meanwhile, Edward Austen travelled on the Continent, Francis sailed the Indian Ocean with the Royal Navy, and Charles was soon to embark on a naval career: no one in the Steventon parsonage could ignore events on the Empire’s periphery. This theatrical and biographical context provides new insights into how Austen’s early juvenilia examines and interrogates contemporary constructions of British character, values, and empire.

Pritchard-Pink, Nicola. ‘The ‘Austen Effect’: Literary Tourism as Pilgrimage’

In this talk, I shall explore Austen tourism in the UK, focusing on the tourists themselves, the sites they visit, and what exactly they are experiencing when they arrive.

Austen tourism is a lucrative and long-standing phenomenon, from Constance Hill’s 1902 pilgrimage to present-day organised tours of “Jane Austen Country”. Global tourists are afforded a wealth of sites, including cities and buildings associated with Austen, film locations, places mentioned in her novels, fan conventions and events, and even statues. I shall discuss the dichotomy that exists between these ‘Austenland’ sites and how tourists experience the relationship between historic and fictional spaces, comparing Plog’s classification of allocentric and psychocentric tourists in relation to Austen tourism, as well as uncover the problematic ambition of global tourists to experience authentic locations.

Using their own words, I shall uncover the push and pull factors which draw Austen tourists to these spaces, what they gain from visiting, and how their personal idea of Jane and prior consumption of Austen impact their travel experience. Tourists bring their own unique image of Regency England with them, and when combined with specific Austen loci, they are able to experience personal imaginative leaps and mentally immerse themselves in their own Regency world. Because of this personal nature of the tourist experience, the role of Austen locations takes on a vital enabling function, helping tourists to connect with their idea of the past as well as Austen’s novels and the worlds she created.

Probett, Emma. ‘From Mansfield With Love’

‘From Mansfield With Love’ (FMWL) has over 100 episodes, rivalling that of ‘The Lizzie Bennet Diaries’ (LBD), and yet it might be the least well known Austen adaptation of the digital age. Despite this, FMWL is a global phenomenon in its own right. The creators used multimedia as part of its weekly uploads — with actors tweeting out from character accounts — a variety of different set spaces in different cities were used to follow Fanny Price’s own movements, and rather than presenting itself as a video diary, the conceit for the channel was that it was a collection of video letters from Frankie (Fanny) to her brother William, far away at sea. Given *Mansfield Park*’s own comparative lack of popularity against other Austen novels, it is not a surprise that FMWL wasn’t the sensation that LBD was. However, there is still much to gain from the study of this series and how the writers connect with Austen’s outlook and writing style, as well as exploring how they updated the novel’s heroine — a heroine so often accused by critics over the last 200 years of being boring and frigid — to show her disenfranchised state in a much more relatable manner to the modern reader. In this paper, I will show: how this adaptation embraces Austen’s original text, how FMWL explores

connections between the global and the local, and how the series used physical and digital spaces to create its own world within the real world, much like the novel.

Rattray, Adam. Winchester College. ‘8 College Street’

Adam Rattray studied architectural history under Dr. David Watkin and for years has been involved in the restoration of historic buildings. He teaches at Winchester College where he is head of Art History and is part of the team responsible for the refurbishment of 8 College St. prior to a summer opening in 2025. The discovery of a set of rooms in the form of a four-room apartment, adequate to the needs of the Austens in 1817, but ‘lost’ to 19th- and 20th-century alterations, is a highlight of the summer exhibition.

Richard, Jessica. Wake Forest University. ‘Growing Up with Jane Austen’

In 1991, as a precocious 16-year-old in far northern Minnesota, I won a summer research grant from the US National Endowment for the Humanities to write a long, researched essay on the role of fathers in Jane Austen’s novels. My mentor for this project was my high school English teacher, a 42-year-old married father of 2 daughters a few years younger than me. By the end of that summer, I was having sex with my mentor. Six years later I married him. 32 years later, after 20 years of reading, teaching, and writing about Jane Austen, I divorced him.

Perhaps because so many of us first read Austen’s novels as young girls, her oeuvre offers special occasion for self-reflection and growth. In memoirs from Pakistan, Australia, the UK, and the US, writers describe how Austen helped them grow up, teaching them to navigate familial and romantic relationships. We learn these lessons through novels in which Austen explore the didactic narrative imperative, the pressure of the marriage plot to teach girls lessons.

In this paper, drawing on my larger book project, I place my personal experience in the contexts of these memoirs and within the trope of lesson-learning in her works while also exploring how teaching and writing about Austen taught me lessons about consent, choice, and autonomy. Through the works of Jane Austen, I both grew up too soon and grew up at last.

Rytting, Jenny. North West Missouri. ‘Two Global Figures: Jane Austen and Carl Jung’

Although Jane Austen and Swiss psychologist Carl Jung seem to have little in common, they are both, like Elizabeth Bennet, “studier[s] of character” (*P&P* 42). They are also both well known worldwide: Austen fans (and adaptations and translations) can be found around the globe, and Jung’s theory of psychological type (in the form of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) likewise has an international reach. Moreover, their spheres intersect in the application of type theory to literary characters found everywhere from Middle Earth to galaxies far, far away— including Austen’s “3 or 4 families in a Country Village” (9 Sept 1814). I have myself found the MBTI to provide insight into characters’ thoughts, feelings, and actions, as it does with human subjects. However, many literary type schemata are presented online without any theoretical justification. A psychologist co-researcher and I explored the methodology of typing fictional characters by asking volunteers who knew *Emma* well to take the MBTI as if they were a character in it and comparing the results to typing based on textual analysis. We presented our study at a meeting of the Association for Psychological Type International in 2017 but have not yet shared it with a Janeite audience. My presentation combines this previous study, tailored to Austen enthusiasts rather than type practitioners, with an analysis of recent, online Austen type schemata as a way to gain further insight into the

intersection of type theory and literary criticism and the enduring global reach of Austen's beloved characters.

Saadaoui, Nada. University of Cumbria. 'Walking in Jane Austen's Regency Era English Landscapes: An Exploration of Historical, Cultural, and Literary Significance'

As walking became popular in England during the Regency Era, Jane Austen was among the many who indulged in the activity both in writing and practice. In her study of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Olivia Murphy, a prominent Austen scholar, raises a key question 'what can be meant by walking?', an act which she demonstrates is 'simple but controversial' (Murphy, 2013). This paper will delve into the complex milieu of Austen's writings and examine the meaning and importance of walking, as explored in my PhD research. I will start with situating walking within the broader historical context of Regency England, in which Austen's representation of walking provides insights into the cultural and social changes of the time, drawing on a range of influences such as the Romantic movement, Picturesque landscape gardening, travel writing, class and gender politics. I will reflect on the ways in which Austen uses walking as a metaphor for social and emotional progress, and how it enables her to explore the complexities of social relationships and the limits of female mobility. I will therefore refer to Sally Palmer's argument on the symbolic value of walking as a 'step by step' progression which happens on a figurative and literal level (Palmer, 2001). My paper will offer a combined theoretical and geographical approach, which encapsulates the significance of walking in different Jane Austen landscapes as open fields, bounded gardens, seaside and towns, and the purpose each entails including recreation, health, privacy and social interactions.

Sabor, Peter. McGill University. 'Jane Austen and Canada: From Anna Lefroy to Joan Austen-Leigh'

This paper has a dual focus. First, I wish to consider Jane Austen's interest in Canada, manifested in her reading and in one of the best of her poems. I shall then turn to the Canadian response to Austen, beginning with some little-known readings of her novels in her lifetime and concluding with a selection of Canadian contributions to Austen studies from the late nineteenth century to the present day.

Saglia, Diego. University of Parma. 'Outing *Pride and Prejudice*: Gay Revisions of Austen at the Turn of the Century'

An examination of the reimagining and reformulation of the plotlines, characters, and themes of *Pride and Prejudice* from gay perspectives in three films – Rose Troche's *Bedrooms and Hallways* (1998); Byrum Geisler's *Before the Fall* (2016); and Andrew Ahn's *Fire Island* (2022) – and the podcast series *Gay Pride and Prejudice* (2022) by Zackary Grady.

Salah, Christiana. Hope College. 'Mr. Darcy's Beard: Transcultural Readings of Piety and Prejudice in *Ayesha at Last*'.

Austen's novels have always been global texts; now transcultural adaptations of her works circulate globally. As Linda Hutcheon argues, "traveling stories can be thought of in terms of cultural selection" and successful adaptations "exploit their cultural environment to their own advantage." The reader's own cultural framework, more than any metric of fidelity, determines an adaptation's success in a particular environment. This paper unpacks why, when Christian college students in the U.S. encounter an Austen adaptation by a Canadian Muslim author, one aspect of the retelling is consistently met with resistance.

Uzma Jalaluddin's 2018 novel *Ayesha at Last*, a *Pride and Prejudice* modernization, produces humor and resonance by mining its rich setting: a neighborhood of Southeast Asian immigrants in Toronto. Yet the portrayal of Khalid (Darcy)—in particular, the changes Ayesha (Elizabeth) inspires in him—receives pushback from my students. The reason, I argue, lies in Jalaluddin's choice to reimagine Darcy's class pride as piety, while also making him a target of Islamophobia.

Jalaluddin's text introduces the complex issue of whether piety, to borrow Darcy's terms, should be considered "good principles" or "pride and conceit". Austen, of course, satirizes sanctimoniousness in Mr. Collins. Khalid, the most orthodox of the Muslim characters, is critiqued as judgmental. But changing pride to piety also means Khalid's arc is to bend on his devout beliefs—a not-so-clear character improvement. This paper asks whether students' resistance to his arc stems from a flaw in the structure of Jalaluddin's reimagining, or from misreading in a changed context.

Sangster, Matthew. University of Glasgow. 'Austen Among her Contemporaries in Early-Nineteenth-Century Scottish Reading Communities'

This paper will use data from the recently-completed *Books and Borrowing, 1750-1830* database to provide a fuller picture of the writers who were read alongside (or instead of) Jane Austen in the first two decades after her novels were published. *Books and Borrowing* data lets us see Austen's novels being read by French prisoners-of-war outside Selkirk and taken up enthusiastically on the Orkney Islands during the 1810s, allowing us to trace the interests of some of her earliest readers by examining their borrowing profiles. The database also provides quantitative evidence of the scale of borrowings of Austen's works as compared, for example, with the novels of Frances Burney and Maria Edgeworth that she held up as valuable exemplars in *Northanger Abbey* and the numbers of *The Spectator* that she denigrated in the same passage. The data also provides some indication of the fluctuations in her popularity. Austen was borrowed relatively rarely from Robert Chambers' circulating library in the late 1820s, but there is evidence that her inclusion in Richard Bentley's Standard Novels series drew readers back to her works, setting her reputation on more solid foundations as the nineteenth century progressed.

Šepić, Tatjana. University of Applied Sciences, Croatia. 'Jane Austen in Croatia - Translations and Reception'

For more than 150 years Jane Austen's work remained largely unknown to Croatian audiences. The first translation of one of her novels, *Emma*, appeared only in 1962, followed by *Sense and Sensibility* in 1979 and *Pride and Prejudice* in 1997. However, from the late 1990s we have a sort of Austenmania that started with new translations of the three novels mentioned and her other major novels and juvenile writings translated for the first time. Besides British TV and film adaptations, sequels and spin-offs, there are Croatian blogs, critical articles, essays, book reviews, students' projects, programmes produced by Croatian television, public lectures on Jane Austen's work and her modernity, even a ballet inspired by the writer's most famous novel *Pride and Prejudice*. The paper discusses the Jane Austen phenomenon in Croatia, her reception and reputation among scholars and common readers. It analyses some problems and challenges Austen's refined prose poses to translators and the way these translations reflect the socio-historical context in which they have been published. Further on, it discusses how and whether these translations and scholarly literary criticism have changed common readers' perception and understanding of Austen's novels. Do readers still see them only as romances

or the novels' complex nature entice them to decode hidden meanings underlying their apparently simple love stories? Is it the writer's vivid portrayal of characters, or her distinctive literary style that captivate their attention? These are some of the questions discussed in order to explain why readers in Croatia read and love Jane Austen today.

Shapira, Yael. Bar-Ilan University. 'Austen and the Minerva Question: The Case of *More Ghosts!*'

Austen frequently comes up in discussions of William Lane's Minerva Press, primarily because of *Northanger*: all but one of the novels Isabella Thorpe recommends to Catherine Morland were published by Lane. Many scholars now believe that Austen did not simply use the *Northanger* novels as a metonymy for popular fiction, but read these particular novels and invoked them specifically and purposefully. But what other Minerva novels might Austen have read? What more might we learn about her attitude toward *Abbey* reads this much-denigrated yet ubiquitous type of fiction?

Like many questions that involve the history of reading, these call for a certain willingness to speculate, and that is what I propose to do in my discussion of Mrs. F. C. Patrick's Gothic parody *More Ghosts!* (1798), which (as Mercy Cannon notes in a rare critical discussion of the novel from 2020) shares *Northanger Abbey*'s ambivalence towards the popular genre it is supposedly mocking. I would like to go a step further and argue that *More Ghosts!* has enough in common with *Northanger Abbey* to suggest not just generic affinity, but actual influence. As I will show, Patrick's novel – published just as Austen was beginning to write *Susan* – has a striking number of textual and thematic commonalities with *Northanger Abbey* and anticipates its main generic innovations. I will conclude by arguing that, its silly title notwithstanding, *More Ghosts!* challenges and complicates common critical views of Minerva fiction as being necessarily derivative and secondary, and raises important questions about the flow of influence in the Romantic literary marketplace.

Shimazaki, Hatsuyo. 'Reading Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* as a Modern Interpretation of *Mansfield Park*: Narrative style and the Socially Inferior Protagonist's Point of View'

When the Swedish Academy announced that the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature 2017 was Kazuo Ishiguro, a committee member humorously said, 'if you mix Jane Austen and Franz Kafka you get Ishiguro in a nutshell'.¹ Ishiguro's masterpiece, *The Remains of the Day* (1989), had indeed gathered attention in comparison with Austen's novels for its similar setting in an English country house. However, research connecting their works has not developed. This may be owing to Ishiguro's departure from the historical drama; some of his later works are categorised as fantasy or dystopian fiction, making it difficult for readers to see resemblances to Austen's.

Interestingly, Ishiguro occasionally mentions about the influence he had from Austen's writings. At an event, he observed with a reference to *Mansfield Park* that he had 'learnt so much from this profound novelist about nuance, understatement, [and] technique'.² Ishiguro's acknowledgement of Austen's skilful writing techniques is important. The real connection between his novels and Austen's is beyond external descriptions of the polite society but in their focus on protagonists whose liberty of speech is restricted due to decorum and social hierarchies.

I will compare Fanny Price, Austen's most subordinate heroine, with that of Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021), a story of a humanoid robot. *Klara*'s ambiguous status as a companion to a teenage girl reminds us of Fanny's inferior position in the wealthy family, making her a

bystander of social and private scenes. Their narratives often convey complex observations and emotions that are not explicitly stated. I will examine both writers' elaborate writing techniques that allow readers to empathise with these socially downtrodden heroines.

Singh, Suyasha. IIT-Roorkee. '*Trishna* and Anxieties of Empire'

In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), we see manifestations of "anxieties of Empire" (Leask, 92) in the form of pre-occupation with wealth and property, leading to, the normativisation of colonial social order not only for readers at home but also abroad (aided by imposition of education of English Literature in the colonies). But is the presence of the text in postcolonial democracy's everyday (here, India), just a residual, colonial hegemonic intervention or an occurrence where the text has been 'vernacularised' — remade in postcolonial reception/consumption — by aspirational and affective encounter with postcolonial citizen-consumers? The paper will examine a particular instance of *Doordarshan* (the State-owned broadcasting network) telecasted TV-series *Trishna* (1985), an adaptation and transposition of *Pride and Prejudice* to an urban middle-class Indian milieu, which made it illegible as an 'English' text and circulated it into vernacular spaces that had little to do with institutionalised English studies. The paper will explore whether the colonial legacy in the form of English language and literature change its nature at this instance, instead becoming a tool in decolonising the production and control of knowledge? As well as, in construction of identity of the subject of an emerging modern India, that was grappling with socio-cultural and geopolitical fissures. The paper will draw attention to the increasing mass viewership and resultant audience's intimate relationship with entertainment serials like *Trishna* — texts which had transcended space-time and were made-own through vernacular assimilation — leading to an engagement with questions around the meaning of nationhood and belonging in a country which was grappling with caste, class and gender divide.

Smith, Orienne. University of Maryland. "No Reading, No China, No Composure": Female Anger in *Mansfield Park*

My paper will explore the local function of anger in Austen's work, focusing on the anger of the characters of Fanny Price and Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park*. Under the veneer of the exquisite negotiations of polite society and social cues engaged in by her characters, Austen's novels simmer with suppressed rage, explosions of fury and self-directed anger, but none more so than in *Mansfield Park*. Against the sordid backdrop of the Bertram family connection with the slave trade and the oppressive presence of the patriarchal Sir Thomas Bertram, the local acts of resistance and anger of the young women in the novel are emblematic of an intestine war within *Mansfield Park*. The petty competitiveness of the Bertram sisters is no match for Fanny's barely disguised anger at Edmund's preference for Mary Crawford, an anger that consumes her throughout the novel. In contrast, Mary's anger is sporadic and situational, tempered by her love for Edmund. In this novel focused on "improvement," Fanny and, later, her sister Susan are given the opportunity to rise above the coarseness of their familial roots, and to evolve and grow in the process. Mary is given no such opportunity: like Fanny, Mary possesses many good qualities, but unlike Fanny, Mary is not rescued and "improved," nor is she granted a happy ending. I suggest that the novel's unsympathetic treatment of Mary Crawford is in tension with Austen's (and the reader's) frustration, bordering on anger, with the unfair hand that has been dealt to Mary Crawford. Austen's decision not to rescue Mary reflects the realities of Austen's world as well as our own—a world founded on the suppression of the productive use of anger to effect change.

Smith, Rebecca and Amy Franklin-Willis. University of Southampton. Panel: ‘Jane the Octopus and Friends: Contemporary Novelists Talk Back to Austen’

This panel will consider the use of Austen’s work and the figure of Jane Austen herself as inspiration for contemporary fiction. Like an octopus, Austen in the twenty-first century is a shapeshifter, a creature with a huge reach, adapting to different surroundings and defying expectations, a charismatic but still mysterious being.

Rebecca Smith will explore the way that Austen’s work underpins her own contemporary novels including most recently, *Conversations With An Octopus* (Legend Press, 2024), a quirky crime novel which takes inspiration from *Sanditon* and features a wise, all-seeing octopus called Jane. She will examine what she has learned from Austen and used in her own work, in particular Austen’s use of parallels and reflections and quiet but determined female characters.

Amy Franklin-Willis will discuss recent novel re-imaginings of Austen’s work that range from a historical transgender Elizabeth Bennet, a contemporary Indian American Austen tetralogy, and a contemporary *Pride & Prejudice* set in Brooklyn, New York with an Afro-Latina heroine. It is not a truth universally acknowledged that these novels mirror their origin stories. Instead, they bring Austen to a new generation of readers and offer a gateway to the original novels.

Stabler, Jane. Panel chair: ‘Responses to *Jane Austen and Lord Byron: Regency Relations*’

Jane Austen and Lord Byron made a joint appearance at the convergence of the Byron Society of America and the Jane Austen Society of North America at New York in May 2008: *Austen and Byron: Together at Last*. Since then, scholarship has usually treated Austen and Byron apart, but in 2024 Christine Kenyon Jones published *Jane Austen and Lord Byron: Regency Relations*, bringing together again the two most brilliant ironists of the Regency era. *Jane Austen and Lord Byron: Regency Relations* opened multiple new points of comparison between the two writers, including the publishing house of John Murray and the editorship of William Gifford that Austen and Byron shared; their mutual admiration for Edmund Kean’s acting, Walter Scott’s poetry, and gothic excess; their separate intersections with the Lord Portsmouth scandal. As Christine Kenyon Jones points out, no two writers are more responsible for the creation of the male fantasy figure who would dominate romantic fiction for the next two hundred years across print (Byromania) and screen (Darcymania). This panel brings Christine Kenyon Jones together with international scholars of Byron and Austen: Peter Graham, Emeritus Professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech (author of *Don Juan and Regency England* (1990)), and a Ph.D candidate, Emma Brodey from Yale University (in 2021 Emma curated an on-line exhibition of editions of *Pride and Prejudice* called ‘Publication and Prejudice’, which you can see at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DD9wcuPfQE>). The panel will be chaired by Professor Jane Stabler, University of St Andrews.

Strabone, Jeff. Connecticut College. ‘Jane Fairfax as Precarious Labour: A Marxist Reading of *Emma*’

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word ‘precariat’—a portmanteau of *precarious* and *proletariat*—was coined by US socialist Michael Harrington in 1989. It received book-length treatment in 2011 in *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, by the UK economist Guy Standing, who defined it as a class ‘consisting of many millions around the world without an anchor of stability’ who, by virtue of being educated, experience ‘status discord’ and ‘have to accept jobs that have a status or income beneath what they believe’ they

are worth—like the baristas and interns we graduate every year. Two centuries earlier, Jane Austen gave us a member of the precariat *avant la lettre* in the character of Jane Fairfax.

Described as a child who ‘became the property’ of her grandmother and aunt, their own class position declining, Jane then ‘belonged to Colonel Campbell’s family’ until, their daughter married, her services as companion were no longer needed. With education but without prospects, Jane prepares to sell herself to the offices ‘not quite of human flesh’. Rather than hear a possible allusion to sex work, Mrs. Elton hears instead ‘a fling at the slave-trade’. Although the novel affords Jane the agency of ending her engagement to Frank Churchill—whose aunt’s offstage death, miraculously timed, saves her from the governess-trade—the reader is invited to contemplate what *really* happens to the class-descending Jane Fairfaxes of the world.

Informed by recent scholarship emphasising Austen’s keen understanding of economics and class, my paper performs a class analysis of the Bates–Fairfax side of the novel. What does placing Jane Fairfax at the moral centre of the novel allow us to see about the mature Austen’s understanding of global problems of class and labour, whether slave, ‘free’, or sexual?

Toner, Anne. University of Cambridge. ‘Jane Austen and Group Portraiture: the Conversation-Piece, 1818/1938’

Once Louisa Musgrove is deemed safe after her fall, life returns to Uppercross. Anne observes Mrs Musgrove at the centre of a happy, domestic scene. The people and the things that surround Mrs Musgrove are carefully positioned: on one side, girls at a table cutting up silk and gold paper; on the other tressels, trays, cold pies and riotous boys. A fire blazes, Charles and Mary arrive, and Mr Musgrove “sat down close” to Lady Russell to make conversation. “It was a fine family-piece” concludes the narrator.

The focus of my talk is the “family-piece”—also known as a “conversation-piece”—a popular genre of eighteenth-century group portraiture. Austen’s writing has much in common with this art that she references, indeed imitates, in *Persuasion*. Both are concerned with sociability, intimate group dynamics and talk. Like the painted conversation-piece, talk in Austen’s fiction is observed (as well as enacted), and is done so in a relatively constrained form.

The conversation-piece largely disappeared from view in the later nineteenth century, but became strikingly fashionable again thanks to Phillip Sassoon’s 1930 exhibition of 152 paintings in London. This neo-Georgian revival of the conversation-piece evoked Austen’s writing and world. I will attend to Rex Whistler’s 1938 portrait of Elsie and Robert Tritton in the style of a conversation-piece in front of their recently purchased home, Godmersham Park, formerly owned by Austen’s brother Edward. Moving between eighteenth and twentieth century contexts, I will examine Austen’s affinities with the conversation-piece, in terms of modernity, innovation, nostalgia.

Tremblet, Aurelie. Université Grenoble Alpes. ‘The Collective in Jane Austen’s Novels’

Austen’s novels are about unions. Not only because all her finished novels end on marriages, but because she placed a high premium on interpersonal relationships, which, to her, constituted the cornerstone not only of human felicity but of morality and social harmony. Her ethics was indeed one of sociability and sympathy – showing striking similarities with Lord Shaftesbury’s —: both rejected an atomist vision of society.

To Austen, the rise in individualism that emanated from the new society she saw emerging at the end of the 18thc (i.e the birth of the consumer society—a phenomenon soon to become worldwide—, but also the rise of the middle-class) indeed constituted a major threat. We would offer two examples:

1/ the famous toothpick scene at Gray's in *Sense and Sensibility*, with the gentleman's self-centered and myopic approach of reality, making him oblivious to the bigger picture of society.
2/ the numerous hypochondriacs in her novels. For, it is more rarely noted but Austen was particularly interested in this illness, which she actually depicted as a pathology of narcissism affecting a whole social class.

Setting her reflection into its philosophical but also socio-economic context, I would seek to demonstrate that Austen's overriding concern was indeed to tackle the issue of knowing others and bonding in a new culture tending to make people develop a self-centered attitude. As such, the image of the "circle" – a pervading image in all her novels – proves absolutely central. A most often positive metaphor (implying close-knit relationships, protection and unity), the image also epitomized Austen's profound awareness of – if not deep-seated anxiety at – our being cut off from one another, irredeemably enclosed in separate psychological bubbles. A condition she deemed tragic but universal.

Urda, Kathleen E. Bronx Community College. 'A Stranger in Strange Lands? *Pride and Prejudice* and Religious Communities'

A fascinating sub-genre of recent Jane Austen updates are those set in communities with strong and conservative religious traditions, ones often quite disparate both from Austen's own Anglican background and from each other. This paper proposes a comparison of two such adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Uzma Jalaluddin's *Ayesha at Last* (2019), which is set in a Toronto Muslim community, and Sarah Price's *First Impressions: An Amish Tale of Pride and Prejudice* (2014), which takes place in a Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Amish farming community. Through this comparison, I will explore how these types of transcultural modernizations might further inform our understanding of the term global as it relates to Austen's novels and their appeal. What aspects of *Pride and Prejudice* translate and why, especially into such highly specific religious settings? Are there particular aspects beyond the romantic plot and main characters that both adaptations focus on and relate to their community's beliefs and practices? Is it a perceived conservatism in Austen's work that speaks to writers familiar with these respective communities or is it instead Austen's portrayal of characters who maintain independence in highly ordered environments that these works capture? Both? Is the understated nature of Austen's religious evocations in *Pride and Prejudice* what makes it possible for the novel – and Austen – to "go global" in this religious direction or is it another aspect of the work?

Vallasek, Júlia. Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj. "'Standing Alone in the World of Romantic Mists and Towers.'" A Few Remarks on Hungarian and Romanian Translations of Jane Austen'

Translation and translatability are good measures of reception of an author's works in a different culture. When those works become available to a community in another language, the number and frequency of their retranslation and republication can all be good indicators of reception.

The date of the first translations of Jane Austen's novels varies across Europe from the 19th century French translations to the beginning of 21st century translations into certain minor languages. My paper examines the similarities and differences of these translations in two East-

European countries (Hungary and Romania), focusing on their publication history and reception. The outline starts from the publishing of the first translations in the 1930s and 1940s, their contemporary interpretations, through the emergence of systematic translations of Austen's oeuvre, and how the author was perceived during the Communist period, concluding with the "Austen-boom" of the turn of the century, when publishers in both Hungary and Romania capitalized on the global success of media adaptations, and when the shift to market-driven publishing radically facilitated both the accessibility and interpretation of Austen's work in those countries.

As an Austen translator myself, (Jane Austen's Letters, Lady Susan, Sanditon, The Watsons), in my paper I also attempt to highlight how the different translations in different periods tackle the stylistic/linguistic challenges of transferring Austen's works from one language and cultural context to another.

Wang, Chunxia. China University of Petroleum. 'World History Hidden in Tea-things in Jane Austen's Novels'

In Jane Austen's novels, tea sets—including urns, pots, cups, and saucers—appear frequently, often accompanied by tea, sugar, coffee, and other elements associated with social gatherings. These items, considered "worldly goods" in global history, reflect significant historical and material connections. Drawing on the critical frameworks of thing theory and object studies, as developed by scholars like Bill Brown, Elaine Freedgood, and Suzanne Daly, this essay traces the global material histories of these "worldly goods." By examining Austen's letters and biographies alongside her novels, it explores how these objects reveal Austen's engagement with key historical themes such as war, empire, trade, the navy, and slavery, positioning her within broader global narratives. Specifically, the material histories of these goods illuminate the significance of locations like Cheapside and Gracechurch Street in *Pride and Prejudice*, illustrating London's role as a world capital. The novel's ending, with the Gardiners—businesspeople—being "always on the most intimate terms" with Darcy and Elizabeth, gains new meaning through this lens. The essay also examines the history of china, shedding light on Austen's possible support for British china manufacturing amid intense competition with Chinese, German, and French producers, as suggested in *Northanger Abbey*. Furthermore, the history of sugar uncovers Austen's nuanced views on slavery and the slave trade in *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, while tea's history connects to British anxieties over trade with China, as reflected in Fanny Price's reading of George Macartney's *Journal of an Embassy to the Emperor of China*. These "worldly goods," products of European colonial expansion, also underscore Austen's portrayals of navy officers in *Persuasion*, which may reflect her perspectives on British imperialism.

Watson, Nicola J. Open University. 'The Pedant and Popular Biography: or, Reflections on the BBC Series *Jane Austen: Rise of a Genius* (2025)'

In honour of the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth, The Open University co-funded a three-episode docudrama devoted to Austen's life and career, *Jane Austen: Rise of a Genius*, on which Watson served as academic consultant. This paper offers an insider's account of working on the script and successive cuts, situating the programming as a form of popular biography/biofiction within the longer history of Austen biography, and reflecting on the struggles between pedantry and creativity that making the series entailed.

Weldon, Amy. Luther College, Decorah. "'Some Stay, Which Cannot Be Undermined': Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, and the Corset"

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and Jane Austen (1775-1817) might appear to have little in common. Yet a close reading of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and *Persuasion* (1817) shows them struggling with the same question: How can a woman hold herself upright as a being of sensuality *and* strength in a hostile-to-indifferent world, becoming – in the Biblical phrase both Austen and Wollstonecraft would have known – a “woman of valor?” Perhaps the answer starts with the garment Wollstonecraft and Austen would have put on each morning: a corset, or “stay,” which was believed to help a woman develop an outward version of the inward uprightness that study, exercise, and spiritual discipline could bring. But the breast-lifting, waist-cinching corset could spark the desires of the male observer *and* the female wearer, although desire’s risks, then and now, fell more heavily on women than men. Fashion brings pleasure and sensual expression to life (as new scholarship on Jane Austen’s wardrobe confirms), yet Wollstonecraft anticipates the dangers of Instagram-influencer self-commodification when she declares, “Taught from their infancy that beauty is woman's sceptre, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison.” As women, how can we express our bodies’ delights and desires without being tricked into a beauty-focused, social-media-commodified “girl power” box? What does it *really* mean to be strong? Perhaps Austen and Wollstonecraft might have some answers.

Wells, Juliette. Goucher College. ‘New Discoveries and Questions from the Morgan Library & Museum’s *A Lively Mind: Jane Austen at 250*’

A Lively Mind (6 June – 14 September, 2025), for which I am guest co-curator, celebrates both Austen’s landmark year and also the 50th anniversary of the bequest of her manuscripts to the Morgan Library by Alberta H. Burke, the distinguished American Austen expert and collector. The exhibition presents manuscripts, artworks, and rare editions from the Morgan’s peerless holdings together with loans from more than a dozen institutional and private collections, including iconic artifacts from Jane Austen’s House in Chawton and an extensive selection from the Burke Collection at Goucher College in Baltimore, USA. In addition to telling afresh the story of Austen’s life and authorship, *A Lively Mind* traces Austen’s early publication and reception in North America, drawing on my *Reading Austen in America* (2017) and *A New Jane Austen: How Americans Brought Us the World’s Greatest Novelist* (2023).

A Lively Mind welcomes every curious visitor through immersive exhibition design and storytelling. At the same time, our exhibition contributes to Austen scholarship by sharing two new discoveries that extend my own research (plus one factual correction), as well as by reopening two questions that had been thought to be settled concerning two manuscripts and one artwork relating to Austen.

I will show and explain evidence supporting the following:

- that the key figures in watercolors of Nova Scotia social life, c. 1818, attributed to Christian, Countess of Dalhousie—an owner of a copy of the 1816 Philadelphia *Emma*—are a self-portrait and a portrait of her husband, Lord Dalhousie;
- that William Dean Howells was inspired to read Austen by his elder daughter, Winifred, an aspiring poet who died as a young woman;
- that the smaller of the two notes on Austen’s composition—the unsigned one—may well have been written by Jane rather than, as now generally believed, by Cassandra as a draft for her longer, signed list;

- and that Hüet-Villiers' "Mrs Q" is very unlikely to have been the portrait Austen acclaimed in a May 1813 letter to Cassandra for its perfect resemblance to "Mrs Bingley," i.e., Jane Bennet

Wilson, Hannah. University of Cambridge. 'Gift Exchange and the Uncertain Boundaries of Consensual Courtship Intimacies in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*'

Historical perspectives on sexualised intimacies in Romantic-period thought invite consideration of consensual boundaries in physical terms (Anna Clark 2011; Katie Barclay 2013). Yet, since these conclusions are largely drawn from male-authored legal treatises, perceptions of consent predominantly rest on repressing women's voices. Proposing that the literary genre of the courtship novel provided a crucial forum which enabled female authors to publicly discuss consent, this paper examines blurred boundaries of sexual desire and control during amatory gifting in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1818). By interrogating the distanced viewpoint concerning the exchange of Marianne's lock of hair and Edward's ring, my analysis reflects upon Austen's narrative preoccupation with the unknowability of internal emotions behind this act of sexualised gifting. This paper shows how Austen's courtship gift scenes ask how freely women's minds can truly accede to sexualised relations when navigating the under-explored emotional coercions of amatory exchange, expanding understanding of consensual boundaries in Romantic-period literature to be a mental, rather than solely bodily, experience.

Zille, Tom. University of Cambridge. 'Jane Austen and the British Imperial Curriculum: Post-Independence Discourses in African Universities'

The extent to which the rise of English as a subject both in secondary and higher education was tied into a British imperial project has been conclusively demonstrated in recent decades. Alongside Shakespeare, Jane Austen was one of the cornerstones of the English curriculum taught across the Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, while Shakespeare often served as a representative of ostensibly 'universal' literary qualities, Austen became a symbol of social and cultural Englishness – which opened her up to quite specific critiques by intellectuals in formerly colonized territories from the 1950s onwards, a process that has received little scholarly attention.

This paper will explore Austen's prominent place in post-independence debates about the status and value of the Eurocentric English curriculum at African universities in formerly British-colonized territories, such as the 'Nairobi Literature Debate' of the 1960s. The writers and academics at Nairobi, Makerere, Ibadan, the National University of Lesotho, and in Botswana who engaged in these debates found Austen's works to, at best, encapsulate the socio-cultural disconnect between colonizers and colonized (a view most notably proposed by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o); at worst, they regarded her depictions of landed upper-middle class lifestyles as complicit in a colonial intellectual oppression that served other, bloodier forms of oppression – as suggested in the university teaching of Molarra Ogundipe-Leslie at Ibadan, or in Felix Mnthali's poem *The Stranglehold of English Lit.* (1961), in which Austen becomes fully synonymous with the discipline of English.

Contextualizing these discourses with other early postcolonial literary and critical responses to Austen and drawing on recent theoretical work on decolonization by scholars such as Achille Mbembe and Olúfẹmi Táíwò, this paper will explore a 'writing back' (Salman Rushdie) that is emblematic of the broader cultural aftermath of British imperialism.

