Jocelyn Harris, *Satire, Celebrity, and Politics in Jane Austen* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2017); paperback; pp. xxi, 349; RRP: US$51.99;
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Jocelyn Harris’s fascinating and very impressive book argues that Jane Austen “was a satirist, a celebrity watcher, and a politician in the historical sense of one keenly interested in practical politics” (p. 1) Individual chapters deal with Austen’s knowledge of and interactions with the celebrities of her day, and the different ways she incorporated this material into her novels. Chapter 1, “‘Ungossiping Authority’: Fanny Burney, Cassandra Cooke and Jane Austen,” examines the friendship between celebrity novelist and sometime lady-in-waiting to Queen Charlotte Fanny Burney (Madame d’Arblay) and Austen’s mother’s cousin Cassandra Cooke. Parallels are drawn between Burney and her sister Susanna (Susan) Phillips and Fanny and Susan Price in *Mansfield Park*, and Harris identifies the incident in *Emma* when Mr Elton proposes to the heroine in a carriage with an episode in Burney’s life prior to her marriage. The argument is supported by the extensive correspondence that Regency women kept up, and by diaries, court records, and newspaper and magazine items.
 Chapter 2, “‘He Swore and Drank, He Was Dirty and Gross’: Lieutenant Price and Lieutenant Phillips,” extends the knowledge that Austen had of the Burney sisters. Susan Burney married Molesworth Phillips, a Lieutenant chiefly famous for being on Captain James Cook’s final voyage, on which Cook died on 14 February 1779 after being stabbed at Kealakekua Bay, Hawai’i. Phillips was initially treated as heroic by some artists and writers for shooting his Hawai’ian assailant, and sometimes he was credited with avenging Cook’s death. The reality was less edifying, as Phillips did not retrieve Cook’s body which the Hawai’ians then dismembered, and was later court-martialled and convicted of cowardice and negligence at the Battle of Camperdown in 1797. Harris identifies him with Lieutenant Price, father of Fanny, William and Susan in *Mansfield Park*. Chapter 3, “‘Everybody is Cross and Teasing’: The Mansfield Theatricals,” continues the analysis of that novel, connecting it with Maria Edgeworth’s *Patronage* (1814). Austen admired Edgeworth’s novels, as well as those of Burney, and the analysis of parallels between *Mansfield Park* and *Patronage*, by way of Shakespeare and the contextualisation of private theatricals in the Regency era, is lively and interesting.
 Chapter 4, “‘Censure in Common Use’: Women, Politics and Satire,” covers female writers including Edgeworth and Mary Wollstonecraft, commenting on poverty and dependence such as that experienced by Mrs and Miss Bates in *Emma*. Chapter 5, “‘Carried Home, Dead Drunk’: Satires on the Royal Family,” investigates Austen’s sources of knowledge about the Prince Regent and other members of the royal family, and also her close connections (never more than one degree of separation, Harris avers) with them. Chapter 6, “‘Hair So Untidy, So Blowsy!’ Elizabeth Bennet, Dorothy Jordan, and the Duke of Clarence,” discusses the possibility that Austen’s favourite heroine, Lizzy Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice*, may have been modelled on the famous actress and royal mistress, Dorothy Jordan. Chapter 7, “‘Half Mulatto, Chilly and Tender’: *Sanditon*, the Duke of Clarence, and Sara Baartman, the ‘Hottentot Venus,’” addresses race, money and sexuality in the Regency, while speculating about Austen’s last unfinished novel *Sanditon*.
 The brief “Conclusion: The Belated Celebrity of Jane Austen” and three appendices addressing figures of interest in the period, Joseph Nutting (an army button-maker), Wowski (a charcter in a play, and a nickname designating the Duke of Clarence’s Jamaican mistress), and Lord Byron and Lady Caroline Lamb, bring the study to a very satisfying end. Throughout the book Harris often speculates on letters of Austen’s or those of her correspondents that have not survived (her sister Cassandra destroyed many letters and redacted those that survive, in some cases drastically). However, the argument is grounded in fact and Harris provides a detailed and careful context for Austen’s life and writings. Jocelyn Harris has produced an intellectually challenging, viewpoint changing study in *Satire, Celebrity, and Politics in Jane Austen*, and it merits an extensive audience among all who love Austen, and not just among academics. It is very entertaining, supremely readable, and I cannot recommend it highly enough.

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