

## **James Robert de Jager Jackson 1935-2011**

James Robert de Jager Jackson, familiarly known as Robin, died on 29 April 2011 after a long illness courageously borne. He was born on 14 July 1935 to Reginald Jackson, a South African professor of philosophy (still remembered for his work on John Locke and John Stuart Mill), and Clara Farrell, his Canadian wife. Reginald Jackson was teaching in St Andrews, Scotland, at the time of Robin's birth but he moved shortly afterwards to Edinburgh (where Robin first went to school) and died there, of a recurrent illness, in 1946, at which point his widow took their son and his younger sister, Jennifer, across the Atlantic to Kingston, Ontario, where her elderly father still lived. It was in Kingston, therefore, that Robin completed his schooling and in 1957 launched his academic career by gaining a first-class Honours degree in English at Queen's University and winning the university's Medal in English. These initial successes were followed up by an M.A. in English at Queen's the following year and by the series of fellowship awards associated with his two Ph.D. degrees, the first at Princeton in 1961, the second at the University of London in 1963. That both doctoral theses were focussed on the great Romantic poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge clearly signalled what would become the central thrust of Robin's subsequent life and work.

Following a year spent teaching at McMaster University in 1963-4 Robin was appointed to an assistant professorship at Victoria College in the University of Toronto, where he would remain for the remainder of his career, becoming an Associate Professor in 1967, a full Professor in 1973, a University Professor in 1994, and (following his retirement from teaching) an Emeritus University Professor in 2001. Success over the years in obtaining Canada Council and SSHRCC research grants and prestigious Guggenheim and Killam Fellowships facilitated an annual working schedule that included extensive periods of research at the British Library and elsewhere. A first book, *Method and Imagination in Coleridge's Criticism*, was published in 1969, a second, *Coleridge: The Critical Heritage* (a collection of existing criticism) in 1970, a third, *Poetry of the Romantic Period*, in 1980, and in 1981 Robin brought out Coleridge's *Logic*, the beginning of his outstanding editorial contribution to Coleridge studies. That edition was followed in 1995 by the two constituent volumes of Coleridge's *Shorter Works and Fragments*, edited in collaboration with his wife and colleague Professor Heather Jackson, as Volume XI of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, and in 2000 by the two volumes that made up

Volume VIII in the same edition, *Lectures 1818-1819 on the History of Philosophy*. After a venture into the field of critical theory with *Historical Criticism and the Meaning of Texts* (1989) Robin published two scholarly volumes, *Annals of English Verse, 1770-1835* (1985) and *Romantic Poetry by Women: A Bibliography, 1770-1815* (1993), that surveyed the historical ground he would seek to document more fully in the *Jackson Bibliography of Romantic Poetry*, a richly ambitious database involving first-hand examinations and detailed bibliographical descriptions of the more than 23,000 volumes published between 1770 to 1835 that contained English verse which had not been published prior to 1770. This was an undertaking which meant much to Robin and consumed huge amounts of his time and although his illness and then his death effectively prevented his finally checking all of the resulting records, the grand project will continue to completion under his name.

Central to Robin's existence was his devotion to his wife and to their two daughters, Katherine and Elizabeth, combined with an exceptional loyalty to his work and to the institutions within which that work was pursued. He was admired and much sought as a teacher of graduate and undergraduate courses—particularly in his special fields of Romantic Poetry and Criticism, Shakespeare and other English dramatists, and Critical Theory—and as a supervisor of doctoral dissertations. And an ever-widening recognition of his integrity, practical wisdom, and willingness to be of use resulted in his serving, throughout his career, on an extraordinary number of college, department, university, provincial, and national committees. Fundamental to his success in such roles as in other aspects of his life was his combination of keen intelligence, wide knowledge, and moral and intellectual responsibility with an exceptional personal warmth and accessibility. That warmth and patient kindness, together with a pervasive good humour enlivened by active humorousness, made him someone to listen to, someone to rely upon, someone it was always a pleasure to be with—and someone whom his friends and colleagues will long and affectionately remember.

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*(Author's title given as of the time of writing)*