

Yearning for Restriction: Propagating Conservative Legal Norms in
Right-Wing Literary Podcasts and Religion-Centered Editions of
Works by Jane Austen and Mary Shelley

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Why is the Christian Right devoting so much attention to beloved classics by authors including Jane Austen and Mary Shelley? Challenging what they disparage as decadent mainstream academia and immoral literary theory, right-wing scholars and commentators are developing an entirely separate scholarly ecosystem—ranging from publishers and series of edited critical editions to digital media including podcasts. My chapter in progress explores how the Ignatius Critical Editions, founded by a scholar whose dissertation was directed by Pope Benedict XVI, recently have been launched as a platform to promote reactionary political views to schoolchildren and college students. Even as the ICE editors and contributors deplore what they present as leftist academics' use of literature to further a political agenda, the critical apparatus they have added to editions of *Frankenstein*, *Mansfield Park*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and other canonical novels is geared to cast as eternal truths subjective views of reproductive politics, gender norms, socioeconomic class division, and the originalist legal framework. I also examine the “Great Books” podcast developed by *National Review* magazine in tandem with Hillsdale College; the episodes cultivate a nostalgic view of the past through commentary on the aforementioned novels and other canonical works. Furthermore, I consider how liberal and progressive academics' inattention to right-wing researchers and culture—and, in some cases, closed-minded and exclusionary views regarding conservative beliefs and reception of eighteenth-century literature—have played into the development of the right-wing literary ecosystem.