The title of this book says a great deal. As Morgan Wortham notes in the introductory chapter, the subheading clearly indicates an engagement with a certain philosophical trajectory. At the same time the use of ‘poetics’ in the title indicates more than a simple history of philosophy. It invites us to consider poieses; the process of producing which operates at once below and beyond the level of the will. When juxtaposed next to the word 'sleep' the title immediately asks us to consider the notion of 'unconsciousness' and the doing and undoing of 'man' in the 'world' (p18).

The remaining 168 pages – comprised of eight chapters and endnotes - begin with a discussion of "philosophy's limits". Aristotle states that sense-perception organizes both sleep and wake. What differentiates sleep from swooning or asphyxia is that, whilst these forms of sense-deprivation occur in an extrinsic way, sleep is a privation of sense-perception which sense-perception gives itself (p20). At the same time, Aristotle postulate sleep as a physiological response to the demands of the waking day. Sleep comes on as digestible matter cools and sinks downwards. Once the process of digestion is completed, the sleeper awakens. The chapter also takes in Kant and his view that excessive and non-instrumental sleep would signal death itself (p28). Similarly, if dreaming happens whilst awake, it reveals a diseased condition. The chapter ends with a discussion of Hegel. When awake we compare all sensations, intuitions and representations in order to ascertain the objectivity or non-objectivity of content. Dreams are what happen when the mind is not the 'totality for itself' which it is during the waking day
Within chapter one, then, the reader is already alerted to a rich vein of thinking on consciousness, somnambulism/sleep walking and dreams.

Each of the remaining chapters is as rich in scope and detail. In chapter two, we encounter Freud and Bergson. For Bergson, perception widens its field of operation during sleep and it is out of real sensation that we fabricate dreams (p39). Chapter three offers extensive discussion of Merleu-Ponty and his idea that “sleep and waking, illness and health are not modalities of consciousness of will, but presuppose an ‘existential step’” (Merleu-Ponty 1962: 164) Chapters four and six illustrate the breadth of Morgan Wortham's survey of sleep; taking in Celan and Beckett. Our (chronological) journey ends with a commentary on Nancy. Pulling things together, Morgan-Wortham writes that the two most striking features of Nancy's book are "its relationship to a series of frequently unacknowledged philosophical sources" and "its seeming refusal to evaluate the specificity or distinctiveness of the various forms of thought it inherits" (p133)

At times, the book assumes knowledge of philosophy and it may find its main audience in those who work in the fields of literature and modern thought. For those already engaged in the philosophy (or poetics) of sleep, Morgan Wortham's critique of Nancy (2009) will prove useful reading. For those concerned with other areas of philosophy or modern thought, Morgan Wortham's musings on sleep may provide a useful window through which to peer at old questions.

For me, the book was at its most interesting when it could have engaged with sociological writings on sleep (but did not). For example, Simon Williams (2005) uses Leder (1990) to fashion a phenomenology of sleep; yet nothing is given over to this here. Fine and Leighton (1993) – amongst others – have offered steps towards a sociology of dreams which also find no place here. This is not necessarily meant as a criticism. Rather it is an indication that, for me, the book's strength lies in the fact that it opens up and introduces territory I would not necessarily have considered. Others working outside the field of the sociology of sleep may find
the same – whether it be in discussions of the human/animal distinction (chapter 1), madness and sleep (chapter 7) or linking the running discussion of somnambulism to recent changes in DSM-V. *Poieses*, after all, may produce 'something that was not there before' (p17).

**References**


**Word count: 741**