

plea for preserving the 'aura' of the texts that manuscripts embody (p. cxxix). This is, one presumes, meant to apply to their treatment of 'The Watsons' and 'Sanditon' only.

Finally, Chapman's description of the manuscripts' documentary forms was cursory, incomplete, and occasionally inaccurate. There has been further investigation since then, of which the Cambridge editors make appropriate use. It is a pity, however, for the purposes of easy retrieval, that they do not provide the information that they gather in some systematic form of documentary description or, where relevant, physical collation, as often appears in scholarly editions. Chapman's error in the matter of the leaf count and appearance of watermarks in the manuscript of 'Lady Susan' is not corrected. Some inconsistencies and inadequacies in dealing with the range of textual challenges posed by the documentary forms of the manuscripts may be put down to the unwavering Cambridge confidence that scholarly editing is about commentary and annotation—that its chief commitment is to the worlds in which Austen's print and manuscript forms circulate rather than to the objects themselves. There is also the evident uncertainty, repeated across the volumes, over the targeted readership for this edition. But this is further proof of how seriously the Cambridge editors misjudge the textual challenge of Jane Austen—an author who tricks and surprises us at every turn.

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DENNIS M. READ. **R. H. Cromek, Engraver, Editor and Entrepreneur.** Pp. xii + 182. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. Hardback, £55.

This book is a reassessment of the reputation and artistic talents of Robert Hartley Cromek (1770–1812), whose fame has been forever tainted since the publication of Alexander Gilchrist's biography of William Blake in 1863. In Gilchrist's book (as in other subsequent biographies of Blake), Cromek is portrayed as a second-rate engraver, a greedy editor and an unscrupulous entrepreneur who exploits the talents of other, more gifted individuals—including Blake. Cromek has therefore remained a figure in the shadow. Revealingly, despite his involvement with some of the most important artists, engravers, and literary personalities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Britain, and his participation in numerous major editorial projects, Cromek's life and career have not been deemed interesting or influential enough to be included in the otherwise very comprehensive *Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

To be sure, Read's book fills a scholarly gap and his chapters provide an invaluable insight into some of the comings and goings of the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century artistic and publishing world. The first two chapters explore the activities of Cromek as an engraver and provide biographical information on his Yorkshire origins and later London life, including his training as a lawyer and his apprenticeship under the renowned Italian engraver Francesco Bartolozzi. Chapter Two also discusses Cromek and Blake's collaboration on Benjamin Heath Malkin's *A Father's Memoirs of his Child* (1806), a project that reveals the apparent tension between the two artists, which would ultimately lead to their falling out. The third chapter seeks to re-write the story of Blake's and Cromek's collaboration on Robert Blair's *The Grave*. In particular, Read re-interprets Cromek's decision to side-line Blake and instead employ the Italian engraver Luigi Schiavonetti to engrave Blake's own designs as a decision made in Blake's 'best interest' (p. 30). Indeed, Read puts forward the debatable argument that 'Blake's reputation certainly would not be enhanced by [his own] "indifferently" and "carelessly" etched engravings' (p. 30). The remainder of the book concentrates on Cromek's activities 'in the more executive realms of

art' (p. 45), including his editing of *The Procession of Chaucer's Pilgrims to Canterbury* illustrated by the English painter Thomas Stothard. Blake, who disliked Stothard's paintings, had embarked on a rival project of the same title in order to outshine Cromek's enterprise. However, Read shows that Blake's own version of the *Canterbury Pilgrims*, which originated from artistic spite, was received rather negatively by most contemporary critics. Cromek's involvement with the Chalcographic Society, discussed in Chapter Five, allows Read to explore further aspects of the divergences between the two men, especially with regard to their attitude towards the value—or the detrimental effect—of commerce on artistic productions. Blake was convinced that Cromek's involvement with the arts was purely lucrative and that his aim was to place the arts in the service of commercial gain, thereby degrading and corrupting them. The last two chapters delineate two literary projects initiated and edited by Cromek, which led to the publication of three works: *Reliques of Burns* (1808), *Select Scot[t]ish Song* (1810) and *Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song* (1810). In his chapter on Robert Burns, Read uncovers the editorial difficulties Cromek encountered in the preparation of the works by the Scottish author, in particular his having to confront the numerous objections of the Liverpoolian Thomas Roscoe and their disagreement regarding editorial matter. Read's final chapter, on the other hand, shows how Cromek was misled by the 'ambitious and enterprising young Scottish poet Allan Cunningham' (p. 127), who deceptively penned a large number of the songs included in the *Remains*. This act of forgery, carried out without Cromek's knowledge, only came to light in 1819 when James Hogg stated his suspicions in his *Jacobite Relics of Scotland* (1819–21).

Redirecting the course of an individual's posthumous reputation is no easy task. In Cromek's case, this re-assessing mission is made particularly difficult as his life and career have been pitted against the formidable figure of Blake, as well as the overwhelming output of Blakean scholarship. Read, however, clearly manages to reshape certain of our assumptions regarding his subject. He is helped in his task by the large number of unpublished letters and other previously unseen documents in the hands of some of Cromek's heirs. His thorough archival research and his numerous quotations from contemporary periodicals enable him to contextualize Cromek's artistic and editorial practices and decisions and demonstrate that his contentious conduct and ambition were far from being unusual at the time.

Yet one cannot help but feel that Cromek is, as it were, Read's protégé whom he tries to protect at all costs against a malevolent Blake. In this regard, his biographical approach is not unlike Samuel Johnson's in his *Account of the Life of Mr Richard Savage* (1744). Read acknowledges his biographical subject's weaknesses and condemns his faults, yet he nonetheless tries to salvage Cromek's reputation and justifies his occasionally questionable behaviour. (Obviously, unlike Johnson, Read is not personally acquainted with his subject; neither was Cromek an eccentric individual living on the margins of society, as was Savage.) Read unambiguously recognises that Cromek's talents were limited and that his skills as an engraver were not original—'Cromek's engraving ability... was mediocre', (p. 18) he openly confesses, and, elsewhere, admits that his subject was 'certainly no exemplar of altruism' (pp. 5–6). Nonetheless, Read's view that Cromek's decision to choose Schiavonetti to engrave the design of *The Grave* paradoxically resulted in advancing Blake's name over Schiavonetti's (p. 30), or his statement that 'a designer is an artist; an engraver is a copyist' (p. 30), are highly debatable—Blake, obviously, would have strongly disagreed with such a view. Read's opinion, in his Burns chapter, that 'had his health remained intact, Cromek might have become best known as the most important nineteenth-century editor of Burns' (p. 126), is equally open to discussion, especially as

Read provides very little assessment of Cromek's actual editorial practices, simply stating that he 'maintained textual fidelity' and thereby distinguished himself from other contemporary editors who 'freely practiced silent emendation' (p. 108).

Read's book is about the practicalities of art and literature and discusses the construction of artistic and literary enterprises, but it does not offer any deep critical and aesthetic judgement on text editing or the making of illustrative prints or images. Besides its revisiting of Cromek's career, the book's interest lies in its focus on the landscape of artists revolving around luminaries, and how such luminaries often depended on the actions and decisions of more obscure and often less visionary—though admittedly, no less hard-working—individuals. It also provides clear examples of artistic networks stretching well beyond the capital, and how some major artistic projects were made possible by the support and collaboration of individuals living and travelling outside London (the second appendix is entitled 'Coach Travel in Early Nineteenth-Century Great Britain'). Finally, on a more formal level, these aspects of Read's study are made all the more compelling as they are described and expressed in Read's meticulous, clear, jargon-free style, which makes for particularly satisfying reading.

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ALAN JOHNSON. **Out of Bounds: Anglo-Indian Literature and the Geography of Displacement.** Pp. x + 318. (Writing Past Colonialism). Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011. Paper, \$28; cloth, \$53.

In 'Music for the Middle-Aged', published in the *Civil and Military Gazette* in 1884, the young Rudyard Kipling wrote, with arch hyperbole, about his fellow Anglo-Indian writers:

I make no doubt that there will arise a race of virile poets, owning no allegiance to, drawing no inspiration from, Western thought, who will weave for the drawing-room of the future, songs as distinctly *sui generis* as an overland trunk or a *solah topee* and breathing in every word the luxuriant imagery and abundant wealth of expression peculiar to the East.

(Kipling's India: Uncollected Sketches, 1884–88, ed Thomas Pinney  
[New York, 1986] pp. 44–5)

Although British Indian writers never quite fulfilled Kipling's exuberant prophecy, the literature they did produce was distinctive, and some of it very fine.

There have been a number of excellent critical treatments of this sub-national genre. With the rise of colonial and postcolonial studies over the last few decades, several of these have focused on a topic that preoccupies critics of colonial and post-colonial literature: the aesthetic and ideological implications of literary representations of space—in this case, the social and psychological space that both divided and linked Britons and Indians during the time of the Raj. These treatments have usually construed this space in abstract terms, in discussions of such matters as liminality, hybridity, deterritorialization and displacement. In *Out of Bounds*, Alan Johnson does not shy from the use of such abstractions, but he gives them a much-needed and useful concreteness by invoking them in reference to actual geographical, sociological and architectural locales—the iconic locales that appear so frequently in Anglo-Indian fictional and nonfictional narrative. Organizing these spaces in pairs of opposites—for example, the hill station and the cantonment in the plains, the garden and the jungle, and the club and the bazaar—Johnson examines their representation in the works of three important Anglo-Indian writers: Rudyard Kipling, Flora Annie Steel and Jim Corbett. He argues that in their renderings of South Asian topography, these