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Robin Mayhead. *Walter Scott*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1973. x, 132 pp. \$3.45.
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Mayhead's short book on Scott appears in the series British Authors: Introductory Critical Studies. The purpose of the series is to present the "general reader" with an introductory "general critical study" free from the "insuperable obstacle" of background information (p. vii). Much of the book is interesting and valuable, especially the chapter on *Waverley*, but it is hardly a general study for the general reader, since too much of Scott is either omitted altogether from discussion or briefly mentioned and then dismissed with a negative evaluation that would tend to mislead a general reader.

In large part the book is a collection of Mayhead's previously published work. The essence of the chapter on *The Heart of Midlothian* appeared first in *Essays in Criticism* (ed. F. W. Bateson). Much of chapter iv ("A Study in Mixtures: *Guy Mannering*; *Redgauntlet*; *The Antiquary*") appeared in the author's essay, "Scott and the Idea of Justice," included in *Scott's Mind and Art* (ed. A. N. Jeffares); the section on *The Antiquary* is published almost concurrently with the present book in the *Scott Bicentenary Essays* (ed. Alan Bell). The final chapter ("A Note on Scott as Critic: Postscript") is a reprint of Mayhead's review for *The Library Review* of Ioan Williams' book, *Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction*. Chapter v ("Scott and the Man of Prudence: *Rob Roy*; *Old Mortality*; *The Abbot*") does not appear elsewhere, but it is very slight, as is the chapter on Scott's poems.

We are left, then, with chapter ii, a fine study of Scott's ambivalent attitude toward the Romantic in his first novel: "*Waverley* is the work of a writer deeply attracted by the wild, the picturesque, the stirring, yet who is at the same time acutely suspicious of their charms. . . . Scott is both Romantic and anti-Romantic. He is at once a Romantic at heart, and a vigilant critic of his own Romanticism" (p. 18). The idea is not new, but Mayhead discusses

it intelligently and in depth. The chapter would have been still better, and more valuable, if he had shown more awareness of the work of previous scholars.

Indeed, Mayhead's virtual refusal to take into consideration and give due credit to the work of others—his unwillingness to show how his chapters build on or depart from previous scholarship—is a major deficiency of the book. To write about an important author without showing awareness of what others have done is presumptuous, and at the same time to belittle the scholarly approach, as Mayhead repeatedly does, is unfortunate. Mayhead knows all the fashionable critical jargon—"*Waverley* has real density of texture and foci of interest" (p. 44)—but one leaves the book in doubt as to how valuable his undocumented criticism really is. Moreover, his "criticism" sometimes consists of his simply telling us that something is "a turgid bore" or "a bore and an embarrassment" or "repulsively absurd" or "truly awful." Remarks of this sort cannot be called criticism of very high caliber. How much credence, then, ought one to give to the high praise which Mayhead has bestowed on Scott elsewhere in the book?

Lars Hartveit's *Dream Within a Dream*, which appears as No. 18 of the Norwegian Studies in English, has the rich scholarly apparatus that Mayhead's book lacks. Hartveit has read all the important secondary literature about Scott, and he does not say anything without showing how it relates to what others have said. Moreover, his study has a thesis: ". . . Scott's vision of reality depends on tensions and conflicting tendencies which can ultimately be traced to a common source: his 'divided allegiance' between the romantic and the prosaic or prudent" (p. 17). He selects four themes for extended analysis—society, the heroic, law, and religion—and shows how they "coalesce into a main theme, which may be defined as *illusion and reality*" (p. 21).

Hartveit argues that organized society and the irrational forces that threaten it are best exemplified in *The Heart of Midlothian*, a novel which also illustrates a main character's inspired transcendence of the ordinary at a time of supreme crisis—a recurrent motif in the *Waverley* Novels. The non-Romantic unheroic vs. the Romantic heroic can be seen in *Waverley*; law vs. chaos in *Guy Mannering*; and religion in its different and conflicting manifestations in *Old Mortality*. The final chapter ("Dream and Reality") shows

how the book's overriding thesis is exemplified in *Redgauntlet*. Thus the several chapters are bound together into a unified whole, and we have in *Dream Within a Dream* a genuine book, not, as with Mayhead, a collection of essays.

Hartveit's knowledge about Scott is not just a matter of his having read the important secondary literature; it is a profound knowledge and understanding of the novels themselves, based on years of study and reflection. *Dream Within a Dream* is the work of a mature scholar admirably in love with his subject matter. The book has so much to offer that one readily forgives the author for occasional rough sentences and minor infelicities of expression. For the reasons I have given, the scholar and the Scott enthusiast will find *Dream Within a Dream* stimulating and inspiring. The unobtrusive summaries, the balanced critical judgment, and the interesting background information make it in addition an excellent introduction to Scott for the general reader.

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