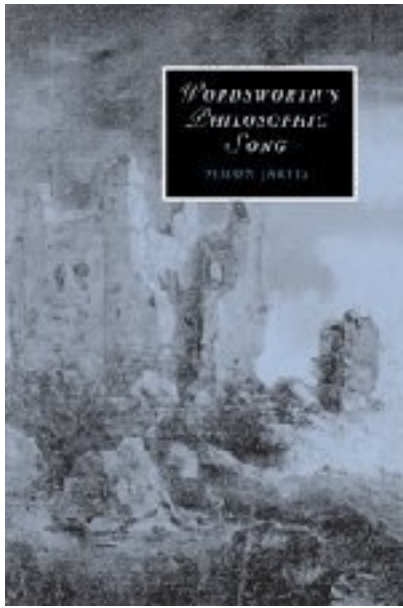


Wordsworth's Philosophic Song



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Wordsworth wrote that he longed to compose 'some philosophic Song/Of Truth that cherishes our daily life'. Yet he never finished *The Recluse*, his long philosophical poem. Simon Jarvis argues that Wordsworth's aspiration to 'philosophic song' is central to his greatness, and changed the way English poetry was written. Some critics see Wordsworth as a systematic thinker, while for others he is a poet first, and a thinker only (if at all) second. Jarvis shows instead how essential both philosophy and the 'song' of poetry were to Wordsworth's achievement. Drawing on advanced work in continental philosophy and social theory to address the ideological attacks which have dominated much recent commentary, Jarvis reads Wordsworth's writing both critically and philosophically, to show how Wordsworth thinks through and in verse. This study rethinks the relation between poetry and society itself by analysing the tensions between thinking philosophically and writing poetry.

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