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Liturgy, Imagination and Poetic Language:
a study of David Jones's *The Anathemata*

Richard St.John Jeremy Marsh

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Abstract

The thesis seeks to attempt an examination of David Jones's long poem *The Anathemata* primarily from a theologically informed standpoint. It sets out to understand, from the literary-critical point of view, the forces and influences that have come together in order to make the poem. At the same time, it is aware of and tries to explore the theological, liturgical and mythological material which provides Jones with both the background to and the content of his poem. It is argued that the form of poem, its linguistic content and the experience of reading it, are best understood in terms of pilgrimage and that such a metaphor is best suited to encompass both its huge scale and its attention to detail.

From an overall examination of the available secondary literature, the thesis proceeds to examine something of the experience of reading the poem, whether or not the poem can be conveniently understood as an epic and what Jones himself thought he was doing, at the same time his own theoretical stance is illuminated by reference to other contemporary thinkers.

An extensive examination of the terms 'myth' and 'anamnesis' and the backgrounds and links between the two both in general and within the context of the poem precede chapters which explore the language of the poem both in terms of stylistic features and also in terms of the literary sources on which Jones draws and which make up the intertextual space within which the poem exists. These matters are further examined in a discussion of the most significant themes with which the poet works in the course of *The Anathemata*. Finally, some account is given of the formal shape of the poem before a 'commentary' or 'paraphrase' of the poem draws out, in context, the significant features.

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Declaration

None of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university.

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Introduction & Presuppositions

For anyone trained in an historical-theological way of working, the experience of encountering a poet such as David Jones and a poem like *The Anathemata* is at once both a terrifying and a liberating experience. It is terrifying, because in order to read his work creatively, it is necessary to dispense with many presuppositions about a methodology of simple straightforward deductive reasoning. It is liberating because the poet introduces theological concepts by means of unusual modes of manipulation of ideas and different, though by no means less precise, uses of language. Theologians often claim that the truths of faith are by their nature 'poetic', that language either metonymic or metaphorical is somehow a better means of expressing the Divine or even, somehow, has some innate kinship or affinity with it, than the logical language of deductive reasoning. They would argue that metaphorical language, the language used primarily by poets, is necessary for the meaningful expression of religious concepts; that it is the form of language which best does justice to their distinctive and often fragile nature. One suspects somehow that, although there is much truth in their claim, they are doing a disservice to poets - and an even greater one to whatever might or might not be poetic language. And a disservice is also being done to religious truth in that it may, thereby, be relegated to a suspect, or inferior position relative to other kinds of truths.

David Jones was both a poet and a graphic artist. His published written output was modest, spanning the years between 1937 and his death in 1974. A Christian in what has subsequently come to be known as a traditionalist Roman Catholic mould, his convert's fervour was tempered by his creativity. His poetry is religious, Christian certainly, on two counts:



first, his reliance on and engagement with the cultural heritage of Western European Christianity, especially its Roman and Celtic forms, as the basic material for his poetry; and second, the ideas which lie close to the heart of his work are either explicitly religious or have immense implications for those who would think about God. David Jones was not a theologian or a priest - and if there is theology in his poetry, it is not there as an organised system, easy to isolate, to appropriate and to submit to critical study. However, it may be contended that there is a deep underlying consistency which makes it possible to speak of David Jones's theology. It is a theology which is present in fragments and in the obscurity of taut and difficult language. It is a theology which is hidden, arcane and wrapped in codes; a theology above all which is about the communication of a sense of the mystery of God and his engagement with the world. It is the sort of theology and thinking about God that poetry is best able to express.

Although the theology which may be found in David Jones's poetry is eccentric in respect of the main thrust of Western Theology, with its passion for systems and rational precision, it would be equally wrong to turn to the thought-world of the Christian East in order to find a convenient category with which to label him. The Evagrian maxim that 'if you truly pray you are a theologian'¹ does not really help us - within his pages there is no specific spirituality. He does not, for instance, describe the experience of God found in the practice of affective or contemplative prayer. When prayer is his subject, he is rather more likely to describe God's experience of Man's intercessory prayer. Yet he does explore two of the important themes of Christian spirituality: that of the journey and the

¹Evagrius Ponticus, *The Praktikos & Chapters on Prayer*, trans. John Eudes Bamberger OCSO, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1981) p.65

sacredness of place. To these we may add his insights into the joyful and fruitful aspects of the human soul bent on the discernment of the divine within the world. The result is certainly what we might call 'spiritual writing'.

Within much of his published work, Jones often writes about men from the perspective of God, and this has two separate but linked implications. First, it puts into some kind of focus Jones's kaleidoscopic use of history. His careering across time, drawing links and correspondences, makes sense when seen from the Divine point of view in which God, immutable, is to a certain extent eternally incarnate in his own creation and only man is bound in transience and history. God is to be found in the created order, even in the religious and political practices of the pagan and pre-historic world.

The second implication has to do, in a sense, with what may conveniently be labelled spirituality, and more specifically with the human practice of intercessory prayer. Traditional Roman Catholic teaching on intercessory prayer sees it as humanity's sharing in the Divine work of continuous creation. When Jones treats the subject, overtly for instance in *The Sleeping Lord*, there is a sense in which the intercessor is sharing directly with God's trans-historical participation in the created order.

but for the departed
of the entire universal orbis
from the unknown beginnings
 unguessed milleniums back
until now:
 FOR THESE ALL
he makes his silent, secret
 devout and swift memento
And discreetly and with scarcely any discernible movement
he makes once again the salvific sign, saying less than half-

audibly: *Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine..*²

This is not to say that in Jones's work God has been watered into pantheistic force. There is perhaps a panentheism in his poetry, but, so far as his treatment of history is concerned, the one historical event of the Passion of Christ stands as the act by which all historical events are potentially divinized. The Cross, or perhaps one should more accurately say, the Triduum (for liturgy is of central importance in all his writing), is the locus for redemption. Moreover, if the Passion is the redemptive centre for all history, it is also that for all myths. The Christ-myth is that which enables all myths to be potentially numinous and at its centre is the Cross and Passion of Christ. Closely bound to the Cross in the Christian tradition are the sacraments, and in the Western Catholic tradition the Mass is pre-eminent among them. With its sacrificial connotation, and the historical locus for its institution at the beginning of the redemptive Triduum, the Mass is interpreted by David Jones as the *locus classicus* for efficacious sign-making. It is *the* sign and symbol from which all signs and symbols accept their validity. It is the key to the plethora of codes that David Jones uses in his poetry.

As with the question of intercession, this also has two further implications: first, that of the significant and symbolic way in which God makes himself known and present to humanity; second, and perhaps more important to Jones, that man as 'maker', as 'artist', as 'manipulator of symbols' and as 'mythmaker' has an important role to play in the Divine economy. (This surely must be a parallel to the sharing by humanity in the historical and trans-historical quality of God in intercessory prayer).

² David Jones, *The Sleeping Lord and Other fragments*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1974) p.86

In David Jones's poetry all of this is earthed geographically and culturally in the British Isles. For him, the 'matter of Britain', the legends of Arthur, *Y Goddodin* and *The Mabinogion*, to name but a few of his sources, are a reservoir of myth becoming history which lies at the centre of British consciousness, although often unknown to the majority of the population but feeding Jones's sense of God incarnate in the particular but universally significant.

This is a thesis about one of David Jones's poems, *The Anathemata*. Published in 1952 to considerable critical acclaim,³ it is a long poem, recognisably modernist in tone and Roman Catholic in ideology, in which David Jones explores the cultural traditions of Western Europe and specifically the British Isles from the perspective of the saving work of Jesus Christ in his Passion and its expression in the world of human sign-making in the Mass of the Roman Rite. But to say this is already to simplify almost to the point of parody: its scope - geographical, historical, theological and cultural - is huge and this in itself demands much of the reader. It is also in many ways intrinsically a difficult poem: its form, its allusive texture, its surface of fractured and fragmented language and its very typographical appearance on the page contribute to that difficulty. This thesis asks three sets of questions: first, what is happening in *The Anathemata* and what does it mean? Second, what is its relationship to the religious material which it uses? How are the Mass and the Passion interrelated and used within the poem? And third, what critical apparatus best assists the reader to understand the kind of text that it is, and the process of reading it?

³ For example W.H. Auden thought it probably the best long poem written in English this century.

It will have become apparent from the foregoing remarks and the earlier preliminary discussion of Jones's thought, that the text of the poem itself makes the question of literary-critical and theological methodology particularly problematic. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (with which *The Anathemata* has some affinities) was regarded as a difficult poem on its publication in 1922, but critics and others have 'learned to read'⁴ such Modernist works by coming to understand the particular codes in which they are written and they no longer pose such a problem. The same cannot be said for *The Anathemata* which retains its aura of difficulty thirty years after publication; this may, in part, account for its lack of general popularity. This thesis will examine *The Anathemata* primarily from the literary-critical concept of intertextuality⁵ and also the nexus of theological concepts which cluster around the study of liturgy. It thus draws both on literary criticism and on sacramental theology for its method and its analysis. This itself raises methodological questions which need to be acknowledged and clarified. The study of literature and theology is by no means well enough established to make methodological matters self-evident.

A survey of critical comment on *The Anathemata* will be followed by sections dealing with the concepts of myth, liturgy and (related to the latter), *anamnesis* in the context of the poem. Then the language of the poem will be examined, both the variety of types, rhythms and devices which Jones uses, and the sources which have influenced his composition and upon which he draws more or less directly. From here it will be

⁴cf., William T. Noon, *Poetry and Prayer*, (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1967)

⁵cf M.H.Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, (Orlando, Fl: Holt Rinehart and Winston, INC, 1971)p247.'...The term intertextuality,...,is used to signify the multiple ways in which any one literary text echoes, or is inseparably linked to, other texts, whether by open or covert citations and *allusions*, or simply by participation in a common stock of literary and linguistic conventions.'

possible to discuss some of the recurrent themes or motifs of the poem such as the voyage, Mary, trees, cities, etc. This will be followed by a brief section discussing the structure of the poem after which will come a commentary or 'reading' of the poem drawing on all the theoretical work which has preceded it.

I shall argue that *The Anathemata* may be profitably read in a vast and complicated intertextual space, in the sense that it enters into dialogue both with the elements of that space: history, geography, previous literature, myths, legends, religious writings etc. and also with the reader. The work of Roland Barthes and other post-structuralist writers may have developed the notion of intertextuality to the point where author, and to some extent even the text, are reduced to an indeterminate mass of signifieds and signifiers but this is, in a sense the most extreme example of literary critical thinking on the subject of intertextuality. Against we may place rather less extreme theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin for whom intertextuality includes within itself aspects of dialogue whereby a text achieves much of its autonomy. It is contended that David Jones has himself (whether consciously or subconsciously) defined the parameters of the intertextual space surrounding *The Anathemata* and placed at the core of the poem the liturgy of the Western Christian Church and, more specifically, its evocation of presence through the concept of *anamnesis*. This 'centre' provides the matrix from which the complex and interactive codes - theological, historical, geographical and mythological - may be interpreted. From this centre may also be derived the theological, mythical, anthropological and aesthetic tools necessary to interpret the poem. *The Anathemata* 'lives', rather than just exists passively, in the sense that the whole liturgy that lies at its centre 'lives', gathering in to itself important and significant elements of human experience and

interpreting them in terms of the Christian narrative. Here lies *The Anathemata's* uniqueness even in terms of the work of David Jones and its interest for those whose academic concerns are to do with the relationships between literature and theology.

Chapter 1: Critical Comment on *The Anathemata*

Since its publication in 1952, *The Anathemata* has steadily accumulated a sizeable body of critical comment and discussion. For the most part, those who have attempted any sort of exploration of the poem have admired it and have sought to elucidate and describe the complex processes at work. There have, however, been some notable exceptions: critics who have found the poem confused, self-indulgent and pedantic to the point of obfuscation. We shall deal with positive critical comment first, before discussing those who have given *The Anathemata* a less than favourable reception. It is perhaps noteworthy that although the majority of critics received Jones's first poem, *In Parenthesis*, an account of life in the trenches in the early stages of the First World War, with approbation and general enthusiasm, many of the same commentators have seemed less at ease with *The Anathemata*. To be sure they have felt innately and intuitively that this is Jones's most significant work, but its tone, subject matter and its overtly religious tenor have prevented many critics from being wholeheartedly favourable in their reception of the poem. This survey does not pretend to be exhaustive but aims merely to point out the general shape of scholarly writing about *The Anathemata* from its publication until now.

In a recent symposium, John Matthias has argued that there have been three phases or 'stages' in the development of a critical corpus around David Jones's poetry.¹ The first stage, he argues, included work by the circle of friends who clustered around Jones supporting and encouraging him. The second 'stage' is comprised chiefly of what Matthias describes as

¹John Matthias, ed., *David Jones: Man and Poet*, (Orono, Maine: The National Poetry Foundation, University of Maine, n.d.) p.18

the 'sharply focussed and generally introductory studies'² of, for example, David Blamires, William Blisset, Tony Stoneburner and Louis Bonnerot. The third and current stage includes the work of Thomas Dilworth, Jeremy Hooker, Neil Corcoran, Kathleen Staudt and Patrick Deane and reflects the present more expansive state of David Jones studies.

The first 'stage' of Matthias's classification includes the writings of, among others, Harman Grisewood, H.S Ede, Douglas Cleverdon and, pre-eminent among them in terms of his work on *The Anathemata*, René Hague. Of him, Matthias writes: 'If two of the main contributions of this generation [i.e this first stage in critical discussion of Jones's works] were advocacy and elementary exegesis, Hague was the chief advocate and exegete.'³ Certainly Hague's Commentary⁴ is a lasting tribute to his devotion to and friendship with David Jones and his selfless championing of Jones's cause. Hague drew upon conversations that he had had with Jones over many years as well as letters from Jones both to himself and others, in order to try to explain the material on which Jones draws to make the poem. It is not his avowed purpose to strait-jacket the reader into any particular interpretation of the poem; rather he aims to set before the reader the knowledge necessary to make a fruitful reading of it.⁵ This said, Hague's intimacy both with the author and the poem, while a work-in-progress, does not prevent him from making some rather curious errors of interpretation, notable among them his mistaking of the historical setting for the voyage in the 'Middle-Sea and Lear-Sea' section of the poem⁶ But

²Matthias p.19

³Matthias p.19

⁴René Hague, *A Commentary on The Anathemata of David Jones*, (Wellingborough, Northants., Christopher Skelton, 1977). Henceforth it will be referred to as *Hague Commentary*.

⁵cf. Hague's own Preface to his Commentary p.xi

⁶Hague, *Commentary* pp.110-111. The matter is discussed by Thomas Dilworth both in his review of Hague's *Commentary* and also in his *The Shape of Meaning in the Poetry of*

probably more important than these errors of fact is the tone of the work, which constricts the possibilities of the reader's engagement with the text while claiming to do no such thing. Taken in all however, in his *Commentary* Hague's accumulates a massive amount of the information necessary for a full appreciation of the poem and remains an indispensable tool for any critical examination of *The Anathemata*. The *Commentary* is by no means the only published work by René Hague of interest and importance for an examination of *The Anathemata*. His edition of Jones's letters, *Dai Greatcoat*,⁷ together with numerous journal articles and his study of the poet in the *Writers of Wales* series,⁸ explores the background to the poetry and the overall thought of the man, from the perspective of one whose breadth of arcane knowledge was almost as great as Jones's itself.

An important early contribution to the debate was made by the Jesuit scholar, William T. Noon⁹. He discussed the poem alongside works by other poets in the context of a well-wrought analysis of the differences and similarities between the theory and practice of poetry and prayer. In doing so, he came to the following conclusions about *The Anathemata* :

Not only does it enshrine the Christian liturgy as a poetic subject; it tries to show this liturgy as a vital human experience in one poet's life. It addresses the current diaspora. Its voice assumes that most listeners do not worship according to this poet's religious rite.¹⁰

David Jones, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) p.379 n.18. It should be noted that Hague was by no means the only commentator to misinterpret Jones's intentions with regard to the sea-voyages. cf. Dilworth, p.379 n.19

⁷René Hague ed., *Dai Greatcoat: A self-portrait of David Jones in his letters*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1980)

⁸ René Hague, *David Jones*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press (Writers of Wales Series), 1975), among numerous articles are contributions to the special issues of *Agenda* devoted to David Jones's work.

⁹William T. Noon, *Poetry and Prayer*, (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1967), Chapter 8 is devoted to his examination of *The Anathemata*.

¹⁰ Noon, *Poetry and Prayer*, p.237

In these three sentences he addresses and to a certain extent pre-empted one of the greatest difficulties that critics have had with the poem, its 'Catholicity' in the sense of it lying firmly within an identifiable, and, some might argue, alienating or partisan religious cultural milieu, and turns it into an asset rather than a debit. Of equal importance is Noon's achievement in balancing the individualistic and corporate aspects of both poetry and prayer as viewed from the latter part of the twentieth century. The ability to hold these two aspects in some sort of tension is of vital importance in his assessment of *The Anathemata* as a significant poem both from the point of view of the canon of English Literature and from the narrower perspective of those works of literature whose subject matter is the Divine.

In the same year, *Agenda*¹¹ published a David Jones special issue which brought together work by a number of scholars ranging from the descriptive to the explicatory. It marked the watershed between the first and second phases of David Jones scholarship.

Among those represented in the *Agenda* special issue was David Blamires whose own comprehensive study of both the written and the graphic output of Jones was published in 1971.¹² His discussion of the contents of *The Anathemata* is accurate and erudite: of note are his examinations of the theories of religion, history and the literary symbolism of the poem which precede his discussion of the poem's form and content. Also noteworthy is his discomfort with Jones's apparent failure to appropriate the modern world into the fabric of his poem, a criticism which has been echoed by a number of authorities; and this may be one reason why critics

¹¹William Cookson ed., *Agenda* (David Jones Special Issue), 5.1-3 (Spring -Summer, 1967)

¹²David Blamires, *David Jones: Artist and Writer*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971)

are often happier with *In Parenthesis*. In contrast to Noon who, as we have seen, engages with the poem from the point of view of theology or, even more specifically, spirituality, Blamires is adamant that: 'It is through anthropology rather than theology that we most easily enter the poetic intention of *The Anathemata*.'¹³ This 'humanistic' approach to the text enables Blamires to argue for a more universally applicable significance for the poem than can the majority of critics who concentrate their attention on *The Anathemata's* more obviously religiously particular aspects. Although it should be said that this humanistic stance in no way diminishes Blamires's sense of the poet's grappling with the numinosity of the world.

Much of the significant work on David Jones has always appeared in scholarly journals and it is perhaps worth noting the contributions of two very different figures, William Blisset, and Louis Bonnerot. Blisset's article, "David Jones: 'Himself at the Cave-mouth,'"¹⁴ marks the beginning of a new, discursive approach to the poetry of David Jones, while Bonnerot, writing in French, not only opens up a new audience for the poet but also explores the links between Jones and James Joyce and, at the same time, explores further the sacramental implications of *The Anathemata*.¹⁵ Alongside these two we may record the work of Jeremy Hooker whose introductory study of David Jones, in which he usefully analyses *The Anathemata* in terms of the linked concepts of

¹³Blamires, p.129

¹⁴ *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 36,3, (April 1967), 259-273.

¹⁵Louis Bonnerot, "*The Anathemata* de David Jones: Poème Epique et Eucharistique.", *Etudes Anglaises* 24.3 (Juillet-Septembre 1971), 233-256, also, "David Jones, Poète du Sacré", *Etudes* (Avril 1973), 575-588, and, "*Ulysses*": *Cinquante Ans Après: Témoignages Franco-Anglais sur le Chef-d'Oeuvre de James Joyce*. (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1974) cf. pp.223-242.

maze/labyrinth and the rituals of initiation, and his other essays,¹⁶ have contributed significantly to the canon of David Jones studies.

The third of Matthias' three 'stages', has been largely dominated by North American scholars. The major exceptions to this are Neil Corcoran, whose study of *The Anathemata* was published in 1982,¹⁷ and Elizabeth Ward, whose book will be discussed below. Corcoran defines his aims:

My intention in this study - a critical, not an exegetical intention - is, in part, to suggest the ways in which some things that initially seem eccentric in David Jones can relocate themselves much closer to the centre of our most familiar concerns and pre-occupations.¹⁸

He argues that *The Anathemata* is a poem which creates, through the language which is its medium of existence, the very world which is its own subject matter.¹⁹ It is, according to Corcoran, one mind's response to the fragmentation of the world which he sees around it and to an impelling sense of the responsibility of the artist to preserve, and to identify continuities. Above all, Corcoran repeatedly and correctly stresses the importance of language: 'For David Jones, the realities of history, and the shape of the world, are perceived not *through* language but *in* it.'²⁰ He is sympathetic to those who regard Jones's Welshness as somewhat of an unconvincing veneer and is not uncritical of some aspects of the style of the poem; however his study is an important analysis both of the poem itself and the personal and cultural forces instrumental in shaping it.

¹⁶ Jeremy Hooker, *David Jones: An Exploratory Study of the Writings*, (London: Enitharmon Press, 1975) Hooker draws heavily on the Virgil criticism of W. Jackson Knight whose book, *Cumaeae Gates*, Jones is known to have admired, and, perhaps attempts a more speculative investigation in, *John Cowper Powys and David Jones: A Comparative Study*, (London: Enitharmon Press, 1979)

¹⁷ Neil Corcoran, *The Song of Deeds: A Study of 'The Anathemata'*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1982)

¹⁸ Corcoran p.vii

¹⁹ Corcoran p.18

²⁰ Corcoran p.97

The shift to North America as a source for much David Jones scholarship has been paralleled by a movement of intention or aim in scholarly writing. Anne Carson Daly in a series of important articles has tackled the structure of the poem and its content, and she has attempted an examination of the thought which lies behind the poem. In her work on the poem's structure she has been inspired by the ambivalence or rather the two-sided nature of the title of the poem itself. She has sought to provide the reader with the tools necessary for a reading of the poem rather than attempt a reading herself;²¹ Kathleen Henderson Staudt has examined the language of the poem, seeing it in terms of its similarities to and differences from T S Eliot's *Four Quartets* and also to the poetry of William Blake and Arthur Rimbaud. In doing so she has contributed valuably to the exploration of David Jones's sign-making and his use of 'sacramental' language offering new and contemporary ways of talking about the linguistic shape of the poem.

Pre-eminent among this group of scholars is Thomas Dilworth. He has published some sixteen items since 1977 including journal articles, reviews, and edition of some of Jones's letters, and to this should be added his major book on the subject of Jones's poetry.²² Dilworth has sought to interpret the poetic work of David Jones rather than describe it. This he has done from the point of view of the interrelationship of form and content, which he describes as 'symbolic form'.²³ In so far as *The Anathemata* is concerned, his contribution to the scholarly debate has been to explore how the structure of the work resonates with its

²¹ For example see Anne Carson Daly, 'The Amphibolic Title of *The Anathemata* ; A Key to the Structure of the Poem.', *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature*, 35.1(Autumn 1982),49-63 and "Hills as Sacramental Landscape in *The Anathemata*.", *Renascence* 38.2 (Winter,1986),131-139.

²²for journal articles etc. see bibliography.

²³Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* p.x

intellectual possibilities in order to produce the finished poem. He describes it as a 'displaced epic' in form and 'an anatomy of western culture' in content.²⁴ He is able to draw on the work of many scholars before him in order to produce what is probably the most authoritative book on the subject of the poetry of David Jones, although some reviewers have found his style and terminology rather too sophisticated.²⁵ Significantly, despite his advanced and complicated methods of analysis, he comes to overall conclusions which are, in many ways, very similar to those reached both by David Blamires and Neil Corcoran. Dilworth makes his own opinion clear in what may be to some the astonishingly bold claim that: '*The Anathemata* is a great work. In originality, unity, and scope it belongs to a range of achievement that includes the *Aeneid*, *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, and, if we may mix genres, *Ulysses*.'²⁶

Contemporary with Dilworth's *magnum opus* is the publication of the collection of essays in the National Poetry Foundation's 'Man and Poet' series edited by John Matthias, not least because it illustrates the development in David Jones studies over the last decade or more. The three pieces which deal specifically with *The Anathemata*, by Hooker, Dilworth, and Deane, are ample demonstration of the progressive movement from description to close reading and analysis which the poem has provoked in recent years.

A final note should be made of Jonathan Miles' *Backgrounds to David Jones: A Study in Sources and Drafts*.²⁷ Miles' book stands in the strand of writing which goes back to the attempts at clarification and explanation

²⁴Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning*, p.152

²⁵cf reviews in *Agenda* and the review article by Kathleen Henderson Staudt, "Anatomising David Jones", *Contemporary Literature*, 31:4 Winter 1990

²⁶Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning*, p.256

²⁷Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990 (hereafter referred to as *Backgrounds*)

achieved by Hague's *Commentary* and also Henry Summerfield's similar although much less comprehensive *An Introductory Guide to "The Anathemata" and "The Sleeping Lord" Sequence of David Jones*.²⁸ Miles describes his purpose; 'It is an exploration of his intellectual matrices and preoccupations, with the aid of the very books from which Jones himself amassed the information which stands behind his book.'²⁹ Miles does not content himself with the description of influences; in his exploration of the marginal notes which Jones made in the books in his own library, and by paying similar attention to the successive drafts of his poems, he uncovers something of the processes at work in the writing of these poems. In respect of his method of operating, Miles has similarities with Dilworth who also pays careful attention to the manuscript and bibliographic aspects of David Jones.

An overall conclusion as to the critical consensus about *The Anathemata* may profitably wait until we have discussed a selection of those critics who have been generally less than appreciative in their examination of the poem. Once again, it is not the intention to try and be exhaustive, but rather to give a flavour of the grounds commonly assembled by critics for objecting to the poem. They have been selected in order to be chronologically representative and will be discussed at some length since they will not feature so prominently in the rest of the thesis as the other scholars discussed above.

One of the first overtly critical discussions of *The Anathemata* came from J.C.F. Littlewood³⁰ who wrote a short time after the poem's publication. Littlewood's review is a sustained piece of invective against the poet, the

²⁸Victoria B.C: Sono Nis Press, 1979

²⁹Miles, *Backgrounds* p1

³⁰J.C.F.Littlewood, 'Joyce-Eliot-Tradition', *Scrutiny* , 19,1, (1953), 336-340.

poem and the method of the poem. Even Jones's preface does not escape Littlewood's pen; he accuses it of 'astonishing affectation'³¹ and of being essentially a distortion of the theory put forward in Eliot's essay, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*. But his major criticisms of the poem are in fact criticisms of the poet's method: first, that Jones is chiefly interested in words rather than the poetry which words can be fashioned into, and second, a dislike of Jones's strategy of 'disengagement' or 'impersonality':

The technical "audacities" - they are often vulgarities - and the ostentatious hob-nobbing of erudition with a 'no nonsense' vernacular take themselves - are intended to be taken - for Metaphysical concreteness (the Metaphysicals also are invoked in the preface) and, as such for unobtrusive evidence that here is an ordered world of evident and unquestioning truths - the world, of course, of Hopkins. But Mr. Jones's assurance is too jaunty to be true, and his audacities are perpetrated in a world made safe by his habit of never becoming personally engaged - a habit which, sanctioned by his own pseudo-classical injunction against 'self-expression', has earned him a reputation for 'impersonality'.³²

Blamires has suggested that the aggressive, antagonistic tone of Littlewood's review has more to do with the reviewer's distaste for the adulation that *The Anathemata* had received since its publication³³. This may well be so but it may also be argued that Littlewood is unable to grapple with the problem of genre: what is *The Anathemata* and how might it be classified? Moreover the question of the authorial voice, or apparent absence of it, is a serious question which deserves careful consideration.

In an essay published in 1964, John Holloway has some rather more serious questions to ask of David Jones in general and *The Anathemata* in

³¹Littlewood p.338

³²Littlewood p.340

³³Blamires, *David Jones: Artist and Writer* p.114

particular.³⁴ But, in contrast to Littlewood, he is concerned from the outset to affirm the innate value of Jones's work: 'Without Jones, the design of modern poetry has a hole in it.'³⁵ Holloway's examination of *In Parenthesis* includes the suggestion that Jones marks the limits of poetic form and technique of modernism, producing poetry altogether too busy and often too demanding of the reader. If this is legitimate criticism of *In Parenthesis* how much more so is it the case with *The Anathemata* ? Holloway regards it as less successful than its predecessor but admits that, in it, Jones also attempts to achieve rather more³⁶ and at greater length; indeed: he suggests that the poem sets out to achieve what would, in other ages, have been achieved in epic poetry. 'In a society which has miniaturized its poems almost as much as its radios, this deserves salutation and gratitude whether it succeeds or fails; it is central, inescapable, the act of a major figure.'³⁷ This notwithstanding, Holloway proceeds to examine both what Jones does in the poem and the way he does it. He comes to the conclusion that Jones's aim as set out in the preface to the poem is discordant with the actual achievement of the poem and that Jones's insistence on the Celtic and Roman elements of British culture, while ignoring other equally valid and important ones has led him to 'a radical divergence between performance and programme.'³⁸ The result of this is that Jones's subjective selection of material symbolising the cultural integrity of Britain subverts any claims that the poem might have to universal significance. Moreover, *The Anathemata*

³⁴John Holloway, "A Perpetual Showing: The Poetry of David Jones" in *The Colours of Clarity: Essays on Contemporary Literature and Education*, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964).

³⁵Holloway, p.114

³⁶ Holloway, pp.116-117

³⁷ Holloway, p.117

³⁸ Holloway, p.120

effectively demonstrates (according to Holloway) that the erudition which is a part of the modernist method does not in itself make for good poetry:

In the end, all the immense elaboration of *The Anathemata* reduces to something very simple: to one relation repeated over and over, an endless catachresis of *hinted identity*, thrown off from a diffused agitation of particulars, a quasi-free association, a recession and thickness, a transfinite array of not-plannedness.³⁹

But what is the overall effect of this failure of modernist erudition? Holloway is quite clear: '...*The Anathemata*, save for a handful of rather striking and very uncharacteristic passages, is poetically a work of almost astonishing boredom.'⁴⁰ At least as regards poetry, the subject matter, even Holloway admits, has its own inherent interest, but in the end Jones's method, the busy-ness of his poetry and his failure to grapple with real rather than mythic life seem to Holloway to tell against the poem especially when compared with *In Parenthesis*.

Holloway's essay examines some crucial core areas which will need to be further examined in the course of this thesis. Central, however, is the matter of Jones's technique which he argues is too bound up with the modernist love of erudition, of words juxtaposed on words and images playing with images, to be effective. The mistake here is perhaps to see Jones as a member of a movement rather than a gyrovague, aware of T.S. Eliot (though demonstrably not of Pound until after *The Anathemata*) but intent on developing his own poetic method rather than wholeheartedly adopting someone else's.

Donald Davie has indeed suggested that Jones's demonstration of many of the features of modernism is accidental. 'But all the evidence is that Jones

³⁹ Holloway p.122

⁴⁰ Holloway p.122

had no interest in, and little information about, programmatic modernism in general and Pound's poem in particular.⁴¹ Davie is an example of a more contemporary critic of David Jones. Much of his criticism takes up where Holloway leaves off. Does Jones's subjectivity undermine his work, he asks? Davie is convinced that in some of the published work, notably Jones's essays, his ideas frequently demonstrate an extraordinary naivety and even silliness.⁴² If Davie is right, then we would have to be wary of placing too great an emphasis on such works of theory and exposition as the preface to *The Anathemata*. Elsewhere, Davie has turned his attention to Jones's shortcomings as a poet rather than his shortcomings as a more speculative thinker. He argues that *The Anathemata* is in fact unfinished and produces as evidence the manuscript material later to be collated and published as *The Roman Quarry* which, he argues, is ample demonstration that it was part of a greater whole linked by their sharing in a conception which Davie describes alternately as 'extraordinary' and 'monstrous'.⁴³ *The Anathemata* is therefore just a fragment of a poem which defies its own author to finish it: 'All were equally parts of one poem in the strictest sense interminable.'⁴⁴ Davie is surely wrong here, although there are certain similarities of subject matter and interest: for the passages from which *The Roman Quarry* was constructed are complementary to *The Anathemata* rather than a continuation of it. Moreover the latter, as we will explore later in this thesis, has such a taut structure, both formal and imaginative, that the charge that it is in any way unfinished is patently

⁴¹ Donald Davie, *Under Briggflatts: A History of Poetry in Great Britain 1960-1988*, (Manchester: Carcanet, 1989) p162.

⁴² Donald Davie, "Editorial" in *PN Review*, (Vol 24, Autumn, 1981)

⁴³ Donald Davie, *Under Briggflatts*: p.160

⁴⁴ Donald Davie, *Under Briggflatts*: p.160 The manuscripts found after Jones's death were transcribed and edited by Harman Grisewood and René Hague, *The Roman Quarry and other sequences*, (London: Agenda Editions, 1981)

absurd. We can perhaps say that the things which interested David Jones when he wrote *The Anathemata* continued to be overriding concerns of his and it is not surprising that later work of his should be devoted to the themes of Celtic legend and the Roman Empire.

Elsewhere, Davie suggests that although David Jones certainly wrote poetry, it was not verse:

For the verse-line, and the niceties of turning from one verse-line into the next, Jones very seldom showed any susceptibility at all; and in his letters, whenever he is required to comment on rhythm and metre and the relation between them, his remarks are puerile.⁴⁵

Once again, Davie seems to be feeling his way, although with different terminology, towards a reiteration of the criticisms made by Holloway about both the modernist programme and the inherent boredom of Jones's poetry. We may conclude, however, that Davie's charge that Jones was not interested in the prosody of his poetry will need further investigation later in the thesis.

It is necessary to turn now to Elizabeth Ward who, in her book *David Jones: Mythmaker*⁴⁶ has published probably the most far-reaching and trenchant recent criticism of Jones's method and work. Unlike Littlewood, however, Ward's criticism is not a matter of carping invective but a carefully considered discussion of what seem to her to be serious drawbacks in Jones's work. She defines her central critical argument as follows:

⁴⁵ Donald Davie, *Under Briggflatts*, p.163

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Ward, *David Jones: Mythmaker*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983)

...although David Jones's mythopoeic impulse proved first to be a creative catalyst of the most fruitful kind, it later hardened into an obsession with the abstract features of the myths haunting his imagination, to the point of creating severe creative blockages.⁴⁷

Her working out of this overall thesis in connexion with *The Anathemata* leads her to question whether in fact the poem can be reasonably described as 'Christian', since she believes that Jones's commitment to the abstract notion of myth, however defined, undermines his doctrinal orthodoxy.⁴⁸ Moreover, this insistence on the priority of myth subverts any attempts that he might make to deal adequately with history, relegating it to yet another aspect of mythology and putting in doubt Jones's claims that he is creating something authentically modern, rooted in the concrete reality of the 'actually loved and known'.

Elsewhere in her book, Ward concurs with the criticism levelled at *The Anathemata* by such critics such as Holloway, that the modernist technique adopted by Jones, coupled with his own vision of ultimate coinherence, leads to a work which is essentially self-referential and choked by its own fractured surface and infinity of recessions⁴⁹. Almost ironically, what Ward regards as serious flaws in the poem are the very qualities that Corcoran and others find to be its strengths. But it is her understanding of myth, and Jones's relation to it, which lies at the centre of her discomfort with *The Anathemata*. By way of rejoinder, it may be said that she starts from a conception of myth which is immediately reductive and constraining; from this point of view she argues that Jones's mythopoeic impulse subverts the primacy of the Christian revelation,

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Ward, *David Jones: Mythmaker*, p.4

⁴⁸ Elizabeth Ward, *Mythmaker*, Ward writes: 'Its reputation as a work of Catholic piety has been as hardy as that of *In Parenthesis* as a 'war book', and yet equally misleading, for the poem's fidelity to 'myth' affects its Christian orthodoxy quite as much as it affects its historical objectivity.' p.130 But cf. also Corcoran who also suggests that *The Anathemata* is essentially self-referential.

⁴⁹ Ward, *Mythmaker* p.153

reducing it to yet another myth among many. This done, she accuses Jones not only of Manichaeism but also of a heterodoxy verging on the heretic. Thomas R. Whitaker has ably shown that Ward's understanding of Western Catholic doctrine has hardened into a dogmatic caricature, and that Jones is a far too subtle (and orthodox Catholic) a thinker and writer to be accused easily of dualism.⁵⁰ It will be shown in a later chapter that the discussion of 'myth' as a technical term does not diminish it but rather broadens it to include and *divinise* the whole system of mythological codes and the various interpretational strategies open to the reader.

It remains, however, now to come to some brief and necessarily overbroad conclusions concerning the critical comment on *The Anathemata* outlined above. Overall, despite the exceptions noted above, critics are agreed that it is a significant work of poetry, but there the consensus begins to break down. Those who are proponents disagree as to the significance of both form and content and it must be said that it is only recently that the abiding criticisms of opponents have been engaged with satisfactorily and writers have tried to account for the strangeness and difficulty of the poem without resorting to pietism, hagiography and obfuscation.

Adverse criticisms of the poem concentrate on the method of its making, its linguistic techniques, which have been described as 'thickness', its structure of multiple allusions and complex erudition in order to suggest that there is a radical disjunction between what Jones sets out to do and what, in the end, he is able to achieve. Critics such as Holloway and Ward are convinced that *The Anathemata* must, in the end be taken as a failure, albeit a fascinating and eloquent one.

⁵⁰ Thomas R Whitaker, 'Homo Faber, Homo Sapiens' in *David Jones: Man and Poet*, ed by John Matthias pp.476-477

One of the most recent critics to examine *The Anathemata* closely, Jonathan Miles, in a sense comes close to Holloway and Ward, although he is rather more positive about the work's worth, he says: '*The Anathemata* is, I feel, a flawed masterpiece, but certainly it has not received the attention it deserves.'⁵¹ Certainly even the most laudatory of the poem's proponents have not been blind to what they have regarded as shortcomings. There are times within the text when Jones adopts a tone of almost impenetrable obscurity and its surface difficulties loaded with marginalia seem calculated to dissuade the more timid of readers from making much headway. Some, we might suggest, may be put off by the pedantic connotations involved in having a poem with so much which needs explanation by way of footnotes. The consequent intrusion of a strong authorial presence in the shape of these notes, holding up and shaping the experience of reading the poem⁵² has been seen by some readers as exasperating and alienating. It is also true to say that the very unfamiliarity to many modern readers of much of the material within the poem (for example; the Catholic Mass, the Arthurian legends, Classical myths just to list a few) may well be a factor which discourages attention of this poem. And, it should not be forgotten that *The Anathemata* is a long poem which deals with issues which Jones believed were of universal significance; and, the prevalent trend in middle-to late-twentieth-century British poetry has been for short poems or at best sequences of poems in which the lyric voice of the poet has predominated. This too is a contributory factor to the poem's neglect.

Although we can certainly find things wrong with the poem, there is also much that is right, and this too has been a notable factor in the critical

⁵¹Miles *Backgrounds* p.180

⁵²c.f.the discussion of the work of Victor Shklovsky in relation to this matter in later chapters of this thesis.

consensus. There is an argument indeed that the problem is not so much with *The Anathemata* but with modern criticism which, it might be suggested, no longer has the tools available to it to do justice to a poem which, whatever Jones may claim for it, verges on the epic in both form and content. Kathleen Henderson Staudt suggests that the study of *The Anathemata*, together with its forebear *In Parenthesis*, would do much to extend the interpretative possibilities of late — twentieth-century literary criticism:

The quest for such an understanding might well begin with Jones's two long poems, for a resistance to narrative, coupled with a commitment to the poet's particular sense of culture, seems to be a common feature of many of the most ambitious and 'epical' long poems and poetic sequences of our century.⁵³

In conclusion, we would suggest first that the fact that *The Anathemata* still holds the interest and the attention of many critics is a testimony to the power of the poem and the hold which it can exert over the imagination. This, we may contend, would be impossible if it were incompetent both in its conception and in the execution of that conception. But it will be argued that it is not, it is the work of a careful craftsman who worked slowly and meticulously. Much of it is of great beauty and if not all of it has been universally judged successful, then those passages do not in themselves render the whole devoid of interest and value.

Second, Jones is aware of his place within the tradition of British poetry. That this awareness is articulated concretely in the allusive texture of his poem is significant, but we may also argue that the strength of this sense of

⁵³Kathleen Henderson Staudt, "Anatomizing David Jones", *Contemporary Literature*, 31:4 (Winter) 1990 p.583

place and of the power of the deposits prevents him from becoming a maverick or 'crank' and, more positively becomes the foundation of his own poetic art, giving him the confidence to use his own powers of discernment and imagination.

Third, and finally, his precision and accuracy both in the great intellectual issues with which he deals, and in the details and particularity of little things which, along the way, get drawn into the fabric of *The Anathemata*, gives to reader and critic alike a sense of this being a very *human* poem. And, if this were not enough, it provides for many readers a sense of wonder, excitement and not a little joy.

Chapter 2: What kind of poem? The Literary Experience of *The Anathemata*

There is little doubt that *The Anathemata* is an unusual poem, looked at from any angle. Its language is unexpected, its subject matter is strange and sometimes arcane, and the effect of its visual impact on the page upon the reader is idiosyncratic. Almost before one is able to answer the question: what is it about? one has to answer the question: what is it? This chapter seeks to begin to answer the latter question, not least by way of examining what Jones himself wrote about his method and self-understanding in his correspondence and, more importantly, in the lengthy and detailed preface to the poem itself. An examination of the preface will serve not only to illuminate the processes at work in the actual composition of the poem but also begin to tease at the deeper, underlying, conceptual questions which spurred Jones on to the making of this thing.

The Epic

But first, it may be advantageous to look at an acknowledged authority who pre-dates David Jones by more than a century:

I should not think of devoting less than 20 years to an Epic poem. Ten to collect materials and warm my mind with universal science. I would be a tolerable Mathematician, I would thoroughly know Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Astronomy, Botany, Metallurgy, Fossilism, Chemistry, Geology, Anatomy, Medicine - then the *mind of man* - then the *minds of men* in all Travels, Voyages and Histories. So I would spend ten years - the next five to the composition of the poem - and the five last to the correction. So I would write haply not unhearing of that divine and rightly-

whispered Voice, which speaks to mighty minds of predestined
Garlands, starry and unwithering.¹

Thus wrote the youthful Coleridge to his publisher, outlining his plans and his ideas for an epic poem which he was never to commence, let alone complete. Despite its overblown youthful arrogance, it presents the critic with a useful starting point from which to begin to tackle David Jones's poem *The Anathemata*. For it seems even 'out of time' to describe almost exactly the sort of poem that *The Anathemata* is, an attempt, albeit restricted and partial, to detail in the form of a poem the *mind of man*., or rather, those things which might be claimed to constitute the mind of Western European man in the middle of the twentieth century. Does this then direct us towards the conclusion that the poem is perhaps an epic? Need one search any further for a suitable genre or category with which to label this poem? The problem is that *The Anathemata* is by no means easy to define formally. If one is to be strictly accurate the answer is no; it is certainly not an epic in either form or content. By way of contrast, Jones's previous long poem *In Parenthesis* does fulfil the criteria of epic rather better (but even this 'bends the rules').² *The Anathemata* is not '... a long narrative poem on a great and serious subject, told in an elevated style, and centred on a heroic or quasi divine figure on whose actions depends the fate of a tribe, a nation, or the human race.'³ But then it is not so far from being that. It is long, it is written in what might be described as an 'elevated style', and its subject matter certainly conforms to a great seriousness and, from the point of view of Jones, at least, it is of crucial (and when writing of David Jones the

¹ Richard Holmes, *Coleridge: Early Visions*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990). p.144.

² cf. especially John H. Johnston, *English Poetry of the First World War*, (Princeton:Princeton University Press, 1964) pp. 284-344. But even Johnston points out that Jones in *In Parenthesis* is compelled by his subject matter to reformulate the epic or heroic vision of his poem.

³ M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, p.51

word *crucial* has a specific significance all of its own) importance to mankind. It is also, in a sense, centred on a quasi-divine figure if we reinterpret that somewhat. Even if, in the case of this poem, that figure appears by way of shadows and hints rather than openly and evidently. There is, then, the almost paradoxical situation where Christ is effectively present at the centre of the poem by virtue of his personal absence. To speak of this is almost by way of a digression, yet one would, nevertheless, still defy the critic to describe *The Anathemata* as *epic* in the same way that one might the works of Homer or *The Aeneid* of Virgil, chiefly of course because of the absence of a narrative thread. But, at the same time, it is necessary to acknowledge some sort of kinship of spirit between *The Anathemata* and the epic form of poetry. However, the passage from Coleridge above suggests that the concept of *epic* itself might need redefining for the modern world and this redefinition might offer a way forward in trying to understand Jones's poem. Coleridge implicitly defines epic poetry as articulating '*the mind of man*' requiring therefore of the poet that he or she be learned in a wide range of disciplines, both scientific and artistic, so as to approximate in him or herself the whole range of human learning. In fact, the description that Coleridge gives of how he would go about writing his epic has a remarkable similarity with the way that David Jones went about making all of his poetry and especially *The Anathemata*. It is the result of the gradual accrual, albeit in a non-academic way, of a vast amount of learning all of which can, and often is, incorporated into his poetry. Jones constantly demonstrates within the pages of his poem an immense knowledge of material drawn from a large number of disciplines. The breadth of this knowledge is often remarkable, all the more so when it is woven into the fabric of the poetry with intuitive deftness and with a craftsman's eye for apposite detail. The result is that the considerable learning upon which Jones draws does not

lie heavily upon the poetry, it does not call attention to itself but rather it is integral to both the content and, through it, the form of this poem.

We may, then, say that although *The Anathemata* is not an epic poem in the same way that *In Parenthesis* is primarily because it is not a narrative work; it has, nevertheless, enough of the quality of the epic about it to admit of some family resemblance. It has been described as a 'displaced epic',⁴ a genre which, according to Dilworth, who coins the phrase, it shares with the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound and which, although abandoning the regularity of both form and content of the traditional epic, retains the depth of overall vision. Accepting this sort of provisional and partial definition of genre the reader is forced to acknowledge that *The Anathemata* is, to a certain extent, undefinable and even if it shares in the extended vision which we require of the epic and associated forms there are also passages of extreme lyric tenderness and others which are best understood as incantatory in a liturgical and often psalmic sense. *The Anathemata* is the sum of all of these things and, in a sense, it is more since it often seems to be trying to extend its own potential and reach out of the safe world of recognizable form and well-tested poetic language into uncharted waters where it goes about the business of defining itself on its own terms. The same, it might be added in parenthesis, may be said of David Jones himself.

The Preface to the Poem

But this is in a sense to pre-empt some of the difficult questions of both form and content that the poem poses the reader. Is the reader helped by what Jones himself has to say about his creation in the preface to the

⁴ Thomas Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning in the Poetry of David Jones*, (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1988) p.152.

poem? From the outset he seems unconcerned by such formal problems as whether *The Anathemata* is an epic or not, but rather tries to explain, or at least justify to the reader why the poem is the way it is. 'I have made a heap of all that I could find'⁵. begins Jones, quoting the medieval Welsh historian Nennius and immediately the reader may be seduced into a sense of the poem being somehow randomly created and organised, heaped together rather than carefully constructed. Such a reaction is further compounded by what seems at first sight to be the palpable difficulty and unfamiliarity of many aspects of the poem from the reader's point of view and by Jones's own articulation of how it came to be:

What I have written has no plan, or at least is not planned. If it has a shape it is chiefly that it returns to its beginnings. It has themes and a theme even if it wanders far. If it has a unity it is that what goes before conditions what comes after and *vice versa* . Rather as in a longish conversation between two friends, where one thing leads to another; but should a third party hear fragments of it, he might not know how the talk had passed from the cultivation of cabbages to Melchizedek, King of Salem(p.33)

In saying this, Jones does not inspire in the reader confidence in a strong authorial hand, rather it might be suggested that he aims to elicit a kind of kinship or partnership of common purpose between himself and his reader. The provision of so much explanatory material in footnotes extends this sense of partnership and yet at the same time paradoxically it subverts it because through the footnotes the author *guides* the reader. Almost unseen the author controls how his poem is to be read. To accept at face value Jones's modest and somewhat self-consciously diffident explanation of how the poem came to be is to miss this point and to do a disservice both to Jones and *The Anathemata*. The implication that the

⁵ David Jones, *The Anathemata : fragments of an attempted writing* , (London: Faber and Faber, 1952). All future references to the poem are noted just by page numbers or in the footnotes by *Ana* .

poem somehow 'just happened', that its form is a product of mere chance and the poet's whim, is categorically disproved when one is reminded of the large number of drafts through which Jones went in composing the poem to his own high standards⁶. But it soon becomes evident to the attentive reader that there is very little that is random in *The Anathemata*. In truth, it is highly structured although the shape of that structure is often concealed beneath the thick recessive surface texture of the language. As will be demonstrated later, the attention of the reader's eye and ear is constantly drawn to this 'surface' of the language and it is Jones's consummate facility with words which is likely to strike the reader rather more forcefully than the artifice of his construction of verse lines and the architecture of the poem, although neither of these is in any way insignificant. Recognising these factors in the formation of what one might inelegantly call the poetry of the poem, one is drawn once again to consider Jones's own self-articulation in his preface, looking now at his own wrestling with a definition of what poetry is.

For one of the efficient causes of which the effect called poetry is a dependant involves the employment of a particular language or languages, and involves that employment at an especially heightened tension. The means or agent is a veritable torcular, squeezing every drain of evocation from the word-forms of that language or languages. And that involves a bagful of mythus before you've said Jack Robinson - or immediately after.(p.20)

For Jones then, poetry is language at 'heightened tension' it is infinitely evocative and it embodies within itself all of the cultural deposits of the language or languages in which it is written. These cultural deposits Jones

⁶'It had its beginnings in an experiment made from time to time between 1938 and 1945. In a sense what was then written is another book. It has been rewritten, large portions excluded, others added, the whole rearranged and considerably changed more than once.' pp. 14-15. Hague and others estimate that the actual number of early drafts is much higher than Jones himself admits.cf. also Jonathan Miles, *Backgrounds to David Jones: a Study in Sources and Drafts*, (Cardiff:University of Wales Press, 1990).

labels with the term *mythus*, a loaded concept in his vocabulary which may best be left until a later chapter for elucidation. This notwithstanding, each of these three aspects of Jones's definition of poetry are crucial for an understanding of *The Anathemata*. Not only do they help to explain the linguistic texture of the poem but also how by evocation and allusion the outward form of the words is bound up with the question of content and how it is that that content is rendered significant. If one wishes to know quite how Jones understands that this might be accomplished one only needs to turn to his own elucidation of the title of the poem. Here he describes his comprehensive vision as to how the outward form of words and their inner meaning relate. He writes in a way that verges on the playful and which is, as much of the preface is, very close to poetry itself.⁷ It is noteworthy that throughout the poem there are passages where the distinctions between prose and poetry are rendered almost meaningless.

But all of these questions concerning the formal characteristics of the poem are in some way dependent upon Jones's particular and often highly personal understanding of what art is all about and what an artist is meant to do. Upon this in turn hangs his theory of signification and his reading of cultural history, both of which have to some extent to be confronted, if not mastered, by the reader before *The Anathemata* will give up much of its sense. The central matter is to do with the making of significant things, not things, however, with a purely private significance or meaning

⁷ So I mean by my title as much as it can be made to mean, or can evoke or suggest, however obliquely: the blessed things that have taken on what is cursed and the profane things that somehow are redeemed: the delights and also the 'ornaments', both in the primary sense of gear and paraphernalia and in the sense of what simply adorns: the donated and votive things, the things dedicated in whatever fashion, the things in some way made separate, being 'laid up from other things'; things, or some aspect of them, that partake of the extra-utile and of the gratuitous; things that are the signs of something other, together with those signs that not only have the nature of a sign, but are themselves, under some mode, what they signify. Things set up, lifted up, or in whatever manner made over to the Gods. pp.28-29 .

but things which somehow coinhere within the universal, extending its possibilities and exploring its various facets, inevitably transforming it. The infinite evocation which Jones requires of his words, and the cultural deposits which they presuppose and enact, function as a dynamic force within the poetry in an almost tangible, and certainly transformatory way. The words of the poetry make present and contemporise the implications and ramifications of the deposits of human culture. This sense of evocation whether in the visual or the verbal arts as 'making present' is of central significance for Jones's self-understanding. For it is both analogous to and dependent upon Jones's personal understanding both of the artist as a gratuitous maker of things and also as bound up with the archetypal sign-making of the Mass which, like a steady underlying rhythm, will hold together even the most disparate parts of *The Anathemata*. For both the artist and the priest standing at the altar to celebrate the Mass are concerned with the sort of evocation which leads to a kind of presence which, in its turn, is a way of grasping hold of reality. 'Poetry is to be diagnosed as 'dangerous' because it evokes and recalls, is a kind of *anamnesis* of, i.e. is an effective recalling of, something loved.' p.21 But the present phase of Western Culture is one in which an understanding of the connotations of words and symbols cannot be presumed either by the poet or the priest. The reservoirs of signification, the *lingua franca* of meaningful signs and symbols upon which both priests and artists could have drawn in the past, have run dry; nothing can be presumed to carry within itself the range of potential meanings necessary for either art or religion. Both the priest and the artist have been forced, by the pre-eminence of technology, what David Jones call the 'utile', to become, in a way, men of the diaspora⁸ exiled from their positions of central

⁸ Thomas Dilworth ed. & intro, *Inner Necessities: The Letters of David Jones to Desmond Chute*, (Toronto: Anson Cartwright Editions, 1984) p.26 (Hereafter, *IN*)

significance within cultures and civilisations to the fringes where their role is as curators.

It is not surprising, therefore, that *The Anathemata* opens with the depiction of a priest saying Mass in a contemporary, ugly Church building. Such an image brings together so many of the themes which Jones discusses at length in the preface and the reader is soon enmeshed in the constant strategy of movement or transformation which enlivens the poetry. One of the most notable features of the poem is its constant movement not only linguistically but also of subject - matter. One image gives way to another and reading the poem is in many ways analogous to making a journey, a metaphor which was not lost on Jones himself as he muses on the processes behind the making of *The Anathemata* . 'Now making a work is not thinking thoughts but accomplishing an actual journey' (p33) and the journey of this poem brings both the reader and the poet back to the point from which they started; the celebration of the Mass. Not, of course, that the reader should be in any way surprised by such circularity of form: on the page following the preface the poet has given a strong hint as to the shape of the poem. 'IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT, WE SAT BY THE CALCINED WALL; IT WAS SAID TO THE TALE-TELLER, TELL US A TALE, AND THE TALE RAN THUS: IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT...' (p.45) But the words and the typography coming as they do after the preface with its meanderings and conceptual difficulties have a mysterious quality heightening the sense of expectation. Once again, however, in the preface Jones has pre-empted his reader for although he certainly wants his poem to be a mystery he nevertheless wants to define this carefully:

My intention has not been to 'edify'(...), nor, I think, to persuade, but there is indeed an intention to 'uncover'; which is what a 'mystery' does, for though at root 'mystery' implies a closing, all 'mysteries' are meant to disclose, to show forth something.(p.33)

Later in this thesis the concept of mystery will be examined once again. For the moment let it suffice to say that although it is tempting to accuse Jones of deliberate obfuscation, (and that has certainly been the position adopted by some critics) the concept of mystery should not be mistaken for a shortcoming on the part of an author unable to organise his thoughts with a sufficient degree of clarity. Rather, if it is understood as a way in which truth is acquired through wrestling and a constantly heuristic and discerning engagement with a text, it will provide another useful strategy for the reader to bear in mind as he or she comes to understand the task involved in reading *The Anathemata* .

The Influence of Eliot

Finally, in considering the preface, which we may accept as Jones's authentic expression of his authorial intentions, there is the question of his own position with regard to the poem. It has been noted that the poem depends upon the deployment of the vast amount of knowledge which Jones himself had accrued, and yet he is able to write:

It is of no consequence to the shape of the work how the workman came by the bits of material he used in making that shape. When the workman is dead the only thing that will matter is the work objectively considered. Moreover, the workman must be dead to himself while engaged upon the work, otherwise we have that sort of 'self-expression' which is undesirable in the painter or the writer as in the carpenter, the cantor, the half-back or the cook. (p.12)

Such thoughts resonate remarkably with those of T.S. Eliot in his essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent* . Eliot argues that great poets are those who find themselves in the continuum of tradition rather than

those who assert their personal autonomy. The best poets, Eliot argues: 'may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors assert their immortality most vigorously.'⁹ Such a poet would as a consequence have a strong sense of history which, in its turn, would strengthen and undergird his sense of his own place within the historical continuum:

This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his own contemporaneity.¹⁰

Such a poet, according to Eliot, is able to see the main 'currents' and developments of poetic achievement and knows that to engage with this it is necessary to put aside the urges of individuality in order to become part of a greater and more valuable whole.¹¹ The poet who takes history seriously and becomes responsible to it, finds himself with a stronger and more realistic grasp on the contemporary and by virtue of his historical perspective he is consequently able to be modern. Moreover, his judgement, honed by the wisdom of his forebears, is less likely to turn to the emotional 'personal' poetry which Eliot dislikes. For the emotion which is proper to art is impersonal and is timelessly valuable and valued not personal and transient¹². If a good poet is able to be discerning and not ephemeral because of his engagement with the wisdom of the past, what then is the difference between the poet and the non-poet? Before returning to Jones and his self-understanding, we may look at another

⁹T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in Frank Kermode, ed. & intro., *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1975) p.38

¹⁰ Kermode p.38

¹¹'The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality' p.40

¹²p.44

remark of Eliot's, this time from an essay entitled "The Metaphysical Poets", once again published in Kermode's *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot* :

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.¹³

Jones is certainly a poet who takes history seriously; he is also as we have seen a poet who concurs with Eliot's insights into the impersonality or perhaps we might use the term 'reserve' necessary for good poetry. Looking at Jones's work, is it possible to say that he has achieved his aim of a studied impersonality? Even if one leaves aside the couple of occasions in the poem when he lets the mask slip and the narrator's voice becomes identical with that of Jones himself,¹⁴ the range of material is so idiosyncratic as to leave the reader frequently curious about a person who combines an interest in the craft of the shipwright with a knowledge of medieval philosophy. The 'insularity' of interest which Jones predicates of himself by way of his 'biographical accidents' combining with his vast learning and his strategy of acknowledging that this learning is not likely to be shared by his readers and thus needs explanation, renders *The Anathemata*, in some respects, a remarkably personal poem, for all Jones's protestations of impersonality, in which the author's influence is always strongly felt if rarely directly heard.

The experience of reading *The Anathemata* is, then, one of making a journey in the company of a humble and yet extremely erudite guide.

¹³Kermode p.64

¹⁴ Notably in *The Lady of the Pool* but more importantly in *Mabinogs Liturgy* where he introduces his own experience of Christmas in the trenches in 1915.

The journey is by no means easy. Sometimes it is extremely tortuous and if not dangerous then frequently very demanding. As with most journeys not all its parts are equally enjoyable, while some are perhaps technically more successful than others. Above all else this is a journey which is in a sense familiar to all readers in which one finds oneself returned to the place from which one started, able to look at the route one has taken and to review all that one has learned along the way.

Chapter 3 : Myths, and Liturgical Anamnesis

In the last chapter some tentative conclusions were reached about what David Jones believed to be his method and purpose in writing *The Anathemata* ; and some attempt was made to describe the reader's experience in engaging with the poem. In this chapter, a set of concepts, each of which underpins the intellectual framework of the poem and each of which is specifically keynoted by Jones in his preface, will be examined: myth, liturgy and, consequent upon and integral to it, *anamnesis* . The intention is to see how each might relate to the poem which David Jones has written, and how, as they interrelate, they come to illuminate each other.

Myth

In his essay 'Myth and mystery in the Poetry of David Jones', René Hague calls myth 'that shape-shifting creature'.¹ The reader is immediately alerted to a qualitative aspect of myth which is, nevertheless, of the utmost importance: that is, its strangeness, its quality of otherness. We may also indicate by this the innate, preconceived difficulty of any discussion of the term. That this is objectively true is admirably demonstrated by K.K. Ruthven who, in his short but comprehensive monograph on the subject, shows that he is as aware as Hague that speaking about myth is a tricky business; quoting Wallace Stevens, he asserts that 'they seem to resist the intelligence almost successfully'.² Strangeness and a consistent resistance to investigation, seem, from the outset, to be the qualities of myth. Yet these conceptual difficulties notwithstanding, the reader coming upon many of the writings of poets

¹ René Hague in *Agenda* special edition on Myth

² K.K. Ruthven, *Myth* , (London: Methuen & Co, 1976) p.1

throughout this century, not least among them the poems of David Jones, will be struck by their employment of traditions of narrative and the structures of symbol and allusion which are immediately recognisable as myth. Within *The Anthemata*, alongside the Biblical and Liturgical references, the geological and archaeological detail, and used by Jones with equal facility and familiarity, is material derived from classical legend, for instance *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Celtic story from *The Mabinogion*, and, by a rather circuitous route, Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*. The importance of this massive body of material, both for the form and the content of the poem, soon becomes evident as the reader progresses with his or her investigation of the text.. Whatever myth is defined as being, it is enmeshed in the complex of typological allusions which lie at the interpretative centre of the poem and it has a determining effect in shaping the succession of fragmentary yet important narratives, for example the voyages, which emerge into focus, weaving their way around *The Anthemata's* twin redemptive centres of the Cross and the Mass. Later in this chapter it will be necessary at length to examine how myth underpins liturgy and how that underpinning injects a sort of circularity to the use of myth within the poem. For the moment one might risk pre-empting a part of that discussion and suggest that myth is a determinant narrative by means of which a community understands itself and its relationship with the Divine. It must be admitted that this definition has a major shortcoming in that it stresses the functional characteristics of myth; it stresses what a myth *does* rather than making any attempt to describe what it *is*. Yet to understand the importance of myth, as a concept which illuminates *The Anthemata*, it is necessary to investigate both what it is and what it does, or can be made to do. In addition, it is necessary to grapple with David Jones's own sometimes idiosyncratic use of the term.

Jones's own thoughts on the subject are to be found at their clearest and most economical in a footnote to the preface of the poem, which should be the starting-point for any reading of the poem. Since they are extremely illuminating with regard to the subject under discussion, his clearest and most uncompromising statement of them, it is worthwhile quoting in full:

I prefer 'myth' to 'mythus', but owing to such sentences as "She said she'd some fags, but it was pure myth" the meaning of myth is liable to misunderstanding even in the most serious connections. Unfortunately *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1933) defines myth as 'A purely fictitious narrative etc.' Yet we sing in the Liturgy '*Teste David cum Sibylla*' and clearly the Sibyl belongs to what, for the Christian Church, is an extra-revelational body of tradition. But such bodies of tradition are not to be described as 'purely fictitious', yet they are certainly properly described as 'myth'...I don't mind the rather academic 'mythus' but I don't see why we should have the English form myth permanently separated from its primal innocence, from the Greek *mythos*, which, I understand, means a word uttered, something told. Then we should rightly speak of the myth of the Evangel, a myth devoid of the fictitious, an utterance of the Word, a 'pure myth'. (p40n.1)

It is worth noticing how in the first sentence Jones, perhaps in some respects naively, first disposes of the negative connotations of myth, and uses of the word 'myth' as 'untrue' or 'untruth', and then goes on to speak of the Christian Gospel as a kind of archetypal or 'pure' myth. The implications of what Jones suggests are not only that the narrative about Christ contains within itself truth, but that it also has Divine authorship, that the truth which it contains comes from God. 'Pure' or 'genuine' myth is therefore truth spoken by God. Thomas Dilworth therefore argues that 'mythos' 'denotes archetypal meaning', and it is with this connotation and its consequent presumptions that David Jones uses this word in his critical and discursive prose essays.³ Certainly there are times

³ Thomas Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* p. 22

when Jones means mythos to bear the meaning of ultimate truth under the form or, to borrow the term from sacramental theology, 'species' of narrative but is he not perhaps being rather more specific? Above all one can say that in David Jones's thought, myth is a way in which God reveals himself. It is a vehicle of Divine manifestation. Such a conception enables him to view the received doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, built upon the myth of the Gospel, as mythic material available to the poet and the artist. In Jones's opinion, the form which the myth takes is eternally significant, transcending time. It is this which makes it important for him to differentiate between genuine and false myth, a differentiation which is problematic, and may at times seem pedantic, but which he outlines with a certain clarity in an essay on 'The Myth of Arthur':

To conserve, to develop, to bring together, to make significant for the present what the past holds, without dilution or any deleting, but rather by understanding and transubstantiating the material, this is the function of genuine myth, neither pedantic, nor popularising, nor indifferent to scholarship, but saying always: "Of these thou hast given me I have lost none".⁴

Genuine myth is specific and yet inclusive. Its form has a transparency by means of which truth may be seen and appropriated. It is eternally significant, as is the truth which it contains, and if within it the outward form of truth is somehow transformed, the essence of it is nevertheless preserved intact.

So we may gather that Jones understood myth to be wedded to the whole business of poetry and the making of things. The form that the ancient deposits were given, or handed on, is of the the most profound

⁴ David Jones, 'The Myth of Arthur', in *Epoch and Artist*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1959) p.243

significance to him, as also was the sense that mythos grasps at a reality or a truth which historical facts could not attempt to grasp. Hence it is the core of undiluted signifying presence conveyed in the shape of story lying beyond formulations and within yet equally beyond even history which interested him and which enables him to slide so eloquently between the Christian and the pagan mythic heritage. It is in this context of narrative that signs and symbols could be allowed free play, both in the mind of the poet/artist/maker and in the apprehension of the reader. It may be suggested, then, that it is the faculty of the imagination which Jones applies to the signs and symbols which constitute the myth which and thus deepens our perceptions of his subject.

Myth and Imagination

We need, however, to extend the investigation in order to try to understand something of the processes of conception underlying Jones's use of myth. Coleridge's often quoted dictum that imagination is: '...the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'⁵ provides Edward Robinson with a foundation on which he builds an elucidation of the ideas of imagination from a theological perspective which, it might be argued, aids the comprehension of David Jones's endeavour. Adopting Coleridge's understanding of imagination as being analogous to divine creation, Robinson suggests that: 'What the truly creative imagination can do is to set us free, to open us up, or more precisely to enable us to open ourselves up, to an infinite world of possibilities: to reality.'⁶ In this, imagination is the faculty in man which responds to phenomena by trying to reach beyond them to an unseen

⁵ S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, (London: Keagan and Paul, 1983) p.304

⁶ Edward Robinson, *The Language of Mystery*, (London: SCM, 1987) p.21

reality. If, as Robinson suggests, human beings are spiritual, responsive to mystery, then imagination is that which, because it shares in the creative dimension of the mystery, is the human faculty best placed to probe or wrestle with it. This being so, Robinson presents us with two categories of imagination: vertical imagination, 'The faculty that enables us to raise our vision to new heights or to explore more deeply the roots or bedrock of our being.'⁷ Against this may be set an horizontal imagination, by which the insights gained vertically may be transmitted or conveyed to others. This bi-partite categorisation of imagination is admittedly somewhat artificial but at least it does justice to the sort of activity in which any poet engages in the fulfilment of his art. It may be contended that Jones's understanding of the concept of myth and Robinson's elucidation of imagination are complementary. If we accept that myth is a means of entering into mystery, then imagination is the human tool which permits and enables this. It is rendered more comprehensible in the context of David Jones when it is considered that imagination, creativity and the whole business of making are thoroughly bound up with one another. Additionally, we should mention two further aspects of Robinson's discussion of imagination: that the 'receptivity' of imagination needs support both by the faculty of reason, and also that it operates socially, within the context of some sort of community, that is, that imagination is not and never can be a solitary activity.

Myth, Language and the Ritual Community

This final insight can surely be taken somewhat further. First, following Philip Wheelwright, we may suggest that language, the means whereby a community communicates within itself, has a part to play in this

⁷ Robinson p.12

experience of the margins. Wheelwright suggests in his book *The Burning Fountain* that:

...religious, poetic, and mythic utterances at their best really mean something, make a kind of trans-subjective reference, although their methods of referring and the nature of what is referred to need to be understood and judged on their own merits, not by standards of meaning imported from outside.⁸

The language in which myth is couched belongs to this conception of 'expressive of depth language'. That is to say, language which is different from ordinary literal or 'steno-language' in that it conveys symbolically matters which have to do with the meaning of existence which take seriously human existential ambiguities, the sense of being on the 'threshold'. Wheelwright writes that: 'Memory and imagination give the past and future a shape; contemplative awareness of them reduces their power over us - or at any rate over that part of us which matters most.'⁹ Myth then is a way of coming to some sort of understanding of the world in a linguistic form; but Wheelwright takes his investigation one stage further: '...in order to know nature truly in a mythopoeic way one must engage in the gestures and ritual acts which bring oneself into active communion'.¹⁰ Community itself through its ritual activity confirms the quality of meaningfulness predicated of the language of myth. Victor Turner develops a concept of *communitas* by which he means a bond uniting people which exists over and above social bonds, a spontaneously self-generating 'anti-structure' in which people confront each other as 'human totals'. Of it he writes that *communitas* is; '...the conditions for the production of root metaphors, conceptual archetypes, paradigms,

⁸Philip Wheelwright, *The Burning Fountain: A Study in the Language of Symbolism*, (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1968.) p.44

⁹Wheelwright p.28

¹⁰Wheelwright p.154

models for and the rest. Root metaphors have a "thusness" or "thereness" from which many subsequent structures may be "unpacked" by *vijnana* consciousness or *l'ésprit de géométrie*.¹¹ If a certain amount of latitude may be allowed in matters of vocabulary, it might be suggested that Turner's paradigms, archetypes and root metaphors may be analogous to the heritage of myth and symbol which provides a common pool of ideas on which the creative imagination can work, prevented by the 'anti-structure' of the *communitas* from descending into self-fulfilling fantasy. It is evident that Turner and Wheelwright have come to complementary and mutually illuminating conclusions albeit by different routes. Community, ritual, language and myth are bound together. It is in this respect that myth and liturgical activity, which in the case of David Jones will mean primarily the Eucharist, are brought together in the field of community.

The words quoted above which Jones writes of myth could just as easily be applied to the Eucharist. Indeed, the language of transubstantiation is a piece of technical Eucharistic language that he is deliberately re-applying here to myth. The implications are interesting and indicate something of Jones's theological bravery and creativity. For he is suggesting that genuine myth, by which he does not just mean Christian myth, has many of the functions of the Eucharist in representing, making-present and getting to the heart of tradition. We will have to return to this matter when we discuss the Mass below.

Myth, Art, Poetry

¹¹ Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p.55

The matter of David Jones's theory of myth leads one into his understanding of what art in general and poetry in particular are all about. For Jones, mythology was part of the accumulated human experience of past and present, all of which had a part to play in the making of significant and beautiful things. Therefore the form in which the ancient deposits were given and received is of the greatest significance to him as evidence of human sign-making; in this case, the human response to and articulation of archetypal truth. But there is also an implicit understanding that the form in which truth-bearing myths are available owes something to God as well. Thus mythos, like the Eucharist, is a point at which human and divine artefacture meet and work together in harmony. Man is the artist seeking to articulate divine truth, and God is offering himself kenotically, that is to say, emptying himself into the world of signs. All myths are therefore in some way incarnational, representing as they do a point at which God and man come into close proximity and in which salvific truth may be apprehended by man who is thereby transformed. Conceiving things in this way enabled Jones to slide easily between the Christian and the Pagan mythic heritage, blurring, to a limited extent, the distinction between the two and yet still managing to maintain in a central and pre-eminent position the myth of the Christian Gospel towards which points the truth inhering in non-Christian mythologies. Indeed, it is in this context of mythic narrative pointing towards the same locus of truth, that signs and symbols could be allowed free play both in the mind of the poet/artist/maker and in the apprehension of the reader. The reader apprehends these things because he or she, knowing something of the codes which Jones employs, for example the Bible or archetypal myth, is able to make connections between hitherto disparate worlds by virtue of the poet's selection and arrangement of material. So it may be said that it is the faculty of the

imagination that Jones applies to the signs and symbols of ultimate truth which enriches and deepens the reader's perceptions of his subjects. Myth becomes a springboard for the poetic imagination and inventiveness. Moreover, it may be noted that his understanding of myth contributes towards his singular inversion of the mythic method which some have suggested is the way other twentieth-century poets and writers, notably Yeats and Eliot, have used myth. Other poets have used myth in order to get in touch with the past; in contrast, Jones uses its transubstantiating properties to enable Divine truth to speak to a present reality which has heretofore been silent. To quote Dilworth: 'Now the present does not invoke the past but the past the present.'¹²

Can we say that David Jones's understanding of myth is so eccentric as to be meaningless? In order to decide, we may set against David Jones's understanding of myth the work of others, who, from a variety of standpoints have considered what myths might be or might do. A brief resumé of the theories adduced historically to understand myth reveals that all mythographers presume that myths encode meaning within themselves in a way that requires unlocking. In the Classical world, Euhemerus and his followers saw myth as containing kernels of historical truth presented in such a way as to confirm an historical reality. Developing the implications of this, Ruthven points out that just as myth may be historicised in this way so too history can be incorporated into myth to become a 'para-history'. He quotes Michael Grant to the effect that para-history records 'not what happened but what people, at different times, said or believed had happened'.¹³ This flexible appreciation of the generation and function of myth will become particularly important when

¹² Thomas Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* , p.361

¹³ K.K. Ruthven p.6

we come to discuss how myth and liturgy interact. Another view of myth is to see it not as history but as natural history encoding allegorically in itself primitive understandings of what is going on in the universe.¹⁴ Thus Frazer was able, writing in *The Golden Bough*, in the early part of this century, to view myth as but one stage, albeit a false one, in mankind's progression towards science by which things can be explained rationally. Frazer and others also saw myth as encoding the meaning of a community's constitutive rituals especially concerning fertility and rites of passage. The psychological approaches of both Freud and Jung, although differing in detail, presume that myth is a projection of the psychology of the unconscious into the external world. Yet others have reduced myths to philology, or to moralizing, and Levi-Strauss and other structuralist critics have supplied a method for analysing myths which, although by no means devoid of any ideological programme, concentrates on functional analyses rather than evincing meaning.

When David Jones uses myth, he draws (albeit perhaps unconsciously in some instances) upon a variety of these theoretical stances: the historical, the natural-historical, the ritual and the psychological theories outlined above. As with Eliot before him, the work of Frazer and Jessie Weston informed his use of the complex of material around the theme of the Waste land and vegetation ritual. He had read enough of Freud and learned enough during his own periods of mental illness to understand that at times myths seem to mirror the inner workings of the mind. Finally, his use of Roman myth shows that he understood, probably as no other poet has done, that myth can be used by totalitarian and imperialist regimes to account for and justify their existence. But none of them was in itself sufficient for his purposes and none of these systematic theories

¹⁴ K.K. Ruthven p.54

accounts for the fascination with which Jones in particular and humanity in general has retained myth as a category of self-expression. All interpretations of myth are partial keys, useful under some but not all circumstances; all contain truth, so long as one is careful to prescribe the limits to their truthfulness. All *demythologise*, within defined existential premises strip the myth of its external characteristics in order to grasp at the core of meaning or self-understanding lying within. To each proponent of a theory there is an equally cogent opponent, especially in matters of detail and interpretation, which is a useful reminder of the provisionality of such an enterprise. Above all, and this is perhaps why it is impossible to apply any one theory to Jones's use of mythic material, these articulations of myth presume that meaning is somehow locked in, needing to be freed by the key of the theorist.¹⁵ We have already seen that Jones believed that myth had a communicative function which transcended simple explanation and defied the theorist to close it up. A myth contains truth which is accessible through the form of the myth itself, which is outward looking and not arcane and secretive. It does not require those reading it to be special initiates into esoteric knowledge because it encodes meaning which human beings may appropriate because they are essentially sign-makers. Jones's theoretical stance is nearly always coherent. His thoughts about myth inform those about art, and they in their turn rely upon his understanding of theology. Whenever one begins examining one area of his thought or practice, one is in danger of heading off into other directions. We need therefore to look elsewhere for a suitable standpoint to comprehend the use of myth within *The Anathemata*.

¹⁵Against this, we might consider the work of William, G. Doty, who, in the introduction to his book *Mythography: The Study of Myths and Rituals*, (n.p.: University of Alabama Press, 1986) writes: 'My own preference is for a multilayered, multifunctional working procedure...' p.xiii

Myth and Theology

The American Process theologian, Schubert Ogden, takes a standpoint somewhat farther back from the theorising described above. In order to define myth, he posits three densely-packed and interrelated statements which should perhaps be quoted in their entirety.

1. Myth is a particular way of thinking and speaking that, like other such ways represents (i.e *re* -presents, presents *again*) the reality presented in one basic mode of human experience.
2. The reality that myth represents is the ultimate reality presented in our original, internal, non-sensuous experience of ourselves, others and the whole.
3. The particular way in which myth thinks and speaks of this ultimate reality is as a narrative or story determined, on the one hand by its intention to answer the existential question of the meaning of reality for us, and, on the other hand, by its use of concepts and terms proper to the other basic mode of human experience, namely our derived, external, sense experience of others and ourselves.¹⁶

Ogden is concerned to differentiate myth from fable, folk-tale, saga and legend by confining myth to those narratives which speak of the Other or 'ultimate reality'.¹⁷ Whether such a differentiation can be easily sustained in practice is, however, questionable. Nevertheless, these propositions are useful as they begin to point one in the direction from which one might determine what a myth does rather than what it is. This might at first sight seem to be a major shortcoming, but, as will become clearer when we discuss liturgy below, by understanding its functional characteristics we may be made wary of adopting wholeheartedly any of the reductive interpretations of myth mentioned above, and still come to some roundabout conception of what it is. But Ogden's definition seems to harmonise rather well with David Jones's. The myth according to him,

¹⁶ Schubert M Ogden in Alan Richardson and John Bowden eds., *A New Dictionary of Theology*, (London: SCM Press, 1983) pp. 389-391

¹⁷ *Dictionary* p. 391

is a re-presentation of the conditions under which ultimate truth is accessible in the human sphere. If Jones has been courageous enough to use transubstantiation in his writing we might follow his lead and import from liturgical theology the term *anamnesis* to describe what is going on here, a word which has already been used in this thesis but which will be explored at greater depth later on in this chapter.

The writings of the historian of religions, Mircea Eliade, complement the thinking of Ogden. Eliade suggests that through the means of myth, mankind represents its time of origins *in illo tempore* :

The myth, then, is the history of what took place *in illo tempore* , the recital of what the god or the semi-divine beings did at the beginning of time. To tell a myth is to proclaim what happened *ab origine* .¹⁸

Thus myth bridges the gap between the contemporary experience of both *sacred* and *profane* time, and the more flexible conception of time and history within which ultimate reality is perceived as inhering. It is, in a sense, a 'map' of this difficult territory, partial, in many respects limited and yet, paradoxically, capable of encapsulating an almost infinite amount of information. It is important, because in some ways it is the first way in which humanity expresses something of its apprehension and understanding of the transcendent in words. Myths flourish in those societies which view the world as essentially sacral, capable of being a vehicle of the sacred. It is therefore at odds with any dualist world view in which the divine lies at a virtually unbridgeable epistemic distance from the world.

¹⁸ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* , (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959) p.95

For the moment, however, it is necessary to consider the third of Ogden's propositions: that myth speaks of ultimate reality through the vehicle of narrative and articulates its meaning in the terms proper to human sense-experience. Wheelwright, as we have seen, suggests that mythic narratives embody archetypal ideas translated into ordinary language.¹⁹ Myth therefore operates in a way which is somewhat analogous to metaphor, conveying truth by a deliberately fluid 'category mistake' in which the tension²⁰ set up between two or more lines of association demands some measure of interpretation. It is in this tension between what is said and what is meant that the power of myth and also the power of poetry may be said to lie. As Wheelwright says: 'One of the most powerfully expressive kinds of poetic tension is that which exists between the story or scenario of a poem and the suggestions thrown off by its innuendo.'²¹

If this is true, then, taking all of the above, it goes some way to account for the qualitative strangeness of myths mentioned at the outset, and, moreover, hints at their attractiveness for David Jones and other creative writers, in that metaphor is a common ground of creative strategy. Further, it has been suggested that myths are not of themselves inherently self-intelligible: they demand explanation and elucidation, preferably from within the ritual context within which it is generated. By the same token we may argue that myths are, to a certain extent, encoded and it is necessary that the reader or ritual participant has access to the key in order to unlock and appropriate the reality within. When Ruthven surveys the use of myth by writers of literature he observes the way in which they constantly find new ways of writing about old myths. Moreover, he says:

¹⁹ Wheelwright, p.154

²⁰cf.also the writings of Paul Ricoeur, who has explored this point.

²¹Wheelwright p.86

'Change - in the form of creative misunderstandings - is what keeps myth alive.'²² Central to Jones's use of myth, as will be demonstrated, is that he keeps changing it.

Some critics have seen the use of myth made by Yeats, Pound, Lawrence, Joyce and other writers of this century, as somehow an avoidance of contemporary reality or even a deficiency of vision. Perhaps predictably, a critic such as Eagleton writes: 'It is not difficult to see the flight from contemporary history in the recourse to myth of the major writers of English literature...'²³ Against this, it may be suggested that turning to myth has by no means been a sign of a lack of contemporaneity, but rather it is the existential response of writers, amongst whom Jones is by no means the least, to the situation where eternal truth seems to have taken flight and all that is left are 'godless technocracies'.²⁴ It should of course also be noted that there is a difference between those like Yeats who sought to create, in a synthetic way, a new mythology for this century and others who have drawn in whatever way on more ancient deposits as material for their writing. It is in this latter category that one would place David Jones, adding as a rider that what is important is not his use of old myths but rather the new poetry that he is able to make with old things.

In his book *The Death of Tragedy*, George Steiner writes of myths:

A mythology crystallises sediments accumulated over great stretches of time. It gathers into conventional form the primal memories and historical experience of the race. Being the speech of the mind when it is in a state of wonder and perception, the great myths are elaborated as slowly as language itself.²⁵

²² Ruthven p.62

²³ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983) p.110

²⁴ David Jones cf *The Sleeping Lord*.

²⁵ George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1961) p.323

It is a statement which seems to gather together much of the material which has been discussed above and seems especially pertinent to a discussion of the importance of myth for David Jones. Indeed, it might even be set up as a brief commentary on what is going on in *The Anathemata*. For the achievement of David Jones in this poem is to enable myth to mean everything that it can possibly connote or denote. Myth becomes something not of antiquarian interest but a living corpus of truth and understanding as relevant for the twentieth century as it was for the cultures from which it grew. And it is Jones's interest in the culture of Western Europe which is of crucial importance in understanding why myth as a way of articulating archetypal truth is so significant within the form and content of *The Anathemata*. Within the poetry of David Jones, myth has become a way of speaking about 'reality', both immanent and transcendent, which is embedded in culture. It has become, in Jones's mind at least, almost a meta-language with its own grammatical rules and convention: the language which humanity, considered as culture, speaks about that area of human experience in which the Other relates to humanity and urges upon that humanity some sort of articulation of understanding and interpretation:

'Mythos, then, is not self-intelligible; it has to be studied in the context of rite and ceremony which have engendered it or which at any rate have molded its distinctive form'.²⁶

Liturgy and Anamnesis

It has already become clear that myth and worship are linked together and the foregoing discussion of myth has begun to raise the issues in which the two interact, especially with regard to the thought and poetry of David

²⁶ Philip Wheelwright, p154.

Jones. It is now necessary to turn to the issue of worship and liturgy. *The Anathemata* is, according to Jones, a 'meditation in time of Mass'. Liturgy is central both to the form and content of the poem; it provides one of the major systems of codes with which the poet will work. As such, it governs not only what the poem means but how that meaning is conveyed, both in its overall structure and in the particulars of the way in which language is used. Not least, it governs how a large proportion of the poem is printed on the page. There is no doubt that Jones has a special facility with the corpus of theological thinking around the liturgy. He is, without striving to be, an intuitive theological thinker. Indeed, Rowan Williams has described Jones's essay 'Art and Sacrament'²⁷ as: '...surely the best account in English this century of sacramental theology...'²⁸ Why should this be so? The immediate purpose of the next section of this chapter is to examine, albeit briefly, some of the theological issues concerning liturgy which have a bearing on an examination of *The Anathemata* and to try to understand why Jones's use of them is so innovatory and exciting.

Liturgy and Worship

'In the singular the word "liturgy" denotes an act of worship, more specifically the Eucharist.'²⁹ During this discussion the word will be used in both the general and the specific senses. This said, one would wish to qualify the definition further, following that given by Gregory Dix, and restrict the usage to worship offered within and on behalf of the Church as a whole, contrasted with the private prayer of individual Christians.³⁰

²⁷ Collected in *Epoch & Artist*

²⁸ Rowan Williams, 'The Nature of a Sacrament', in, J Greenhalgh and E Russell, eds., *Signs of Faith, Hope and Love: The Christian Sacraments Today*, (London: St. Mary's Bourne Street, 1987) p.35

²⁹ R.C.D. Jasper, 'Liturgies', in J.G Davies ed. *A Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, (London: SCM Press, 1972) p.223

³⁰ Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (London: A & C Black, 1945) p.1

Liturgy is thus the Church's corporate worship and, more especially, that act of worship constituted by the Eucharist with its Dominical connotations, in that it is believed to derive from the example and injunction of Jesus Christ. This is summed up in the concept of liturgy, and may be further refined by the concept of sacrament: '...what makes the Christian sacrament unique is not so much something inherent in the doing of them, some special action, but the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in his dying and rising'.³¹ Liturgy, worship and sacrament are all of significance for *The Anathemata* of David Jones.

The modern study of liturgy and worship has enabled us to make some general observations about what worship is: first, that worship as a phenomenon in which man reaches out from his particular situation towards God has to be understood simultaneously in both its divine and its human aspects or perspectives; second, that it also functions as a constitutive element of the human community which celebrates it. This assertion may be made because it is the ritual action whereby that community achieves some measure of self-understanding, not least because it embodies within itself the mythic narrative by which the community orientates, understands and defines itself. Thus myth and worship are from the outset inextricably linked. Worship is the practical and creative outworking and expression of the truth which, we have seen, is presumed to be deeply embedded within myth. 'Worship, then, can be seen as at once reaching out to the Transcendent and as embedded in human life'.³²

If the foregoing remarks apply equally well to all forms of human worship one is therefore drawn to ask how these are worked out in the specific

³¹ Rowan Williams, 1987, p.32

³² Cheslyn Jones et al. eds, *The Study of Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1978) p.6

context of Christian liturgy and what then is specific to Christian worship? What concepts, what presuppositions lie beneath the liturgical codes upon which Jones is able to draw?

It has been suggested that one of the functions of worship or ritual action is the encapsulation of the constitutive myth or narrative of a community. This generalisation holds true for the particulars of Christian liturgy, in which is recalled the narrative-pattern of salvation history. Within the Christian tradition this narrative includes the events of the Old Testament seen in terms of its prefigurement and interpretation of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, together with those events themselves which constitute the salvific core of the narrative or specifically *paschal mystery*.

Myth and Liturgy

One might ask how it is that this is related to the concepts of myth discussed above. Drawing on the work of Victor Turner which we have already examined in the context of myth above, Stephen Sykes articulates an understanding of how liturgy (ritual) represents the routinization or institutionalisation, of the original impetus or vision of a religious tradition: in the case of the Christian religion this amounts to what was described above as the 'salvific core of the narrative', the deeds of Christ and his followers. The liturgical repetition and re-enactment of this narrative preserves and ensures the essential character of the Christian community.³³ According to Turner, this routinization has two important effects: the 'impregnation' of the historical stories with the elements of myth, thus becoming sacred history, and the 'crystallisation' of this history

³³ S.W. Sykes, 'The Role of Story in the Christian Religion: A Hypothesis', in, *Literature & Theology*, Vol 1 Number 1, March 1987 p.20

or narrative in the form of holy things and repetitive rituals.³⁴ Within the context of Christian liturgy, the story of Christ and the saving acts of God, together with his agents such as Abraham and Moses prefiguring Christ, are used liturgically in a mythical way which does not compromise its historicity, the premise that the events actually occurred. There is, however, a tension between the two modes of the narrative which can only be meaningfully resolved in a liturgical or ritual context where present history and eschatology are brought into contact with sacred history, actually significant because it is both past history and presently determinative myth. Thus the liturgical code of the Christian Church, in contrast with the worship of other religions, acts as an interpretative matrix within which history and myth can cohabit creatively despite the tensions of an incipient paradox. It will be necessary to return to this important point and press further its implications in a discussion of the literary-critical presuppositions of intertextuality below.

The Mass and *Anamnesis*

But central to an examination of distinctively Christian worship is that complex of liturgical activity which draws overtly on its historical and mythic narrative, the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. This includes not only the ancient liturgy of Holy Week, but also, more importantly for this discussion, the Eucharist. 'Just as the paschal mystery was the culmination of Christ's redeeming work, so the Eucharist becomes

³⁴ 'This ritual structure has two important aspects: on the one hand, the historical deeds of the prophet and his closest companions become a sacred history, impregnated with the mythical elements so typical of liminality, that becomes increasingly resistant to criticism and revision and consolidates into a structure in the Lévi-Straussian sense as binary oppositions are set up and stressed between crucial events, individuals, groups, types of conduct, periods of time, and so on; on the other hand both the deeds of the founder and his visions and messages achieve crystallisation in the symbolic objects and activities of cyclical and repetitive rituals; 'Passages, Margins and Poverty: Religious Symbols of Communitas' in V. Turner, *Drama, Fields and Metaphors*, (Ithaca: New York, 1975) p.249 quoted by S. W Sykes, in *Theology and Literature*, 1.1 March 1987 p.19

the culmination and centre of Christian worship.³⁵ To understand why this should be the case it is important to recognise that within the Western Catholic tradition, as opposed to some Protestant traditions within which the Lord's supper is comprehended as a 'memorial', the Eucharist is seen neither as a passive remembering of an event that has happened historically, nor as a re-crucifixion or repetition of the sacrifice. It is nonetheless a 'making actual' of the Paschal events, an *anamnesis* :

The full meaning of the Greek word *anamnesis* is remembrance, done in such a way as to call forth the actual presence here and now of the person and deeds commemorated, in the kind of way that liturgical re-enactment of myths has always done.³⁶

It was from the writings of Gregory Dix that Jones was to draw much of his thinking about *anamnesis*, the mechanics of how the Mass might be said to make present the divine. In his book *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix developed a theology of *anamnesis* which Jones was to find of the utmost importance. Dix articulated within an historical context an understanding of the Eucharist as an action, something done with a particular meaning given by Christ himself for *anamnesis*, a memorial, or remembrance of himself, a meaning which was fixed, which could not be added to, but rather could be drawn out, interpreted, a meaning which was publicly affirmed by the Eucharistic prayer of the church which in its turn rehearsed the saving events of Christ's life.

...we have to take account of the clear understanding then general in a largely Greek-speaking Church of the word *anamnesis* as meaning a 're-calling' or re-presenting of a thing in such a way that it is not so much regarded as 'being absent', as itself *presently operative* by its effects.³⁷

³⁵ c.f. J.D. Crighton, "A Theology of Worship" in Jones. C et al. *The Study of Liturgy* p28

³⁶ p.14

³⁷ Dix p.245

This matter of presence is of central importance for *The Anathemata*, a poem in which Jones is constantly exploring what *anamnesis* means in the context of Western Civilisation. Not only is this evident in the bringing of the past into the present, but also in the presence which is here and now. Jones indicates that it is only because things have a presence in themselves that they can be made to be indicative of other things. This may be further illustrated by another remark of Dix's:

The same eternal fact can touch the process of history at more than one point, and if there is an apparent difference in the effects of such contacts, that difference is entirely on the side of the temporal process, for eternity knows no 'difference', and no 'before' and 'after'.³⁸

Within *The Anathemata* each Eucharistic manifestation is portrayed relative to an historical culture, its forms and prefigurements are 'indelibly marked by locale and incidence' (p.53), but the presence of the divine evoked thereby is the same. It has reached across 'the bent flanks of space'. The garb, or way in which the liturgy is presented or 'dressed' is specific to itself, it is culturally relative, but bread and wine still carry the same resonances of the Upper Room, the Cenacle from which all Eucharistic sign-making stems. The Mass holds together all of man's evidences of sign-making. In a letter to René Hague, Jones outlines his own understanding of *anamnesis* :

It is foolish so it seems to me, to pretend that the Catholic mythus is other than a complex of mysteries of inexplicable splendour, and that it is consonant with man as a sign-making animal. The Roman liturgy, as it stood with the chant, was a stupendous artwork loaded with the sacred, apperceived not with the understanding of this or that particular word or words but with the whole of man's faculties - as inutile as Mary Maudlin's precious unguents poured out from the fractured alabaster, a reprehensible

³⁸ Dix p.263

act of the most inutile sort - but the Cult-hero gave a sharp response to those of that opinion, "Let it be, I tell you straight that wherever in the whole world is sung the *chanson* of my deeds this shall be told in *anamnesis* of her."³⁹

The action of Mary Magdalene is interpreted by Jones in terms of sign-making. Her action in anointing Jesus, with all that that might mean, is somehow transformed into something eternally significant. It is noteworthy that in this passage, *anamnesis* is the effect of artistic sign-making which results in the Catholic mythus. Once again we see how closely aligned these things were in Jones's mind. The poetry of *The Anathemata* is a poetry of presence in which the poet depends on a particularity leading into generalisation, a strategy which presumes the efficacy of liturgical *anamnesis*. More than one critic has noted Jones's indebtedness to Dix's wide vision of the effects of Eucharistic *anamnesis*. Tony Stoneburner⁴⁰ has indeed argued that the whole poem is in effect a set of variations on the 'purple passage' in the last chapter of Dix's book in which he presents a panorama of Eucharistic activity:

And best of all, week by week and month by month, on a hundred thousand successive Sundays, faithfully, unfailingly, across all the parishes of Christendom, the pastors have done this just to *make* the *plebs sancta* - the holy common people of God.⁴¹

The breadth of Dix's vision, built as it is upon painstaking scholarship resonated with the aesthetic stance which Jones was by that time already developing, and this, in addition to the theological theories of Maurice de la Taille, with which he was already familiar, were immensely appealing

³⁹ quoted in René Hague, *David Jones*, (Writers of Wales Series), (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975), p.57

⁴⁰ Tony Stoneburner, "So Primitive, So Civilised: The Eucharistic Vision of David Jones," *Anglican Theological Review*, 55(1977) Of the final chapter of *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Stoneburner says '...in which Dix explores the variety of events which the eucharist has beneficially informed and the range of geography, culture and class of persons it has graciously involved since the resurrection.' p.157

⁴¹ Dix p.744

and liberating to Jones. We might see an echo of this passage from Dix, that we have quoted above, towards the end of the poem when in the final section Jones makes the subtle, almost undetected movement from poetry which focusses its attention on the person of the crucified Christ to the priest making the Mass and back again. The Mass is the re-presentation of the salvific core of the Christ-myth, eternally valid: Mass and Passion, Christ and Priest, interdependent and eternally valid:

He does what is done in many places
 what he does other
 he does after the mode
 of what has always been done.
 What did he do other
 recumbent at the garnished supper?
 What did he do yet other
 riding the Axile Tree? (p.243)

We may agree with Dilworth when he picks up the wide ranging implications of Jones's poetic exploration of *anamnesis* :

The Eucharist makes present Christ, who as man symbolically embodies the earth and humanity. And because Christ is also God, present to all space and contemporary with all time, the symbol is literalised and expanded. His anamnesis is the real presence of everything and this is largely what the poem means.^{42/43}

It is thus that the worshipper enters into the events of the Pasch and these events, by consequence, carrying with them their eschatological and

⁴² Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* , p200

⁴³Note however that Jonathan Miles does not agree, he writes: 'But David Jones's notion of the transubstantial nature of art is really expressing something that is so much less than it suggests. He means that the qualities of an object are 'transubstantiated' into images or words. No real magic occurs. The artwork as a system of signs encompasses a presence *in alio esse* , that is, with virtual as well as actual being, but this is to posit no more than the Protestant idea of the significant relation between bread and body; transubstantiation, which is in point of fact a magical effect, need not come into it. To claim more is to diminish what Catholics believe takes place uniquely in the Mass and to undervalue the self-conscious processes of the artists work.' *Backgrounds* p.21 We may argue that Miles is wrong here and that what is effected in the poetry of *The Anathemata* with regard to *presence* is indeed directly analogous to *anamnesis* .

salvific significance, break into the present reality of the liturgy. It is against this background of salvation history/myth, liturgically operative, that the Western Catholic tradition can speak of the act of consecration of bread and wine in the Eucharist as effecting the liturgical reality of the presence of Christ, body and blood, present objectively within the elements themselves and also within the Church that offers the rite. That is to say, that presence inheres within the community constituted by the myth in much the same way that it exists within the liturgy itself. This sense of presence is of central importance to David Jones in *The Anathemata*, for he constantly explores what it means in the context of Western European civilisation.

Throughout the foregoing discussion, much use was made of ideas about sign-making and the nature of the role of the artist. It is now necessary to clarify those ideas as one approaches the other major theological influence on David Jones's Eucharistic thought, Maurice de la Taille. But to do that it is necessary to look at some more of Jones's own theoretical preconceptions.

Liturgy and Sign-Making

Throughout his life, Jones argued that humanity's very nature involves the making of things, the creation of art, things sufficient in themselves and owing no explanation for their being: to use Jones's own terms, these are things which are 'gratuitous' or 'inutile' rather than those things which are 'utile' and 'technical'. Jones contends that in this making, in this assembly of signs and symbols, humanity stretches outside of itself from the material towards reality, the ground of which is divine. 'A sign must be significant of something, hence of some 'reality', so of something

'good', so of something that is 'sacred'.⁴⁴ If then the art of sign-making is indicative of religion, then religion, and especially the Christian religion, is committed to art and the making of signs as a means of grace, and of articulation of the substance of that grace, which at the same time illuminates and 'grounds' the present reality and reaches further to other 'sacred' presences. So, when discussing Hogarth's painting *The Shrimp Girl*, he is able to say: 'Here then is a *signum*, a made thing having such and such significances and totally independent of our fluctuating reactions or of our inability to react at all'.⁴⁵ Sign-making is at one and the same time constitutive of human bodiliness and a reflection of a transcendent creativity which in Christian terms is usually bound up with the Divine creativity of the Logos. Thus man shares in divine creation through his own sign-making and in doing so he defines both himself and the community in which he lives by the forms that he creates.

Throughout the poem, Jones explores how it is that urges for signification work up from the depths of humanity and how they culminate in the sign-making of the Mass, which itself provides the formal framework for the poem. David Blamires in his discussion of *The Anathemata* and *In Parenthesis* approaches David Jones's work from a perspective that is above all anthropological. From such a perspective, human sign-making, the artistic proclivity, working up in an almost evolutionary mode from prehistory to the present condition of crisis, is the material for the poem. This surely strengthens the poem and contradicts and questions those who argue that *The Anathemata* is in many ways meaningless to those who cannot appreciate Jones's Catholic ideology.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ David Jones, "Art and Sacrament" in *Epoch and Artist*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1959) p.157

⁴⁵ *Epoch & Artist* p.175

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Ward discusses this at length in her chapter on the poem *David Jones: Mythmaker* pp.121-155

Events, and other things done, may have a significance far beyond themselves; at the same time they may have an articulation which is also grounded in the physical and the practical. In the case of the Mass, its significance lies not in its making present of the events of the Last Supper according to the dominical ordinance, but in its re-presentation of the whole saving nexus of the Passion. It was from the Jesuit Maurice de la Taille that Jones derived a theological understanding of the Mass and the cross centering on the matter of sacrifice, the transference from the domain of the profane into that of the sacred. De la Taille argues that for a sacrifice to be acceptable to God, certain conditions have to be satisfied. His initial reading of the Passion narrative leaves him with the unsolved problem of how Christ the Victim could be at the same time Christ the Priest, the offered and the offerand of the sacrifice⁴⁷. His solution is to regard Christ's offering of the bread and wine in the Cenacle of the Last Supper as in fact an offering of himself on the Cross, a two-fold offering or immolation. Hence each subsequent offering of the Eucharist by the church is an offering of the same sacrifice both of bread and wine and, of course, the Cross:

We see how the Eucharist, sacrifice and sacrament, in the abundance of its richness, sums up all that the cross offered to God and proclaimed for men. It is the summary of the marvels wrought by the Almighty for the salvation of mankind.⁴⁸

Jones summarises de la Taille's task with admirable succinctness: '...the relationship of what was done in the supper-room with what was done on the Hill and the further relationship of these doings with what is done in

⁴⁷That this is not necessarily a problem requiring a theological 'solution' can be seen in the works of Christian hymn writers and poets cf for instance. W. Catterton Dix's hymn 'Alleluya, sing to Jesus', especially the latest two lines: 'Thou on earth both Priest and Victim/In the Eucharistic Feast. *The English Hymnal*, No. 301

⁴⁸ Maurice de la Taille trans. W.B. Shimpf, *The Mystery of Faith and Human Opinion Contrasted and Defined*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1934) p.33

the Mass.'(p.37) Christ put himself deliberately into the order of signs. That is the central insight which Jones drew from the often difficult and certainly dry and scholastic theology of de la Taille. The result for the ordinary believer is well put by Watson L. Holloway:

All who place themselves in this select "semiotic" order transcend time; religious human beings who conform to the dictates of the Eucharist (making the elements "other", converting base and non-sacred material into things worthy of being lifted up to God; sacralizing the profane), prefigure or reflect the soterial power of Christ's Passion. 49

Between them, Dix and de la Taille provided for Jones a Eucharistic theology which linked the sign-making of the Mass and the redemptive centre of the Christian faith. Moreover it was a theology which spilled over to inform and craft his thought on all art and sign-making. The human making of the Mass renders present the salvific sacrifice of the Cross, and the Cross itself is the guarantor of man's sign-making.

From the outset of the poem where we see man the priest 'making this thing other' to the return to the Mass at the end of the poem with Christ triumphant on the Cross, Jones is attempting to proclaim and explore what is the authentic content of the 'other'. If we wanted a clear articulation of this it probably comes most clearly in 'The Lady of the Pool', where Elen Monica recounts the events of the sacrifice of the Passion and their manifestation in the Eucharist,

When he came to town
 upon a' ass's pony:
At the lit board
and in the dark-hour garden
 before the bishop's curia and

⁴⁹ Watson L. Holloway, 'The Pagan Liturgy of David Jones', *Antigonish Review*, 1983 vol 53, p.52

within the Justiciar's mote hall
 raised to the mock purple
 and
 at the *column* ...cap-tin.

On the ste'lyard on the Hill
 weighed against our man-geld
 between March and April
 when the bough begins of yield
 and West-wood springs new.
 Such was his counting house
 whose queen was in her silent parlour
 on that same hill of dolour
 about the virid month of Averil
 that the poet will call cruel.
 Such was her bread and honey
 when with his darling Body (of her body)
 he won Tartary.
 Then was the droughts of March moisted to the root by that
 shower that does all fruit engender - and do constitute what
 they hallow an'chrism these clerks to minister that kings
 and queens may eat thereof and all poor men besides. (pp.157-158)

The redemption wrought by the Passion is depicted in terms both of Christ being weighed against man's sins and of the fructification of the Wasted Land from which the fruit of the Eucharist is made available to all, whether rich or poor. The content of Jones's verse is clear, a fanciful but by no means theologically eccentric account of the incidents of Holy Week. But its form, drawing on popular song, nursery-rhyme and alluding, as it does, to the work of other poets, notably Chaucer and Eliot, leaves the reader with a sense of dealing with something from which many of the expected facets of the familiar have been removed. There is a strategy of what we might, borrowing the term from Victor Shklovsky, describe as *defamiliarisation*. An aspect of technique which Shklovsky argues is central to poetry as an artistic medium. He argues that:

The technique of art is to make objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because

the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged.⁵⁰

In this essay, Shklovsky argues that both the technique and even the language of poetry contribute to a slow unfolding of meaning and sense.⁵¹ That Jones was aware of this aspect of poetic technique cannot be denied, but, while accepting that the poetry does act to make the reader grapple with its sense, there is also a playfulness here which, although it never obscures the great significance of the events that Jones is describing, puts them into a new context, requires that the reader sees them in a new way.

The Mass, the myth of History and the Present

But Jones's understanding of the Eucharist as being a point of contact with redemption in a period of dryness is, however, far more than a poetic conceit. David Jones looked upon the world around him with a sense of bewilderment and pessimism, fearful for the survival of man's sign-making in the face of technology. Neil Corcoran understands Jones's pessimism in psychological terms;

The Anathemata is, among other things, the attempt of a very solitary man threatened by mental breakdown to endow a lonely life with a sense of meaning and order, and precariously to preserve an identity against an interior pull towards disintegration.⁵²

But there is another way of looking at it all, one which has a greater relationship to the Mass material within *The Anathemata*. In his essay *Notes on prophecy and apocalypse in a time of anarchy and revolution; a trying out*, Tony Stoneburner tests the concepts of prophecy and

⁵⁰Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique", in David Lodge ed. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader* (London: Longman, 1988) p.20

⁵¹"A work is created 'artistically' so that its perception is impeded and the greatest possible effect is produced through the slowness of perception." or later 'The language of poetry is, then a difficult, roughened, impeded language.' Shklovsky p.27

⁵² Corcoran p.39

apocalypse against the writings of David Jones. So far as *The Anathemata* is concerned, the genre of the apocalyptic, offering as it does a degree of hope within a trenchant analysis of civilisational crisis, seems to offer a valid way of understanding the poem. Jones, according to Stoneburner, has the soldier's sense that all civilisations must come to an end but:

Within history there is the Mass in which the transhistorical God who experienced intrahistorical existence in the Incarnation makes available the benefits of that history-redeeming event (Annunciation - to Ascension), ever the same and ever anew for the faithful daily at a thousand altars.⁵³

In this sense, the Mass, which as Dix points out has its roots in the response of God to a particular historical crisis⁵⁴, has validity beyond that historical point for all crises and cultures. In *The Anathemata* there is a feeling that a culture that has been known and loved is coming to an end; it is experiencing the finitude that Jones would suggest is constitutive of all cultures. Disastrous as that might seem, the ever present redeeming presence of the Mass ensures that hope itself will stay alive for 'every point in history is equidistant from Eternity.'⁵⁵ It has been suggested that Jones's reading of history and of the end of Western culture, influenced as it is by his reading of Spengler, is so pessimistic as to be hopeless:

These rear-guard details in their quaint attire, heedless of incongruity, unconscious that the flanks are turned and all connecting files withdrawn or liquidated - that dead - symbols litter the base of the cult-stone, that the stem of the palled stone is thirsty, that the stream is very low. (p50)

⁵³ Tony Stoneburner, "Notes on prophecy and apocalypse in a time of anarchy and revolution: a trying out", in, G.A. White and C Newman, eds., *Literature in Revolution*, (New York :Northwestern University Press, 1972) p.269

⁵⁴ Dix cf especially chapter 9

⁵⁵ Stoneburner 1972 p.270

If we adopt Stoneburner's analysis it is evident that this is by no means the case. The symbols may be thirsty and the cult-man, priest and poet may stand alone trying to maintain the cultus but the crucifixion which frees the waters and irrigates the Waste Land is still made present under the species of bread and wine. The depiction of crisis is balanced by the redemption which has always remained available to him through his liturgical sign-making.

It may be suggested that, through the multi-valent nexus of symbols of which the Mass is comprised, David Jones is able to come to terms with the shifting patterns of history. Certainly, Jones has a strong sense of history; he handles the matter of historical facts and places more judiciously than almost all of the poets who adopted the modernist label. To do it, we may argue, he looked at history itself from the point of view of myth. History became a narrative structure of archetypal significance. How this is so can be seen by the way he both adopts and adapts the historical analysis of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*. Both Kathleen Henderson Staudt⁵⁶ and Jonathan Miles⁵⁷ have examined the copious notes that David Jones made in his own copy of Spengler's book. Both, in contrast to Hague who tries to minimise the extent of Spengler's influence on *The Anathemata* and later writings, are convinced that the view of history propounded in *The Decline of the West*, while not always attractive to Jones in all of its detail, provides the general shape of the overview of history that he takes throughout his work. The evidence of the margins of Jones's copy of *The Decline of the West* : '...articulates a new version of Spengler's historical vision which would become an

⁵⁶Kathleen Henderson Staudt, "The Decline of the West and the Optimism of the Saints" in John Matthias ed., *David Jones : Man and Poet*, (Orono, Maine, The National Poetry Foundation, n.d.g.) pp.443-463

⁵⁷*Backgrounds* Ch. 3

essential part of Jones' own poetic myth.⁵⁸ It is not necessary here to précis the whole of Spengler's huge work. Rather we should notice the general pattern as it affects the study of David Jones. First, we should notice that Spengler conceives of the shape of history in terms of a series of cycles, not in a straight developmental line. Through these cycles, cultures develop through phases which Spengler names after the seasons through the spring time of innovation and creativity until they reach the period of decline when they metamorphise into civilisations. The distinction between culture and civilisation is important; as Spengler puts it in a passage marked by Jones: 'Culture and Civilisation - the living body of a soul and the mummy of it...Culture and civilisation - the organism born of Mother Earth, and the mechanism proceeding from hardened fabric. Culture-man lives inwards, Civilisation-man outwards in space and amongst bodies and 'facts'.⁵⁹ In the early phases of culture the artist is able to flourish, later, as civilisation comes to predominate, the technician takes on the mantle of power and the role of the artist, and the religious person, is harder to fulfil. Spengler categorises the soul of Western European culture as it can be seen in the last thousand years as Faustian. Staudt describes the main feature economically: 'In Faustian culture, intellect and the scientific method replace the old religion, and men become conscious of history and destiny for the first time.'⁶⁰ But in a sense, civilisation is the destiny of culture and in Jones's work much hangs on the dichotomy between the inhabitants of these two aspects of the same historical process; the 'truth man' and the 'fact' man.⁶¹ The

⁵⁸Matthias p.446

⁵⁹Oswald Spengler trans. Charles Francis Atkinson, *The Decline of the West*, (London:George Allen & Unwin, 1932)I p.353. quoted in Miles, *Backgrounds* p.55

⁶⁰Matthias p.446

⁶¹Staudt notes Spengler's proposition that the meeting between Christ and Pilate is the quintessential historical event of the opposition between Culture and Civilisation, the 'truth' man and 'fact' man, and points out how Jones uses this in *The Anathemata* (p.239). Matthias p.456

former being the artist and man of religion and the latter the 'megalopolitan' technocrat caught up in a imperialist world which has to be dominated both politically and intellectually.

Spengler's and of course Jones's sympathy lies with the 'truth' man, but the reality of the present twentieth-century situation is that the 'fact' man predominates, and the city becomes the place of soulless power. The cyclical map of history enables Jones to draw parallels and correspondences between his own time and the past, most notable of which is the way in which he explores twentieth-century Europe from the perspective of Imperial Rome.

But, as we have suggested, Jones transformed Spengler's articulation of history into myth. In doing so, he has to discover within history seeds of hope and continuity. In his essay "Art in Relation to War" Jones writes :

When Spengler, with a kind of satisfaction at the grimness of our destiny, advised young men, if they would excel, to abandon the muses for technics - 'the sea instead of the paint-brush, politics instead of epistemology', he too was showing a prophetic astuteness, even if we think it was the astuteness of an evil genius. He, so to say, bid the devils believe, but not tremble; for he believed it to be the devils' hour. The hour of the daemons of power that take possession of the Waste Land when true cultural life is at its lowest ebb and the 'young hero' has not yet restored 'the maimed king' and the time of resuscitation is not yet. When all is 'doing' and there is no 'making'. When the end is all, and the means nothing. When there is no organic growth, but only organization and extension of dead forms.

The artist, however, in whatever age, and whatever the determined destiny, has both to believe and to tremble and somehow or other, to affirm delight.⁶²

⁶²David Jones ed. Harman Grisewood, "Art in Relation to War" in *The Dying Gaul and Other Writings*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1978) p.129

Despite the blackness of the apparent situation, the transformation of history into myth demands that Jones be open to 'the inevitability of restoration and revival'.⁶³ We may note the artist's 'heroic' role in it and bear in mind that the priest too is an artist in the eyes of David Jones, within the often fragile logic of *The Anathamata*. The persistence of the Mass despite the emptiness of the times, may be argued to have two important considerations. First, the 'making-present' of one particular historical event consistently throughout all other times develops Jones's sense of mythic correspondences across history. Second, it is a sign of hope that a set of symbols and actions can remain meaningful when all else fails.

Liturgy and Intertextuality

Let us now turn back to liturgy and ask some questions of it from the point of view of literary criticism. Among critics, the writings of the Russian Formalist Mikhail Bakhtin may give some help. He argues that a text may be understood as an *utterance* when it speaks from one set of social circumstances to another and when its *enunciation* is seen in terms of dialogue which, he argues is the prerequisite for the epistemological condition of understanding. Within liturgy, this sense of dialogue operates on a number of overt and less tangible levels. Bakhtin takes the matter further:

The artist receives no word in linguistically virginal form. The word is already impregnated by the practical situations and the poetic contexts in which he has encountered it...That is why the work of the poet, just as that of any artist, can only effect a few transvaluations, a few displacements in intonations, that the poet

⁶³Matthias p.459

and his audience perceive against a background of previous evaluations and previous intonations.⁶⁴

Bakhtin is speaking specifically of the poetic and the artistic text, but these insights would seem to apply just as forcefully to the liturgical text seen in these terms as an utterance. Within liturgy, words and symbols which already have a life of their own are brought together; they already exist within their own intertextual space of connections constituted by salvation history and the community of the Church in its particular historical situation. For the reader we may substitute the worshipper, entering into a situation of dialogue with the liturgical text which itself dialogues with salvation history and the specific situation of the church throughout the ages. This concept of dialogue as an active coming to understanding of an utterance would seem to have certain parallels with the theological idea of *anamnesis* discussed above. Both sets of concepts, albeit from different disciplines, seem to offer complementary ways of understanding how encountering liturgical texts is not a matter of passive receptivity but rather it is an active engagement with the narrative core of salvation history/myth. It is thus that it is possible to speak of liturgical texts in the context of worship as producing in the worshipper a sense of presence or inbreaking of the constitutive events of the Christian community from both a theological and a literary stance.

In the course of this chapter, we have examined some of the theological presuppositions behind liturgy and linked then to the discussion of the literary critical method to be found elsewhere in this thesis. I believe that these matters are by no means of tangential interest to an examination of *The Anathemata*; but rather they are of central importance. To understand what David Jones is doing when he writes a poem about the

⁶⁴ Tzevetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, (Theory and History of Literature, vol.13), 1984) p.67

Mass, it is important to understand what is happening in the Mass itself. To come to grips with his use of myth and history it is important to have some conception of how these relate to the liturgical centre of the poem. The foregoing pages have begun to tease out these questions.

Chapter 4 : Language - The Material of the Poem

The language of *The Anathemata* is a crucial element in its overall effect as a text. The reader coming upon it for the first time cannot help but be struck by the apparent difficulty of the language: even the appearance of it on the page defamiliarizes and wakens the reader before he or she is able to engage with the sometimes difficult subject matter and an underlying conceptual framework, which, as we have seen, is often complex and idiosyncratic. This is the first of two chapters which will deal specifically with the language of *The Anathemata* . The second will focus specifically on the way in which Jones derives linguistic shape from outside sources: other poets, nursery rhymes etc. It will be a discussion of influences upon the poet and his poem from a linguistic perspective. The present chapter will examine many of the varieties of language to be found within the poem. For it is variety which, of almost all of the aspects of the poem's language, forces itself immediately upon the reader. Throughout the work, Jones experiments with different kinds of tone, rhetoric, rhythm and verse. He presents the reader with ancient and modern language, with the familiar and the foreign. Moreover, he mixes up different kinds of language, so that it is not an effect of the successive discovery but, rather, the simultaneous deployment of styles, that the reader experiences. There can be few poets in this century who have used such a variety of language styles in their published work and, in doing so, have expected so much of their readers. There can be few poems in which an examination of the language will repay so much investigation or entertains so much controversy. Indeed, a recent examination of the language of David Jones's poetry has suggested that linguistic analysis of his poetry is the next major task for critical studies of the poet, and it is noteworthy that recent critical studies of *The Anathemata* have tended to

concentrate on the poetics and the structure of the poem rather than its content.¹ Such studies have begun to grapple with the question of why it is that the language of the poem is so foregrounded in the perceptions of the reader.

Varieties of Language and Tone

The opening words of *The Anathemata* introduce the reader to the narrator who will accompany him or her throughout the poem. Even when the poem is not directly in the hands of the narrator, as in the three sections of the poem which are primarily monologues or dramatic interludes, the narrator is there as a controlling presence which has already defined both place and history and to whose narrative thrust the digressive structure of the monologue will eventually defer. In some respects, this narrating presence is a masked version of the poet himself: on a couple of occasions the mask 'slips', revealing a personal detail about Jones. For instance, in 'Mabinog's Liturgy' the musings of the witches are juxtaposed with an account, couched in the language of Roman military campaigns, of Jones's own experience on the Western front in the First World War.

If this, though sure, is but allegory
at all events
and speaking most factually
and, as the fashion now requires, from observed data: On
this night, when I was a young man in France, in Gallia
Belgica, the forward ballista-teams of the Island of Britain
green-garlanded their silent three-o-threes for this I saw
and heard their cockney song salute the happy morning; and
later, on this same morning certain of the footmen of Britain,

¹...the next necessary step in Jones studies—emphasis on the poetic and linguistic as distinct from the 'intellectual', and 'theological' aspects of his work.' W.J. Keith, "Intermixed Lingo": Listening to David Jones, in H.B. de Groot and Alexander Leggatt eds., *Craft and Tradition: Essays in Honour of William Blissett*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1990) p.251

walking in daylight, upright, through the lanes of the war-net
to outside and beyond the rusted trip-belt, some with gifts,
none with ported weapons, embraced him between his *fossa*
and ours, exchanging tokens. (p.216)

Even here, the language, thick with apposite allusions - for example to the Christmas hymn, 'Christians awake, salute the happy morn' and, more particularly, the vocabulary, effects a strategy of fictionalization in which the author becomes just another character in the poem. The fact of directly experienced reality, which Hague suggests that Jones is trying to differentiate from allegory, is not, it might be suggested, differentiated strongly enough linguistically.² Although, in this instance, we must admit that introducing close to one another the words 'factually' and 'observed' and even 'data', with its connotations of exactitude and precision, balances this up somewhat. And it must be admitted that there is no overriding reason why Jones should not become a character in his own poem. The reason for this intrusion of the authorial voice is further obfuscated when one remembers that throughout the poem Jones directly addresses his readers by means of the very large numbers of footnotes which he appends to his text. Although, for the most part, these merely supply information which the reader might not have at his or her fingertips, there are occasions when Jones obtrudes himself into the picture by overtly expressing an opinion or recounting an anecdote. 'When, in August, lavender was cried in the street, my maternal grand-mother was saddened by the call, because she said it meant that summer was almost gone and that winter was again near'. (p.125 n.1) The mask is soon replaced and the narrator, omniscient, directive and opinionated, continues to guide the reader. Guidance is perhaps the term which best helps one to come to grips with the narrative persona of the poem. The

² Hague *Commentary* p.230

reader is not so much introduced to him as taken by the hand and shown the initial image of the priest at Mass with which the poem opens. In some respects, Jones seems to be aping the wireless commentary of royal and other ceremonial events with which he must have been familiar. But it is not a matter merely of description; the guiding narrative presence has a moral and judgemental role. The use of carefully chosen but loaded adjectives in passages that that would otherwise seem quite straightforward and helpful to the narrative movement of the poem, (for instance, describing the baldachins as 'pasteboard' and the ornaments as 'sterile'(p49)) gives to the narrator a strong and directive personality to which the reader finds it more conducive to defer than if the pretence at impersonality were absolute. Moreover, the narrator frequently employs the rhetorical device of questions addressed either overtly to the reader or reflexively to the narrator itself. These questions are a recurrent feature within the poem that have drawn the attention of many commentators. The former questions in which the reader is directly engaged are fewer in number than the more reflexive ones. They tend to underscore those realities which, although central to the thrust of the poem, the poet communicates in his periphrastic manner, for instance:

They make all shipshape
for she must be trim
dressed and gaudeous
all Bristol-fashion here
for:
Who d'you think is Master of her? (p.53)

The question is of more than of figurative significance, coming as it does so near the beginning of the poem, it is one of Jones's ways of ensuring that *The Anathemata* will be read with some degree of understanding congruent with the poet's own. The answer to the question is Christ: the

wrong answer would set up a chain of misunderstandings which would render an already difficult poem impossible to read. Moreover the question and its answer provide the key to the principal code which Jones uses throughout the poem. If it is true that all writers write in some sort of code which demands interpretation by the reader, then, we may argue that although Jones writes using many codes, the majority of them derive from the biblical code centred on the person of Christ, William Blake wrote: 'The Old and the New Testaments are the Great Code of Art'³ and those aspects of the poem that do not derive from this centre are in fact interpreted by it and hence to a certain extent are absorbed into it. The reader therefore reads even classical and pagan allusions in the light of the core of Christian salvation which is established, at least in part, by the rhetoric of the questions.

The second, reflexive sort of questions are used primarily to set time and place by displacing or eradicating alternatives. Sometimes they set the scene in the context of other historical events or practices. 'Did he hear them bawling a Frigg-day's ichthyophagous feast/at the Belling Gate?' (p.170) But in this example, it is not just time and place that are set by the question; the links of this, with an earlier section of the poem are established, two journey narratives are brought together into one single pilgrimage, and the digression of 'The Lady of the Pool' is resolved.

Frequently, however, the questions seem to be more the expression of musing or of contemplation, as if the narrator was toying with the possibilities of ideas thrown up by the implicit plays on words which the poet loves, rather than the overt rhetorical devices of figurative language.

³quoted in Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982) p.xvi

Take, for example, the following extract from the beginning of 'Angle-Land':

Or was it she
 Sea-born and Sea-star
whose own, easy and free
 the pious matlos are
or, was it a whim of Poseidon's
(master o' the cinque masters o'lodemanage)
whose own the Island's approaches are
 that kept her?
Was the Foreland?
 was the Elbow?
under fog. (pp.110-111)

The device of questions enables the narrator to bring together into one passage a wide range of potentially disparate material, from the tutelary Goddess of the sailors to the navigational details of the ship as it rounds the coast of Britain. The effect of this is only positive if the poet deploys a strategy by which the narrator is allowed the poetic 'space' to indulge in musing and going off at a tangent, and the reader is allowed to follow him. But there are, however, times when musing or contemplation seems to sink into broken and contorted thought, even more difficult than the poem is usually, and lacking the lyrical feel that characterises much of the narrative. This may be illustrated by a glance at one short passage.

Failing
 (finished?) West
 your food, once
Upon a time
 the Daughter's torch
 Demeters's arch
extinguished
down
 in our streets
where is corn and wine? (pp.231-232)

The two footnotes which Jones provides at this point help the reader to unravel what he is trying to say here. These aids, and the passage's context within a quasi-narrative section dealing with Calvary, and, indeed, the Biblical codes which underpin the whole of the poem, go some way to elucidate what the poetry might mean and give the reader some tools with which to attempt understanding, but, in this case, even that seems somehow undermined by the language. It is fragmentary and fractured: syntax is stretched to breaking point, in danger possibly of not being able to bear the weight of meaning which seems to be laid upon it. The punctuation seems deliberately to subvert the reader in his or her attempt to make sense of it all. Despite this, it is rhythmically very strong. According to Hague's Commentary, this paragraph 'is the very nadir of the sorrow of Good Friday';⁴ but if this is the case, and it must be said that it does seem to be of crucial significance for the cumulative theological/aesthetic argument of Jones's poem, why does the language in which it is written defy straightforward comprehension? Is Jones using the admittedly strong and effective rhetorical device of the question to cover his own inability to handle the material? Why, indeed, does it draw attention to itself to the extent that it provokes a discussion such as this?

Of course this is Modernist poetry - indeed Jones has been described as the last of the Modernists - and some measure of linguistic fragmentation and surface impenetrability is to be expected as a formal characteristic of such poetry. There is a tendency in Modernist art, of which Jones's poem is arguably an example, both plastic and literary, for the material out of which it is made to draw attention to itself. The 'thingness' of the surface of paint or words is significant. Recent criticism, as we have seen, has frequently concentrated on this aspect of Jones's work, (although it must

⁴ Hague Commentary p.252

be admitted, however, that although the strategy of labelling him as a modernist has provided some worthwhile insights, it would be wrong to presume that he was writing to a fixed and immutable formula by which he was able to label himself as a modernist Poet. It is far more likely that he picked up the idioms which have come to be labelled as characteristically modernist perhaps from Eliot but, principally because they enabled him to achieve what he wanted to achieve). The result of one such study has been come to some sort of understanding of why it is that that the language of the poem is so foregrounded in the perceptions of the reader. Patrick Deane argues that Jones's strategy in using foreign words, his typography, his drawing upon Roman inscriptions, his word play and his rhyme structures and syntax force the reader to engage with words as words before they can be encountered as words bearing meaning. 'The materiality of the text is asserted in the atomic and molecular elements of discourse itself - not only sentence structure, but clauses, phrases and words as well.'⁵ Moreover, Jones adopts a syntactical structure which, according to Deane, constantly differs to parataxis undermining the narrative flow of the poem and inverting it back upon itself.⁶ 'The effect is as disconcerting at the narrative level as open contradiction is at the grammatical, and both bind the reader into a world of words'.⁷ Deane argues that the poem is in the end almost entirely self-referential, and that attempts to make it bear more meaning than the fragile linguistic structure can cope with are in vain, or at best are misguided. That, in the end the 'thing made other', is ultimately the linguistic structure of the poem itself, within which the critic and the reader must look for the

⁵ Patrick Deane, "The Text as "Valid Matter": Language and Style in the *Anthemata*", in John Matthias ed., *David Jones: Man and Poet* pp.307-308

⁶ Matthias p.319

⁷ Matthias p.319

inherence of meaning or perhaps for something else equally significant, an encoded texture or 'this-ness'

But to come to the conclusion that the poem cannot be understood outside itself will not in the end solve the problem. Deane is aware that David Jones is acutely perceptive of the reality of Incarnation, the doctrine of the Church which teaches that the Divine may be profitably sought and found in the material world, and that he uses language in such a way that the surface shaped by the juxtaposition of words is no less important or meaningful than the ideas that the words are trying to convey. But that surface itself, the words as things, are themselves potentially vehicles of the transcendent. If the numinous is to be found in the created order, it is not as something diffuse but rather as something located in particular things, people and places, and words. Words as things, rather than words which mean something, have to be accepted on their own terms. This allows Jones, more perhaps than any other modern poet, to enjoy and explore the possibilities of word-play. To quote one example much beloved of critics: 'Nudge Clio/she's apt to be musing;' (p88) In which almost every word in two brief lines of verse seems to be reflecting and refracting in different, exciting directions. If the Incarnation is indeed basically inexpressible because logically impossible, then the language which the poet uses to try and express it will inevitably be always in danger of destroying or subverting itself. ⁸Therefore, as Deane points out, the very difficulty of the poem's language is its own response to and articulation of the Word made flesh:

...the remarkable extent to which the most distinctive stylistic feature of *the Anathemata* -- a linguistic materiality derived from the constant failure to exclude, lexical narrative, and other

⁸Matthias p.327

alternatives from the body of discourse – appears, in fact, to be a poetic response to the Incarnation.⁹

Not the least of these poetic responses located in fact within the language of the poem itself, language which becomes a sign or vehicle of Incarnation, the Divine locating itself within the human domain. The Word is made flesh. If this is true, then the Word can also be made word, the medium whereby flesh communicates. God conceived of as Word is surely of the utmost significance in understanding the linguistic texture of Jones's poem. Ultimately, one cannot help but feel that with Jones's particular sense of craftsmanship and material, the words that he uses in his poetry and the way that he uses them, are significant, and that any fragmentation that there may be is purposeful and will repay investigation.

Ancient and Modern Language - The Evocation of the Past

Another passage from the poem illustrates yet a further and different way in which the fragmentation of language forces its attention upon the reader.

Patricius gone the *wilde Jäger*

From the *fora*
to the forests.
Out from *gens Romulum*
into the *Weal -kin*
dinas -man gone *aethwlad*
cives gone wold-men. (p.113)

This illustration comes from the 'Angle-Land' section of the poem. The poet is trying to convey something of the historical period just after the end of the Roman occupation of Britain when different native and

⁹ Matthias p.329

invading peoples fought for sovereignty. The mixture and conflict are illustrated by Jones using an almost brutal macaronic texture in which unfamiliar words from many languages jar against each other. But Jones uses this for a purpose in order to try to convey something of the historical situation to his reader: 'The fractured and fused forms, the hyphenated words such as *dinas* -man and (p112) "Crowland-diawliaidd" etc were merely an attempt to get *something* of this historic situation. It has to be halting, broken and complicated and Babel-like - I think.'¹⁰ The effect observed here has been well paraphrased by W.J. Keith: 'The complicated racial movements and assimilations are embodied within the language itself.'¹¹ David Jones presumes that words have the power to evoke in the reader a sense, or indeed, presence, of an historical period distanced from his or her own. That, in a theological sense words can, under certain circumstances, effect the sort of transubstantiation and *anamnesis* which underpins the whole poem, making present one historical reality in the time of another.

But the macaronic verse such as we have been discussing is by no means the only way that David Jones uses language in order to evoke within the reader's consciousness the reality of the past. Within the language of *The Anathemata*, the poet encourages his readers to enter into the world of the past only insofar as that world is, through words, brought into the present. This 'contemporizing' of history is one of the most noteworthy features of the poem and one which is achieved primarily through the means of the effects produced by the manipulation of language.

¹⁰ Hague *Commentary* p.138, cf also Thomas Dilworth, ed. *Inner Necessities: The letters of David Jones to Desmond Chute*, (Toronto: Anson-Cartwright, 1984) p.32

¹¹ W.J.Keith, "Intermixed Lingo": Listening to David Jones 'in H.B.deGroot and Alexander Leggat eds., *Craft and Tradition: Essays in Honour of William Blisset*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1989)p.253

Throughout the poem there seems to be a tension between the use of ancient and modern language which adds to the dynamism of the poem as the different elements strive to resolve themselves into some kind of creativity. In fact, modern language is the overall poetic medium of the poem. The language is not a pastiche of those poets who, as we shall see, influenced the poet. Neither does it try to evoke the historical reality of both place and period by aping the older forms of language. The reader is not dealing here with a poet who is using the linguistic style of the past to evoke the past, but rather the style of the present is brought into contact with the vocabulary of the past. With its broken syntax, its uncertain verse forms and its sliding between prose and poetry, it is very much of its period in the middle of this century. But, this said, by the careful deployment of words derived from linguistic codes which belong to, or refer almost exclusively to, a past era, Jones evokes history while maintaining, and even enhancing, the overtly modern surface of the poetry. To illustrate, here is a passage from the 'Keel, Ram, Stauros' section of the poem. We might note especially the specific vocabulary from which Jones draws the words that he uses.

Tree-nailed the strakes to you
 garboard, bends and upwards
free-board and capping and thole.
All wood else hangs on you:
clinkered with lands or flushed with seams
 Raked or bluffed.

Planked or
 boarded and above
or floored, from bilge to bilge.
Carlings or athwart her
horizontalled or an-end
 tabernacled and stepped
or stanchioned and 'tween decks. (p.174)

In this example, the use that Jones makes of the precise vocabulary of the shipwright draws the reader through its unfamiliarity into the world of the past where such vocabulary is mundane. Precision evokes history. But the unfamiliarity also has the effect of opening the reader to the possibility of this strange and ancient language being the vehicle for difficult, and equally unfamiliar, theological ideas. The juxtaposition of one interpretative code on to another mode of discourse is effected by the defamiliarization of the reader.

Elsewhere, the ancient codes of language are not so easily assigned to a specific area of specialist knowledge. The section entitled 'The Lady of the Pool' certainly evokes the past effectively but this is not achieved solely by the deployment of an archaic technical vocabulary. Rather, it is by virtue of its being cast in the form of a dramatic monologue in which the omniscient narration defers to digression, impersonality to emotion, and the reader is guided by a polysemic fictional character of immense complexity. But why is it that Elen Monica is able to evoke for Jones and his readers, the London of the late Middle Ages? There are probably two reasons. First, the use of specific words which, like the example of the language and vocabulary of the shipwright discussed above, refer to and seem to evoke the reality of the past. These may be geographical details, the technical terms of scholastic theology or the names derived from a liturgical Calendar. The cumulative effect of such precise words is for the reader to 'trust' him or herself to the 'displacement' effected by the poetry. The historical situation which the poetry seeks to evoke has reified itself in the present by means of the unfamiliarity and precision of the words which the poet introduces into a poetic form and shape which is firmly based in the modern idiom. The following example, this time taken from 'The Lady of the Pool', shows how Jones uses the cumulative effect of a

succession of unfamiliar words, many of which *seem* ancient, to achieve this verbal *anamnesis*. Insofar as Elen Monica evokes medieval London with any degree of efficacy, so too David Jones's theory of language is put to the test and, we may argue, found to be reasonable.

Was already rawish crost the Lower Pool afore four o'
the clock this fine summer mornin' - it might 've been
Lemon's Day. An' cuckoo seeming but bare flown and
Ember Ides not yet by a long way come, in pontiff Juliuses
'versal colander and them not yet sung their Crouchmasses
by tax-chandler's Black Exchecky Book nor yet thumb'd
Archie's piscopal *Ordo* to figure out the moon of it. (pp.125-127)

The second reason, also illustrated by the quotation above, is, in a sense, a matter principally of rhetoric and it has to do with the poet's choice of the form of the dramatic monologue as a central meaning-bearing feature of the poem. Recently, Vincent Sherry has argued that Jones's deployment of the dramatic monologue throughout his published work has one single common purpose: 'The dramatic monologue serves in all these [the poems of David Jones] works as an aid in Jones's contemporizing the past.'¹² If for the moment we may set aside Sherry's principal argument concerning the moral imperative of the fictional centres of Jones's dramatic monologues, and concentrate instead on the rhetorical strategy of the language, what Sherry has called 'a rhetoric of non-judgement'.¹³ We may agree that the fictionalised London cant which Jones has placed into the mouth of Elen Monica elicits, by her ineptitude and carefully-contrived malapropisms, the sympathy of, and therefore the suspension of judgement or perhaps even disbelief by the reader. To quote Sherry once again: 'This cant jumbles the terms and concepts of formal disciplines,

¹² Vincent Sherry, 'David Jones and Literary Modernism: The Use of the Dramatic Monologue', in de Groot & Leggatt, p.243

¹³ p.244

undercuts the status of such external frames of reference.¹⁴ In such a position it is easy for the reader to be persuaded to enter into the world of medieval London, albeit a fictionalized one which has been constructed for the poet's purposes. Ancient codes, old words and the rhetorical device of the dramatic monologue, all of these, brought together within the poetry, serve to bind past and present into a self-referential and mutually-illuminating matrix whereby the underlying coinherence of all things is realised linguistically as well as theologically.

Lines and Rhythms

In his letters discussing *The Anathemata* with Desmond Chute, David Jones frequently responds to questions about the prosody of the poem. He is usually adamant that this aspect of the poem is a secondary characteristic derived from and not conceived prior to the sound and the meaning of the words. 'My only criterion is how it sounds when I read it out *loud* to myself';¹⁵ or later, 'You see, no thought of either scansion or stress (as such) was in my mind as I wrote it.'¹⁶ But when one comes to examine the form of the poetry, its lines, stanzas and rhythms, it soon becomes evident that these are not accidental but rather are carefully contrived.

W J Keith has examined how it is that Jones moves between prose and poetry with great facility, blurring the distinction between them by writing prose that can easily be scanned and printing some lines as verse which seem to belong rhythmically more firmly to the world of prose.¹⁷ He quotes the opening section of the poem where indeed, the syntax does itself grope towards the making of the thing, and the poet deploys a whole

¹⁴ p.244

¹⁵ *Inner Necessities* p.38

¹⁶ *IN* p.47

¹⁷ de Groot and Leggat pp.253-254

range of rhythmic and assonantal features. It is the great range of devices which Jones employs which makes for the sheer variety and dynamism of the poetry. In the following passage quoted from 'Middle-Sea and Lear-Sea' the scansion of the first line is David Jones's own¹⁸ the accents in subsequent lines from the printed text.

Clōse-cōwled, in hiŝ mât-head stāl the sôlitâry cântōr
cups his numbed hand to say his versicle:

Lánd afóre the béam to stár'b'd

one to twó leagues

And, as the ritual is, the respond is:

Lánd befóre the béam to stárboard

one to twó leagues. (p.103)

We may immediately note that once again, Jones's avowed 'accidental' strategy of composition is seen to be his own, carefully contrived fiction. We may also set against this quotation another remark made by David Jones in correspondence with Desmond Chute: 'Many of my accents are more intended as digs in the ribs, to remind the reader of this or that, to hold 'em up a bit. One is at one's wits end for devices to jog the attention sometimes.'¹⁹ The alliterative opening introduces the liturgical rhythms to follow, strengthened by the use of psalmic parallelism. within which the meaning inheres and develops. The accents do indeed 'jog the attention' but only to impress upon the reader the facility with which Jones has used stress to evoke the cry of the look-out and the answer of the ship's crew. Once again words evoke a particular situation, but this time it is not just the words themselves but the rhythmical arrangement of those words which effects the sort of poetic presence which in this thesis we have argued is akin to if not identical with *anamnesis*.

¹⁸ Quoted in Thomas Dilworth, "David Jones's Glosses on *The Anathemata*", *Studies in Bibliography*, 33, (1980) p.243

¹⁹ IN p.32

In those sections dealing with sea voyages the rhythms of the poetry are insistent, forward moving, looking always to their roots in folk-song and sea-shanty. The words bowl along keeping time with the ship, even when Jones allows the verse to defer to the more stately rhythms of liturgy and the versicle and response form on the page; despite this, there is an insistency, a movement which is not resolved until the ship enters harbour for the final time. Even then, it is a typographical device rather than a rhythmic one that Jones uses to close this particular set of episodes:

The old padrone

the ancient staggerer
the vine-juice skipper.

What little's left

in the heel of his calix
asperging the free-board
to mingle the dead of the wake.

Pious, eld, bright-eyed

marinus .

Diocesan of us.

In the deeps of the drink
his precious dregs
laid up to the gods.

Libation darks her sea.

He would berth us

to schedule.(p.182)

The short, breathy sentences and phrases each contributes to a growing patchwork image of the ship entering harbour. But it is an image of great depth and perspicacity, because the expectation engendered in the reader by the fractured syntax does not require the poet to paint this picture exhaustively. Fragments of images and insights, liturgically balanced, mutually illuminating, with the viewpoint subtly but firmly changing, work together, urging the verse on to its almost inconsequential closure in

the last line. Contrast this then, with another passage where Jones is rather more leisurely:

Of Liber

perhaps from over the Sleeve
made confluent with the lucid gift
our naiads never fail to bring
parthogenic from the rock
quick by high valleys, or
meandering slow and
by the wide, loamed ways, by swallowed way
sign the whole anatomy of Britain
with his valid sign
(out to where the nereids
bring in the shoal-gift: also Him, in sign). (p.204)

The sentences and phrases are by no means longer than in the previous example, but the use of longer vowel-sounds gives to the poetry a more discursive and meandering feel. The commas in the phrase, 'by the wide, loamed ways, by swallowed' working in consort with the repetition of 'by' and the soft vowel sound of loamed, act as the accents do in a previous example, slowing the reader down to consider the poetry as it unfolds word by word. Here, once again, we see parallelism both of rhythm and of meaning and a cumulative piling upon each other of words and the possibilities of their meaning. When we come to make some overall judgements about the way in which David Jones uses language in *The Anathemata* we find ourselves wholeheartedly in agreement with Keith who writes in his conclusion to a study which he himself would regard as preliminary :

The words, sounds, and rhythms out of which literature is "made" make possible a revelation of the sacred meaning of human life. God's "*fecit* -mark" is upon both. Moreover, just as, in the world of sense, the humble and lowly "creatures" are as essential to the

divine scheme as the high and mighty, so in the world of language there is no effect that is not ultimately redeemable.²⁰

We are however still left with some important problems, not the least of which is the fractured surface of the language which, despite all that has been said in the foregoing pages, makes up the bulk of the poem. Moreover, it has been hinted that the use of language as matter to evoke reality in a way that is akin to the transformation presumed by the liturgical theory of *anamnesis*, requires a particular theory of poetic language. We have begun to unravel this in the foregoing pages but is any further help to be derived from those who have considered in their work the theoretical issues of types and modes of language as employed in works commonly labeled 'literature' by prose writers and poets?

In *Towards a Christian Poetic*, Michael Edwards considers what language and literature might mean when viewed from a Christian perspective. He argues that the structure undergirding the determinate Christian narrative is ternary: creation, fall, re-creation, or alternatively, life, death, and resurrection. This tri-partite formula may, he argues, be observed in the inner workings of language and literature: 'A Christian poem should be Christian in itself. But there is another problem. The language of a Christian poem should be Christian.'²¹ In Edwards's view, Christian language would be creative in so far as it would transcend temporal consideration and raise the human to a state of resurrection compared with his former, fallen self. Edwards makes an implied distinction between Christian and profane language which would not be attractive to David Jones; neither does it really help in trying to make sense of the language that he uses in *The Anathemata*.

²⁰ de Groot & Leggat p.257

²¹ Michael Edwards, *Towards a Christian Poetic*, (London: Macmillan, 1984) p.114

In contrast, Kathleen Henderson Staudt outlines three of the possible ways of writing criticism. The first, which presumes that a text is an extrinsically communicating medium is opposed to a second where it is regarded as a self-referential unit. These two approaches, she argues, are the dominant modes of recent criticism. Against them she places an approach derived ultimately from Jan Mukarovsky, which, like the amphibolic title of Jones's poem, holds these two approaches in some kind of creative tension. She argues that poetic language has a dual role both outwardly communicative and inwardly self-referential, but that the interaction of these two modes of linguistic discourse within the same text illuminates a third, Incarnational reality. Applying this insight to *The Anathemata*, Staudt points out that:

It simultaneously describes and performs the essential actions of making and offering, and in doing so it reveals the ultimate intersection between the human, material world, which includes the poet's ink, paper and linguistic signs, and the transcendent order which his signs show forth.²²

As suggested above, in Jones's poetry words have an ontological 'thingness' akin to Hopkins's concept of *haecceitas* or quiddity derived ultimately from the teaching of the medieval philosopher Duns Scotus²³ they are material forms in some way complete in themselves yet they also bear meaning. They are signifying, breaking away from the surface of the human order to relate to a transcendent 'Other'. It has already been suggested that there is at least some theological precedent for this in the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation where the material and the transcendent intersect without either being compromised in any way.

²² Kathleen Henderson Staudt, 'The Text as Material and as Sign: Poetry and Incarnation in William Blake, Arthur Rimbaud and David Jones', *Modern Language Studies*, (1984) p.21

²³ cf *Ana* p148 n.4 and Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955 rpr. 1980) pp.455-456

But does this approach to how language functions in *The Anathemata* go far enough to explain its difficult, fragmentary quality? Probably not in itself, although this theory of language is congruent with Jones's own thoughts about artistic creativity,²⁴ and certainly helps to illuminate the use of language which has been observed throughout *The Anathemata*. Perhaps one might gain some further clue from the first language that the reader encounters, the title. The title alone, *Anathemata*, is an amphibole, that is to say, a word which has at least two apparently contradicting meanings or two levels of meaning. In this case Jones uses it to indicate and connote both holy things and profane things without any dilution or diminishment to either; this cuts across any remaining grounds for contention that there is a division between the language which can be used for Christian matters and that which can be used for profane. The title may be pulling in two opposing directions, but it remains somehow unitary, defying the final break that would rob it of the tensive quality in which meaning seems to reside.²⁵ It is almost as if in the breaking of the language one thing is allowed to emerge from another in a vast chain of paronomasia.²⁶ The gaps themselves are significant, the silence not a matter of passivity but action.

It is still necessary to question how, or whether, the broken linguistic surface of the poem participates in or somehow conveys something of the Incarnational reality. One approach would be to suggest that the language reflects Jones's perception of the world and more particularly Western Civilisation as essentially dying, breaking up with no generally accepted corpus of belief left to hold this fragmentation in check. Yet, despite this

²⁴ See Jones's discussion of this in 'Art and Sacrament' in *E & A*

²⁵ For a fuller discussion of this point see; Carson Daley, 'The Amphibolic Title of The Anathemata', *Renascence*, (1983), p.35

²⁶ J. A. W. Bennett *Poetry of the Passion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) p.200

pessimism, Jones retains enough confidence in the signifying presence of 'Otherness' to believe that it will make itself known even in the present dark days. Thus, beneath the troubled and fragmentary surface lies some kind of apperception of Divine reality. The relative straightforwardness of such a view is attractive but it must be admitted that the spatial adjectives of above and beneath etc, fail to do justice to Jones's particular and often subtle use of language.

It has already been suggested that to make sense of his Incarnational language we have to predicate both a material and a transcendent quality to the fabric of language itself. But the matter is not that simple: it is not a question of language reflecting what is going on in the world, becoming a sort of allegory, a code to be broken in order to unleash the truth; language to a certain extent creates the world, it certainly defines it, delimits it. The poet, whether he or she appreciates it or not, creates the world within language and has the freedom to ensure that it conforms to their own prejudices. David Jones's world is made up of language: even when he is describing the most physical and mundane things he constantly plays etymological and syntactical games which may lessen the immediacy of impact. But, on the other hand we may argue that part of the strategy of difficulty, the teasing of the reader, is rather like his introduction of accents discussed above: it slows the reader up, makes him or her wrestle a little with the text, makes sure that the poem does not give up its meanings too willingly and retains a sense of mystery.

The question itself may be turned round and treated from an epistemological point of view. It may be argued that the sort of knowledge which is bound up in, and conveyed by, the poem governs the sort of language in which it is written and moreover the application of the ideas of tradition and mystery may be useful signposts in coming to some sort of

understanding of this. In his book *Discerning the Mystery*, Andrew Louth argues that an understanding of tradition as a continuum of knowledge is vital to a comprehension of the movement towards truth present in the humanities as opposed to the sciences. He suggests that the truth is gleaned from studying a text not in terms of working out of a proposition but rather by a creative and open engagement or, drawing on Gadamer, a conversation with the text. This engagement, far from drawing away or divorcing itself from the constraints of tradition, actually participates in it. 'The discovery of the true meaning of a text or of a work of art is never finished - there is no "original meaning" - it is rather an unfinished process whereby tradition is handed on.'²⁷ Knowledge in the humanities is not therefore conceived of as a constantly advancing quest to solve problems rationally, but rather as more of a dialectical process of revelation and reflection in which reason is no less important than it is in the sciences: 'At the heart of the kind of understanding involved in the humanities another dimension of reason is involved, which one can perhaps call contemplation.'²⁸ Contemplation is a word more usually associated with the world of spirituality, and no doubt Louth is aware of this, but it enables him, drawing on the work of G. Marcel, to move his discussion on to examine the question of mystery both as the indissoluble core of the Christian tradition and as a category of phenomenon opposed epistemologically to 'problem'. A problem may, given the right conditions, be solved, worked out; a mystery can only be engaged with. Both problem and mystery are no less constructs from which knowledge may be derived, but this must be done in an appropriate way. In a later chapter, Louth compares this distinction between problem and mystery with four categories of difficulty experienced in reading literature

²⁷ Andrew Louth, *Discerning the Mystery*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983) p.33

²⁸ Louth p.68



proposed by George Steiner. Three of these we may, following Louth, place in the realm of problem; some problems may be solved as one might a crossword but the fourth, 'ontological', difficulty cannot be treated in this manner: 'It is a difficulty which seems to question the very nature of poetry itself and to demand of the reader a radical reordination as to what meaning is at all.²⁹' It would be wrong to treat the form, language and content of *The Anathemata* as being bound up entirely in this ontological difficulty. With the right book and commentaries, following the right clues from the footnotes and the preface, aspects of it can be solved or 'worked out'. However, there is a sense in which the difficulty of the poem's surface language holds the reader at a distance, questions him or her, engages actively with them, requires not simple recognition and understanding but a careful weighing of words and ideas which approximates to contemplation, a way of engaging with the text which we might be tempted to call 'active reading', if passivity, or perhaps more precisely openness and acceptance, were not such an important constitutive element of it. We have already noted how the poet uses the rhetorical device of reflexive questioning by the narrator in a way that verges on contemplation. In a sense the reader is expected to mirror in his or her own reading the slow, careful strategy of that musing. Words evoke because they are given the space to unfold all their possibilities.

It is almost as if the poem itself, through the deployment of a number of rhetorical and linguistic strategies, not the least of which is its own fractured self, is enacting upon the reader how it will be understood, determining how it will be read. W.F. Jackson Knight, a classical scholar whose work was admired by Jones, wrote on the subject of mazes: 'Mazes and labyrinths provide correlatively obstruction to those who would enter

²⁹ Louth p.112

the middle point of a certain area, and at the same time a conditional penetration of that point.³⁰ Might we not argue, along with Jeremy Hooker, that the fractured and fragmented language of *The Anathemata* forms the verbal equivalent of a maze or labyrinth, one whose centre will, paradoxically, never be penetrated because it is a mystery, the mystery at the heart of Jones's Christianity. The language at times draws the reader on, at other times places a barrier which may only be crossed with difficulty, and yet at times, constrains the reader's point of view to that intended by the author.³¹ Later in this thesis it will be necessary to reconsider Hooker's theory of *The Anathemata's* labyrinthine formal structure. It will be suggested that there are other ways of articulating the form of the poem which are better suited to the task. However, this image of the labyrinth can well be maintained to describe the way in which the features of poetic language, tone, rhythm, ancient and modern, rhetoric, work together to enact the experience of the poem.

Mystery, contemplation, labyrinth: these concepts seem to offer a clue to the linguistic difficulty of *The Anathemata*. And to them we might also add, defamiliarisation, for, what has been described above is not so very far from the theory derived from Victor Shklovsky that we have already examined.³² The language draws attention to itself because in some respects it is the material world from which it springs, at least within the pages of Jones's poem. It engages with the reader so that reading *The Anathemata* is never a passive experience but an active wondering/wandering close to the heart of a mystery as Jones describes its historical outworking.

³⁰ W.F. Jackson Knight, *Vergil: Epic and Anthropology*, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1967) p.189

³¹ cf. Thomas R Whitaker, 'Since we have been a conversation...', *Clio* 6.1.1976

³²cf. above p.64

Chapter 5: Sources of Style - Influences on the Language

Browning, for example, gave me a bit of a clue of how something *might* be managed, and the sudden appearance of Hopkins and my reading of Skelton and one's interest at the time in 'negro spirituals' and God knows what all, seemed to 'click' in some way with all kinds of childhood things - nursery rhymes, early readings of Malory and, of all people, Macaulay, and fragmentary bits of Welsh stuff, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Norse sagas and Caesar's Gallic Wars, and all kinds of popular cockney songs, and bits of metaphysical poets, and Lewis Carroll, and Lear and God! it's absurd to try and trace the differing and very disparate strands, and behind that being brought up on the Authorised Version of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. And then all this very heterogeneous stuff given new point and cohesion by becoming a Catholic in 1921 and reading Maritain and meeting you and Tiger Dawson and Tom [Burns] and those various blokes we used to talk with in the late 1920's and 1930's. But how the hell can one explain all this - you can't.¹

David Jones writes thus to Harman Grisewood in a letter dated May 1962, some ten years after the publication of *The Anathemata*, enunciating a few of the influences which he is aware of contributing to the form and content of his poem. In the previous chapter the form in which Jones presents his readers with a variety of types and tones of language was examined and discussed. In this chapter language is again the theme but the sources of that language are now the subjects for discussion and elucidation. *The Anathemata* is a poem in which it soon becomes evident to the reader that the poet is constructing a large and very complex structure of allusion and quotation within the fabric of the text. The poem pays homage to, draws upon, and quotes a large number of works both poetic and non-poetic, just a few of which Jones himself acknowledges in the letter quoted above. We have already seen how varied the language of

¹ René Hague, ed., *Dai Greatcoat: A Self-Portrait of David Jones in his Letters*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1980) p190. Henceforth, hereafter DGC.

the poem is, but now it is time to recognise some of the sources of the variation and discuss it from the point of view of this structural quality of multiple allusion. In the discussion below it is not the intention to be exhaustive; indeed that would probably be impossible, so vast is the literary world from which he is able to select the elements of the intertextual space which has been constructed around *The Anathemata*. All one can hope to do is point out the general shape and note some of the main thrusts of his technique.

It is not, however, simply a matter of saying 'these are Jones's influences'. That would be interesting in itself, but it has already been well documented, especially by Hague in his *Commentary* and more recently by Jonathan Miles in his *Backgrounds to David Jones: A Study in Sources and Drafts*.² Neither is it a prelude to a reading of *The Anathemata* which presumes it to be either a catena of quotations or an exercise in pastiche and parody. That Jones allows his own reading to enter his text in a way that is more overt than many other poets, should not be taken to demonstrate an artistic and compositional failure on his part; rather it indicates an imaginative use of the writings of others in which there is an element of reciprocity. The reader is prompted to re-read, albeit on Jones's terms, the writers quoted and alluded to, and read the poem through the lens of a particular, sometimes eccentric and yet always fascinating literary canon assembled and guaranteed by the poet himself. As a result, the textual 'space' created by the poet through the composition of the poem is in a constantly dynamic state of movement as connections and liaisons between it and the body of the text develop and multiply.

The Bible

²Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1990

If we were still tempted to dismiss *The Anathemata* as being unoriginal and made from the discards of others, we would do well to bear in mind that interpolation and quotation in literary works has a long, varied and significant history. In the following quotation it is the Jewish Bible which is under discussion:

It may actually improve our understanding of the Torah to remember that it is *quoting* documents, that there is, in other words, a purposeful documentary *montage* that must be perceived as a unity, regardless of the number and types of smaller units that form the building blocks of its composition. Here, the weight of literary interest falls upon the activity of the *final* redactor, whose artistry requires far more careful attention than it has hitherto been accorded.³

It is perhaps easier to grasp the unity of composition in a work such as *The Anathemata* than it is with certain aspects of the Bible. But we would do well to bear in mind the importance and value of *quoting* documents. Moreover this insight opens up for us a formal and indeed structural aspect of *The Anathemata* which does not seem to have been discussed before in connection with the poem. This is the way that scenes and images dissolve or metamorphize to be replaced by other scenes, and also in the way that quotation is woven tightly into the structure of the poem. Jones seems to be at least tacitly aware of the Biblical antecedents of his seemingly 'modern' compositional technique. *The Anathemata* is in fact 'Biblical' in a sense which transcends those occasions when the poet chooses to quote or allude to it. It is indeed 'structurally' Biblical. Once again, the reader is reminded of the importance of the Biblical 'code' for a reading of *The Anathemata*, but here that debt may be extended to include shape as well as content.

³ Joel Rosenberg quoted by Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, (London 1981) pp. 19-20 quoted in Gabel Josipovici, *The Book of God : A Response to the Bible*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1988, rpr. 1990) p.17

But what of those occasions when the Bible itself has been a source of meaning and language within the poem? We may bear in mind that the way in which Jones encountered scripture in his own experience is of profound importance. His 'Low-Church', Anglican upbringing will have introduced him to the Authorised Version of the Bible and to its incorporation into the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer. Later, after his conversion to Roman Catholicism, he came into contact with the Latin Bible of the Vulgate through the Mass and also through his attendance at the Divine Office in the eccentric world of the Gill household. This liturgical experience of scripture is altogether different from the rather broader lines of encounter possible within the Anglican context of his early life with its larger tracts of continuous Biblical reading.

A perusal of a list of Biblical references which Jones quotes in the text of *The Anathemata* reveals nine prophetic quotations or allusions, primarily from Isaiah, and eight from the Apocalypse of St. John, while the only other books from which Jones drew more than once or twice are Hebrews and the Psalms together with the Gospels, principally that according to St. John. Isaiah, with his references to the Messiah, traditionally interpreted by the church as pointing towards Christ, gives Jones an opportunity to gather up all the pre-Christian historical and mythic material and orientate it towards his central point, the crucifixion. In doing so, he effects a series of bold transformations each of which while clearly anchored in the Biblical text, extends the significance of that text, or at least uncovers and makes clear what was implicit and hidden. Take for instance the following example drawn from 'Rite and Fore-Time':

Lighting the Cretaceous and the trias, for Tyrannosaurus
must somehow lie down with herbivores, or, the poet lied,
which is not allowed. (p.74)

Compare this with the text from Isaiah 11.6 to which Jones is alluding:

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Jones replaces Isaiah's wolf and lamb by carnivorous and herbivorous dinosaurs: in so doing, the prophecy is extended back into the far-reaches of biological time. And even the inert geological sphere is not exempt from the prophetic dimension, for Jones is commenting on the fact that the prophet is himself a poet, a maker of artifacts, in this case the words of prophecy under divine instruction. We should not be unaware that as well as extending the significance of Biblical prophecy backwards into geological time, Jones (by using the technical terms for prehistoric biology developed by modern science) also extends prophecy into the modern world.⁴

But the Bible may on other occasions be combined with Classical myth in order to produce new and extensive possibilities for meaning:

Why did they regard him
the decorous leader, *neque decor* ...
volneraque illa gerens ...many of them
under his dear wall. (p.84)

The Latin text of Isaiah 53.2⁵ is set up against Virgil's description of Hector in the Aeneid Book II.277-279 (Now his beard was ragged and his hair

⁴Miles devotes two chapters of his *Backgrounds to David Jones* to an analysis of the use that Jones makes of geological and archaeological images. He writes: 'Jones, in the true Thomist tradition, has accepted the challenge to twentieth century Christian poets to comprehend and, as it were, to baptize the scientific evidence against Biblical notions of geogeny.' p.98

⁵'Et ascendet sicut virgultem coram eo, et sicut radix de terra sitiendi: non est species ei, neque decor: et vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus, et desideravimus eum.' 'For he he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.' (A.V.)

clotted with blood, and all those wounds which he had sustained fighting to defend the walls of his homeland could still be seen),⁶ to emphasise thereby some sort of kinship of theme which transcends culture. In his footnotes, Jones comes to grips with the indignities heaped upon the Redeemer by his people and also gives the Latin quotations necessary to understand these lines. The meaning in the end depends primarily upon the use of language, on the plays on words like *decor* and *decorous* between the meanings of words in Latin and English. The fact that Biblical and Classical myth can be adapted in order to share the same language is by no means insignificant, for it enables difficult typological similarities to be drawn with delicacy and skill.

The common factor in all of the uses of Old Testament prophecy in *The Anathemata* is that whatever it is used in conjunction with it always elucidates or develops the underlying concept of the Redeemer, whether it is the depiction of Christ the hero at the beginning of 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day', where Isaiah 53.7, Song of Songs 5.10 & 15, Psalm 110 and 1 Peter are deployed in quick succession couched in language reminiscent of *The Mabinogion* and other Medieval epics to introduce a narrative which will move from annunciation, through conception to crucifixion. Or, indeed the 'Boast' in Mabinog's liturgy where epithets drawn chiefly from Welsh sources culminate in the words of Isaiah:

Alpha es et O
 that which
the world cannot hold.
Atheling to the heaven-king.
Shepherd of Greekland.
Harrower of Annwn.
Freer of the Waters.

⁶Virgil, trans. W.F. Jackson Knight, *The Aeneid*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1956) p.59

Chief Physician and
dux et pontifex.
Gwledig Nefoedd and
Walda of *every* land
et vocabitur WONDERFUL. (pp.207-208)

Coming after titles which may be difficult to understand, the single word 'WONDERFUL' derived from Isaiah 9.6 is, in some respects, almost a relief, the familiar coming after the confusion of the unfamiliar. The reader will have been in no doubt that all the other titles refer to Christ as well but the fact that Jones is able to achieve so much with one single word demonstrates well how deeply the Biblical code is embedded in western European consciousness and how he utilizes familiarity to contextualize and allow his readers an entry to the unfamiliar strands of western consciousness.

But prophecy and apocalypse, important though they are for sources of meaning within the poem, are certainly less important as sources of language than the psalms. The psalms as David Jones would have experienced them are the daily prayer of the church, a rhythmic underpinning of lived spiritual reality. It is not the psalms in their Old Testament context which primarily interests Jones but as they are understood in and through the New Testament and, by extension, the western Catholic liturgy. The psalms as known and used by Jones have already been removed from their original position within Hebrew thought by their incorporation into a Biblical code in which the New Testament and, more specifically, the events and teachings surrounding Jesus Christ are the interpretative key. There is a strong element of this evident in the material derived from prophecy above, but we may underline here the fact that within the Christian Biblical code has been enacted a number of cultural transformations from Semitic to Greek and Greek to Roman thought-worlds. Christianity in this respect has the

inbuilt potential to transcend and subsume ostensibly different cultures into itself. Once again we may argue that the way in which David Jones may be seen to effect this within *The Anathemata* is another example of his creative response to the code which lies at the root of his religious tradition.

For example, if we return to his use of the psalms, he adopts and enriches the Church's traditional typological presumptions of the identity of Christ with the shepherd in his use of Psalm 23;

And now is given a new stone indeed;
the Good Calf-herd
for Rhonbos his *pastor bonus*
lifted up and adored
(and may we say of his *moschoporos*;
this pastoral Lord *regit me* ?) (p.91)

While referring to a sixth-century BC Greek *kouros* or young man carrying a calf or *moscophoros*⁷, Jones makes, allowing an element of slippage of terminology, a link between it and the Biblical concept of the Good Shepherd. But at the same time there is an interesting play introduced here between the opening words of the Latin text, *Dominus regit me* and the translation of the Authorised Version of the Bible, 'The Lord is my shepherd'. So using the words and their meanings as a springboard, he is able to strike a theological and poetic balance between Christ as Lord and Christ as Pastor, two concepts which, by no means mutually exclusive, are frequently difficult to reconcile within the same context.

One of the distinctive qualities of the psalms is their parallelism, the way in which the second half of a verse will develop the thought of the first

⁷cf. R.J. Hopper, *The Acropolis* (London: Hamlyn, 1971) p.190

half. It is a distinctive feature of Hebrew poetry and one which was to have an important effect on the liturgical development and practice of the Divine Office in the Christian West. That this is true does not escape David Jones who is himself conscious not just of the biblical form but also of its adaptation within the Eucharist and the Divine Office. The question-answer, versicle and response form is employed frequently with the poem, most notably perhaps in his evocation of the ship making its way to and from the Islands of Britain where Jones draws upon psalms, their liturgical context and sea-shanties simultaneously.

Is it then each brined throat chanties?
We've made from Ilissus
 all the way
matlos of the Maiden
 all the way
 all the way. (p.103)

We will return to the question of sea-shanties below; for the moment it is necessary to consider briefly the use that Jones makes of the Gospels. From the outset we may say that the narrative which lies closely under the surface of *The Anathemata* is that around which all four Gospels are based, the story of Jesus Christ from conception through to execution. This said, the reader of the poem will have noticed that this narrative thread dominates the poem without obtruding into it in an ungainly or inappropriate way. Jones achieves much implicitly; the events of the Gospels are always placed at one or two removes from the surface of the poem and direct textual quotation or allusion tends to be brief: for example in 'Mabinog's Liturgy' one single word *alae* from Matthew 26.53 suffices⁸ to convey a sense of impending judgement with the coming of Christ and in 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day', in his periphrastic account of the

8p.208

passion, at the moment of Christ's death, Jones directs his readers to the Matthaean account:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, ELI,
ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? that is to say, My God, my God, why
hast thou forsaken me?

Jones's lines are:

But tell me his cry
no, his cry before his *mors* -cry.
Of his black-hoürs' cryings
his ninth hour out-cry. . . . (pp.238-239)

In the note appended to these lines Jones directs the reader not only to his Biblical, but also source, but also to Gerard Manley Hopkins's sonnet of 1885 'I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day' with its evocation of utter blackness, of desolation together with self-surrender and from which he has derived particularly the usage of 'hoürs' quoted above. Jones's lines taken together with Hopkins' sonnet provide a poetic gloss upon the Gospel account of the death of Christ, albeit one which as ever in *The Anathemata* is distanced from the events themselves. The poet uses language which draws back from the highly charged and personal Matthaean verse and Hopkins' sonnet and yet which does justice to both.

Sea-Shanties

Sea-shanties seem to have fascinated Jones and they make one of the principal portions of a major influence on the language of the poem, that of folk song. The sea shanties provide Jones with an almost liturgical structure, being rhythmically regular, admitting of variations in scansion and studied introductions of plays upon words. (By way of digression, it might be suggested that the quasi-liturgical form of the shanty associated

act owing much to his roots in the Arts and Crafts Movement. The effect on Jones's poetry seems to have been altogether more profound. Throughout both *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* the poet alludes to British folk songs. A good example is his use of *John Barleycorn* in the closing section of *The Anathemata* .

with this hand and that hand conjoined
over the poured-out confluence
he parts that, which –
under the sign of that creature –
can do more than any grain.
All have stomach for these comfortable signs
in the lighted apses.

Within, with lights brighted
under the dressed beam
all can eat the barley-cake
and sisters dear
may plait him bearded
for their hair
and all can sing:
Fol the dol the didiay
but he

he must be broken off at knee. (pp.227-228)⁹

Against the background of the fraction of the Mass, which is the breaking of the consecrated bread before distribution and consumption, an action which (as Dix points out) came to symbolize Christ's own death at the passion,¹⁰ Jones places the English folk-song of *John Barleycorn* with

⁹cf. A.L. Lloyd's note on this song in Ralph Vaughan Williams and A.L. Lloyd eds. *The Penguin Book of English Folk Songs*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1959) p.116. Lloyd writes: 'This ballad is rather a mystery. Is it an unusually coherent folklore survival of the ancient myth of the slain and resurrected Corn-God, or is it the creation of an antiquarian revivalist, which has passed into popular currency and become 'folklorized'? It is in any case an old song, of which an elaborate form was printed in the reign of James I.'

¹⁰The original purpose of the fraction, both at the Jewish 'grace before meals' and at the last supper, was simply for distribution. But symbolism laid hold of this rite even in the apostolic age. It is clear from 1 Cor.X.17 that in St.Paul's time the fragments were all broken off a single loaf before the eyes of the assembled communicants. This was the whole point of his appeal for unity in the Corinthian church. This was still the case in the time

what for him were its connotations of an ancient pre-Christian fertility ritual. Jones would have been aware of the ramifications of this from his reading both of Jessie L. Weston and Frazer's *Golden Bough* ¹¹ as also with 'Green grow the rushes · O', another ritual song with its roots in the pre-Christian period, which he uses elsewhere. And if the reader searches this extract he or she will also find a reference to the fifteenth-century Coventry Carol with its associations with the Mystery plays and particularly the massacre of the Innocents, and also a glancing allusion in the rhythmical positioning of one word, 'comfortable', from the so-called 'Comfortable Words' in the Book of Common Prayer Communion Service. From the perspective of the meaning of the poem, Jones has managed to extend the boundaries of Eucharistic resonance. The Mass has been enabled to incorporate everything. It is a masterful series of reflecting surfaces. But it is interesting, too, from the point of view of both poetic and religious language, for all of this is incorporated into a passage of psalmic/liturgical parallelism which, for Jones, has a remarkable rhythmic consistency. Although it may be noted that its tone shifts from the descriptive narrative similar to that which may be found at the outset of the poem, to a narrative tone which is less distanced, more participatory and inclusive, the allusions emerge to engage and greet the reader, not to confuse and frustrate.

Not all folk-songs, however, are selected because of their ritual connotations like *John Barleycorn*. A little later in the same section of the poem Jones combines a poem, a fairly saucy folk-song and a nursery-

of Ignatius who writes of 'breaking one bread' (or 'loaf', *hena arton*), again as the demonstration of the unity of the church. Before the end of the second century, however, this symbolism had lost its point and another was *substituted* for it, in some churches at least, that of 'breaking' of the Body of Christ in the Passion.' Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p.132

¹¹ To which Hague directs readers in his *Commentary* p.244

rhyme against the background of the Mass and the New Testament narratives both of the crucifixion and of the child-Christ and the doctors of the temple.

Her's who at twelve years taught men:
the sophists wonder
where they stand.
Stands a lady
on a mountain
who she is
they could not know.
His waters were in her pail
her federal waters ark'd him. (p.235)

In this instance, although he alters the line-scape of the original folk-song to conform with his liturgical taste, 'On yonder hill there stands a creature/Who she is I do not know/I'll go and court her for her beauty' (p.234 n.3.), the rhythm is for the most part retained although the words have undergone a subtle change, enabling Jones to render from a profane tale of love a profound meditation on Mary at Calvary and the Mystic Marriage between Christ and his Church. Yet, despite its profundity, the retention of the folk-song rhythm together with the allusion to the nursery-rhyme 'Simple Simon', '...and all the water he had got/was in his mother's pail', that soon follows and concludes the extract quoted above, gives to the poetry a lightness of touch which prevents it from descending into vapid self-indulgence. We may argue that within *The Anathemata* folk-song takes its place within the linguistic mixture not just because it is old and mysterious but also because of its own innate interest and beauty and its relationship with the more formal and liturgical elements of the poem.

Nursery-Rhymes

Before turning to the more 'literary' allusions which Jones has woven into the poem, there is one final type of traditional verse that must be examined: nursery-rhymes. These are regularly incorporated into the poetry. Above it was shown how 'Simple Simon' added depth to a meditation on Mary; we have already pointed out how 'Sing a song of sixpence' is placed in a central position for the meaning of the poem, adjacent to an account of the passion in 'The Lady of the Pool'¹², and in a future chapter it will be demonstrated that the questions in 'Oranges and Lemons' are raised by Jones to an almost rhetorical status. But we should also draw attention to Dilworth's exposition of another allusion to 'Oranges and Lemons' in 'The Lady of the Pool' '(that's where they keep the chopper bright, captain/and no candle/to light you to bed' (p.142)). Dilworth argues, 'It is this dark inevitability that psychologically requires a saviour, a redeemer,'¹³ This redeemer, it is argued, is symbolised by Bran the Blessed, Bendigeid Vran whose head is believed, according to the tradition of the Mabinogion,¹⁴ to have been interred under the Tower of London to ensure its preservation. Dilworth is probably right with his identification of personages but wrong in his overall interpretation: there is surely no need to argue for a situation of psychological darkness, in order that Jones may use his allusions in this way. For the moment however, let us consider two occasions on which Jones uses lines from the nursery-rhyme which he quotes as: 'Monday's child is fair of face/Tuesday's child is full of grace'(p.188n.4) and in a later section

¹²see above chapter 3

¹³Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning*, p.222

¹⁴cf. Branwen the daughter of LLyr: 'And Bendigeid Vran commanded them that they should cut off his head. "And take you my head," said he, "and bear it even unto the White Mount, in London, and bury it there, with the Face towards France.' Lady Charlotte Guest trans. O.Edwards revised, *Mabinogion from the Llyfr Coch y Hergst*, (No place of publication given:Llanerch, 1990) p.56

'Thursday's child has far to go'. (p.224n.5) In the first instance, Jones is annotating the following lines of poetry from 'Mabinog's Liturgy';

They say it's Tuesday's child
is chose
this year's Mab o' the Green
 mundi Domina
or was she Monday's
 total beauty
Stabat by the Blossom'd Stem? (p.188)

By way of comparison, we may also cite the later allusion to the rhyme in the final section of the poem, 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day'. 'Her Thursday's child/come far to drink his Thor's Day cup:' (p.224)

The overall theological context for 'Mabinog's Liturgy' is the Incarnation and more specifically its liturgical expression in the Masses of the Nativity. Jones incorporates, almost by way of preface, an account, oblique and fractured, of the Passion. Into this account, in which Mary is foregrounded despite not being named, Jones inserts the nursery-rhyme which he juxtaposes with the liturgical material from the Missal extolling Mary's beauty and leaves the reader to connect the 'full of grace' with the salutation of Gabriel. The nursery-rhyme is deployed as a strategy of familiarity with which the poet may handle the unfamiliar. A similar process may be discerned in the later use of the nursery-rhyme. But, in this case, the context is that of the Last Supper, traditionally celebrated on the Thursday before Easter. A play on words reminds the reader of the roots of the name of this day in the Norse Pantheon of Gods and the allusion gives an open-ended quality to what is being evoked. If we know that Christ as 'Thursday's Child' does have far to go, we also know something of the shape of that journey. And here, too, in the context of the Passion, Jones reminds the reader of Incarnation: if Christ is

conqueror, we are to remember that he is also eternally the Incarnate Logos and the child of Mary. In both instances, the use of this particular nursery-rhyme brings with it a sense of fate, or something foretold and inevitable.

In discussing the incorporation of allusion to folk-songs into *The Anathemata*, it was argued that they are there not just because they are of antiquarian interest to the poet, or because they have a prosodic regularity which attracted him, but because they also carry within themselves connotations which Jones could use and develop. Moreover, it was suggested that they are there because Jones believed them to be beautiful. The same may, of course, be said of nursery-rhymes, but it is necessary to go farther. We may argue that nursery-rhymes, being the first poetry that most people learn, have a special significance and connote a psychologically formative period of real profundity. They carry with them the connotation of play. That this is so may be argued on two counts: first that nursery rhymes are imaginative in a way that introduces children to a world which the more sophisticated might call surreal, and at the same time they help to develop the child's nascent imaginative capabilities. Second, that their rhythmic simplicity and insistency has an immediate and easily remembered appeal. Both aspects of nursery-rhymes, the imaginative and the rhythmic, are aspects of playfulness. This sense of play, we may argue is particularly significant when we look at the work of the psychiatrist and psychotherapist D.W. Winnicott who argues that play is an important transitional state between internal and external experience of prime importance for the development of religious and artistic faculties within the adult:

The intermediate area of experience, unchallenged in respect of its belonging to inner or external (shared) reality, constitutes the

greater part of the infants' experience, and throughout life is retained in the intense experiencing that belongs to the arts and to religion and to imaginative being, and to creative scientific work.¹⁵

To juxtapose, as Jones does, these simple poems, replete with their deep and yet unnamed resonances, with the theological matter of Passion and Incarnation is to signal, albeit tacitly or covertly, what was certainly true for the poet: that he believed these theological truths to be deeply embedded in human nature. This is also to suggest that the allusions to nursery-rhymes within *The Anathemata* have a qualitative difference from the references to other writings, and have to be handled with great discernment. It is also to suggest what others have hinted at,¹⁶ that Jones has a great facility with psychological matters which he uses with the utmost subtlety. And further, it is to point out that there is an aspect of Jones's poem which is playful, which delights in ear-catching rhythms and imaginative connections. The language of children's nursery-rhymes incorporated into *The Anathemata* is a salutary reminder to the reader that there is a joyful and life-affirming side to the poem, and indeed of much of Jones's work written and painted, which may sometimes be lost when we concentrate our attention too firmly on the Passion and the Mass.

Homer and Virgil: The Classical World

'However the *Odyssey* is rather like the Mass in one respect, chaps can do what they will with it but it never destroys the terrific shape.'¹⁷ And it is probably true to say that Jones would have applied that comment both to the *Iliad* and possibly to the *Aeneid* as well. Certainly it is primarily to Homer, Virgil, and then Cicero together with the Roman historians that

¹⁵D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1971) p.14

¹⁶cf Corcoran p.iii

¹⁷DGC p.168

Jones uses in allusions which open up to the reader his perspectives on the Classical world and also, rather more broadly, on to the mythic shape of reality. But also they provide him with figures that can be worked up as being of archetypal significance, constantly reappearing in the poem. In the following passage we may discern . the sort of use that Jones makes of classical material from both Homer and Virgil. It is probably best to quote it at length:

All the efficacious asylums
in *Walliae vel in Marchia Walliae*,
 ogofau of, that cavern for
 Cronos, Owain, Arthur.
Terra Walliae!
 Buarth Meibion Arthur!
 Enclosure of the Children of Troy!

Nine-strata'd Hissarlik
 a but forty-metre height
yet archetype of sung-heights.
Crux-mound at the node
gammadion'd castle.
Within the laughless Megaron
 the margaron
beyond echelon'd Skaian
 the stone
 the fonted water
 the fronded wood.

Little Hissarlik
 least of acclivities
yet
 high as Hector the Wall
 high as Helen the Moon
who, being lifted up
 draw the West to them. (pp.55-56)

In his notes to these lines, Jones openly suggests to his readers that the sources of his allusions may be sought in Virgil, Homer, and Pliny as well as the Bible. At the same time he juxtaposes material drawn from his

Welsh sources. Hague commenting on it adds Livy (and Apollodorus - here Jones's commentator may well be stretching the point and imposing upon the poem his own interests and knowledge). But it is the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* together with the Roman reworking of much of Homer's material in the *Aeneid* which provides Jones with the foundational material for his poetry here. By holding together in the texture of the verse both the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad*, Jones is able to open up the idea of Troy being the ancestor of Rome, and, as the reader will later discover, of London. The classical material enables Jones to make the link between the ancient mythic world of the Mediterranean and the Celtic world for which the Welsh stand as representatives. It is an archetypal link, built on the symbols of Troy and Helen, archetypal city and archetypal woman. The continuation of the passage quoted above makes this clear: that Troy is the pattern for all cities,¹⁸ and Helen is the pattern for all women. Jones exploits the play on words made possible by using Greek between megaron and margaron, a palace and a pearl. Implicit in this reaching of allusion into the biblical world is that Mary is not far from his imagination. If the reader were still unsure about the reality of these archetypal references, and required further confirmation, then he or she may be convinced by the incorporation of another reference to Virgil's description of Priam's palace. He reminds us of the presence there of stone, water, and wood, three elements which, for Jones, are constitutive of all human sign-making. The reader may well be reminded of an earlier listing of them in the context of the Mass on the second page of the poem. In his note to the reference, Jones writes, '...he hands down three of the permanent symbols for us to make use of.'(p56n.2) We may argue that in the section under discussion Jones uses words, and more especially names, derived from

¹⁸*Ana* p.57

classical sources in order to open up a world of archetypes which will be drawn upon and developed throughout the rest of the poem. In this and other classical allusions direct quotation might be considered be a barrier to the reader, so it is upon names and implicit ideas that Jones rests his primary interest. Within the passage under discussion Jones adopts an epic exhortatory tone reminiscent of Greek tragedy, not a descriptive, narrative tone such as has preceded and will succeed it. In that sense the allusive matter on which he draws has affected the shape of the language of the poem, its tone underlining the importance of the archetypal material and culture-shaping myth which Jones has transformed into his own poetry. But not all archetypes derived from classical material are offered to the reader in such an overtly dramatic tone. Later in this first section of the poem, Jones introduces matter from the *Odyssey*;

How else Argos
the friend of Odysseus?
Or who should tend
the sores of lazars?
(For anthropos is not always kind.)
How Ranter or True, Ringwood
or the pseudo-Gelert?
How Spot, how Cerberus? (p.79)

Among recent commentators Dilworth may be singled out as having understood the archetypal significance of these faithful dogs, deriving as they do from Classical sources, the Lake District, Wales and even the tradition of the Punch and Judy show. Unfortunately we may suggest that he presses his point too far. 'Its implied contention that man's relationship to god should resemble that of a dog to its master might be unacceptable were it not for the correlative implication that god is dog-like in his unconditional devotion to man.'¹⁹ We should be content to say

¹⁹Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* , p.214

that in this list of dogs, it is faithfulness which is being evoked in all its aspects; and to push the matter too far is to risk tipping the balance and to risk destroying the precarious structure of meaning and language which Jones has created. These two examples do not exhaust the instances in *The Anathemata* where Jones has used classical and especially Homeric and Virgilian, allusions to engage with archetypal figures and narratives; elsewhere in this thesis it has been shown how Jones uses the idea of Hector's being dragged round Troy, in conjunction with the Suffering Servant material in Isaiah, to draw attention to and invite the reader to explore the archetype of the suffering hero.²⁰

But what of classical material from the Roman period? From what we know of David Jones he was fascinated by, if sometimes somewhat antipathetic to, Roman Imperialism; and these feelings are perhaps more clearly articulated in his final published collection of verse, *The Sleeping Lord* and the work-in-progress posthumously published as *The Roman Quarry*. Nevertheless, *The Anathemata* contains much that is derived from Roman history and poetry. The following quotation shows Jones articulating the positive aspects of Roman civilisation:

How long since first we began to contrive
 on the loose-grained tufas
 quarried about the place;
 incise, spaced and clear
 on the carried marbles
 impose on the emblems:
 SENATUS POPULUSQUE...?
 for all the world-nurseries
 to say: Roma knows great A.
 For the world-connoisseurs to cant their necks and to allow:
 Yes, great epigraphers, let's grant 'em one perfected
 aesthetic - and, of course, there's the portrait-busts. (p.89)

²⁰p.88 above

In this instance, both the meaning and the shape of the allusion as it appears typographically are linked together. Rome's main artistic achievement is in language, or rather the concrete articulation of that language in letter-cutting in stone. We can be sure that the stone cutting of Jones's friend Eric Gill, with its classical regularity and form is not far from Jones's mind here. Indeed we may note that there was during the thirties a considerable interest in Roman lettering, amongst the more notable exponents of which was the calligrapher Edward Johnston and also Leonard Evetts, author of *Roman Lettering*. The Latin words for the Roman state are placed in capitals across the page as in the inscriptions themselves. We have already seen how some recent commentators have argued that for Jones language has a quality of materiality. Here we can see one passage which has been adduced as evidence for that argument; and we may further argue that Rome's gift to the world of the Latin language, whether carved in stone or not, has an important influence on Jones's use of Latin throughout the poem. Each time he introduces Latin words into the text he is able to evoke Rome in both its Imperial and Ecclesiastical guises, even when, for instance, he is quoting from an historian speaking about Wales. Language is not a bearer of history; it has its own history and connotations which Jones is able to harness in his poem.

If in the section quoted above Jones uses language drawn from Roman allusions in order to convey the strength of Roman culture, he is also able to use it to express the more negative, totalitarian implications of the Roman state. We may look for instance at his account of the foundation of Rome herself, the rape of Rhea Silvia by Mars. Although it is too long to quote in full²¹, once again we have an example of Jones's creative use

²¹The Passage lies between pp.87-88

of language. From Roman myth and history Jones derives words, technical terms from Roman surveying, *decumanus*, *kardo*, *transversus*, all of which evoke the feeling of presence and particularity. But the vehicle for all of this is London cockney cant such as he will use in a later section for Elen Monica, the Lady of the Pool. Thus Latin and English are placed in juxtaposition: and the formality (Imperial formality) of one is contrasted with the cockney slang of another. But, almost ironically, this contrast works against the similarity of the craftsman's words. Also, in the placing here of two tones of language, the violence of Rome is evoked by the Latin and the cockney 'cant' altogether different, personal and not a little vulnerable.

Finally, and almost by way of an appendix (although for the theme of the poem it is of crucial importance) we should note the way in which Jones adopts the hermeneutic technique developed by many of the Patristic writers with regard to the myths of pagan antiquity. By this hermeneutic technique the classical myths were seen as containing 'types' of Christian salvation history. Within *The Anathemata*, Odysseus, bound to the mast of his ship becomes a Christ-type²² but more important is the passage from Virgil's *Eclogues IV* which from earliest Christian times was seen as foreshadowing Christ. Jones uses it twice, close together in the text, once as part of an inscription in which the other words are taken from the opening of the Gospel read at the Nativity mass and once in the text facing the inscription itself, where the context is the same although the execution is different:

Just where, in a goodish light, you can figure-out the ghost-
capitals of indelible eclogarii, rectilineal, dressed by the left,
like veterani of the Second, come again to show us how,

²²cf. Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, (London: Burns and Oates, 1963)

from far side shadowy Acheron and read
IAM REDIT. . VIRGO
.... IAM REGNAT APOLLO. (p219)

Hague describes this passage as Jones articulating the passage from 'myth to mystery'.²³ Jones quotes in the *Angle-Land*²⁴ the same passage from the *Eclogues* that we have just been discussing, in a section which, Dilworth argues, Jones is not only displaying an example of the Christian Church using Virgil as a prophecy for Christ, but in which it is also conflated with another prophecy, that of the promise of Arthurian return.²⁵

The Matter of Britain

If classical fragments incorporated into the poem gave Jones the opportunity to explore linguistically the determining and archetypal characters and narratives of Western culture, the incorporation of material derived from the Arthurian legends grounds that archetypal material specifically in the British Isles and develops it accordingly. As Blamires has written, the Arthurian legends are '...not there to provide a mere literary background or pseudo-medieval flavour, but because it is a way of stating his conviction of the essential unity of the Island of Britain.'²⁶ A coloured diagram entitled 'A Genealogy of Myth' published after Jones's death as the frontispiece to *The Roman Quarry*,²⁷ bears this out but reminds us that Jones realised that the Arthurian legends

²³Hague, *Commentary* p230

²⁴p.112.

²⁵Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* p.185

²⁶David Blamires, *David Jones: Artist and Writer*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1971), p192

²⁷David Jones, Harman Grisewood & René Hague (eds.) *The Roman Quarry* (London: Agenda Editions, 1981) frontispiece.

contained connotations for the whole of European politics and culture and were certainly not exclusively British, whatever their roots. However, if we examine Jones's essay entitled *The Myth of Arthur* , published ten years before *The Anathemata* , we may be able to suggest that even this is not the whole story:

The mythological deposits [of Arthurian legend] seem to say to us: God is wonderful in his masters of illusion, in the transmogrifications, in the heroes who sustain the folk and the land.

The historical fragments perhaps say to us: God is wonderful in the Dux and in his mobile tactic, in the defence of the province.²⁸

For here we see, albeit implicitly, by an adaptation of the ejaculatory cry of St.Brendan, the implication that 'the matter of Britain' has resonances which go beyond the political and the cultural and which refer ultimately to the transcendent. It is important to grasp this firmly because Jones uses Arthurian material, derived primarily from Malory, Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of *The Mabinogion* and the history writing of Geoffrey of Monmouth, differently in *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* . Briefly, following Blamires, we may suggest that in the former allusions to Malory are used to explore the universal experience of the soldier. Of *The Anathemata* , Blamires suggests that:

...its Arthurian allusions deal more with the those aspects of the matter of Britain which border on the the realms of the supernatural and the numinous....*The Anathemata* deals more in moods and figures of a universal character than in events, and its mysterious relationships backwards and forwards through time and place are perhaps best captured in the Fool's words from *King Lear* (III,2), which serve as an epigraph to the whole book: 'This prophetic Merlin shall make for I live before his time.'²⁹

²⁸ 'The Myth of Arthur' in David Jones, ed. Harman Grisewood, *Epoch and Artist* , (London: Faber and Faber, 1958) p.258

²⁹Blamires p.191

So, when examining, from the point of view of language the use that Jones makes of allusions drawn from the Arthurian tradition, we would expect to discover how Jones achieves the evocation both of the supernatural and at the same time something which might be described as quintessential Britishness.

When, at the outset of the poem we are told that 'The cult-man stands alone in Pellam's land,'(p.50) immediately the poet refers us to Malory for the explanation that Pellam is King of the Waste Land, an image which Jones uses to evoke the emptiness of the present cultural situation, no doubt with more than a sideways glance at Eliot and Jessie L. Weston. Equally important for the sort of language that the poet will use is that, having used language from the Arthurian deposits to describe the present state of 'man without God', Jones uses titles derived from the Grail legend to describe Christ. Blamires points out especially 'Freer of the waters'(p.207) and later 'Chief physician' (p.208), both applied to Peredur, a character in *The Mabinogion* . That this is not a fanciful reading of the text may easily be demonstrated by quoting a passage where the infant Christ is compared to Peredur together with a part of Jones's own note on the passage:

Her Peredur

vagrant-born, earth-fostered
acquainted with the uninhabited sites.

His woodland play is done, he has seen the
questing *milites* , he would be a *miles* too.

Suitor, margaron-gainer.

The allusions are to the opening episode, concerning the hero and his mother in the Welsh story of *Peredur son of Efrawg* , called Peredur the Chief Physician...He goes on his quest, frees and restores the Wasteland: the streams flow again, marriages are consummated and the earth fructifies. (p.225 & n.2)

From the character of Peredur evolves the characters of Galahad and more particularly Percival, who in the later Anglo-French versions of the Grail epic such as is exemplified by Malory, is the perfect knight who achieves the goal of the grail-quest in 'Sarras city' which is where Christ is crucified³⁰ As Blamires points out, the analogy need not be pressed too far.³¹ The theme of the Waste Land will be more exhaustively examined in a later chapter.

But what of other deployments of allusive material from the Arthurian deposits? We have seen how they provided a store of metaphors and a reflexive narrative context from which Jones could maintain the oblique depiction of Christ. The same obliqueness is maintained in the section entitled 'Mabinog's Liturgy' where the clothes which the central character wears evoke not just Britain but also the external cultural forces which have made it what it is; in a sense they reflect the forces which have come together to make the later versions of the Arthurian epic. However, the central feature of this section is the depiction of the Midnight Mass of the Nativity celebrated in the presence of Arthur's wife:

...standing within the screen (for she was the wife
of the Bear of the Island) and toward the lighted board; in
cloth of Grass of Troy and spun Iberian asbestos, and under
these ornate wefts the fine-abb'd Eblana flax, maid-worked
(as bleached as will be her cere-cloth of thirty-fold when
they shall intone for her...*pro anima famulae tuae*) and
under again the defeasible and defected image of him who
alone imagined and ornated us, made fast of flesh her favours,
braced bright, sternal and vertibral, to the graced bones
bound.(pp.195-196)

³⁰For more detail cf. Glenys Goetinck, *Peredur: A Study of Welsh Tradition in the Grail Legend*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1975)

³¹Blamires p.191

The poetry, printed as prose, has an ethereal quality which is maintained throughout the section. Jones manages to convey a sense of palpable holiness with language which proceeds slowly. The allusions to the Arthurian legend which he footnotes point the reader to the account of Guenevere's funeral in *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Blamires suggests that this latter is 'one of Malory's most poignant episodes'³² This may be true, but Jones's round-about reference both to the shroud and to the Mass of 'woman deceased' enables him to draw an archetypal parallel between Guenevere and Mary. Arthur, who in later poems by Jones³³ will become a type for Christ, is paralleled by Gwenhwyfar who is a similar type for Mary. The reader must also remember how Jones depicts the mystic marriage between Christ and Mary in the final section of the poem. 'He that was her son/is now her lover.'(p.224) In the section under discussion, however, this implicit theological reality is wrapped in a dense texture of words which alliterate and convey a sense of strangeness and mystery.

The Medieval World

If the allusions to the Arthurian corpus are not meant to evoke a pseudo-mediaevalism, then what is the reader to make of the many occasions when Jones quotes directly from works of Anglo-Saxon and Medieval literature? What use does he make of *The Dream of the Rood* and other Anglo-Saxon material, and the poetry of, among others, Chaucer, Langland and Dunbar?

In a letter to Harman Grisewood, Jones writes about *The Dream of the Rood* :

³²Blamires p.190

³³cf especially 'The Hunt' in *The Sleeping Lord*

...It, glorious, and so is it all, when the Cross speaks about the *weight* of the hero and how the hero and the wood were bound together. It is a loss to the world that this great northern conception of the crucifixion has never *really* been expressed in plastic art - ...³⁴

When trying to unravel what sort of influence the Anglo-Saxon poem had on the language of *The Anathemata* it is necessary to look first to a painted inscription which is used as an illustration facing page 240. In Helen Gardner's translation, the text reads:

Then the young Hero - it was God Almighty -
Strong and steadfast, stripped himself for battle;
He climbed up on the high gallows, constant in his purpose,
Mounted it in sight of many, mankind to ransom.³⁵

In his discussion of *The Dream of the Rood* J.A.W. Bennett points out that in the poem we have depicted a tree which while reflecting and sharing the sufferings of its human burden speaks as a part of the cosmos. He further argues that the poem has a riddle-like quality, a tone of enigma, which, in the context of David Jones we might prefer to interpret as 'openness'. We may also note that Bennett suggests that for the unknown author of *The Dream of the Rood*, the Passion of Christ was not a tragedy but was the fulfillment of a divine purpose.³⁶

We may argue that from *The Dream of the Rood*, Jones was able to draw a language for writing about the passion which was sanctioned by its antiquity but which was radically different from more mainstream, or perhaps, more fashionable, interpretations and articulations. The language of Christ as hero or of the beam of the cross being glorious or jewelled is not unknown in the Latin West but it is unusual and confined

³⁴DGC p.122

³⁵ Helen Gardner ed., *The Faber Book of Religious Verse*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1972)p.26

³⁶J.A.W. Bennett *Poetry of the Passion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1982) cf. Ch.I. "A Vision of a Rood"

to the earlier period of Christian history. Jones uses it with facility and creativity, primarily perhaps because it opened up the Passion myth to resonate with other, more ancient mythologies of hero-redeemer, or saving wood. *The Dream of the Rood* gave Jones a small but interesting vocabulary with which to explore the central ideas of Cross and Mass, a vocabulary which is above all notable for its visual impact. Hague³⁷ notices the covert allusion to *The Dream* that we can detect in the section:

the hydromel
that moistens the mortised *arbor*
dry-stiped, *infelix*
trophy-fronded
effluxed *et*

But we may draw attention to the way in which Jones moves his allusive stress to include a reference to the Good Friday hymn *Vexilla Regis*, a poem which has a more orthodox Christology but which also, as Jones points out in his note on the passage, focusses on the role of the tree of the cross although in a more triumphalistic way than that to be found in *The Dream of the Rood*. A mixture of these styles of theological stances appears in allusions which may also be found implicitly in the passage from 'The Lady of the Pool' describing the Passion which has already been discussed at length early in this thesis.

If *The Dream of the Rood* bequeathed to Jones the concepts of the central role of the actual wood of the cross in the process of salvation and the idea of Christ and hero, it was Langland and *Piers Plowman* which gave Jones added impetus and depth to the latter concept. In a letter to Harman Grisewood commenting on a radio broadcast of the poem he wrote: 'it is lovely to hear the sounds as they were intended - it's a glorious poem and no mistake.'³⁸ Jones believed it to be a if not the quintessentially British

³⁷Commentary p.257

³⁸DGC p.172

poem. This being the case, one would expect to find him making rather more overt use of it than he does. Where he does quote from it, it is to develop the idea of Christ as a knight, clothed with humanity, 'In his helm and in his haubergeon - *humana natura* '³⁹ which becomes '...with his war-soiled harness tightened on his back' (p.207), or, a few pages later, 'He would put on his *man's* lorica.' (p.226) Despite the paucity of direct references, it is possible that Langland's poem has a hidden yet seminal influence on *The Anathemata* . It could be argued that the breadth of Jones's vision is derived ultimately from that of Langland and, more important in the present context, from Langland's language, the tonal variety and imaginative landscape. In the introduction to his edition of *The Vision of Piers Plowman* , A.V.C. Schmidt isolates four distinctive elements of Langland's poetic art: the use of Latin words and phrases as part of his English verse, the use of delicate rhythm, the employment of wordplay and the use of expanded metaphor and thematic imagery.⁴⁰ We may argue that in *The Anathemata* all of these features may be said to recur. Jones follows Langland in 'enriching'⁴¹ his English poetry with the precision, rhythm and authority derived from Latin words (and indeed in Jones's case from other languages as well). Similarly we may argue that Jones has learned much from Langland's mastery of alliteration, for example in this example from Angle-Land; although the stress is different and perhaps more *modern*, there are similarities: 'Far drawn on away/from the island's field-floor, upwards of a hundred fathoms'(p.114). If we turn to Langland's wordplay, we see him developing complex structures of resonance of which Schmidt notes: 'The intellectual excitement of Langland's poetry owes much to our sense that he is

³⁹Passus XVIII

⁴⁰William Langland, ed.A.V.C. Schmidt,*The Vision of Piers Plowman : A Complete Edition of the B-Text* , (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1978) p.xxx

⁴¹Langland p.xxi

exploring experience through language. Exploration leads to discovery.⁴² Once more, we may be tempted to say the same of *The Anathemata*, as also we may of the way in which Langland develops complex extended images built through the accumulation of linguistic surfaces extending the shape and properties of meaning. Once more, we may say much the same of Langland's fellow poet also concerned with the depiction of London, David Jones.

Before turning to the question of the influence of Chaucer, we must consider the use that Jones makes of the poems by or attributed to the fifteenth-century Scottish poet William Dunbar. That Dunbar is of the greatest importance may become clear when we compare Dunbar's 'Lament for the Makaris', (described by Kinsley as 'One of the great elegiac expressions of a melancholy age, in which the universal and the personal are poignantly fused'⁴³) and Jones's own 'A, a, a Domine Deus', published in *The Sleeping Lord*. Both have a similarly pessimistic view of life if not necessarily of the artist's endeavour. But when we look to the text of *The Anathemata* for signs of Dunbar immediately, one may turn to a passage at the beginning of 'Keel, Ram, Stauros':

Did he walk the water-lanes of the city from east of Bridge
Within, by Dowgate and Vintry to Faringdon Without.
Walking the nine river-fronting divisions of the city
of cities all, *per se*
and flower of towns. (p.170)

The author's own note makes the source of his allusion clear, for he not only names but also quotes the poem which at that time was ascribed to Dunbar upon which he is basing his own lines. The allusion comes

⁴²Langland p.xxxiii

⁴³William Dunbar, ed. James Kinsley, *The Poems of William Dunbar*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) p.352

almost as a hinge between the narrative speculation about the the walk around London which the sea-captain might have made, and the lengthy quotation from the nursery-rhyme 'Oranges and lemons' which, we will see, may in some respects be interpreted as a commentary on the whole of the journey motif within the poem. Suffice it to say here, that the poet is employing three different but complementary strategies in order to evoke London, and more specifically the London of the late middle ages to which Dunbar, in particular, refers in his poem. This we may compare to 'The Lady of the Pool' where Jones footnotes a reference to the same poem about London and in his own poetry compresses and yet develops the ideas in Dunbar's. Jones writes, 'In each blithe *aedes* /as gables a bell-rope,' and quotes Dunbar, 'Blith be thy chirches, wele sownyng be thy bellis' (p.162 &n.6). In this case Dunbar's reference to the bells of London resonates with the way that Jones will use the nursery-rhyme recounting the sound of those bells to evoke London .And finally we may look to an earlier allusion to the same Dunbar poem about London at the beginning of the 'Lady of the Pool' section where 'clere be thy virgins, lusty under kellis' becomes 'clere and lusty under kell' (p.124 &n.2) In this case it would seem that it is the words which proved most attractive to Jones.

Can we say more if we look to other occasions where Dunbar's poetry emerges through the texture of Jones's? For instance in a passage meditating on the Incarnational aspects of the passage and the role of Mary in both, Jones writes 'he of all the schouris balm/and every dew/continually', (p.235) the inclusion of the second lines of the poem by Dunbar, which is also about the Incarnation,⁴⁴ begins *Rorate coeli desuper* .. Not only has Jones quoted significant words, from the liturgical Advent Prose, but, he has also maintained the strategy which Dunbar has deployed of incorporating these liturgical references into this closely-

woven mass of words. Dunbar chooses words for the sequences for Masses of the Incarnation and Nativity. Jones chooses to develop in a another way, extending the meaning outwards away from the centre by shifting his and the reader's attention to the Benedicite in another quotation from Dunbar's Incarnational poem, which Jones uses in the middle of his own account of the Nativity.⁴⁴

Finally, it is necessary to turn our attention to Chaucer and to the use that Jones makes of his poetry. In doing so, we should examine this material from two perspectives. First, the occasions where Jones quotes from or alludes directly to Chaucer. These occur almost entirely within 'The Lady of the Pool' section, which, as we shall see, is itself significant. We have already seen how Jones brings the Susanna episode from the book of Daniel in the Apocrypha into the poem and conflates it with a reference to Odysseus, bound to the mast against the sirens.⁴⁵ The passage continues as follows:

... clear gilt-tressed
 enough to hang a dozen Absolons
 and Lorks-a-mercy! (pp.142-143)

We should notice here the allusion to the *Balade* from *The Legend of Good Women*, to which Jones refers the reader in his annotations. On a later page, as one authority has pointed out,⁴⁶ Elen Monica's ejaculation, 'sweet Loy!' (p.146) seems to have something of 'The Prioress's Tale' about it. (St. Eloi or Eligius (c.588-660) is the patron saint of goldsmiths and metalworkers. 'He is a good example of a genuine saint of antiquity whose cult attained its widest popular diffusion in the later Middle Ages.'⁴⁷)

⁴⁴Ana p.215

⁴⁵Ana p.142

⁴⁶cf. Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* p.250

⁴⁷David H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978) p.130

Jones manages simultaneously to incorporate comparative references to both faithful and unfaithful women and two typological articulations of mythic saviours by the judicious choice of areas of allusion. It may also be suggested that the Shipman's tale is a possible influence which has been overlooked by most commentators. Finally Dilworth has noticed that in his personal copy of *The Anathemata*, Jones has annotated the line 'Wot a tiger! His beard full of gale.' (p.137) and refers himself to The Prologue: 'With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake (406)'⁴⁸ We may notice in all of these examples the way in which Jones has transformed his sources to conform them to the fictionalised cockney dialect within which he constructs 'The Lady of the Pool'.

If one moves on to a later passage in Jones's poem we may see him adopting the strategy, with which we are already familiar, of simultaneously compressing and expanding the original text but managing to retain a great measure of verbal similarity in his own poem:

Or else
the clerk of Bridgewater come lately from fishing in Tiber-
water, that sang to me *Come Hither Love* in I-talian-cum-
Somerset, told to me false annals! (p.156)

Set this against the quotation from Chaucer's *Prologue* which Jones quotes in his footnote, 'That streyt was comen from the court of Rome/Ful lowde he sang Com hider love to me'. (p.156 n.2) The reader will notice the closeness of verbal quotation and also how Rome is retained but as 'fishing in the Tiber', an interesting and creative circumlocution. Finally, when discussing individual instances of Jones drawing upon Chaucer, it is necessary to note 'about the virid month of

⁴⁸cf. Thomas Dilworth, "David Jones' Glosses on *The Anathemata*" *Studies in Bibliography*, 33 (1980): 239-253

Averil/that the poet will call cruel'. (p.157) Here Jones manages in the course of one sentence to allude to the beginning of Chaucer's *Prologue*, a Medieval English poem, which he footnotes, and at the same time pay homage to Eliot's own allusion to Chaucer at the beginning of *The Waste Land*.

When looking at these individual instances where Jones draws upon Chaucer for *The Anathemata*, the reader should bear in mind that his strategies in this regard are not in themselves particularly different from those that we have seen him adopting with reference to other sources. But there is a second type of allusion to Chaucer which is of greater importance to the linguistic fabric of the poem, or at least of certain sections within it, yet is harder to isolate and therefore to submit to critical analysis. That is, that the entire digressive and monologic shape of 'The Lady of the Pool' seems to owe a great deal to Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*. There is a tonal, if not a verbal similarity, as if Jones was entertaining his readers with a verbal creation which, although Chaucerian in conception always escapes pastiche. René Hague's comment is perceptive and worth quoting:

To a reader of Chaucer, the spirit of his writing and, in particular, the emphasis he and his characters so often lay on all that is associated with the Cross of Calvary, are so akin to D's [David's] own, and entail so marked a similarity of metaphor and image, that the date of Chaucer's death (1400?) is an appropriate central point for what he calls (*ibid*) [in a letter to Desmond Chute] 'the interpenetration backwards and forward and up and down' of the many facts and fancies that are transmitted by the lavender seller.⁴⁹

Hague manages with economy to convey something of the Chaucerian feel that Jones evokes in the creation of Elen Monica. But that she is not

⁴⁹ Hague, *Commentary*, pp.155-156

exhaustively Chaucerian and owes in her execution to a some significant nineteenth-and twentieth-century sources, will be demonstrated elsewhere in this thesis when we consider the use that he makes of Browning and Joyce.

Shakespeare and Milton

The penultimate section describing the influences upon the language of *The Anathemata* will deal with the use that Jones makes of authors from Shakespeare through to Milton. There is obviously an element of arbitrariness in such a grouping, but it is contended that any discussion of the elements of David Jones's linguistic influences would be only partial if Shakespeare and Milton were to be omitted. Although it is impossible to argue that *The Anathemata* is in effect a radical reworking of one of Shakespeare's plays, as has been suggested about *Henry V* and *In Parenthesis*,⁵⁰ there is ample evidence that Jones drew frequently upon the plays of Shakespeare. This is by way of a corrective to the opinion of Holloway⁵¹ who argues that Shakespeare is but one of many quintessentially 'British' deposits which do not appear adequately represented in the poem.

Neil Corcoran points out how Jones uses the line from *King Lear*, 'This prophecy Merlin shall make for I live before his time',⁵² both as an epigraph for the whole work, both poem *and* preface, and also within the 'Lady of the Pool' section of the poem.

Don't eye *me* , captain

⁵⁰John Barnard, 'The Murder of Falstaff, David Jones and the "Disciplines of War"', in René Wellek and Alvaro Ribeiro eds., *Evidence in Literary Scholarship: Essays in Memory of James Marshall Osborn*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979) pp.13-27

⁵¹Holloway in *Colours of Clarity* p.120

⁵²*King Lear* III.ii: 95-96

don't eye *me* , 'tis but a try-out and very much betimes;
For we live before her time.⁵³

Corcoran, following Hague,⁵⁴ argues that ,Monica is deliberately removing herself from the processes of ordinary human time to place herself 'in the order of signs', in the timelessness, or the eternal co-present, of myth.⁵⁵ This is certainly an acceptable interpretation, but for our purposes what is interesting is the way in which the meaning turns on the variation of the quotation from Shakespeare to include the feminine and thence draw into its network of allusion the Marian principle which informs so much of the poem.

Elsewhere in 'The Lady of the Pool', Dilworth has noticed that the displacement of time continues in connection with the use that Jones makes of Shakespearean allusions. However, he interprets this as deliberate anachronism insomuch as much as it is a seer-like prediction.⁵⁶ We may argue, rather, that in common with much of the allusive texture of *The Anathemata* , the inclusion of material from Shakespeare acts in two ways, to 'anchor' the reader's perceptions in the familiar while remaining in the middle of a poetic strategy which serves often to complicate. For example, once again returning to 'The Lady of the Pool', where Elen Monica is recounting the voyage through the storm of the ship *Mary* , which is a type both for Mary, the Mother of Christ and, as with other ships in the poem, is linked through the medium of wood and similarity of masts and riggings to trees, to the crucifixion itself. The storm already draws heavily upon *Macbeth* for its language:⁵⁷

⁵³*Ana* p.146

⁵⁴Hague, *Commentary* , pp.86-87 cf. especially that Hague extends the chain of allusion even further to include Chaucer.

⁵⁵ Corcoran, *The Song of Deeds* , p.62

⁵⁶Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* , p.216

⁵⁷cf. Hague *Commentary* p. 147

Captain, storm or hurricane, cap-tin?
you should know!

For certain this Barque
was Tempest-tost.

Shining exhalations
as appeared 'bout bate-time of storm-height.

FIVE on 'em
terrible lovely

starring the wide steer-board
and lade-board arms of the main yard, aflare far out-board of
her forward flare, at the spumed bowsprit's lifted end, real
lofty beautiful at the mizzen-mast head... (p.141)

Into the middle of a piece of poetry which is notable even in the context of *The Anathemata* for its difficulty Jones inserts the recognisable reference to *The Tempest* and to its own storm scene. It is after this insertion of familiar material that Jones moves into more dense and figuratively difficult poetry in which the wood of the Cross is evoked by the wooden masts and spars of the ship. The familiar allusion prepared the way for the unfamiliar. In addition, it might be argued that in quoting from Shakespeare, Jones makes connections with a poetic mind that is, like his own, multi-layered and wide-ranging, thus is validating and extending his own linguistic and conceptual vision. It will be necessary to return to these suggestions later.

Turning to Milton, it is evident that Jones had personally a rather ambivalent relationship with the puritan poet. It is known from those scraps of biographical material about his early life which have been compiled, that his father would read *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* every Christmas morning⁵⁸. We also can surmise that Milton's thought resonated well within the Evangelical family setting which was the Jones household. Yet throughout the published correspondence and

⁵⁸cf for instance DGC p.24

other fragments of biography, Jones is disparaging about Milton's implicit theology:

As for that blasted Milton's *Paradise Lost*, his passage of how the pair in the Garden, when realising their criminal state, immediately sought consolation in sexual embraces, well that's the bloody limit and a most outrageous perversion of Xtian doctrine and of the conjugal condition as well. But we need not take heed of him, for his theology was not Xtian at all, but unfortunately not a few of those *orthodoxis atque catholicae et apostolicae fidei cultoribus* from the 'early Church' onwards have been and are infected with this Miltonic stuff.⁵⁹

It is hardly surprising to find Jones showing a healthy disrespect for Milton's thought; it may convincingly be argued that this particular 'strong poet'⁶⁰ reminded the Catholic convert Jones rather too much of his Protestant roots. Yet throughout *The Anathemata*, Jones chooses to quote from Milton, frequently with the sort of verbal similarity and yet difference which, as we have seen, is one of the hallmarks of Jones's use of allusion:

But when they come to Anastasia
 and fetching Hemera early from her bed
 (for she to welcome him must surely gaud with her dawn-
 blush red the wither of the year, nor do less in awe of him
 than do poor Hobs with aid-fires)

And the note appended to this passage

'Nature in awe to him
Had doff't her gawdy trim
With her great Master so to sympathize'. (pp.220-221 n.1.)

59DGC p.235

⁶⁰cf. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973)

Jones adjusts, indeed Hague suggests that he reverses, the images of Milton's language⁶¹ to his own purposes while maintaining the Incarnational context. Hague points out another reference to this poem in the concluding lines of *The Anathemata* when Jones writes: '(Nor bid Anubis haste, but rather stay:/for he was whelped but to discern a lord's body)', (p243) quoting Milton's 'The brutish gods of Nile as fast,/Isis, and Orus and the dog Anubis, haste.'⁶² But, as Hague has himself noticed,⁶³ Jones is not just inverting and varying the words, he has turned the sense of Milton's poem back upon itself. And this is the way that Jones approaches most of his allusions to Milton.

Romanticism and Modernism

In the final section on the allusive influences on *The Anathemata*, it is necessary to consider the influence upon the poem of writers from the late eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, among them principally Coleridge, Browning, Joyce and Eliot.

Beginning with the end of eighteenth century it is necessary to examine the use that Jones makes of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It may easily be demonstrated that it had a major influence upon him; indeed one may refer the reader for further details to Jones's introduction to Coleridge's poem reprinted in *The Dying Gaul*, and discussed at much greater length in the thematic chapter of this thesis. In a letter to Desmond Chute, Jones writes, 'The *An. Mariner* is one of the clues to *Ana*.'⁶⁴ But what sort of a clue is it? Certainly not to overall structure, nor, by the same token particularly to content, although it may be argued it

⁶¹Hague Commentary p.231

⁶² Milton, *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* 211-212

⁶³Hague Commentary p.260

⁶⁴ *IN*, p.62

contributes to both. Both Corcoran and, in a more detailed way, Dilworth, have made suggestions which may help. Corcoran draws on Jones's published introduction to the *Rime*, in which Jones argues that Coleridge's, '...allusions are themselves elusively presented, for its imagery has a metamorphic quality'.⁶⁵ We have seen already how Jones introduces allusions tangentially into his poetic structure. We have also seen how they are introduced as part of a strategy of transformation akin to metamorphosis. Jones does not merely quote; allusion is introduced as a means of moving from one image to another. This may be demonstrated by examining just one of the instances where Coleridge's poem is introduced into *The Anathemata*:

her cordage!!

how does it stand
to stay?
how does it run
to brace or lift or hale?
can the wraith of a laniard extend the ghost of a shroud? (p.138)⁶⁶

Which we may set against Coleridge's own

The planks looked warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;⁶⁷

⁶⁵*The Dying Gaul* p.190

⁶⁶This passage is also cited, together with the quotation from the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, in Dilworth, who also points out the strong verbal correspondence between *The Anathemata* and Jones's own description of the Mariner's ship in *Dying Gaul* p.194. The matter however of the intermediate states of the poem's composition is outside of the scope of this thesis. *The Shape of Meaning*, p.243

⁶⁷Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 529-534

Jones uses Coleridge's original impressionistically and conflates it with nursery rhymes and a liturgical rhythm and typography. Coleridge's ship has taken its place among the other ships in Jones's poem and his 'mariner' among the sailors.

Dilworth examines the various allusions to the *Rime* within the voyage sections of *The Anathemata* and argues that the deployment of these allusions throughout the various voyages ensures a typological continuity between the mythic and the Christian voyage schemes which co-exist within the poem. They are all part of the same voyage. Dilworth suggests that: 'The motif supplies an archetypal breadth which unifies the poem's voyages without reducing them to Christian allegory.'⁶⁸ But perhaps we might add that Jones seems to focus his attention on the mariner because Coleridge's hapless sailor symbolises the journey into what is physically or geographically unknown and also into the spiritual and psychological depths.⁶⁹

If one turns from Coleridge to Robert Browning, one will discover even fewer overt references and quotations within the text of *The Anathemata* than there are to Coleridge, but the overall influence of Jones's Victorian forebear is great. The most important Browning poem within *The Anathemata* is *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, a poem which, there is ample evidence to suggest, was one of Jones's favourites,⁷⁰ and which he introduces in the opening lines of the poem:

between the sterile ornaments

⁶⁸Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning*, p.245

⁶⁹cf. the discussion of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and other poems and novels in the last chapter of Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934.) pp.271-330

⁷⁰cf. for instance Hague's notes on Jones's correspondence in DGC p.41 and Jones's own 'Skelton and parts of Browning have, I now for certain, been quite formative of my stuff.' p.163

under the pasteboard baldachins
as, in the young-time, in the sap-years:
 between the living floriations
under the leaping arches. (p.49)

This may be compared with Browning's own text as quoted in Hague's
Commentary..:

It's different, preaching in basilicas,
And doing duty in some masterpiece
Like this of Brother Pugin's, bless his heart!
I doubt if they're half-baked, those chalk rosettes,
Ciphers and stucco-twiddlings everywhere.⁷¹

Jones's context reverses the sense of the Browning quotation. And we might suggest that *The Anathemata* is quite different in tone and feeling from the sophisticated casuistry of Browning's bishop. Its main verbal influence is in the vocabulary of architectural ornament, which Jones disparages and of which Browning's Bishop approves. There is similarity of feeling here despite objective verbal dissimilarity, a technique of allusion which Jones finds conducive to his poetic style. The reader is able to sense the feeling of the original and may even be mistaken in believing that he or she is reading a genuine quotation but in this particular strategy allusion is a periphrastic affair.

Browning's principal influence on Jones is both linguistic and strategic. From his dramatic monologues Jones derived the freedom to introduce the speech of distinct characters into his own poetry. In his book on Browning, Philip Drew⁷² argues that the dramatic monologue involves a process of writing in which an overt and strong authorial presence is displaced or replaced by a fictionalised character, which, in its turn evokes

⁷¹quoted in Hague *Commentary* p.16

⁷²Philip Drew, *The Poetry of Browning: A Critical Introduction*, (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1970)cf. especially, Ch.2 'How to read a Dramatic Monologue'

a complex reaction on the part of the reader. Browning is different from other nineteenth-century poets in the way in which he develops the impersonal quality of poetry which we have discussed earlier with reference to Eliot. In the case of David Jones, his deployment of the techniques of dramatic monologue derived from Browning, reaches particular heights in *The Sleeping Lord* sequence which, as Dilworth has shown, demonstrates a direct stylistic and formal similarity to *Cleon* and *Karshish* of Browning.⁷³ The results in *The Anathemata* ; Elen Monica, Eb. Bradshaw and the witches from 'Mabinog's Liturgy', show how liberating this influence was on Jones's poetry. These monologues have a freshness and vitality together with a certain quality of obliqueness and sometimes irony and frequently to use a word that we have used much of Jones's poetry, defamiliarization, which lifts the whole tone of the poem and which owes much to Browning's example.

Another Victorian influence on the language of Jones's poetry is Hopkins, who is alluded to directly in the final lines of *The Anathemata* as we have already seen in our discussion of the use that Jones makes of the Gospels as a source for his poem. As with Browning it is the feeling for language itself that Jones receives from his reading of Hopkins rather than the benefit of direct allusion, although this does occur. Dilworth argues; 'Probably more than any other poet Hopkins influences Jones's own definition of poetry.'⁷⁴ Certainly Jones appropriates many stylistic devices⁷⁵ usually regarded as distinctive of Hopkins' verse although he does not fall into the trap of either direct or accidental pastiche if indeed that were possible. Hopkins' concepts of inscape and instress, the reality of

⁷³Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* , p32

⁷⁴Dilworth *The Shape of Meaning* p.26

⁷⁵Dilworth suggests ellipses, asyntactical formations, epithets and unorthodox compounds p.26

the shape of things,, informs Jones as he strives for scrupulous accuracy and the evocation of the particular. Like Hopkins, Jones does at times write sparingly, wasting few words. Equally at other times Jones shares with his predecessor the delight in dialect words and in the deployment of both the question mark and the exclamation mark. We may argue that, quite apart from the stylistic devices 'borrowed' by Jones, Hopkins bequeaths some other highly significant attitudes which have also born fruit in *The Anathemata* . Not the least of these is the use of the imagination which both poets have freed in remarkable and unique ways. To this we must also add that Hopkins and Jones share a mutual interest in Wales, its language, poetic forms, landscapes and society.⁷⁶

The mention of Hopkins, whose work was not published until this century, leads us on conveniently to the last two major influences on Jones in *The Anathemata* , T.S. Eliot and James Joyce. We have already seen how Jones weaves an allusion to *The Waste Land* together with one to Chaucer in 'The Lady of the Pool.'⁷⁷ It has been suggested that Eliot is probably the greatest literary influence on David Jones.⁷⁸ Certainly the influence of him and more particularly of *The Waste Land* and his translation of St.John Perse's *Anabasis* upon Jones is seminal. From Eliot, it may be argued, Jones derived a fundamental sense of the poet as 'rememberer' which he develops into his own conception of the making of works of art and poetry in terms of *anamnesis* ⁷⁹ But, as Kathleen Henderson Staudt points out, there there are many significant differences between the two poets, notably in that in both *The Waste Land* and *Four Quartets* Eliot focusses on the individual, whereas Jones throughout his

⁷⁶cf. J.R. Watson, *The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins* , (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987.)

⁷⁷cf. Chapter 3

⁷⁸Dilworth p.29

⁷⁹cf Corcoran p.12

work directs his concerns towards the articulation of the corporate experience⁸⁰ and that in fact the difference between them can be summed up by two possible connotations of the word memorial: for Eliot it evokes memorial, for Jones anamnesis. The difference is significant especially with regard to their understanding of both history and myth. In the preceding pages, we have seen many examples of poets who may or may not be sources for certain deployments of style and figure within *The Anathemata*, but it is from Eliot that Jones learned how to construct a long *modern* poem replete with inner contradictions and surface fragmentation. Eliot, having learned from French symbolism much about the possibilities of relaxing traditional poetic forms and metres, concentrates on the creation of an 'auditory image'. That is to say, poetry, often written in spare style with short sentences, proceeding by a succession of effects which crystalise around key words and images; in effect, even if meaning has not entirely deferred to technique, the artifice of the poet made plain by the strong sense of the surface of the poetry remains in the foreground of the reader's mind. It is difficult, sometimes fragmentary poetry which depends frequently on overt allusion to and quotations from other writers thus extending the way in which the poet evokes association on a number of different levels. As A.C. Partridge writes: 'The concentrated yet enigmatic language produces an effect that is partly unconscious, because it is deliberately emotive. The symbolist technique does not arouse any expectation of logical pattern.'⁸¹ That all of these elements of Eliot's style and theoretical base are incorporated by Jones into his own poetry will by now be obvious but we should also suggest that Jones derives much of his facility in manipulating archetypal

⁸⁰cf. Kathleen Henderson Staudt, "The Language of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and David Jones's *The Anathemata*", *Renascence* 1866 (Winter) Vol 38 Pt. 2. pp.118-130

⁸¹A.C. Partridge, *The Language of Modern Poetry*, (London: André Deutsch, 1976) p.256

figures and myths from Eliot. Jones's use of material drawn from the study of anthropology and the Grail Legend together with his own exploration of the archetype of the City draw on the previous explorations of Eliot in a deep-seated and remarkable way.

In looking especially at Eliot's influence on the linguistic, rather than the formal and structural, style of *The Anathemata*, we may see the transparency of many layers of language interacting one with another. The verbal precision of particular words evoking reality is linked with the use of footnotes to open up 'unshared backgrounds' (although in fact Jones's footnotes are rather more illuminating than Eliot's). And, probably most important of all, there is a narrative tone distanced from the authorial voice which has enough self-confidence to leave open the juxtaposition of verbal forms.

Finally, it is necessary to turn to the influence of James Joyce and, in connection with *The Anathemata*, especially to the 'Anna Livia Plurabelle' section of *Finnegan's Wake*. In Joyce's work taken as a whole Jones finds a 'total oneness of form and content'.⁸² If we wish to discover the influence of Joyce on *The Anathemata* we will find it in the catalogues of lists and names, in the dramatic monologue of Elen Monica and perhaps, if we follow Dilworth's explanation in the very shape of the poem itself.⁸³ From Joyce, especially *Finnegans Wake*, there is the sense of water as the source of life, and the aptitude to symbolise a place by a person. Joyce teaches Jones much about the transformative, imaginative and epiphanic content of language. One of the major aspects of Joyce's use of language which has obviously influenced Jones and his writing in *The Anathemata* has been well summarised by Herbert Schniedau:

⁸²E&A p.57

⁸³Dilworth *The Shape of Meaning* p.30

He [Joyce] needs scraps of quotidien facts, as if they were grains of sand around which to secrete pearls; he must "invent" nothing (a procedure sanctified by Shakespeare's way with plots), only permute and draw out the varieties of potentiality in any given thing.⁸⁴

Certainly Jones has learned much of what language can be made to do from Joyce, not least that the general can be evoked by the careful use of the particular, the truth of the scholastic dictum that we must proceed from the known to the unknown,⁸⁵ but, apart from the inscription facing page 55, 'Northmens Thing Made Southfolks Place',⁸⁶ and his reference to Anna Livia's request, 'Drop me the sound of the findhorn's name',⁸⁷ made by Elen Monica (*this* is the sound of the Findhorn stone! (p.145 & n.1)), he has adopted few of Joyce's own words within *The Anathemata*. What he does, however, adopt from Joyce over and against the often lugubrious Eliot is a sense of wonder and plenitude, in short the sort of quality of joy and even playfulness which was uncovered when we discussed nursery-rhymes above.

The foregoing pages have looked at the way in which Jones drew on the literary tradition which proceeded him. It has concentrated primarily on the sources for language. *It does not however exhaust all the influences* which have affected him whether consciously or unconsciously. If we list just a few, the areas in which the more obvious shortcomings are to be found will become more evident: Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* and Christopher Dawson's *The Age of the Gods* are both sources for vocabulary and underlying intellectual concepts; more vocabulary was

⁸⁴Herbert Schniedau, "Style and Sacrament in Modernist Writing", *Georgia Review*, 1977 31:2 p.438

⁸⁵cf. *E & A* p306, although the whole of Jones's review of *James Joyce's Dublin* is pertinent to the way in which Joyce influenced the development of Jones as a poet.

⁸⁶Which Corcoran suggests is by way of 'visually signalling an intention to attempt a similar unity of form and content'.p.79

⁸⁷James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1939 (4th ed.) 1975) p.204

supplied by *British Regional Geology* , and Watts' *Geology for Beginners*. While not denying the importance of all of these books, and more in the composition of *The Anathemata*,⁸⁸ it is contended here that the examples included above are significant because of the way they supplied more than vocabulary to Jones's work.

In his final remarks on *The Anathemata*, Dilworth makes the following comment.

The allusions in *The Anathemata* , which are dense and not subordinate to narrative, serve as an alienation technique to prolong the act of reading and to postpone the response. But what they delay they also bring to pass, and the effect is worth waiting (and working) for. It is less a mixture of fear and desire, as with *In Parenthesis* ; more an extended revelation through symbolic interrelationships, and a meditation on culture which goes beyond aesthetic response to illuminate the historic context of the reader.⁸⁹

Dilworth seems to be suggesting that the denseness of allusion, the general deployment of material from the unshared background of the poet, acts as a strategy whereby reading the poem is made more difficult and rendered more of an existential engagement. Thereby, the reader is made to meditate on the vast panoply of deposits which in the context of this poem are symbolic of culture itself. It must be argued that Dilworth claims too much here, and in a technical vocabulary which does not aid the reader in the elucidation of the poem.

To say that the introduction of material from external sources into the poem is an alienation technique seems to be a little strange when, as we have already seen, Jones himself saw the composition of a poem as akin to that of *mystery*: essentially a matter of uncovering, of illuminating and

⁸⁸Miles, *Backgrounds* is particularly good in uncovering the processes at work between influence, creation and redaction.

⁸⁹Dilworth p.256

making clear rather than obfuscation. When a critic like Jeremy Hooker argues that the poem has a structural analogy to the labyrinths of the classical world, is it the positive aspects of the initiates being guided through the maze to a position of enlightenment which is being stressed? It is not a sense of maze as barrier, but maze as vehicle and locus of initiation deploying various strategies of illumination and education from within itself. Dilworth seems to have mistaken this or rather to have pushed it beyond its own fragile logic. To argue that allusions are there to prolong the act of reading and hold up the reader seems to be a rather reductionist view of Jones's method within the poem. It seems to accuse him of plotting contrivance and Jones is perfectly capable of 'holding up the reader' by other less obvious means, for example through complex language and typography, and punctuation which deliberately draws attention to itself.

Against Dilworth it must be concluded that allusions have a purpose which is grounded more organically in the fabric of the text. I wish to suggest that David Jones uses allusions to such a great extent because they enable him to extend the linguistic possibilities of the poem and also because each quotation extends the reflection and refraction of structures of meaning. Language and meaning are, once again, inextricably linked within *The Anathemata*. Allusions are not there to frustrate the reader in his or her attempts to read and make sense of the poem, they are there to excite, sometimes to explain, or even, amuse. If they open a window from *The Anathemata* onto the cultural deposits of the British Isles it is not because they have been exhaustively selected so to do. If that were the case, as Blamires has pointed out, there are some notable and unforgivable

omissions.⁹⁰It is, as the poet suggests in the preface of his poem, something of an accident, and if the reading which he chooses to offer to the readers of his poems does somehow resonate with a vision of Western European culture viewed from a British perspective which somehow seems authentic and uncontrived, then that is a tribute to Jones and the artistry which he deploys in the poem. It is a resonance which inheres in the words themselves, demonstrating that *anamnesis* can be experienced by the reader of literature as an effect of language

⁹⁰ John Holloway points out that much of what we should regard as 'organically British' is missing from the allusive structure of *The Anathemata* . cf. *The Colours of Clarity* , pp.119-120

Chapter 6: Some Themes in the Poem

In writing about a poem like *The Anathemata*, it is necessary for the critic to attempt several different types of approach in order to elucidate the possible meanings of the text. We have already looked at some of the theological and conceptual material which lies beneath the poem's composition and at the other linguistic and poetic techniques that Jones uses. In a later chapter we will attempt to account for the shape of the poem, its form and structure as a prelude to a reading or commentary of the poem. Before that, however, it is necessary to examine individually some of the important themes which Jones explores in *The Anathemata*.

Mary - the feminine principal

Whoever wishes to think about the Incarnation of the Word of God must look carefully for the woman.¹

The massive enterprise of David Jones's work has a careful, if sometimes subtle, underpinning of a sense of Incarnation. The theological doctrine of God made Man may be missed by those who dwell too long on his *theologia crucis*, his envisioning of the world turning on the axis of the Cross. But Jones is too sensitive to the tradition of the Church to portray a Christology without balance or in any way eccentric to dogma. From the outset of this examination of the Marian theme within *The Anathemata* it is important to recall the presumptions made elsewhere within this thesis that Jones conceived/pictured the accepted doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church as they are available to the poet and the artist in terms of myth. Moreover, Jones uses the deposits of the Roman Catholic *communitas* in ways that, following Edward Robinson's analysis,

¹Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *A Balthasar Reader*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982), p.213

described in chapter 2 of this thesis, we may describe as both horizontally and vertically imaginative:

She that loves place, time, demarcation, hearth,kin,
enclosure, site, differentiate cult, though she is
but one mother of us all: one earth brings us all
forth, one womb receives us all, yet to each she is
other, named of some name other...²

Although our task is to examine the Marian material within *The Anathemata*, we may profitably extend the survey in this instance, and draw evidence from other of Jones's later writings. The quotation cited above forms the opening words of the fragment entitled 'The Tutelar of the Place' and it seems a suitable place to start grappling with Jones's Marian material. It forms one of those fragments in which Jones draws, for his basic themes, from a 'quarry' of Roman material and it is a subtle invocation of the *Tellus Mater*, the Earth Mother upon whom all depend and upon whose generative capacity all mothers rely at all times. Much of the fragment has an incantatory, liturgical feel about it as the poet prays to the eternal feminine who

...inclines with attention from far fir-height
outside all boundaries, beyond all the known and
kindly nomenclatures, where all names are one
name, where all stones of demarcation dance and
interchange, troia the skipping mountains, nod
recognitions.³

Like all good liturgy, it has a timeless quality about it. This could be prayer from any period of history to any feminine deity. But Jones, as we have seen, has a keen awareness of history; indeed it might be suggested that

² David Jones, *The Sleeping Lord and other fragments*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1974) p.59

³ Jones SL p60

this historical sense is one of his greatest strengths as a poet, and his reading of world history and western culture is through the glass of Biblical myth. There is a point at which all the time-bound cultural manifestations of the feminine in religion and mythology can be interpreted and are, so to speak, completed in the person of Mary. This is where she becomes the 'mediatrix of all the deposits'.⁴ Jones is dealing with matters that are very old, and we are left with a considerable number of problems from a theoretical point of view. Not the least is the seamless way in which he feels himself able to slide from the ancient deposits of the *Tellus Mater* of the Classical and even Pre-Classical Mediterranean cultus, to the Celtic gathered from *The Mabinogion* and, at one or two removes, from Malory and into the Biblical and Doctrinal traditions of the Church. The issue is surely one of history. Christianity marks its generation in particular historical events, an actual birth, a verifiable death and a resurrection, all of these witnessed by 'historical' figures. On this is built a considerable body of teaching, added to and developed in every age; but this teaching, the Doctrine of the Church, presumes the historicity of the primary events. We may agree with Mircea Eliade when he says that; 'History cannot basically modify the structure of an archaic symbolism. History constantly adds new meanings, but they do not destroy the structure of the symbol.'⁵ If we presume that Jones's ancient deposits constellating around the *Tellus Mater*, Rhiannon, Helen of Troy, Elen or Gwenhwyfar constitute an 'archaic symbolism' we might, taking Eliade rather prosaically, somewhat literally simply say that the historical Mary is she who sums up and completes within the dominating Biblical code, which underpins Jones's work, the basic structural significance of all these

⁴ SL p.62

⁵ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959) p.137

mythic women. But although that is true to a certain extent, that is certainly not the sum total of Jones's activity. Part of his achievement is that he restores history to the world of myth and symbol, seeking thereby to grasp the greater, transcendent reality which lies beyond it.

If we look at another fragment in the poem 'The Sleeping Lord', from which the book takes its title, we see the Chaplain to the household of a Welsh nobleman musing on Christianity and the traditions of the faith, meditating on the Gospel and its significance.

And when he considered the four-fold account in the books
of the *quattuor evangelia* he thought what are these if not a kind of
Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi *sanctaid* in that they proclaim the
true mabinogi of the Maban the Pantocrator and of the veritable
mother of anxiety, the Rhiannon who is indeed the ever glorious
Theotokos yet Queen of Sorrows and *gladius* pierced - what better,
he thinks, than that this four-fold marvel tale should be called
The Tale of the Kiss of the Son of Mair?⁶

And, in the next paragraph, almost in the same breath, the meditation continues to include matters of Welsh legend and Roman history. It is as if all these matters should be treated with equal seriousness, depending one upon another for their significance and ultimate meaning. In the same poem, indeed within the same meditation, the poet maps out a portion of the doctrinal heritage belonging to Mary, from John the Beloved Disciple, to Old Polycarp and through him to Irenaeus of Lyons, who wrote that '...Mair Wenfydedig, was 'constituted the cause of our salvation'.⁷ It may perhaps be said that the key to these matters, so far as David Jones is concerned, is that the whole business of Mary and the Incarnation is etched into a living tradition within the *communitas* of the Catholic Church, whereas the ancient deposits of Wales and Rome could

⁶ SL p.84

⁷ SL p.83

only be brought to some form of life through a living and developing mythology. It may therefore be suggested that David Jones is himself a maker of myths in that he brings together older and newer traditional deposits and makes of them things that are new, sometimes bemusing and often startling.

This is not to suggest, however, that he is in any sense cavalier in his treatment of ecclesiastical doctrine. In the early pages of *The Anathemata*, he describes a piece of Aurignacian carving, the figure of a fertility goddess:

Then it is these abundant *ubera*, here, under the species
of worked lime-rock, that gave suck to the lord? She that
they already venerate (what other could they?)
her we declare?
Who else? (p.60)

in a note to it Jones writes;

It is rather the earliest example of a long sequence of mother-figures, earth mothers and mother-goddesses, that fuse into the Great-Mother of settled civilisations - not yet, by a long, long way, the Queen of Heaven, yet nevertheless, with some of her attributes; in that it images the generative and the fruitful and the sustaining, at however primitive and elementary, or, if you will, 'animal' a level;.. (p.60 n.1.)

David Jones himself is wary of pushing the material beyond a point where it might fragment into an uncomfortable historical syncretism. It is the traditional doctrine of the Church, the *communitas* which prevents his vision from becoming too arcane or self-indulgent without at the same time constricting or encroaching upon his ability to see things in a new way by putting them in unusual and defamiliarising contexts. If what has been described so far has been his 'vertical imagination', it should always be remembered that the 'horizontal imagination', the way in which he communicated his insight and vision, is equally so. His craftsmanship, so

often derided by his friend and teacher, Eric Gill, for being unkempt and messy, is significant.⁸ Whereas Gill achieved most by simplicity of lettering and economy and clarity of line, Jones picks at a theme until he has managed to wrest all apparent (and often not so apparent) significances from it. This is true both of his painting and his poetry.

The huge amount of material gathered together into *The Anathemata* is held together by two interconnected themes: the passion, the crucifixion of Christ on the 'Axile Tree'; and the Mass, the recapitulation of the passion on all altars everywhere at all times. Jones understood that to hold that position there would have to be a strong undergirding of Incarnational theology and, within the Catholic tradition, that would lead naturally into the matter of Mary. Not least among the aspects of Mary which intrigued him was the teaching of the divine *fiat* at the Annunciation, where she accepts the gift of God. Within the tradition of Christian theology this event has been interpreted as a point of human and divine co-operation in the work of salvation. Mary *chooses* to accept the role which God demands of her:

In all the memorials
of her buxom will
 (what brought us ransom, captain!)
as do renown our city.
She's as she of Aulis, master:
not a puff of wind without her!
her fiat is our fortune, sir, like Helen's face
'twas that as launched the ship. (p.128)

⁸ At Ditchling David Jones had worked rather in Gill's shadow in the role of apprentice. Gill had been intent on tidying his methods, making him more 'workmanlike': an uphill struggle. (His entreaties that Jones should clear the clutter of his work table, and treat it with respect, as the Lord's altar, were useless; David Jones felt much securer in a muddle.) Fona MacCarthy, *Eric Gill: A Life*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1989) p.198

This is typical of the obliqueness of Jones's allusive technique; by incorporating into this reference to the Virgin the classical figures of Iphigenia and also of Helen of Troy, he is able to underline Mary's faithfulness and, at the same time, permit an expansion and cross-fertilisation into the world of ships and sea-faring. Thus we have her launching the ship of salvation, the Christ, he who, on the cross, will ransom the world; an Irenaeian ideal. Also included is the ship of the Church. Throughout the poem these two ideals of the ship are developed further. Also worth noting here is the incorporation of the word 'buxom', presumably drawn from the Sarum marriage rite where the wife promises to be 'buxom at bed and at bord', enabling him thereby to bring in the theme of marriage both to Christ in the sense of the tradition of the spiritual marriage, and also of marriage to the Church.

The connection between Mary and ships which has been noted above is continued by Jones elsewhere in *The Anathemata* ; in 'The Lady of the Pool' we are told that one of Elen Monica's lovers was 'master of the *Mary*', a ship that was

Overdue a nine month, writ-off for lost bottomry by
the brokers long since, loanees and loaners as much
in charity as a tib and a Towser...(p.137)

Here the imagery is inverted, Mary is the ship who bears the Christ into a world which has been written off by its insurers. Jones paints in a few deft strokes a picture of hopelessness into which Christ will come. If his allusion is somewhat opaque, he lightens it by reminding the reader that 'Gabriel has already said *Ave* !'. The ship enters port somewhat battered, '...she were hulled, SEVEN TIMES....', (p.139) a reference to the seven swords which according to biblical tradition would pierce Mary. Jones's use of his material and his imaginative presentation of it defies simple

exegesis; it is impossible simply to say that one particular element stands in place of another item of doctrine or tradition in a structure akin to allegory. Certainly the ship *Mary* is Mary the mother of God, bearing salvation in the person of Christ to the world, but also it is the ship of the Church and yet there are some respects in which the ship with its cross-like yards and spars seems to indicate Christ himself at his execution. And in its reference to the traditional carol 'I saw three ships come sailing in' the concentration on the Passion is balanced with an allusion to Incarnation. It is probably best to try and appreciate that Jones understood the whole matter to be subtle and at times confusing, capable of many simultaneous interpretations, and that the doctrines of the Church are for the artist signposts, pointing the way forward to greater visions best served by the poet by the assembling of symbols into something akin to myth.

But Jones does grasp that the significance of Mary goes far beyond the mythic. Later in *The Anathemata*, the witches proclaim the human significance of Mary and her fiat:

...Someone must be chosen and fore-
chosen - it stands to reason! After all there should be
solidarity in woman. No great thing but what there's a
woman behind it, sisters. Begetters of all huge endeavour
we are...(pp.213-214)

All humankind participates in Mary's obedience by its own obedience, although Mary's is pre-eminent. Yet has Jones come so very far from the *Tellus Mater*, the eternal feminine principal? It might with some cogency be argued that Mary's generation of salvation is akin to the special relationship that the *Tellus Mater* has to the adherents of her cultus. That notwithstanding, Jones's depiction of the Midnight Mass in Arthur's court and the elucidation of its significance in the persons of the witches reaches

a climax in an incantatory hymn in praise of Mary 'on this, HER NIGHT OF ALL' (p.215) into the middle of which are inserted some words which seems to come from the poet's own mouth in which, (as we have seen, when discussing the voices of the poem). Jones relates the mystery of the Incarnation to its unusual celebration on Christmas day in the trenches of the First World War.

So far as David Jones is concerned, he has not lost touch with the simplicity of the stories and handles his biblical material and codes with a feeling which is almost, but not quite, naive , despite his evident and considerable learning. He manages to hold the theological apparatus of Marian Doctrine in some kind of tension with an intense physicality by which he is able to comprehend both the mythological and the historical. Mary may be the prechosen Mother of God, but she is also the one who changes the child's swaddling. She may be the Star of the Sea, invoked even before her time by the Phoenician sailors in the 'Middle-Sea and Lear-Sea' episodes, or the Mater Dolorosa, or even the Queen in *Rosenhage* , but she is also the one who repairs Christ's tunic.

Nowhere is this ability to bring together the mythic, doctrinal and historical material surrounding Mary into a creative whole seen so clearly as in the final section of *The Anathemata* . 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day' deals with the matter of Christ's passion. It opens with Christ, seen as a mythic champion, Mary's lover 'signed with the quest-sign';

from her salined deeps
from the cavern'd waters
 (where she ark'd him) come.
His members in-folded
like the hidden lords in the West-tumuli
for the nine dark calends gone.
Grown in stature
 he frees the water. (p.225)

Jones uses the story from *The Mabinogion* of Peredur as a template on which to base this part of the poem. It enables him to draw in the ideas of Wasteland, the warrior-hero and the role of the hero's mother in nurturing him for the quest. Most important it introduces the theme of drought which, as in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, will be a constant *leitmotif* until the end of the poem. From the waters of Mary's womb the Christ is coming. Jones uses the word 'ark'd', a term which can have so many meanings: salvation as in Noah's ark, divine presence, or indeed the ark of the covenant. No doubt Jones means all of these. The physicality of the language is another noteworthy feature not least because it disproves those who would claim that Jones's poetry is invariably disengaged and lacking in emotional warmth. But in this section of the poem, Christ is a knight-errant and for the moment Mary is mother, wife and lover. It is significant that in the final pages of the poem Christ and Mary are portrayed together, with Mary adopting her traditional role in Catholic theology of pointing towards, and being the guarantee of Christ's humanity almost as she would if depicted in an icon.

The final verse of Milton's poem *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, which, as we have already seen, Jones's father would read, ritually every Christmas morning, contains the line 'Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending'. This surely lies behind the title of Jones's last published work *The Sleeping Lord* but it also illuminates the overall strategy whereby he handles Marian material. Milton's line is visual in its imagery and it might be argued that Jones in his poetry owes much to iconography in his portrayal of the Virgin. There are times when one could be reading a poetic description of a painting by Giotto or another medieval artist where the meaning of the painting depends on more than the simple image, but rather on a whole welter of signs and symbols

integrated into the picture. Jones paints on a broad canvas and opens up a mythic world which he regards as significant for all times and cultures. The discussion above remains preliminary, trying to wrestle with the material he uses, the way in which he uses it, and what he tries to do with it. It is important to underscore how doctrinally orthodox he is. For all his borrowings from the mythologies of past ages and redundant cultures, for all his licence, his mythology makes sense. Mary, even when dressed in the garb of the *Tellus Mater*, points inexorably towards Christ, the locus for human salvation.

Sea - Voyages

Again, the sea-faring thing is not there because my grandfather happened to be a mast and block-maker (Eb Bradshaw) but because one *cannot begin* to consider Britain without being straight away involved in the sea and all the sea meant both in the domain of fact and in our whole poetic tradition.⁹

the albescent chalk	
	cliffs gleam bright
her sea-ward parapets	
	It was, he said, as though the White Island
lay at anchor	
	riding a mooring
just off Europa's main.	
And had so lain	
	for countless millenia back
and would so lie	
	hodiern, modern, sempitern. ¹⁰

⁹ Jones, DGC p.156

¹⁰ David Jones eds. Harman Grisewood and René Hague, *The Roman Quarry and other sequences*, (London: Agenda Editions, 1981) p.61. N.B. The quotation from Dunbar's 'An Ballat of Our Lady' in the last line quoted.

When trying to make some sort of sense of *The Anathemata* one is soon going to be brought up smartly by the wealth of references lying within it to the sea, ships and sea-voyages. Jones, grappling with the 'matter of Britain', finds the images of the sea and ships irresistible; and his scrupulous deployment of what Corcoran, following the example of William Golding, has described as 'tarpaulin language'¹¹ draws the reader, willingly or unwillingly, into the heart of the thing. He does not, however, focus primarily upon the sea itself with deft poetic descriptions of its moods and physical appearance; rather, the sea stands within his work as a highway upon which the cultural influences which have finally coalesced to make up Britain are either enabled, or sometimes prevented, from reaching these Islands. Further, the image of the sea permits him somehow both geographically and poetically to delimit the boundaries of Britain, to hold them up and 'make sacred' the land itself.

And, of course, the sea enables Jones to speak of journeys and seafarers, and perhaps more obliquely but no less importantly, to speak of the spiritual journey of the Church and its members. Inevitably in Jones's writings it is easier to say what he is *not* doing than to try to state definitively what he is. The journeys are not, viewed from the standpoint of the conventions of spiritual writing, strictly accurate portrayals of the ascent of the human soul or the body corporate of the Church towards God. Which is to say, that these are not journeys within the mystical tradition conforming to the normative Catholic pattern of purgation, illumination and incorporation. Jones handles the material which he draws from his Catholic orientation with a certain subtle obliqueness, dovetailing it into the mythic material at his disposal. Despite this, it would be wrong to suggest that the voyage material within *The*

¹¹Corcoran p.66

Anathemata is devoid of any spiritual content. We may suggest that Jones has adapted some very ancient archetypal traditions in his treatment of voyages, traditions which convey aspects of the human search for resolution and meaning with immediacy and vigour.

A rambling poetic essay, occasionally of great naivety, commissioned to accompany an edition of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, which Jones had illustrated may offer some preliminary insights into the archetypal cast of mind which underlies *The Anathemata*. We may remember that in his letters to Desmond Chute in which he discusses much of *The Anathemata's* meaning, Jones points out how crucial Coleridge's poem is for an understanding of his own. This essay lays bare many of the key matters which govern Jones's use of sea imagery. Outlining the historical setting for the *Rime*, Jones notes with approbation that Coleridge changes lines from earlier drafts for reasons of accuracy. He then remarks that the polysemic quality of the poem, with meaning layered upon meaning, is a characteristic of all great works of art 'where deep calls to deep.'¹² Later in the essay he makes his meaning clearer: 'It is precisely because of the greatness of the poetry and the imagination which informs it that these things do matter. In poetry everything matters, and the greater the poetry so much more is this true.'¹³ The care and precision with which Coleridge invests his poem is immediately attractive to Jones, but it is certainly not the only reason for his including *The Rime* within the canon of *great* poetry; for Coleridge's poem has, according to Jones, a special appeal for the men of Britain, for 'If the voice of the water-floods and the cataracted foam resounds through this poem, the same resounds throughout so much of our heritage-

¹² *The Dying Gaul* p.183

¹³ *The Dying Gaul* p.207

store.'¹⁴ By way of examples Jones offers as examples the voyages of Arthur and other Celtic wonder-workers journeying from Britain into the cold polar regions and compares and contrasts them with the Mariner's voyage to the Antarctic. For Jones, these too are significant. 'And these two mysterious zones mark the two extremities of the axial line of our own dear earth's diurnal rotation. If deep calls to deep, pole calls to pole, and...Stat Crux dum Volvitur Orbis....'¹⁵

Not slow to remark upon those points where he feels at one with Coleridge's theology, the Mariner's blessing of the water snakes, for Jones the crux of the poem, elicits the observation that, 'all are agreed that the prayer of praise far excels that of petition.'¹⁶ And Jones finds himself able to make much of the agency of Mary in the matter of human redemption and expiation and see elsewhere something of the feminine principal at work in the Tutelary spirits of the deep. Not surprisingly, however, he finds the description of the mariner's shriving by the hermit unfathomable and theologically opaque.

Jones admires Coleridge's incantatory tone and the way in which natural and supernatural are carefully blended together. He argues that the *Rime* belongs to a great tradition of 'wonder' voyages which evoke in the telling something of the 'argosy of mankind' towards redemption and quotes examples of writers among the Greek and Latin Fathers for whom such argosies, even those of Classical literature were types for the Church in pilgrimage. 'All this: the barque, the tall mast, the hoisted yard, the ordeals of the voyage, has in various ways filtered down through the centuries. It could not very well be otherwise, for after all, there is but one

¹⁴ *The Dying Gaul* p.189

¹⁵ *The Dying Gaul* p.193

¹⁶ *The Dying Gaul* p.193

voyager's yarn to tell.¹⁷ Looking at *The Anathemata* this latter remark of Jones's becomes clearer. There is a sense in which although he portrays several sea-voyages, or parts of sea-voyages, within the course of the poem, they are dovetailed together, divided from one another, not so much by chapter headings as by the rhetorical questions which break the reader's assumptions and make him look elsewhere for a secure position from which to read the poem. Some ninety pages, over a third of the poem, are taken up by the voyage metaphor which Patrick Deane described as '...a repository of metaphors for Jones's oblique meditation on the progress of the human spirit.'¹⁸ The amount of space that Jones devotes to sea-voyages surely indicates their importance for him. But it has already been suggested that to see these voyages as primarily an allegorical portrayal of the ascent of the human soul, the voyage of the spirit, would be over simplistic. That these mythical and archetypal figures and images convey humanity's experience of engagement; sometimes troublesome, sometimes joyful is not in doubt.

Jones introduces his first voyage in the section 'Middle-Sea and Lear-Sea', not by any normal textual strategy but by allowing the sea-voyage to emerge from a more speculative almost meditative passage. The first sea-voyage starts almost unawares. The meditation on the statue of Athene Promachos on the Acropolis blending functionally with the Blessed Virgin Mary leads Jones on to the description of the ship rounding Cape Sounion:

Virgo Potens
her alerted armament
land-mark for sea-course

¹⁷*The Dying Gaul* p.215

¹⁸ Patrick Deane, 'The Fate of Narrative in David Jones's *Anathemata*', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, Vol 57,2, Winter 1987/8 p.311

Polias, and star of it
 but Tritogenian.
 As a sea-mark then
 for the navigating officers.
 Not always : *blue* Aegean
 nor smiling middle-mare .
 The loomings and the dippings
 unsighted
 what jack she wore
 unrecognised.
 Who are you pray?
 unanswered.
 (Low, raked, Pelasgian Long Serpent
 for the low sea-mist.)
 The shifts of wind
 the intermittent rain
 but Sunium
 rounded. (pp.94-95)

It is almost as if we have slipped unexpectedly into the narrative of a sea-voyage. But what sort of narration is it? Within this third of the poem that Jones devoted to the business of sea-faring there is no simple tale-telling; the poetry like that of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* often slides between clarity and uncertainty. As Patrick Deane writes in his paper on aspects of narrative within *The Anathemata*, 'In *The Anathemata*, unfortunately, the shore is constantly receding and moments of voyaging or narratory confidence are short-lived'.¹⁹ At some points the reader is even unsure what voyage is being described and whether it has the same *dramatis personae* as the one which has gone before. For example, Jones makes it clear in letters to friends that the voyage described from page 97 onwards is not the same as the first voyage, but the language and the way that it is set out on the page is notably unclear. These two aspects are further examples of the similarity between *The Anathemata* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* :

He's drained it again.

¹⁹ Deane p.314

and again they brim it.
Is it the Iacchos
 in his duffle jacket
Ischyros with his sea-boots on?
There's those avers he's wintered with Cronos
under Arctophylax
 out of our *mare*
 into their *See . (p.97)*

The description of the new voyage probably begins at the end of the line, 'Ischyros with his sea-boots on?' but the indicators are unclear. There is no break obvious from the look of the text on the page and Jones's language gives few clues that we are moving out, away from Athens, from the Mediterranean to the northern seas and the islands of Britain. On the contrary, the syntax seems to indicate that we are dealing with the same sea-captain. Moreover, there has been no real resolution of the first voyage by way of a land-fall; we are somehow plucked out of it just when we expect some kind of end to come to the story, left gasping for some sort of cadence. This sense of not quite reaching land continues until finally the shore is sighted and the reader presumes that the ship has come to rest at St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, but even that is tempered with some uncertainty and the section ends with three questions:

Did he berth her?
and to schedule?
by the hoar rock in the drowned wood? (p.108)

The sea-voyage in the next section 'Angle Land' takes place some nine centuries after the first voyage(s) and yet the questions introducing this voyage around the coast of Britain seem to refer to the ship's captain of the first journeys. A similar strategy will disrupt the reader's sense of direction and sense of chronological time at the beginnings of the 'Redriff' and 'Lady of the Pool' sections. The normal narrative coherence is, each time, subverted:

But the lesson of the voyage narrative is that in 'reality', (the pseudo-reality constituted by the text, but also by implication the world we inhabit) time is not a sequence of discrete moments, and any attempt to pin an event to a particular time is doomed to failure.²⁰

Indeed, Deane argues that this process of narrative subversion finds its own climax at the beginning of the final sea-faring section, 'Keel, Ram, Stauros', where the author confronts the impossibility of the task that he has set for himself. But the confrontation lies close to nursery rhyme.

when might that be?
when might that be??
I do not know!
I do not know!!
I do not know what time is at
or whether before or after
 was it when-
but when *is when* ? (p.170)

Further, Deane suggests that when eventually the ship does find its way back into port at the end of the section and is berthed to schedule, this is itself not a matter of relieved resolution. The narrative is not, at least in Deane's opinion, *finished*,, but rather it is the cue for Jones to move on to a discourse with different narrative and formal characteristics in 'Mabinog's Liturgy'. Deane's thesis and method applied to *The Anathemata* make interesting and often illuminating reading; however, this semiotic approach comes up with conclusions altogether too sophisticated to hang round the hapless neck of Jones's poem. There is a certain subversion of narrative thread, the chronology of the sea-voyages does deliberately confuse and bemuse the reader, but has not Jones explained himself in his essay on Coleridge's poem described and discussed above? All sea-voyages are part of the same single sea-voyage. The time may be different, but there is an internal connection between

²⁰Deane p.316

each voyage. Jones's scrupulous geographical accuracy, his poring over maps and charts to get it all right is important. But it might be argued that he has a metaphysical map of the world in his mind on which special, and some would argue arcane, connections are made. Jones's poetic/mythic map has the earth revolving upon the axis of the cross, pierced through its poles. The seas are the highways of commerce and culture, connected together as the cultures of different lands are connected and dependent upon each other. Britain has a special place in Jones's mental map, and within Britain, London, where the sea meets and interacts with the people of the British Isles, has a pre-eminent position. With such a blue-print in mind, the general shape of the voyages described by Jones comes into focus. The major elements of this map of the world are immovable and immutable. Time happens all around them but is not able to destroy what is specific to them. The sea remains the same; it is everything else that is changing. Having these immutable, unchanging points, Jones is able to handle with a greater incisiveness and clarity the more historical material with which he wishes to play. This mental map gives him the foundations for a potentially risky enterprise. If there was any doubt that all this is not simply sailors tales of historical sea-journeys we should remind ourselves that Jones has given us a clear indication of the greater significance of that before we have even got to the journey sections of the poem. In the first section of the poem, the description of the preparation for the Last Supper is in the sea-faring language (conflated with the folk-song 'Green grow the rushes O') which will become commonplace later in the poem.

They set the thwart—boards
and along:
 Two for the Gospel—makers
 One for the Son of Thunder

One for the swordsman, at the right hand, after;
to make him feel afloat. One for the man from Kerioth,
seven for the rest in order. (p.53)

They finish their preparations with the question: "Who d'you think is Master of her?" As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the answer to such a rhetorical question is obvious in this case from the context:

it is Christ who is master of this 'cenacle-ship'. However, Jones's close questioning of his readers is not always so unequivocal. What, for instance, are we to make of the ships, their commanders and their crews? The information Jones offers is often acquired piece-meal and seems sometimes to involve some inspired guess-work. The ships, it seems, are not men o'war or battle ships, but traders involved in a different but no less ambiguous power struggle, coasting up from the Mediterranean sea, with all that that signifies for the Classical world, to the Islands of Britain. They are running 'the grain of the gale' (p.107), with the old captain guiding and deceiving;

O how he cons her!
the old Pelasgian!
It might be Manannan himself, or the helmsman with the
other *claves*, the gladiatorial vicar of the seas. (p.107)

For the captain is not just a trader, the ship is guided by a figure who is godlike, a knarled, battered god, both Celtic and Christian, who, like St.Peter, has keys. Jones makes these allusions to the captain as a Christ-like figure even clearer in the final part of the voyage:

Who else should they choose
to handle the bitch
(and what a crew!)
if not a cod's-eye man?
the bacchic pelasgian
disciplinarian

Aye, the old ichthys!

But watch his *disciplina*
beyond the gangways aft
abaft
the trembling tree. (p.173)

The fish-eyed man: picking up the Christly fish symbol, as ever, Jones develops it interestingly. The boozy disciplinarian seems almost a sacreligious Eucharistic reference, and Jones seems to have been aware of this, yet one cannot help but think that this exploration of spiritual and speculative frontiers, adds to the strength of the poem. And the contrast between disciplinarian and the Latin *disciplina* or skill is telling, especially when the poet then shifts our attention by way of the captain to the mast and thereby to the ship itself. For Jones, mast and keel are significant for they are linked typologically in his mind to the wood of the Cross, the locus of human redemption:

Always lifted up?
seen of the polloi?
reckoned worthy of latria?
loved of the polis?
evident hope of it?
Agios Stauros
stans ? (p.180)

Note how the attention is drawn to the final verb which is the only Latin or Greek word in this verse to be italicised. Jones notes in his letters how it is that his italicisation is at times without plan. The ship has become an almost overt symbol of the Church, resting upon, and empowered by, the cross which is the fulfilment of all cult-symbols, steered by a briny, drunken, yet Christ-like and priestly figure, who 'would berth us/and to schedule'. (p.182) The play on berth/birth allows a considerable extension and development of meaning. Jones draws heavily upon the Church fathers as he conflates the wood of the mast with the cross and even when

he alludes to the person of Odysseus, bound to the mast, against the singing of the sirens in the storm sequence of 'The Lady of the Pool'.

Suasion by melody

of y'r genuine rock-sirens
twice as natural as the Mother of All Living, foam-white as a
Friday Venus, wetter nor Soo-zanna, clear gilt tressed
enough to hang a dozen Absolons...(p.142-143)

In this passage the ship, which survives the traumas of the storm with its cross-like spars and rigging intact is named as *The Mary* and so the Church/ship metaphor is broadened to add to it the Blessed Virgin Mary, 'hulled SEVEN TIMES'.(p.139) Mary, the symbol of the Church and yet always more than that, is also a channel for that redemption which is sought by the Church. The sailors call themselves 'matlos of the maiden', and in the opening portion of the voyage they are portrayed as if they are monks in choir, invoking their patroness in language which betrays its ecclesiastical roots and at the same time alludes to well-known sea-shanties:

matlos of the Maiden
 all the way
 all the way
from Phaléron in the bay
matlos of the Maiden
 all the way b'star and day
 across the *mare*
 over the *See*
to go to Dis in Lear's sea
 matlos of the Maiden
all for thalassócracy
all for thalassócracy
 Maiden help y'r own. (p.104)

Although the sailors will invoke many tutelary goddesses of all the litoral peoples they pass, in the end there is only one Lady to who all the others

tend. Jones never mentions either Christ or Mary overtly but always by way of allusion to their deeds.

And, although promoted with gusto, there is a somewhat negative connotation to the idea of thalassocracy, the power which derives from the rule of the sea and which depends on the efforts of many sailors to produce financial gains for the few. Within *The Anathemata*, it connotes sea-power down the ages from the classical world through to our own time. Jones must have realised that at the time of writing, thalassocracy ruling over and by means of the seas was at an end in his own world. Indeed, one might argue that he seems to view the sea itself and something far from beneficent:

...he's got
till the Day o'Doom
to sail the bitter seas o' the world! (p.121)

Despite this ambiguity innate in the sea itself, it remains the channel for the cultural influences to reach Britain and for traders and others to rule the world. It is also the highway which the ship of the Church will follow on its journey and it is surely not surprising that the Ship/Church should follow the same course as the ship/Trader. Jones's ecclesial image is strengthened by his use of the keel/mast/cross metaphors and this complex may shed light on the eucharistic motifs which are constantly under the surface of the poem and frequently emerge above. For Jones the Eucharist is all about artifacture but it is also about the passion and the continual making present of the cross within the community of the Church. If the ship on its journey is in some way a symbol of the Church, the mast/cross motif is linked through the passion to the communal Eucharist of all Christians. And if this is thought to be too far-fetched, we would do well to remind ourselves of the closing lines of the voyage,

which we have discussed in an earlier chapter from the point of view of language, a voyage which has led the ship across the sea and time:

The old padrone
the ancient staggerer
the vine-juice skipper.
What little's left
in the heel of his calix
asperging the free-board
to mingle the dead of the wake.
Pious, eld, bright-eyed
marinus
Diocesan of us.
In the deeps of the drink
his precious dregs
laid up to the gods.
Libation darks her sea.
He would berth us
to schedule. (p.182)

The journey ends in Eucharistic imagery as the skipper, described in the priestly, Ecclesial images, drains the chalice of wine which is itself *anathemata*, a thing laid up and offered to the gods, and finally brings the ship into harbour.

We have seen that the journeys within *The Anathemata* cannot be reduced to allegories of the classical articulations of the spiritual life. Nevertheless, we may sense that they do contribute to a spiritual understanding of great depth and not a little sophistication. If we see them in terms of the special, heuristic journeys of pilgrimage. The anthropologist Victor Turner has examined the phenomena of pilgrimages and argues that the individual on the journey is in a state of liminality, that is a condition of ambiguity between the separation from home marked by the start of the pilgrimage and the re-integration into society heralded by its consummation.

Liminality is now seen to apply to all phases of decisive cultural change, in which previous orderings of thought or behaviour are subject to revision and criticism, when hitherto unprecedented modes of ordering relations between ideas and people become possible and desirable.²¹

We may argue that the journeys within *The Anathemata* are opportunities for the imaginative re-ordering and exploration of the archetypal symbols of human existence with the Divine. The movement and consequent sense of separation of the journeys is a motif of ideological freedom where the elements of doctrine can be re-examined. In some respects, the boldest meanderings of Jones's mind take place within these sections of the poem inviting the reader to a similar leave-taking and journeying in which the familiar is made unfamiliar in order to be seen anew. Turner says: 'For the majority pilgrimage was the great liminal experience of the religious life. If mysticism is the interior pilgrimage, pilgrimage is exteriorised mysticism.'²² In this sense then, the exploration of the interior significance of the symbols and resonances of the exterior world *The Anathemata*, through its voyages, is a major contribution to twentieth-century Spirituality and we may even be able to describe it as *mystic*.

The Cities of *The Anathemata*

We have seen how the voyage motif has a pervasive influence on *The Anathemata*. We will argue later that it also has a crucial and formative influence on the form of the poem, that *The Anathemata* is, in a sense, a type of 'literary' pilgrimage. But journeys and pilgrimages are purposeful, they go somewhere. In *The Anathemata* we may argue that cities have a special significance for the poet as the fixed points to and from which his

²¹Victor Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Tradition*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978) p.2

²²Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, p.7

journeys lead. Moreover, it is possible to suggest that cities are at once reservoirs of archetypal and numinous meaning, and, at the same time, that they participate in the carefully planned chains of linkages and correspondences which, as we have seen, form the linguistic pattern of the poem, and underpin its method of conveying and containing meaning. Throughout the poem, city relates to city, extending with each successive introduction, or re-introduction of a city, the content of the mythic ideal of a city.

If we look first at a passage already quoted at length from 'Rite and Fore-Time', (pp.55-57) we will see where, in terms of the poem, the vast chain of cities begins, at Troy, 'matrix for West-*oppida*'. As Jones elucidates in his footnote:

Troy was one of the first walled cities. We can therefore take it as archetypal of all defended sites, and the persistence and integral position of the story of Troy and Helen in our Western tradition thus finds support in modern scientific archaeology; while our civilisation remains the word 'Troy' will equate automatically with 'love and war'. (p.57 n.1.)

Troy is the primary and determinative city of the Western European mythological world-view. The literary and mythological chain which begins at Troy will provide Jones with a developing and shifting sense of the essential qualities which cities have come to symbolise. Tiny as Troy is,²³ her potential in mythological terms is immense. For the city encapsulates love and war, and also deceit and selflessness. In short, cities hold within themselves the human world as if in microcosm. The fact that they are walled or enclosures, (as Jones often uses the Welsh *bangor* meaning a wattle fence originally enclosing an ecclesiastical or sacred site and later a fortified town), is significant. Troy defers mythologically to

²³*Ana* p.56 'small wall-height'

Rome through the direct link of Aeneas, and through the same literary and mythological route, London takes on in the middle-ages of 'The Lady of the Pool' the mantle as well as the title of Troy Novaunt?²⁴ Before we explore further this particular typological chain, we need to take a preliminary glance at the two other cities which play a major part in the poem, Jerusalem and Athens.

Jerusalem with its resonances with Old Testament mythology and narrative is the locus of salvation in the Passion of Christ, and also as the city where the Last Supper took place, is the specific place where, to quote de la Taille, Jones's mentor in matters of sacramental theology, Christ placed himself into the order of signs. In the passage below from 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day', the specificity of the location of the events of salvation in Jerusalem is married with its universal consequences (the fructification of the 'wasted land') and the final allusion to the rubrics of the Mass reinforces the universal significance of the events which occurred in Jerusalem and reinforces the quality of sign-making:

Not every year is the salvage of so many inhabited places made legitimate loot. Not at every time are the cosmocrats as prodigal or the bleached bodies so many, as now, in this place.

In the wasted land
at jackal-meet
at the division of the spoils
with his hand stretched out
he continues. (p.231)

Jerusalem, 'on Ariel Hill, on Sion tumulas/on Uru Mound, in the Salem
cenacle/in the white Beth-El' (p.241), the range of names each with its own
particular significance, is important, is archetypically a holy place. This

²⁴cf Jones's own note on p.54 n.8

passage is evocative of some of the work of Eliot behind which lies the writing of Ezekiel.

The same cannot be said to be true, or at least cannot be posited in quite the same way, for Athens which, it may be argued, stands in the poem as the place from where the cultural deposits which signify Mediterranean culture at its best spring, and are carried towards the rest of the known world. Athens is the beginning and, presumably, although this is not made entirely plain, the eventual destination of the complex of sea voyages which provide a strategy of movement replacing narrative in the central portion of *The Anathemata* :

Her grandeurs
 enough and to snare:
 West-academic
 West-hearts.
And her that he cast of Marathon-salvage
 of bronze
 erect
 without
 Promachos
 of the polis
 of Ouranos
Virgo Potens
 her alerted armament
land-mark for sea course. (p.94)

Athens is evoked by the description of Pheidias' statue of Athene Promachos which stood on the Acropolis in classical times. Once again, Jones effects his verbal *anamnesis* , not by a comprehensive description of the city, but by the studied exploration of one single aspect of it. In choosing the object of his interest with care and by equally careful choice of adjectives he is able to explore much of the significance of the city and, leaving his description open-ended, allows it to continue its pattern of evocation. The statue is at the same time a tribute to the cultural and

spiritual strength of Athens, the making of sculpture to which Jones has already alluded, and the devotion to Athene who stands both for Wisdom and for military Victory; but it is also forged from the spoils of war; and this too is part of what makes up the history and significance of cities. Jones takes hold of the theme of Athene, the female deity who is patroness of the city, and conflates her with all female goddesses in general, but also, with characteristic boldness, with Mary who is traditionally described in Catholic theology as 'Queen of Heaven' and 'Star of the Sea'. Athene, and hence, one might conjecture, Athens itself, is born both of the sea and the land.²⁵ From the city of Athens then comes the sense of the city as dwelling place of the Tutelary Goddess. It gives Jones the opportunity to begin to explore the theme of the eternal feminine which culminates in the person of Mary and which was in later poetry to play an outstanding role.

We have already suggested that Rome fits into the typological mythic chain of cities which begins with Troy. It is important to bear in mind that within *The Anathemata* Rome is used to mean both the City and the Roman people. From its violent conception²⁶ it does not carry with it the cultural and artistic connotations of Athens, for we have already seen above how Jones gives abiding value only to the letter writing and the portrait busts.²⁷ Rome, for Jones, is the centre of a huge Empire whose effects were and are widely spread. It is the symbol of military might and utility over and against the gratuitous.²⁸ But it is also the place where, in the ancient basilicas, Christmas is greeted by the celebration of the Mass?²⁹

²⁵Ana p94 'Polias, and star of it/but Tritogenian'

²⁶Ana p87

²⁷see above p114

²⁸cf. 'Keel, Ram Stauros'

²⁹Ana pp. 220-221

And yet the land within the pomoerium or enclosure, equivalent to the celtic *bangor*, has an eternal sacred significance³⁰. Rome, despite its strong negative characteristics eclipses even Troy in significance within *The Anathemata*. It becomes *The City* where the sacred and the secular co-exist.

(from the wide-pomoerium'd Urbs
as ultramundane to the Pleiades as to the ordered polis whose
archetype the Pleiad is). (p.221)

In this sense, Rome encapsulates what Troy and Athens have only displayed in potential, and Jerusalem in a more hidden way, the liminal reality of the City. The area within the enclosure of *bangor*, is for Jones a threshold place between time and eternity where divine and human realities inter-react. Looked at this way, cities are not places where the movement of pilgrimage begins or ends; rather they are places of dynamism themselves, full of movement and the potential for spiritual discernment and development. It has been argued that Jones's journey sections mirror only tangentially, if at all, the classically defined journey of the soul towards God. It may be possible to argue that his cities taken in total may be the place where he has explored the ambiguity of the spiritual relationship of God to man at rather greater depth, and indeed, more successfully.

It would be interesting to speculate to what extent Jones is influenced by Augustine's *City of God* when he writes about cities. Written against the background of the sacking of Rome by the Visigoths, Augustine contrasts the earthly and heavenly cities. In the former category Augustine places Imperial Rome, built on a foundation of conquest, whose eternal

³⁰For an interesting listing of the evidence, c.f. Hague, *Commentary* pp231-232.

aspirations he dismisses as vacuous but which, given the guidance of good rulers and the Church, could contribute to God's purposes. Against this is set the perfection which inheres in the eternal City of God. That Jones had read *City of God* is known, not least from the quotations which are to be found in *The Anathemata*. In more general terms we may argue that Jones managed in the poem to explore some of the dichotomies outlined in Augustine's great work. The cities within *The Anathemata* provide a kind of commentary in themselves on the *City of God*.

Of none of the cities is this more true than London, the city which occupies so much of the space in the middle of the poem. This London is principally a vision of the late-medieval city. Of it Thomas Dilworth has written:

For him the symbol of this fullness of humanity is the medieval city, in which man lives a complete symbolic life, in touch with metaphysical values and with the historic and anthropological substrata that are continued in the traditions of the city.³¹

We may agree with Dilworth that of all the cities within *The Anathemata*, London is notable for its depiction of humanity. But might that not be just as much a function of the choice of the monologic form for its articulation as the material that Jones has assembled? We are introduced to the city by a lavender – seller named Elen Monica whose Chaucerian and Joycean antecedents we have already noted. In a letter to Desmond Chute, David Jones has this to say about her:

After all the Lady of P. is herself an amalgam of *many* figures - from a waterside tart of sorts to the tutelary figure of London, as, say, was Aphrodite to the City of Thebes or Athena of Athens.³²

³¹ Thomas Dilworth, 'The City at the Centre of *The Anathemata*' in *NeoHelicon*, (1987, 14:2, pp.345-352) p346

³² *IN* p.66

And later.

But primarily she is a woman, a lavender-seller talking to an ancient mariner from the mediterranean and telling him about London and its traditions and about the voyagers she had met with and the tales they had told to her.³³

Despite her noble literary antecedents, Elen Monica is, *sui generis*, Jones's creation of great creativity and interest. She is at once the *Tellus Mater* of the city, its *genus loci*, a Tutelary goddess, but, simultaneously, and far less grandly, she is a depiction of the citizens of the City. This latter is achieved not least by Jones's adoption of the rhythms and infinitely digressive structure of cockney speech in his depiction of Elen Monica.

We might argue that London is not merely the depiction of a vision of the fullness of humanity. For Jones it was *the* known city, and knowing it, he could invest it with the archetypal significances of other cities with which his acquaintance was less personally intimate. The name of the guide, Elen Monica, is itself significant. Elen cognates Helen which immediately links us with Troy; but Jones also would have expected his reader to recognise here an echo of the Empress Helen who discovered the true Cross at Jerusalem. Thus Jerusalem too, is drawn in. The reader will also recall that Monica was Augustine's mother and thereby Jones has linked his London not just with Troy and Jerusalem but also with Rome via the *City of God*. And we may, following the same route, push this chain of correspondences even further to include resonances with the divine city, towards which the archetypal cities tend. That there are other formal and mythical links with these, and other cities, does not diminish the importance of this effective, albeit quaint, language game, whereby he extends the significance of his central city. In adopting this sort of strategy,

³³IN p.69

that is, one in which the known reality and mythical/cultural superstructure which surrounds a city evokes aspects of an unseen divine reality, we may see that Jones has what seems at times to be an almost platonic idealism. Indeed, it is almost as marked as the one with which he felt uncomfortable in the poetry of W.B. Yeats.³⁴

Dilworth has suggested that the London of 'The Lady of the Pool' is the most positive depiction of a city in literature since 'cities became malign'³⁵ and certainly in English since the Renaissance. In truth Jones's London is a far less sinister place than Eliot's in *The Waste Land*, a poem which continuously lies not far beneath the surface of Jones's poetic consciousness. Dilworth also suggests that: 'In human microcosm, Elen is what a city is, and what a civilization is, when invigorated by a living sense of its own history and literature and by a depth of imagination which is religious and mythic.'³⁶ This perceptive comment echoes our earlier suggestion that London within *The Anathemata* is notable for its depiction of humanity. We may pursue this further: the image of humanity within the London of *The Anathemata* is one of dynamism and life. Elen Monica's own enthusiasm colours that of the city. It is a literary depiction of the theological reality encapsulated by St. Ignatius: 'The Glory of God is Man fully alive'. The humanity of London city is alive since it is 'invigorated' by its sense of 'tradition' and because its author, in the way of other visionaries, is aware of the chains and correspondences which enliven the cultural reality, if not always the physical reality, of London.

³⁴DGC p.190

³⁵Dilworth 'The City at the Centre' p.352

³⁶Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* p.228

It is worth remembering that much of *The Anathemata* dates from the years of the second World War. During this time, despite protestations from friends, Jones remained in London. He experienced the blitz at first-hand and the threat that it offered the City. It would be surprising therefore if this experience did not affect his poetry, if only subliminally. We may argue that we might expect one of two effects: first, a heightened level of sentimentality or nostalgia, second, a deepening of the sense of value and significance of the city. It is this latter effect that we see in *The Anathemata*, a vision of great depth focussing primarily on the intersections which are effected within the city. By being a 'sacred site', it is the intersection of the human and the divine. Through the River Thames and the port, it is where the cultural traditions of Western Europe meet the cultural traditions of Britain. It is where the transitoriness of economics intersect with eternal truths. London becomes a cultural and economic crossroads wherein all the cultural and trans-cultural forces which have coalesced to make up the British Isles have come together.

Above all, it is where Britain and the sea meet. That this is significant for the structure and meaning of *The Anathemata* goes almost without saying. We have already noted how much of the poem concerns itself with sea-voyages, and it is important to recognise that the poem does not proceed in a jerky and disrupted fashion. The London material arises naturally from the voyage material. Indeed, one could well argue that it is a part of it; that the pilgrimage theme explored in the voyage sections naturally tends towards London, and achieves some sort of resolution, albeit a temporary one, there.

Throughout the poem, the names of places are important. Nowhere is this observation more true than in the London sections of the poem.

Places are marked by churches whose names, conflated with earlier traditions and even deities expand and develop the vision of tradition:

At the Lady-at-Hill
above Romeland's wharf-lanes
at the Great Mother's newer *chapelle*
at New Heva's Old Crepel.
(Chthonic *matres* under the croft:
springan a Maye's *Aves* to clerestories.
Delphi in sub-crypt:
luce flowers to steeple.)
At Paul's
and faiths under Paul
where
so Iuppiter me succour!
they do garland them with Roman roses and do have stitched
on their zoomorphic apparels and vest 'em gay for Artemis.³⁷

The list of churches in which the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross will be celebrated becomes an opportunity for Jones to explore the religious traditions which have combined within the enclosure of the walls of London. In the same way that all these churches will bear homage to the Cross, so also, implicitly, and with a laudable understatement, these ancient religions too look forward to the crucifixion. But also, churches are indicative of London for they are markers of the sacred within an already sacred landscape. It is almost as if Jones, like a cultural archaeologist, is uncovering the sacred layer of reality which lies close beneath the surface of the profane face of the city.³⁸

³⁷*Ana* p.127

³⁸That this sort of thinking that the sacred City somehow underlies the profane may be demonstrated by a glance at Charles Williams's novel, *All Hallows Eve*, first published in 1948 (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1981), which explores the relationship between these two aspects of London. In his essay, 'The Image of the City in English Verse', Williams writes: 'There are in English a certain number of recurrent images. One of these is the image of the City; it is built up by many descriptions, similes, metaphors and maxims. These images, making altogether one greater image, show the City both ideally, and actually (and even historically), in schism and in concord, as in heaven and as on earth.' in Charles Williams ed. Anne Ridler, *The Image of the City and other Essays*, London, Oxford University Press 1958) p.92. cf, also the essay 'The Redeemed City' in the same volume.

Throughout 'The Lady of the Pool' section we are aware of the layers of tradition which have made London what it is. A good example is when Elen Monica and her stone-mason lover are lying against the city wall and we are suddenly made aware of Roman stonework at the base of the medieval wall³⁹ and that sense of Rome being the physical foundation for London is extended further and the lavender-seller herself takes on this role:

An' in this transfiguring after-clarity he seemed to call me
his . . . Fl - ora . . . *Flora Dea* he says . . . whether to me or
into the darks of the old ragstone courses?
. . . how are you for conundrums, captain? (p131 &
n.1)

To which Jones appends the footnote: 'It has been said that the name of the goddess Flora was used as a mystical or secret name for Rome.' But the introduction of the concept of conundrums is itself significant, for in this section almost more than any of the others, it is difficult to pin meaning down. The reader is him or herself faced with a conundrum and one which needs careful attention in solving.

But in the end there is a resolution, which, as with much of the poem consists of returning to its beginning, in this case the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in the City churches. Once again they are mentioned by name, or by clues which, with the right knowledge, will lead the reader to uncover the name. But as these names unfold and we look forward to liturgical celebration, Jones reminds us of the mythical heritage of the city, Bran the Blessed's head beneath the Tower of London, the Trojan forebears of the city and that 'THIS BOROUGH WERE NEVER FORCED'(p.163), that it remains inviolate.

³⁹Ana p.130

For, these fabliaux say, of one other such quondam king
rexque futurus.

And you never know, captain
you never know, not with what you might call metaphysical
certainty, captain: our phenomenology is but limited,
captain.

So of these let's say *requiescant*
till the Sejunction Day!
For should these stir, then would our Engle-raum in this
Brut's Albion be like to come to some confusion!

You never know, captain:
What's under works up.

I will not say it shall be so
but, captain, rather I would say:

You never know!(p.164)

Stone & Wood

Throughout *The Anathemata*, there are three elemental symbols which reappear frequently under a variety of guises: water, stone and wood. If we wish to confirm that Jones also saw them in this way, it is necessary only to look at the 'Rite and Fore-Time' section of the poem. There, speaking of Troy, he inserts an allusion to *The Aeneid* (II, 512-514). In the text of Jones's poem he writes: 'the stone/the fonted water/the fronded wood.' And in the footnote he comments: 'By whatever means of fusion he [Virgil] hands down three of the permanent symbols for us to make use of'.(p.56 & n.2) We may argue that for Jones these three symbols were especially attractive because they 'crossed the boundaries' between a number of different codes: liturgical, mythic and artistic. Within each code they each have a range of connotations and meanings but, by confusing the settings and by using the symbols in carefully contrived situations, Jones is able to draw on the whole range of possible meanings and connotations and is not thus limited to those proper to any one code. That this has implications for the meaning of *The Anathemata*, is obvious. It

means, for instance, that the limits to what the poem actually means are difficult to ascertain. That it also has implications for the reader of the poem may be less obvious. The reader therefore, has to contend with the possibly confusing situation in which he or she is asked to suspend some of the normal strategies of reading in order to take account and advantage of the suspension of the boundaries lying between codes which Jones has effected. Without this, the symbols are not allowed the free play necessary to relate widely and generate new and exciting meanings. This is not, of course, to deny that these symbols may also have a 'universal', or 'archetypal', meaning (Jones would certainly have recognised and revelled in that) but that by their incorporation into codes and coming under the influence of overt or covert 'rules' of interaction the 'archetypal' meaning is at once constrained and developed. Jones's strategy is to enable *all* meaning to co-exist in a creative, dynamic whole.

The first, water, as we have seen, figures chiefly, if somewhat obliquely, within the voyage sections of the poem. It also figures by implication in the sub-theme of the fructification of the Wasteland. This will be explored at greater length in a later section of this chapter.

Stone

So too stone, figuring as the place where, daily, the sacrifice of the Mass is offered, and also the medium in which man demonstrates his skill as a craftsman (and thereby, implicitly, in terms of Jones's aesthetic theories, is assured his or her humanity) in the art of sculpture. Stone is therefore an element, a symbol, which is, in a sense, fulfilled by transformation. Whether it be the transubstantiation of the Mass or indeed any cultic action, or even the work of the sculptor's chisel, stone is inert, meaningless, until it participates in the process of making something

'other'; Until it is brought into the sphere of human artifacture. In the following quotation it is possible to discern how this is effected actually within the poem.

She's all that and more
all korai, all parthenai made stone.

Agelastos Petra . . .
and yet you smile from your stone.

Not again, not now again
till on west-portals
in Gallia Lugdunensis
when the Faustian lent is come
and the West-wood springs new
(and Christ the thrust of it!)
and loudly sings West-cuckoo
(Polymnia, how shrill!)
will you see her like
if then.
Not again
till the *splendor formarum*
when, under West-light
the Word is made stone. (pp.92-93)

Stone carving is being used here by Jones as a measure of the vitality of European culture. The greatness of classical stone cutting will not re-emerge until the Gothic period, in particular the carving on French cathedrals and, we may suggest, principal among these is the west-portal, the Royal Portal, of the cathedral at Chartres which Jones may not have seen first-hand, but which was his mentor Eric Gill's idea of a perfect building.⁴⁰ In these images of Christ and the disciples, the Word is made stone. Jones has used the phrase before in its literal sense, in relation to the letter-cutting of the Romans; this time it is the metaphorical mode of theology that he is using. The Incarnation is extended beyond the

⁴⁰McCarthy p.76

manifestation of God in the flesh of humanity; it is also revealed in the artistic works of that flesh.

We may compare this to the description of the Willendorf 'Venus' in the 'Rite and Fore-Time' section of the poem. In this Jones says of the unknown stone-age creator of the votive figure, that he is the first known example of 'man master-of-plastic'; 'whose man-hands god-handled the Willendorf stone'(p.59) This is a clear statement of Jones's understanding of man the artist; moreover, in the latter phrase he is arguing that he believes that human making of things is somehow analogous to divine creativity. Although Jones is by no means unique in holding such a view (Coleridge being a good example of one who developed this notion of human and divine creativity being linked or even parts of one single whole, but the debate goes back to the Scholastic philosophers of the middle-ages and beyond) this taut poetic exposition in its great economy is an original contribution to the discussion of the nature of human creativity.

We should also notice that it is the articulation primarily of feminine figures in stone which is Jones's major point of interest. Once again the feminine underlies man's sign-making as it does his living in cities. The art of sculpture begins with the depiction of the Earth Mother, reaches one peak of excellence with the girlish figures of Classical Greece, and will reach another in the carved queens at Chartres. (p.92 n.2) Jones is sure that 'the god still is balanced/in the man-stones' at the height of Classical sculpture (p.94), but his poetry is strongest, and arguably, most effective when he speaks of the depiction of the feminine in stone. It is perhaps a function of the elemental status that he predicates of both women and stone. In relation to the Willendorf Venus he writes in the poem:

Chthonic ? why yes
but mother of us.

Then it is these abundant *ubera* , here, under the species
of worked lime-rock, that gave suck to the lord? She that
they already venerate (what other could they?)

her we declare?

Who else?(p.60)

In his footnote to this passage Jones writes:

It [the Willendorf Venus] is rather the earliest example of a long
sequence of mother-figures, earth-mothers and mother goddesses,
that fuse in the Great-Mother of settled civilizations - not yet, by a
long, long way, the Queen of Heaven, yet, nevertheless, with some
of her attributes; in that it images the generative and the fruitful
and the sustaining, at however primitive and elementary, or, if you
will, 'animal' a level; though it is slovenly to use the word 'animal'
of any art-form, for the making of such forms belongs only to man.
(p.60 n.1)

And man, the reader might wish to add, stands second only to God in
matters of creativity. It may be argued that this footnote allows the reader
to see the workings of Jones's mind both in wrestling with the place of the
feminine, which we have already seen, stands in an important position at
the poem's centre of meaning. Also, and the linking of the two is not
arbitrary, the articulation of the role of humanity and the place of human
endeavour and creativity in his theory of aesthetics is also crucial. Human
nature, defined as sign-making, and the eternal feminine in all her guises,
are for Jones the important issues which speaking and writing poetry
about stone-carving give him the opportunity to write about and consider
at length. The stone and the Mother Goddess are both 'earthy'; that the
one should be used as the medium for depicting the other must have
seemed natural to Jones for it has a poetic and aesthetic correctness about
it. Certainly, the occasions, as we have seen, that he does talk of sculpture
are written in seemingly effortless flowing poetry in which the

fragmentation which so often makes up Jones's poetry is noticeable by its absence.

Thus stone becomes within the structure of *The Anathemata* a means to otherness, the vehicle upon which transformations may be effected. That Jones should use sculpture rather than painting as an archetypal illustration of humanity's sign-making capacity is perhaps not surprising, given his links with Eric Gill. That he should develop the theme in the way he does, is a product of his own unique vision.

Trees

In a letter to *The Tablet* in 1958, Jones has the following remarks to make about the Passiontide hymn, *Vexilla Regis*, written by Fortunatus, which at that time had been removed from the Passiontide Liturgy of the Roman Church. We will not quote the entire letter here, but only a selection of his remarks.

For him [Fortunatus] the terrible transom-beam of the instrument of our Manumission is seen as a Roman steelyard exactly weighing the price.

His concept of the advancing *vexilla*, which provides not only a concrete poetic image but the poem's initial thrust, is even more poignant when we recall that the actual *vexilla* Fortunatus saw with his physical eyes were standards, imitative of a past imperium, but in fact carried before petty Merovingian dynasts at fratricidal wars of loot. Such was the sordid violence from which the poet gave the Liturgy this enduring image of banners. It is the sort of thing that poets are for; to redeem is part of their job.

His most quoted line, that about God reigning from the Tree, recalls not only the figure of Christ the Pantocrator, familiar to the semi-Byzantinized Gaul in which he wrote, but calls forward to all those rood-lofts of the West, not yet joinered, not even dreamed of, when he wrote.⁴¹

⁴¹We might note also The Song of Solomon 2.4. 'He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.' (AV)

This powerful work compels us to feel the Crucial Triumph under an hymnodic form, to which adhere the accidents of epoch and locality, patinated now by centuries of liturgical use. The chant, inseparable from the words, and, of its nature, unmeasured, seems, somehow, to trumpet the equal tread of a bright war-band moving in column, carrying 'the Spoil of spoils'...⁴²

Within *The Anathemata* Jones uses the theme of wood cumulatively, but all the uses that he makes relate to the central matter of the wood of the cross; the locus of salvation. To understand how he is able to effect this, it is necessary to look again at the sources of the poem, principally *The Dream of the Rood* and the *Vexilla Regis*, together with *Crux Fidelis*. All three poems involve what is, in effect, an anthropomorphic personification of the cross of Christ. The cross becomes a person and addresses the enquirer in *The Dream of the Rood*; in the hymn it is addressed as if it were a person. Such a metamorphosis would have been immediately attractive to Jones and we have frequently seen how strange shiftings of perspective, coupled with deployments of the unexpected, were important among his textual strategies.

Both *The Dream of the Rood* and Fortunatus' hymn are notable because they reflect a theological attitude to the cross which articulated it in terms of glory rather than of an instrument of execution; such a theological nuance is rather more common in Byzantine theology, as Jones hints in the letter quoted above. But they also contain something of the mythological riches of the non-Christian, pagan world. As Helen Waddell writes when discussing Fortunatus and his use of the symbol of the tree in his hymn which was written on the occasion of the translation of relics to

⁴²*Epoch and Artist* pp.260-261

Poitiers and she describes as 'the greatest processional of the Middle Ages'.⁴³

It is not as the Latins took it, the symbol and the sign: to Fortunatus, it is still the tree as it grew in the forest, fore-doomed to its great and terrible destiny. In Northumberland again comes the Dream of the Rood, again in Cornwall. It is the dream of men who later made their cathedral aisles in the pattern of forest rides, in whose mythology, the mind of the race, not of the individual, was the other sacred Tree, Ig-Drasil, where Woden hung for nine days and nine nights, that he might solve the riddle of the world.⁴⁴

The foregoing lines from the pen of Helen Waddell might have been written as a commentary on *The Anathemata* so closely do they match and express the way in which Jones uses the theme of trees. We have already seen that when we come to examine these themes within *The Anathemata* they all constellate around a single centre. Each theme begins, is interpreted by, and is resolved by a single interpretative point or matrix. In the case of trees and wood, it is the cross which makes up this interpretative centre. It provides the starting place, a means to interpretation and the place of final resolution. In the 'Redriff' section of the poem, Jones describes the fictionalised reaction of his maternal grandfather, a master block-maker and mast-maker from Rotherhithe, to the request that he should skimp on some repairs to a ship. Within the context of the poem it is a remarkable meditation on the subject of craftsmanship. Within our present context it deserves careful examination because of the description of wood which is integrated into it. The quotation below marks the beginning of Eb. Bradshaw's monologue, his reaction to the Sicilian captain's request for swift and therefore shoddy work.

⁴³Helen Waddell, *The Wandering Scholars*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1927, 6th. ed. 1932) p.54

⁴⁴Waddell, p.54

Not for a gratis load of the sound teak in
 Breaker's Yard
 and that we could well do with.
 Not for a dozen cords of Norweyan, red nor yaller, paid for,
 carried and stacked.
 Or for a choice of the best float of Oregon in the mast-pond.
 Not for as many cubic fathoms of best Indies *lignum vitae*
 as 'ld stock us till we re-sheave the blocks for master-
 bargees plying the Styx. (pp.118-119)

All of the wood named in the monologue would have been attractive to Bradshaw, for the list contains all the best materials for the trade of a shipwright. Jones uses the technical maritime language with humour and accuracy. The repetition of 'Not for...' gives the poetry a rhythmic insistence and replicates the speech-rhythms encouraging the reader to suspend his or her disbelief and enter into the spirit of the piece. The reader may be a little uncertain whether the word 'gratis' from the first line quoted above is meant to carry the connotation of grace, but, by the end of the extract where '*lignum vitae*' literally the wood of life, but also an important wood for the manufacture of pulley-sheaves⁴⁵ is conflated with the classical mythological topography of the underworld, there can be no misunderstanding. The 'tree of life' which is to say, the cross, facilitates the passing of men from one world to another. Under such circumstances, Jones's use of 'gratis' is somewhat ironic for there is no free grace; it has to be paid for somewhere. Jones does not allow himself to get encumbered by theological niceties. This is not dense theological speculation but the layman's intuitive (and therefore often fresh and exciting) response to the received doctrines of the Church. Within a few lines of the extract quoted above, Jones talks of the 'freights, felled of the living wood, a lent o'tides, brings to all the wharves,..., when Proserpine

⁴⁵cf Hague *Commentary* p.51

unbinds the Baltic.'(p.120) It is interesting to note how living wood, drawn, in this case from the classical legend of Proserpine who went down into the underworld, is this time conflated with the phrase, 'lent o'tides', to convey both the spring unfreezing of the Baltic, allowing ships bearing wood from the northern forests to get through to the rest of the world, and also the time of redemption. Later the single word 'unbinds', derived surely from the biblical codes, reintroduces a theological dimension into this description of geography.

Later in this section of the poem, Bradshaw tells his potential client:

if he waits his turn an' damps down his Sicily
sulphur we'll spokeshave those deadeyes for him as smooth
as a *peach* of a cheek

we'll fay that hounding trim and proper - and of
the best spruce, to rhyme with her mainmast, we'll square
true and round to a nicety the double piercin's o' that cap -
and of keel-elm.

.....

As sure as I was articed, had I the job of mortisin'
the beams to which was lashed and roved the Fault in all of
us, I'd take m' time and set that aspen transom square to
the Rootless Tree... (pp.120-121)

We may notice immediately the technical vocabulary of the carpenter and the shipwright which is closely packed into the second paragraph quoted above. In addition his commentary, Hague points out both the allusion here to *The Dream of the Rood* and to the traditional belief that the cross was made from aspen wood.⁴⁶ The important matter is that Jones here links wood, to cross, to ship's mast; a typological link which, although it may not be difficult for the modern reader to understand, is certainly unusual. However, its introduction here prepares the readers for the future occasions when it will be reintroduced. For instance, in the storm

⁴⁶Hague *Commentary* p.153

section of 'The Lady of the Pool' when the mast of the ship bears the Jewels which according to iconographic tradition evoke and proclaim the wounds of Christ:

terrible lovely

FIVE on 'em

starring the wide steer-board

and lade-board arms of the main yard, aflare far out-board of
her forward flare, at the spumed bowsprit's lifted end, real
lofty beautiful at the mizzen-mast head

and

vapouring extra-bright, from the after arm of the mizzen
yard, the wind-haled ensign-halliers with Helen's twin sign
sheening bluish

the wind-ratched red cloth of ensign

rejoicing them

for that she *cannot* be lost! (pp.141-142)

As Hague points out, Jones combines material from a number of different codes in this passage. The cross, the mast and spars of the ship, St.Elmo's fire and the links that was meant to have with Castor and Pollux and thereby to Helen and hence to Troy. We remember also Helen, discoverer of the True Cross. But once again Jones effects a transformation which only manages to avoid a situation of disintegration because of the internal strength of the images as they draw upon and inform themselves. So long as the Cross remains a viable centre to the poem, then the other forms of typological extension and analysis are enabled in a kind of free play to build up a structure of associations which develop the theme without usurping the significance of the 'saving -tree'.

In the 'Keel, Ram, Stauros' section, the image of the ship's mast as a type for the cross is perhaps given its clearest exposition. However, it is once more extended, no longer just the mast of the ship but also its keel, and indeed its whole wooden construction, are adopted into a nexus in which salvation inheres in all wood, as he will say later; 'All wood else hangs on

you'. (p.174). When Jones is able to speak of 'the quivering elm on which our salvation sways'(p.173) we are uncertain whether he is referring to the mast of the ship or to its keel. The next few pages are an extended meditation on the role of wood in which the poet explores the detail of shipbuilding before he moves on to other uses for wood: 'Timber of foundation/chosen as stoutest and topping them/forechosen and ringed/in the dark arbour-lands.(p.175) After speaking of maypoles then gibbets, Jones turns from the vertical uses of trees to their horizontal ones, enabling him to bring in the siege engines and battering rams before returning to the vertical for Greek and Hebrew cult-objects and, finally, in some sort of resolution to the cross itself and to the liturgical devotion which it inspires:

Always lifted up?
 seen of the polloi?
 reckoned worthy of latria?
 loved of the polis
 evident hope of it?
 Agios Stauros
stands ? (p.180)

The cross stands while the earth revolves. Here, in a fragmentary passage that foreshadows the eventual conclusion of the poem⁴⁷ Jones expresses clearly, though not without a measure of diffidence in his use of the strategy of questions, devoid of answers, the liturgical and theological centre of the poem.

Wasteland

Early in *The Anathemata* Jones writes, 'The cult-man stands alone in Pellam's land;' (p50) and, thereby, the theme of the Wasteland and hence (as we have already noted) the myth of the quest for the Grail is

⁴⁷p.243

introduced into the poem. It is noteworthy that Jones introduces it within the context of the priest saying Mass, a major part of the interpretative centre of the poem. It indicates the importance that the Wasteland theme will have in *The Anathemata*. In his footnote to this phrase, Jones comments starkly, 'King Pellam in Malory's *Morte D'arthur* is lord of the Waste Lands and the lord of the Two Lands.' (p.50) If the reader searches for the sources of this theme they are succinctly listed in Hague's *Commentary*;⁴⁸ Books XIII - XVII of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, in the Peredur story from the *Mabinogion*, T.S.Eliot's *The Waste Land*; and, in connection with that, in 1929, it is known that Jones read the book that stood behind Eliot's poem, Jessie L.Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. In a letter to Jim Ede, Jones writes:

. . . I'm reading a very interesting book, called *From Ritual to Romance*, a learned book about the Grail legend - very *Golden Bough* ish but I think in the main, sound, by a woman called Jessie Weston - a bit trying in places. It's very interesting to me at the moment, with this Arthur business in my head.⁴⁹

The material which runs in fact from the dolorous stroke which Balin gave to King Pellam in the second book of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, is not resolved until Galahad, Percival and Bors find the Grail in the castle of Corbenic and transfer it to Sarras where they anoint and thereby cure the Maimed King. It has been variously interpreted as a tradition which is Christian in origin, as based upon a pre-Christian vegetation ritual, and as a Celtic story, but for the purposes of this study we may concur with the judgement of T.S. Eliot who, in accounting for its fractured and inconsistent structure described it as 'a heap of broken images'⁵⁰ The

⁴⁸Hague *Commentary* p.20

⁴⁹DGC p.46

⁵⁰ Margaret Drabble, ed., *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) p.409.

legend seems to reflect and refract in all directions. As Geoffrey Ashe writes: 'Such things as pagan fertility-magic, and the link between the health of the land and the well-being - especially sexual - of a sacred king, clearly have their place in the evolution of Grail mythology.'⁵¹ It was this multi-faceted nature of the Grail tradition that may have attracted Eliot to use it as one of the bases of *The Waste Land*. In fact Eliot, deriving his understanding of the legend from Jessie L. Weston is responsible for an emphasis on the Wasteland which, as Ashe points out is: 'mainly a modern phenomenon.'⁵² So too Jones who, as we have seen above, makes much of the material which he derives from the Arthurian Corpus, the 'matter of Britain'.

But there are other elements of the Grail strand in the Arthurian corpus which must have been especially attractive to Jones in the composition of *The Anathemata*. To understand what they might have been it is necessary to remind ourselves both of some of the intellectual background to the poem and the content of the Grail legend.

David Jones believed that he was writing and painting in a period of history that came after what he termed, 'The Break'. In the preface to *The Anathemata* he makes an attempt to explain that for him and his circle, primarily young Catholic intellectuals, in the twenties and thirties there was a sense that during the nineteenth century western civilisation had moved from one culture phase to another. The implications of this shift were most seriously felt by artists who could no longer presume to draw upon the the deposits of signs and symbols embedded in a culture for the

⁵¹Norris J. Lacy and Geoffrey Ashe, *The Arthurian Handbook*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988) p.406

⁵²Lacy & Ashe, p.406

making of works of art.⁵³ The *lingua franca* of meaning-bearing objects could no longer be used with impunity, or with the reasonable expectation that it would be understood. The culture-phase in which Jones was compelled, by accident of history, to work, was one in which the artist had to struggle to keep alive that tradition which had been passed on to him. The culture-phase becomes, in the terms of *The Anathemata*, the Wasteland, King Pellam's land, and the artist, in an analogy with the priest saying Mass in the bad architecture of a Gothic Revival Church, does his work in a world where they are aware 'that dead symbols litter to the base of the cult-stone, that the stem by the palled stone is thirsty, that the stream is very low.' (p.50)

As we have already pointed out, the course of the legend, as recorded by Malory, King Pellam is so wounded by the dolorous stroke from Balin that thereafter the land is laid waste, not to be restored again until the Holy Grail is found much later. Jones does not attempt to give in *The Anathemata* his own version of the grail/Wasteland tradition. Rather, it gives him access to a literary tradition which comprehends the borders between Christianity and paganism, and which is closely associated with Britain and the British spirit and reflects all the cultural traditions which have come together to make this, and is also touched by aspects of magic and metamorphosis. The Grail strand within the Arthurian corpus has a moral imperative which Jones found attractive and which wove easily

⁵³Ana.pp.15-16. cf. DGC p.192 where Hague usefully explores the background to the term: 'The term 'The Break', which plays so large a part in David's writing and thought, was first used, I suspect, by Hillare Belloc, who applied it in a religious and political context to the move from the theocentric world of the Middle Ages to the man-centred world of 'modern history' and particularly to the breach with Rome and the snapping of continuity with Roman tradition at the Reformation. Eric Gill adopted the term, but took it further by extending it to what he regarded as an inevitable consequence of the humanism of the Renaissance, the rise of capitalism, industrial production, division of labour, and the 'reduction of the worker to a sub-human condition of intellectual responsibility'. David [Jones] complicated the issue when he moved the term into the field of aesthetics and the fine arts.'

We have already seen how the inclusion of the Wasteland motif at the beginning of the poem locates *The Anathemata* at a period of sagging culture; later in the 'Rite and Fore-Time' section of the poem, in a passage dealing with the emergence of Europe after the ice-age, we get the following lines:

Who was he? Who?
Himself at the cave-mouth
the last of the father-figures
to take the diriment stroke
of the last gigantic leader of
thick-felled cave-fauna?
Whoever he was
Dona ei requiem
sempiternam .
(He would not lose him
... *non perdi*
ex eis quemquam.) (p.66)

As Jones speaks of the death of a cave dweller as the 'diriment' or impedimental stroke, he has, surely, one eye on the dolorous stroke that transfixed King Pellas. But also connoted or evoked by this passage, is the saving work of Christ, whose inclusive character is suggested by the quotation, both in Latin and English, from the Last Discourses of St. John's Gospel. There is perhaps a touch of irony here, for in this passage there is a conflation of the cave-dweller and of the risen Christ at the mouth of the tomb together with the oblique reference to the Grail myth which we have already mentioned. The wounding of King Pellam causes the land to be

laid waste, in Jones's terms, and the stream of symbolic resonances dries up. The salvation which Christ brings both spiritually and in terms of human sign-making is achieved through the agency of wounding. That there is here a striking and rich parallelism which will not have been lost on Jones cannot surely be doubted

That the ironic tragedy of the wartime situation during which he wrote much of *The Anathemata* was also not lost on David Jones can be illustrated by another occasion on which the Grail material surfaces within the poem. At the conclusion of the 'Angle-Land' section, he refers to the second book of *Le Morte D'Arthur*, and the incident when Balin and his brother Balan kill each other, each being unaware of who the other is.

(O Balin O Balan!
 how blood you both
the *Brudersee*
 toward the last phase
of our dear West.) (p.115)

The choice of German words to describe the North Sea has the twin result of redeploying the reader's imagination towards the War and, simultaneously, it effects a defamiliarizing transformation. That it lies within parenthesis seems to imply that somehow the reader is privy to some private and personal thoughts of the poet. That a war against Germany was somehow tantamount to fratricide, and that it was yet another signal that the present culture-phase was rushing to an inevitable close, would seem to be the sort of thoughts underlying this passage. In his own copy of the poem, Jones glosses the explanation of Balin and Balan in the footnote with a reference to the dedication beginning *In Parenthesis* , 'TO THE ENEMY/FRONT FIGHTERS WHO SHARED

OUR/PAINS AGAINST WHOM WE FOUND/OURSELVES BY
MISADVENTURE'⁵⁴

Although there are many occasions when Jones introduces material from the Arthurian corpus, mostly by way of Malory or *The Mabinogion*, into the next sections of the poem, the Wasteland theme is not the most prominent. An exception may be the description of the crucifixion from 'The Lady of the Pool',⁵⁵ where Jones ties together Eliot, Chaucer and Malory among very many others, in order to give a rich and creative pictorial interpretation of what happened at Calvary and what its effects were. In this instance, the effects of the Passion are couched in terms of the vegetative regeneration associated with spring, the season of Easter. The Wasteland, inhabited by Mary, the Lady of Dolour (it is interesting to note how Jones transfers the stroke which wounded King Pellam to Mary, who, also, according to Biblical myth was the recipient of wounding the implications of such a conflation of types are interesting) is made to bear fruit again because of the Passion. The reference to Eliot's poem is interesting not only because it is known that Jones admired *The Waste Land* very much and that they shared a common reservoir of Arthurian material but also because Jones's response to the theme itself is far more positive than that of Eliot. Jones, through the theme of redemption by means of the Cross, is able to resolve the emptiness of the Wasted Land in a way that is impossible for Eliot. And, if we are prepared to digress a little, it is important because it puts into context the pessimism which Jones is often charged with. We may accept that he saw as inevitable the end of a phase of civilisation which was precious both to him and to those about

⁵⁴Thomas Dilworth, 'David Jones's Glosses on *The Anathemata*', *Studies in Bibliography* 33, 1980, p.243

⁵⁵*Ana* pp.157-8 cf. the discussions of this passage both in terms of its language and its content.

him. We may also accept that he regarded the role both of the artist and also, by extension, that of the religious believer as precarious in a world which feted technological innovation rather than artistic insight. Both are implied in his use of the theme of the Wasteland. But Jones's Wasted Land is made to bear fruit again through the activity of the Passion. Even at his most pessimistic, Jones retains the hope that is a part of faith that sign making will continue to be possible because it is a part of the nature of God. A very large part of what Jones seems to be trying to achieve in *The Anathemata* is exploring why and how hope may be possible in a world which appears to a sensitive man both meaningless and hopeless.

Although there are few overt references and allusions in the central section of the poem, it may be argued that the journey motif which dominates these central sections contains within itself the quest theme of the Arthurian Wasteland material. There is throughout *The Anathemata* a bipolar relationship between a situation of stasis, i.e living in the time of crisis and the Wasteland and the journeying which is at the same time the progression of the soul in individual terms, and is equally the evolution of peoples and cultures. The journey is also a quest because all movement, all journeying and all pilgrimage has a heuristic aspect. All journeying is seeking or searching even if (and this is a strong element of *The Anathemata*) the end result is only to re-evaluate and see anew the situation of stasis from which one comes.⁵⁶ That the quest uncovers the signs of growth in what had been interpreted and once dismissed as the cultural desert, is proof enough of its validity.

It is in the final section of the poem, 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day,' that Jones explores the full dimensions of the Wasteland theme in connexion

⁵⁶We may note here the similarity between Jones and Eliot, especially in *Four Quartets* on this point.

with the crucifixion. Quest and drought are brought together in the most outstanding and innovative way against the background of the New Testament account of the Passion of Christ. But the reader's perspective on this is carefully contrived by the poet, since the Passion narrative is viewed with the eyes of the Good Friday liturgy, and is a narrative in liturgical performance. The Passion, as portrayed in 'Sherthursdaye and Venus Day', is in some respects one of the high-points of David Jones's art since here the themes and allusive surfaces which have emerged throughout the poem are fused together in a poetic structure which, as will be seen in the discussion in Chapter 7, builds to a climax and then returns the reader to the Mass, newly contextualised by the Cross, from which they departed at the beginning of the poem.

From the outset of this section, the Wasteland theme is very much in evidence, Christ himself is 'signed with the quest-sign' (p.224), and by the same token his saving function is well expressed when Jones says that, 'he frees the waters,' (p.225) Questing and fructifying, these are the two elements from the Wasteland strand of the Arthurian corpus which Jones uses to describe the theologically complex aspects of Jesus as saviour. This is made explicit when Jones makes the direct allusive link between Peredur, the Welsh version of Percival, and Christ. Of the former, Jones writes in his footnote; 'He goes on his quest, frees and restores the Wasteland: the streams flow again, marriages are consummated and the earth fructifies.'(p.225 n.2)

That this is achieved through the death of Christ and is continually available generally through human sign-making and particularly through the Mass, and on the cross is underlined when, later, he writes:

In the wasted land

at jackal-meet
at the division of the spoils
with his hands stretched out
he continues. (p.231)

The 'wasted land' is both the rubbish-dump of Jerusalem at Golgotha, and the world itself, specifically the Latin West; and Jones will make this clear in the next verse of the poem. Hague suggests that the land is wasted because of the death of Christ the King on the cross.⁵⁷ We may however argue that any interpretation which we offer should be more fluid and inclusive than this. Nevertheless, we may concur with Hague when he says that; '...the sharing of Christ's garments [is] itself an image of the sharing of the first-fruits of the Redemption.'⁵⁸ The outstretched arms of Christ on the Cross are a symbol both of that freeing of the waters of the Wasteland by the passion and, at the same time, by a carefully deployed allusion to the rubric of the Mass (p.231 n.2) extend the significance of Christ's activity into the world of sign-making and into the world of the present. The Mass bridges history and makes present at least some aspects of salvation.

From this transparent depiction of the Cross the poet develops a series of allusions to water, the human waters of Mary's womb and the holy wells and springs of Wales. Christ is termed the Lord of the Waters. Yet, paradoxically, the cry of dereliction for Jones is not 'Eli Eli lamai sabachthani', with its connotations of rejection but 'SITIO', 'I thirst', drawn from John's Gospel 19.28, more specifically in the version used in the Good Friday Liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. As if to underline this, the poet has already printed a reproduction of his own inscription of the plainsong neumes of this part of the service a couple of pages earlier in

⁵⁷Hague, *Commentary* . p.252

⁵⁸ Hague *Commentary* p.252

the text of the poem. The Lord of the Waters is thirsty. He who frees the Wasteland needs a drink. The irony is heightened by the immediate introduction of nursery-rhyme language before the explanation of the whole thing, drawn from, or rather corrupted from, Virgil: 'One man, by water, restores us to our state' (p.238 & n.5). It is through the medium of water that Christ realises salvation.

This represents the culmination, if not the exhaustion, of the Wasteland theme within the poem. It is interesting to note that at this point Jones has left behind any direct allusions to Malory or *The Mabinogion*, although their influence is still very much there, but the content of the underlying theme can now be presumed by the poet as he turns his attention to exploring its resolution through the Cross.

One final allusive reference to Malory's version of the Wasteland material, in the final pages of the poem, brings it to completion. In 'Rite and Fore-time', Jones concentrated the reader's attention on the importance of Jerusalem for the history of humanity. In the final lines of *The Anathemata*, he returns to underline this theme having in the intervening pages explained why Jerusalem is so important. Before he turns to the coda of his discursive ending he writes:

Here, in this place
 as in Sarras city
(where the maim was ended
 at the voyage—end) (p.242)

In his footnote to this passage he writes:

The allusion is to 'the Cyte of Sarras in the spyrytuel place' (Malory, Bk.XVII). It was at the city of Sarras that the Grail-quest was consummated, the Maimed King healed and from whence the lance and vessel were taken up to heaven. (p.242 n.1)

But for the reader it is the confirmation that the quest is over, that salvation has been offered and accepted, that resolution has been achieved, that the Wasteland has been made to bloom again. That it happened both historically and mythically in Jerusalem is not of course insignificant. Neither is it insignificant that he pursues his discussion by returning to the Mass. Jones finally pulls together all the strands of the conceptual and allusive material from which the poem has been constructed.

In the chapter of explanation and commentary below, further discussion will be given to all of the individual passages mentioned above; here it suffices to draw attention to the way in which Jones pursues the development of themes within the poem, sometimes singly, often collectively; but always exhaustively. He leaves no stone unturned, no metaphor or symbol untried. During this chapter only a selection of possible themes, perhaps the most obvious ones, has been explored and there are many others which would have been suitable candidates for analysis. The foregoing discussion has tried to show how themes are integrated into the fabric of the poem and how concentration on them illuminates how Jones bridges the gap between his conceptual framework and the resulting work of art which is *The Anathemata*.

CHAPTER 7: THE COMMENTARY

The following chapter seeks to 'read' the poem. It does not seek to be exhaustive in its noting of allusions and references - that has already been admirably done by René Hague, whose own *Commentary* has been influential in the preparation of this one. Rather, this seeks to give an account of the progression of *The Anathemata*, from beginning to end; it aims to explore its shape. It is by no means the final word in the interpretation of the poem, merely one more among others. It is the reading of the poem which is made possible by the sorts of thematic, linguistic and conceptual analyses which have preceded it.

The Shape of the Poem

Before describing the content of the poem, it is necessary to spend a little time describing its shape. How are we to account for the outward form of *The Anathemata*? It is certainly strange and there is little in the canon of twentieth-century English poetry with which to compare it except perhaps *The Waste Land*.¹ But other than the fact that both are long poems in several contrasting sections with some similarities of intellectual content there is nothing really to connect their formal characteristics.

We need to look elsewhere for models from the point of view of which we may understand the poem's outward form. Jeremy Hooker argues that *The Anathemata* is best considered as a verbal labyrinth and that the thought of the Virgilian scholar W.F. Jackson Knight on the subject of the role of mazes and labyrinths in the mythology of the Classical world is illuminating and a useful point of entry. Hooker writes:

¹We might perhaps add the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams's *Paterson*

First, this ancient pattern, of entry into the labyrinth is still a potent metaphor capable of recovering some of its primal significance or of embodying more sophisticated religious or psychic meanings. Secondly, labyrinths or mazes are boundaries or symbolic boundaries, between different worlds or realities or forms of order, and may permit or withhold entry under certain circumstances. Thirdly, they are closely associated with earth and water—above all, with the apprehension of earth as the Great Mother and of water as the element of rebirth.²

The shape of the poem is therefore a function of its archetypal content. Hooker suggests that it is a labyrinth or 'circular maze'.³ In contrast however, Gwyn Williams draws on a different analogy and suggests that both *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* bear similarities to Celtic poetry with its complex interweaving structure and circularity.⁴ But, to a certain extent neither of these do more than reduce the shape of the poem to a set of intellectual constructs, tidy analogies of matters which are certainly close to the poet's heart. However, both of these views grasp onto the one structural matter of which we can be immediately sure, that is the poem's circularity. It returns to the point from which it starts, even if that point is now perceived differently.

On the sleeve notes to a recording of part of the poem, Jones writes: '*The Anathemata* is cyclic in character and however wide the circle, the action of the Mass is central to it and insofar as a circle can be said to have a "beginning" or an "end", it begins and ends with the Mass.'⁵ Thomas

²Matthias p.279

³Matthias p.283

⁴cf. Jones's "Welsh Poetry" in *Epoch and Artist* pp.63-64. On the parallels between Welsh visual and aural art: 'This Welsh aural art belonged to the same order of being as that which made possible a visual abstract art in other Celtic lands. In that visual art questions of the formal and the content hardly arise because what we see is the visible image of the union. It was just this oneness of form and content that the unflinching integrity of Joyce was determined to achieve in a literary form; it was not for nothing that he looked steadfastly at a page from Kells.'

⁵Readings from '*The Anathemata*, '*In Parenthesis*', '*The Hunt*', *Argo* PLP 1093 quoted in Corcoran p.83

Dilworth has developed what is probably the most sophisticated hypothesis to account for the shape of *The Anathemata*, he argues that it is a 'meditative daydream'⁶ made between the elevation of the consecrated bread on page 49 of the poem and the elevation of the chalice on page 242. Between these two events, he argues, lie a series of ten thematic concentric circles or spheres with the eucharist at both the outer edge and the centre.⁷ He suggests that this account of the structure accounts for the simultaneity which, we have already seen in the discussion for Jones's use of Spengler's view of history, is a major and indeed governing factor of the poem. He writes:

The structure, involving intermediate spheres, is not static but diffusive: the centre radiates through the spheres towards their outermost circumference, which itself radiates inward. The intermediate spheres mediate this intraradiation partly by means of the poem's symbolic correspondences, through which all suffering and every joyous consummation has its centre of meaning in the paschal mystery.⁸

Dilworth argues his case strongly, both from the finished or published version of the poem and also from the evidence of the drafts. But while we may find his argument for a realistic setting for the poem in the daydream during the Mass convincing and his structural map of the poem attractive, Hooker's theory of the 'labyrinth' while not acceptable in every respect seems to have greater immediate similarities to the experience that most readers will have of reading the poem. In a sense then, we need to hold both sets of pictures of the poem simultaneously in order to do justice to the structure. We may, however, propose another analogy which may assist the reader in coming to terms with the structure of *The*

⁶Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning* p.157

⁷cf. the diagram on p.169 of Dilworth, *The Shape of Meaning*

⁸Dilworth p.172

Anathemata , one which develops the labyrinthine pattern proposed by Hooker and does not deny the efficacy of Dilworth's atomising of the poem. When discussing the voyage motif within the poem, we argued⁹ from the anthropological perspective of Victor Turner that the sea-voyages within *The Anathemata* evoke the state of liminality produced by the act of pilgrimage. Here we would like to extend that analysis beyond the boundaries of those parts of the poem which are obviously to do with voyaging and see the whole poem in terms of pilgrimage and the textual strategy of defamiliarisation as an element of the transitional, liminal state evoked by the poet. *The Anathemata* is therefore a pilgrimage, with all the difficulties and attendant rewards that that entails, a pilgrimage moreover through both time and space. The 'map' of that journey may well be labyrinthine, but by seeing it in terms of the experience of the transitional, the liminal, and the threshold, we may be able to understand the sort of processes which Jones evokes, or rather is trying to evoke, in the minds of his readers.

(In the following commentary the first and last words of the portions of the poem being described are placed at the head of each section.)

RITE AND FORE-TIME

TESTE DAVID CVM SIBYLLA

'David's words with Sibyl's blending' is the second line of the medieval sequence of the *Dies Irae* , sung immediately before the Gospel in the traditional form of the Requiem Mass. Does David Jones mean the reader to understand that he, or she, is living in those days of wrath with impending doom? Certainly, it is a prophetic motto, but are we, perhaps,

⁹cf. above p.160

to hold it in our minds together with the plea for clemency and salvation which will come in the last verse: 'Spare, O God, in mercy spare him!/Lord, all pitying, Jesu blest,/Grant them thine eternal rest.'¹⁰ But there is more here. Jones is surely outlining something of his own purposes. The testament of David, the Bible's poet, is blending with the Sibylline Oracles, Judaeo-Christian works which refer to the pagan world. In *The Anathemata*, Jones will range from the truths of Biblical Christianity, through the ancient world and the literature and myths of all human history in Western Europe. All these, and more, will become his ~~material~~ from which the poem will be built.

We already...coming through each door.

Who are *We* ? Is it the reader in company with the narrator or, is it the congregation gathered at the Mass? Both are part of a community, whether they know it or not, the human community which recognises, even though it may not always value, the true nature of the priest as craftsman as he gropes his way through the Mass to lift up, 'an efficacious sign', the 'thing made other'. The priest is a visible image of holiness and a channel for the salvation effected by the metamorphosis that only his craftsmanship can effect. And all this is evoked in language thick with allusions to and quotations from the Mass. At the outset, we, the readers of this poem, are confronted with the language of mystery, of strangeness and awful beauty. And yet, it is language 'altogether theirs', language which can, almost despite itself and its strangeness, be understood, if only intuitively. The familiar ritual of weekly devotion is presented in an unfamiliar way, from here on, the reader is charged with the responsibility of sharing in the explorations which the poet will make.

¹⁰*The English Hymnal*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933) No.351

We are living in the 'sagging end'; the doom, the waste land, the technocratic world which Jones fears most strongly. The world, more especially, the symbolic world of Western Christian Europe, is dried up and dying. The world of symbols and myths, the cultural heritage which has been taken for granted, especially by artists, has been overrun by the functional, the technical, and the useful. Even Churches, once beautiful and emblems of the best of human creativity, have been reduced to pastiches with ornament that once pointed to life and dynamism now however pointing to death.

A change of tone, and with it of code, military language signals a retreat, and stone, wood, and water, the three substances which, as we have seen, are for Jones elemental symbols on which all sign-making is based, are in danger of being reduced to their constituents of matter. The 'fact-man' would object here that matter is essentially what wood, water and stone are anyway. But in the preface to the poem, Jones has given an argument to the contrary, the argument of an artist:

Water is called the 'matter' of the Sacrament of Baptism. Is 'two of hydrogen and one of oxygen' that 'matter'? I suppose so. But what concerns us here is whether the poet can and does so juxtapose and condition within a context the formula H_2O as to evoke 'founts', 'that innocent creature', 'the womb of this devine font', 'the candidates', or for that matter 'the narrows' and 'the silver sea, Which serves it in the office of a wall, Or as a Moat defensive to a house'. (pp.16-17)

That matter, reduced to matter, stripped of its spirit, of its essence as something which can be a sign or a symbol, simply put, of its life, is nothing. It is a pessimistic picture, waiting for the final attack of the guerillas of utility which are already entering the Church. Yet, despite even this pessimism, somewhere, in a Church (not necessarily of any great beauty), the life-giving ritual of the Mass is recapitulated.

The cult-man...venerated trinkets

The Wasteland, Pellam's land, is the time we live in now, marked by infertility, ruled over by a wounded King, and the priest/maker - the cultic craftsman, solitary, is in the middle of it. The Wasteland is that land between certainty and doubt, where speculation is arid. It is the time and the place where symbols and stories have lost their power to communicate. It is the precarious position of those who because of their calling are outsiders - lying inside doom, but outside of a world which took a certain amount of literary and cultural baggage for granted, carried it for centuries, but is now choosing to put it to one side and forget it. The cult-man guards the signs - the *signa* that culture has forgotten. He guards things that are not valued any more, as if they were precious, he is the bridge, the pontifex between worlds; this world and the next, the world of signs where art is possible, if not necessary, and the signless world. He is the juggler, the fool, holding together the old things and the new within the land. Knowing what they are, and what they can effect, he guards these *signa*. And here too, there is a list of these signs both those whose origins are divine and those of human origin. The language of the Classical world is mingled with the modern vocabulary of archaeology and anthropology. The unsolicited heavenly gifts together with the things of the earth become reflections of the divine and therefore legitimate objects of devotion. The cult-man holds together all those signs which stand for beginnings and ends. Even in his marginal position, the cult-man is guardian of so much, both old and new, that he speaks the language of God. But even he may not be aware of the forces acting upon even this world, devoid as it already is of the gratuitous, the beautiful and the meaningful, to destroy what little there is left. Priest and poet, artist and cult-man are all endangered species here.

This man...all the *gentes* .

'Late in time, behold him come', the allusion to Charles Wesley's Christmas hymn,¹¹ 'Hark! the herald Angels sing', indicates that the cult-man has similarities to, or perhaps analogues with, he who is Incarnated - the Christ. Is it at the wrong time? Or at the end of time? In the end, it does not matter, the important thing is that it happened, *in time* . The priest/artisan is an anomaly, uncomfortable in the world that does not value his art. He looks over the tools of his trade, tools that are 'name-bearing' in that they are where Christ will be revealed. But Christ will also be revealed through the hands of the Priest and in the bread/cake of the host and all bread/cakes given to this people that they might preach to all peoples, everywhere, in all times. There is here, perhaps, a faint echo of the Nunc Dimittis with its curiously wistful sense of an ending, one era closing and another beginning.

Within the railed tumulus...on this hill.

Within the rails, on the altar which is the Christian seat of revelation and, at the same time, the pagan burial mound, the act of Eucharist, which we should always remember is the action of thanksgiving, is made in the company of all the dead. The priest intones the Mass (high and low) and the poem moves effortlessly in time and place to the Last Supper. The join hinges on the phrase, 'as one who speaks'. (p.51). A low voice in a high-room; there are few here and one has already gone out. The language is taut, each individual word is wrung of all its possible significance. The scene is set, a dramatic replaying of the elements of the Last Supper, with Judas having left already. A new verse introduces a nice word-play on the word conspiracy; a sense of menace, of betrayal and con-

¹¹*The English Hymnal* , No.24

spiracy, breathing together, the unity of table-fellowship. This is at the same time the instigation of one ritual and the continuation and anniversary of another, the Passover. Christianity, in its determinant rituals, makes meaningful within itself the rites of other faiths, other centuries and all cultures. It gathers all safely in. The date of this rite is determined by the moon, the cosmos itself, and the disciples follow the water-bearer through the dryness of Jerusalem and are taken by him to a room, 'a high nave', here both ship and Church. Does the mention of signs of the zodiac indicate that all has been foretold? The words allow Jones to make further allusions moving the reader's focus between a table, the sides of the ship and the altar. And there is a light, too, a ritual light, perhaps too the light which lightens the Gentiles, Christ himself; perhaps the lucernarium, the evening light of the Church at prayer; and the Easter fire, the symbol chosen by the Church to celebrate her holiest moment. Jones moves further to include the high cave of Bethlehem where the Incarnation that is coming to fulfilment in the Passion actually happened. They are preparing for a meal where Christ will be, following Aquinas' Eucharistic hymn, both host, priest and victim.¹² The allusion to the folk-song 'Green grow the rushes O' allows Jones to be clear about who is there, Matthew and John, James and Peter and Judas. The place itself, the upper room, has been transformed into a ship, the ship of the Church, the ship of pilgrimage which we will meet again in later sections and which will in fact, be a crucially central aspect of the poem. But the eucharist too is a voyage in its own right, a voyage across both time and space. Each time it is celebrated it makes present the events of one long Festival weekend in Jerusalem. So, 'who d'you think is master of her?', Ship and Eucharist? -

¹²cf. 'Then, immortal Food supplying,/Gave himself with his own hand' in Aquinas's *Pange Lingua*, *The English Hymnal*, No.326 and also W. Catterton Dix's 'Thou on earth both Priest and Victim' No.301

Christ himself. And, in the prepared room, the Last Supper happens, within the ritual framework of Judaism; at the end of the life of one form of faith, it looks forward to the genesis of another. In a room in Jerusalem, not just anywhere in Jerusalem, Jones, while prepared to make the most strained of connections between people, deities, places and things, has a strong sense of the working of God in the particular; accuracy and precision is all important.

[On this unabiding rock...*colles Arthuri*?

In parenthesis, a digression, perhaps better termed an excursus, in which the poet explores some of the issues surrounding the subject of impermanence. In typical Jonesian ironic style it is hills, and the cities built upon hills, seemingly the most permanent of things, that he uses to do this. This section is heavily annotated by the author, because it needs much explanation and the author recognises that what he is talking about comes from an unshared background. Even Jerusalem, the 'unabiding rock', is not secure from the flux of climatic and geological change. The poet expresses millions of years through the idea of the Aristotelian Great Summer and Winter. Up and down, altitude and lowness, hills are made low, prophecy is vindicated and myths and proverbs are reversed. Parnassus, Ossa, Jerusalem, Rome, Ararat, and then the Welsh *carneddau* and Moel. In Wales, or rather in the marches of Wales, something is kept unchanging, secure and safe - efficacious, like the signs, Wales is, like the eternal Rome in Virgil, an asylum, the enclosure for the children of Arthur, who are also descendants of the people of Troy. For, despite time, weather and the vagaries of geomorphology, there are some matters that lie secure within the tradition.

Nine-strata'd Hissarlik...new founded Oberland]

The extent of the windy ruins of the nine cities of Troy, superimposed one upon another, is small - its scale is out of proportion to ^{its} importance as 'archetype of sung - heights', the original city. In the eyes of the poet, which are also those of the tradition upon which he draws and which he has made authentically his own, Troy is the mythical origin of Rome and hence of the whole of European civilisation. Even before the coming of Christ in the flesh, it lies under the sign of the cross, swastika-shaped, impregnable at the node of the earth, and thus everything is put under the sign of the cross. And within its walls lies Helen, the margaron, the pearl of great price, the feminine valued for itself. Also there is Priam's hall, the Megaron, and within Troy there is, as Virgil pointed out, wood and stone and water, the significal elements from which signs and symbols will arise.

Troy is small, but its mythic significance is immense. In Jones's mind, it becomes the type of all known towns, hills and forts. Love, war and Troy's 'anguish-heights', and all places where people have suffered and died point us towards Calvary. But having established Troy's pre-eminent position, Jones returns to the matter of change and impermanence, especially climatic change and the effects that that can have on what were thought to be impregnable human edifices. The Mediterranean is, at various times, under both desert and ice. Glaciation drags across Europe - like Nazi *sturm und drang* . Is the German advance quite so inexorable as that of the fire and ice? For the Liongate of Mycenae, symbol of man's artifacture, has been covered by wind driven loam (loess/Leo-gate). The ice-age and other climatic changes, create the geology on which cities are to be built. The section ends with both the promise of apocalypse and its resolution in hope. If European culture is destroyed, what signs of hope will there be after the pack-ice has melted?

At this unabiding Omphalos...O the Academies!

From Jerusalem, centre of the Semitic world, to Delphi, oracular centre of the Greek world, and the reader journeys from Ur with Abraham too. All cities are equally unabiding and transient. These rocks mark the division of the cosmos: they are places of liminality, thresholds into the world conjured by signs. And, being rock, they have a sacrificial aspect. The time too is acceptable, the year of jubilee, the year of freedom some two thousand years before the birth of Christ. From here Jones's attention turns to man's evolution. Man evolves culturally from farmer to artist, there is a gradual movement from gratuity to utility. But that Jones will explore further, later in the poem. The focus shifts to man the creative artist, man 'master-of-plastic' to The Willendorf 'Venus', while the poet wonders about the unknown man who created it, Jones wonders who he was, and asks whether in the work of his hands there was somehow a reflection of the creativity of God? 'Man-hands god-handled'. All this happened so long ago before the flux of glaciation had finished its striation and the River Danube had become a highway for the mariners of Rome extending the empire into the heart of continental Europe.

In an apostrophic parenthesis, the poet muses further on the theme of beginnings; this time, the beginning and eventual scope of European civilisation - the dancing of the waltz in Vienna, the Church music of the Benedictine Abbey of Melk, the end of Roman authority. The artist who made the Willendorf 'Venus' was struggling to give birth to form out of stone so many years before that. Out of the earth comes the 'chthonic' form, an echo perhaps of TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the artist makes a thing out of an Earth Mother, a thing both feminine and generative. Jones alludes to the Marian hymns - 'her we declare', and there are quite a few occasions when Mary is declared - already there are hints, oblique

suggestions, that the Queen of Heaven may not be too far off. Who else could it be?

Once again there is a transformation, a shifting of scene, effected in this instance by the introduction of an allusion to the nursery-rhyme 'Three Blind Mice' with its denouement in animals getting killed. The recognition of the familiar gives Jones the opportunity to change the perspective to the representation of the natural world, not the mythical world. We look at another example of prehistoric art, the cave painters of Lascaux, painting animals and making them real on the surface of stone through the medium of paint. (Jones is extraordinarily precise about the material that he uses). These artists make present, unbloodily, what occurs outside the caves in the hunt, and this is itself life-giving for the members of the community. Is this where sacraments begin? Certainly the language that Jones uses here parallels that of sacramental theology with great exactness even down to the rhythms of the words. At the end of this section there is a final twist, 'O the Academies!' contrasts the raw, necessary nature of the artist's work for the prehistoric man to the effete ornamentation of the Greek world. Even if all he is doing is pointing up the difference between the creative and the critical, the twist is unsettling.

What ages since...these danced out the Dinosaur?

In the next section Jones reflects on yet another turning-point in man's development - the coming of fire, expressed in Promethean images, but set liturgically in the context in the celebration of Easter, the holy Fire of Resurrection. The emphasis on the importance of this turning point in man's development is stressed. The first fire becomes the source of meaning for all fires, generated from wood and stone. It is a great day which comes after the blessed night. But there is, once again a twist. Fire

brings with it the capacity to make tools, and ushers in the world of the utile. There is a world which, as he will point out in a poem published later than *The Anathemata*, any sense of the divine will be easily missed no matter how hard we look.

A sudden change in the type of language from the fragmentary to the jocose marks another shift in the poet's, and hence the reader's perceptions. One of the key marks of man, which David Jones returns to throughout his work, is the concern for the dead, and in the next section he sees in the funerary rites of pre-history the types of later, even Christian, rites. He forges ritual links between various instances of fossil remains. Who were all these people? Jones wonders, where did they come from? It all takes place within the geographical limits of the West, which for Jones takes on the form of a stage, a theatre in which the scenes are shifted, and man moves from naked savagery to clothed civilisation. In this play, which is history, the creature develops from being man-like to being humanity itself, under the watchful eye of God who is himself 'not made' - the puppet-master. Jones's material ranges far to include even present-day unsophisticated peoples from Nigeria alongside the fossilised remains of prehistoric man. All have steps to dance in the great dance of history, the cosmic harlequinade.

Now, from the draughty flats...*non perdidit ex eis quemquam.*)

The words that he uses now are capable of both a theatrical and a geographical interpretation. The codes of each inform the sense of the other. Jones turns the main thrust of the poem back to the matter of weather once again. The beginnings of time lie in a masque of climatic change, the '*Vorzeit* - masque'. But the music belongs to the world of the Church and Jones uses the language and words of Latin Church music,

especially plainsong, which help him explore the cycle of climatic change in terms of the cumulative cycles of the Divine Office. The hymn becomes a kind of votive-Mass of weather.

And soon, albeit in the huge scale of geological time, will come the era of human beings: 'adaptable, rational, plucked out'. Man appears in the tertiary age but as yet he does not have the ability to rise above the climate. He may be able to trap 'ulotrichous' animals (which poet, other than Jones, would dare use such a word?), but he is not able to conquer the cosmos which in Jones's terms, has an overriding ideological shape, a rational unity. What sort of ritual or type of sacred making did these men use? asks Jones, in language which directs us to, and almost parodies by its setting, the references to the Mass at the beginning of the poem.

In the next section of more fragmentary verse, Jones hymns the praise of all men who make things, who create artifacts; the action of quintessential humanity which places man into the redemptive sphere of the Passion. He uses words which have the 'feel' of procreation, 'uteral', 'penile', and holds this 'giving birth' up alongside the business of rites and rituals, especially the Christian ritual of the Requiem Mass. These are the last of the cave-dwellers and in the phrase 'Himself at the cave-mouth', they are linked to the person of Christ risen, the work of the Incarnation completed.

Before the melt-waters...mid-wife of us.

Jones shifts his immediate attention from the people and their formation to the gestation of the landscape of North Wales. The poetry is thick with rich rhetoric, the names like Peris, and Paternus, many derived from Welsh legend are evocative of a world which is always changing, In linking geomorphological detail with mythic explanation, Jones connects

Bala Lake, formed four hundred million years ago in the Ordovician period, with the flow of the River Dee, turned South to North by the effects of glaciation. Legend suggests that the waters of the Dee and the Lake never mingle, so the Dee exits *parthenos* , virgin, giving Jones yet another opportunity for a reference to Troy and Greece. Under the Welsh 'Parnassus' of Snowdon, Uther Pendragon lies and will do so until the fall of Wales herself. This is an eschatological passage drawing on Shakespeare, relativity theory and the *Dies Irae* which we have already met at the beginning of the poem, setting the tone for the whole of *The Anathemata* . Jones traces the movement from prehistory to history as if Clio, the muse of history, was stepping on to a stage, somewhat lacking in confidence, diffident.

From the stage he turns to the liturgy and in the next paragraph, in language heavy with liturgical ideas, the land emerges from out of the ice more particularly, this land is Albion. The climate grows tolerable and the ice breaks like the fraction of the Host at Mass, to reveal fertile land. Outflowing deposits of moraine affect the course of rivers and thereby the topography of England. Moreover, Jones points out that the outflowings from Scotland did not just affect Welsh geomorphology: Scotland is the source for not a few of the Welsh cultural deposits too. Cunedda brings with him both Scotland and Rome when he comes from Forth to Conwy. In the tottering years as the Roman grip was being loosened on these islands, it was Rome that brought (or rather sent) Christianity to us.

Before the slow estuarine...Taff to Tâf

This seems like a short wistful note, almost in parenthesis, about the South Wales coalfield, which Jones dismisses for being the cradle of the utility which destroys the Welsh heritage. Or is it a kind of alchemy,

whereby the coal produces wealth? The former seems, however, most likely.

Before the microgranites...*sanctis suis!* ?

Further ice movement from Scotland to Ireland, latterly described in the language of a military campaign. At times, the poetry seems to convey the massiveness of its subject matter. For example, a phrase such as: As though the sea itself were sea-borne/and under weigh', with its play on the final word of the sentence, displays the great extent of Jones's inventiveness. The Irish Sea and St. George's Channel, places where St. Brendan and the other Irish saints will miraculously sail, are themselves carved out. Places where, in common with the other places which we have seen, God will be proclaimed in the works of men.

From before all time...have shown?

Despite everything, the confusing interplay of ideas and realities, there is the light of the Incarnation illuminating even these fore-times. Standing across the fore-times is list upon list, geomorphological, geographical, biological and zoological. In the muddled pack of geological strata, still Christ 'brights his ichthic sign'. The business of sorting out the geological beginnings of the world is complicated, but the sign is eternally illuminating, from the barbarous beginnings, to the elegance of 'amorous Silvy'.

How else we?...Quadrilateral Plan?

If the whole of creation does not lie under the signs of the redeemer, 'He-with-us', the Emmanuel, even we could not exist and there would have been no vehicle for Incarnation. There is a great play on the word 'uteral' here and it is echoed in the adjective used to describe the hills. From this

stems the iconography of the *tellus mater* who will become the Blessed Virgin Mary, but another side of her is explored here, knowledge and learning, symbolised by the Latin mottos of the ancient English Universities; these too are cognates of the feminine. As man evolves into 'Homo Sapiens, post-Pliocene', Jones suggests that even these too are entitled to blessedness. This is the period of the domestication of animals, dogs, and sheep, and also of the first pottery, but Jones reinterprets this material so that the theme of Christ as shepherd is stated and restated. The shepherd counts in the Lancashire counting rhyme, itself the reflection of a more ancient language. Behind the images of the shepherd that Jones uses here is Christ, the eternal shepherd, eternally counting. Finally there is the achievement of kitchen pottery within the neolithic period. Without it, there could be no chalice and therefore no *anamnesis*, the memorial at the Mass. The light of incarnation searches out those places where dogs, images of faithfulness, have been domesticated. And then the search widens to range throughout the burial sites of Europe.

Upon all fore-time...I am your bread?

If it is so that the light of Christ has shone on the people of the fore-time, our daily recollection of Christ at the Mass links us with those whose works judge them, John and Felicity, liturgical types are for us all who too are remembered, at the Mass. For the commemoration of the dead, precedes the Prayer of Consecration. Here Jones remembers the water, necessary, together with the workings of the worm, for the production of the barley which will be the sacramental bread. The section, as the whole poem, ends where it begins, in a Eucharistic climax. At the beginning we were unsure, diffident about what it was we were observing. At the end, there is a statement enclothed in a question: 'I am your Bread?'. We are still unsure.

MIDDLE-SEA AND LEAR-SEA

From the Mediterranean to the English Channel

Twelve hundred years...(They can show you the piscine.)

By way of contrast with the first section of the poem, in this section we are firmly within the realm of history, the recorded accumulation of events in time. Twelve hundred years since the fall of Troy, the city which, as we have seen, is the type for all great cities. Jones introduces his method of recording time here through the medium of the folk-song, 'Green grow the rushes, O', a song which he uses regularly. In the context of the fall of Troy, Jones reminds us of the death of Hector as recorded by Virgil in the *Aeneid*,¹³ dragged backwards, widdershins (which itself has magical and ritual connotations), outside the walls of his own city. This sets up a train of allusive motion in which a link is forged between bruised and broken Hector and Christ, the 'suffering servant' as foretold in the prophecy of Isaiah. This is a poetic strategy which is absolutely typical of David Jones throughout *The Anathemata*. Jones sees in the description of Hector in *The Aeneid* a way of writing about the hero which extols his wounds, and recognises that in his defeat lies the gestation of the people of Rome; it is a way of thinking which parallels the language and thought of Isaiah. Hague writes: 'By applying Isaiah's words to Hector, D.(sic) is assimilating the latter to the Redeemer, and so bringing him into the very heartland of his thought.'¹⁴ But if we compare typological similarities which Jones exploits between Romulus and Elijah, both of whom were assumed bodily into heaven,¹⁵ we can be sure that Jones's strategy is to develop

¹³René Hague is particularly informative on this matter, cf. *Commentary* pp.89-90

¹⁴ Hague, *Commentary* p.91

¹⁵cf. Him up to heaven/in chariot-fire./The heaven-appointed beast of grey/to nourish the lilfy-white pair. p.85

similarities and resonances between the types which make up the nodal points in his universe of meanings.

But Hector's death, viewed through the lens of Virgil points to the foundation of the city of Rome and, in this chapter, we are more proximate to that than we are to the fall of Troy. In the first section of the poem, Jones has spoken at some length of Troy and its significance; it is therefore hardly surprising that he begins this section with something with which the reader will feel familiar. In a footnote Jones explains to the reader something of the thinking behind this strategy of typology referring, in this case, to language which could refer equally to the foundation of Christianity and Rome linking it to the epigram at the beginning of *The Anathemata*: 'We Europeans have participated of both traditions [Classical and Christian] - of the one by right of cultural and racial inheritance, of the other by 'adoption and grace' - *Teste David Cum Sibylla*. '(p.85 n.4) Finally in this paragraph, as if to confirm both the mythological and the political realities of the birth of Rome, Jones offers us a description of the Battle of Lake Regillus; as always, the language that he uses is calculated to arouse the reader's interest, drawing as it does upon St. Paul and the soldier's 'argot' which he picked up during the First World War.

How long, since...—is empire.]

Myth gives way to the muse of history who, in her turn, gives birth to the Roman people. Jones inserts a parenthesis here, in which Mars, the soldier and sometime surveyor and farmer, courts and rapes Ilia. We are reminded of the frontispieces of *The Anathemata* in the words: 'It was dark, a very stormy night' (p.87), is that, the reader may ask, where the tale was born? In the midst of violence? There is a certain sense of

inevitability that it will all happen again. And there is also a sense of the birth of Rome into history being somehow mysterious and strange despite the violence and prosaic description of how it will and has happened. Mars, in this instance, stands for Indo-European civilisation, the imperial civilisation, the greatest of the Western cultures which the poem will discuss. The mixture of linguistic registers from the narrative to something bordering on, but not quite a monologue, is interesting and prepares the reader for the more well-defined characterisations which will occur in later monologues.

Half a millenium...shows the Argives how.

Jones has a technique of placing things and events in an historical context which is sometimes rather confusing. He will time an event from another event which itself will be significant. In this next paragraph, he moves the reader further through history to the time when Etruria had hegemony over Rome and then to a year around 30 AD when the Senate and People of Rome have one great artistic achievement, the making of inscriptions and perhaps the portrait bust. In the theoretical sections of this study, we have already examined how it is that the language achieves the reality of materiality. Then he passes to a reference to the reforms of Tiberius Gracchus, linked, by the idea of the Waste Land, to our own time. But also here is the vineyard of my beloved, to be found in the prophecy of Isaiah; so, although things do not look very promising, there is the sense of the possibility of redemption. In a passage dense with strong parallels between the Classical and Christian thought-worlds, the beginning of the end is here when Octavian calls himself *princeps*. The end is in fact our own time, our own age of megalopolis - commodity-ridden, stifled by the utile. We end this paragraph with all, even the souls of men, marked with the murder and destruction wrought by the beast whose number is

666, ironically of course, in the code of the Apocalypse from where Jones draws this, the beast is a hidden sign for the Roman Empire.

Is Jones so terribly pessimistic? Has the end really arrived? Moving briskly backwards in time to the Dorian invasion of Greece, another time in history which must have looked from the outset like the end of the world with little to redeem it, he asks himself and the reader rhetorically 'and is the age dark?' Even in the so-called dark-ages, despite a tendency to utility and violence, there are 'god-fears' - always 'inward continuities'. If we look, we can see here the beginnings of our own European civilisation, born of Rome but with ancestors going back to Egypt, the far-East of the Mediterranean world. Looking carefully we can see our own, albeit embryonic, selves.

Six centuries...from the *feel* of things?

The previous section has told of a history altogether dark with the merest hints of the continuity of the sense of the sacred; in this section Jones tells of the flowering, the Spring of Greek classical art, 'a new wonder over heaven'. There is a sense of the sculptor sharing in God's creation, the 'man-limb' stirring in the 'god-stones'. Jones makes play between the statue of a man carrying a calf on the Acropolis museum and later images derived from it in which the calf has been replaced by a sheep, and the Biblical image of Christ as the Good Shepherd. And then from the *kouroi*, he turns to the *kore*, to explore the allusive links between all statues of women; Helen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Guenevere etc. In Jones's mind, the next flowering of Western culture will be in the mediaeval period when stone will, once again, be the pre-eminent medium of creative craftsmanship. But this time it will be for the sake of Christ, 'and Christ the thrust of it...the Word is made stone'. This is the flowering of

Western Christian culture. The finest achievement of Roman culture has been carved inscriptions, words made stone, but this is something greater, Word, Christ himself, reflected in humane craftsmanship, made stone. In the carved lettering there is the divine, the Word is incarnate. It may be a pale reflection of the reality of Incarnation, but it is in the right Spirit.

In a fragmentary digression, Jones speculates whether this splendour will ever come again, or whether it is all over for good. In the end, there is only *spes*, hope, the blind anchor which is also the Cross, which can only be 'let go' and when trusted will bear us through.

Down we come...the squall-mist and the rain.

Jones returns his reader to Greece now at the height of the Classical period, where the original works of art are made that, in time, Rome will copy. In the works of the sculptors who are now no longer nameless shadows but sign their work, there is an equipoise between God and man, 'the god still is balanced/in the man-stones'. Art just manages to hold Spirit, but more than technique is necessary for it to do so. There is something precarious, fragile even in those arts which, to Jones's eyes at least, are successful in their endeavour. They must always be in danger of not working; 'it's a nice thing'. After these few remarks of introduction, Jones centres his focus on Pheidias' statue of Athene on the Parthenon and crams together, feeding off one another, words which may be applied to Athene, Minerva, the Eternal Wisdom, the Logos and, of course, Mary. This ^{is} feminine principle which Jones extols as guardian of both land and sea, 'land-mark for sea-courses'. It is with the sea that he finally lets his focus come to rest, with an unknown ship which finally transpires to be a Phoenician trader coming into the harbour of Piraeus on a Friday afternoon in March, the time when, at a later period of history, Christ will hang on a cross; and

thus Jones makes by time and weather, explicit reference to the Passion of Christ. Furthermore, *he* makes a typological link between the skipper and Christ in that they share epithets and the physical characteristics of suffering. The typological links which we have seen made between Christ and characters from Classical literature or well-established myth are paralleled here in similar typological links between Christ and an entirely fictional, but archetypal figure. It is a strategy of similarity and obliqueness. The ship arrives in Athens at the time of Christ's death, and thanksgiving is made for the conclusion of a safe voyage in a Dionysian (or is it perhaps a Eucharistic?) rite.

The respite from the journeying is but brief and the reader soon finds him or herself on another journey, a voyage which will take a ship (at least in terms of the poem) from the Mediterranean of classical antiquity to the *See* of the Anglo-Saxon world. The journey also takes the ship from classical to Arthurian mythology. We have already noticed that Hague, among others, mistakes the beginning of this second journey and suggests that it is the continuation of the first one.¹⁶ It is not, but like the first ship, this journey emerges from a poetic texture thick with questions and therefore uncertainties. Jones describes the sea journey with meticulous accuracy, concentrating for the most part, on the sea and the land bordering it rather than the ship and descriptions of the people in it. But the whole quasi-narrative continues the interrogatory style with which the poet has begun. This is a voyage which will link together the Mediterranean and Celtic worlds. Beneath the constant questioning lies the rhythm of the sea-shanty, 'Farewell and adieu to you Spanish ladies', dating probably only from the nineteenth century. Its occurrence is anachronistic but here it is symbolic of the sailor's work and provides an

¹⁶Hague *Commentary* pp.113-114

insistent rhythm to the poetry. It is poetry which conveys the impetus and surge of the ship under sail; the verse seems almost unstoppable. When it is arrested for a moment it is to draw the reader's attention to a significant fact, for example that the first English land seen by the ship on coming out of the storms of Biscay is Dodman Point, called the 'Deadman'. This sailor's image of the possibility of the end of his journey and therefore a release from danger, has obvious links with Christ. A few lines later, as Jones begins to explore Celtic legend, we learn that the seas were at least etymologically born of a virgin.¹⁷ Wherever the reader turns in *The Anathemata* there are signs of redemption. It is as if the geography of the rocky approaches to the British Isles are steeped in a strange spirituality, half-Christian and half magical. As the ship gets towards the end of its journey, the poet shifts his attention from the sea-course to the crew, their girlfriends and the wealth that they will obtain through the tin which their journeying seeks to find. But there is an irony here, the Ship will bring with it more than it will take away, for it symbolizes the bringing of Mediterranean culture to these Islands, and it will take away only tin, monetary utile wealth.

Close-cowled...by the hoar rock in the drwned wood?

In the final stage of the journey, the ship stands a league or two off shore and Jones employs the image of a liturgy of seaman's cries, with versicles and responses; he dovetails this into sea-shanties of a ritual nature in which sailors pledge their allegiance of the 'Maiden'. 'Close-cowled', the sailors remind the reader of monks in a choir and the ship has taken on almost overtly the form of the Church which, in a sense, it has always been, since the beginning of the voyage. The sense of the poem turns on

¹⁷cf n.5 on p.99

this to prayer, an invocation of the various female tutelary deities of the lands which they have passed in the course of their voyaging. They include the Vestal virgins which offers to the poet a hinge whereby he can turn his attention to Rome even before Peter has become the first Pope, then he breaks with the the verse-form that he has used, albeit with variation, for most of the voyage to insert a passage reminiscent of a rubric which shifts the sense, or rather the perspective from which one views the the passage once more, and introduces the Roman Mass which he interprets in a footnote in terms of the spiritual voyage of the Christian.¹⁸

As the birds announce the proximity of land, as they did to Noah after the flood, Jones

moves our attention once again from the description of the movement of the ship to the skipper. He does this in a similar way to when the ship, albeit physically a different ship but spiritually and typologically the same, entered Piraeus earlier in the chapter. Once more, he is described with Christian imagery, the helmsman with the keys; which is to say that he evokes Peter, the gladiatorial Vicar of the seas. Jones gives a description of his skill as he guides the ship through the treacherous waters in order to berth her at St.Michael's Mount. But, as with the end of the last chapter, we are not as yet quite sure whether he achieves it.

ANGLE-LAND

The poet begins yet another voyage, still later in history, around the fifth century. He introduces it, as he does so often in *The Anathemata*, by a series of rhetorical questions. The ship, this time unidentified, comes along the south coast of England, which is in itself a risky business.

¹⁸ *Ana.* p.106 n.2

Although as usual Jones is scrupulously accurate with his geography, as before, this journey is more than the description of a physical journey - there is an element of faith about it. Was it skill or luck, a 'clean oblation', Christ both offerer and victim, or the intercession of Mary 'Sea-born and Sea-star', which got the ship through the danger? The ship passes on, round into the North Sea. Jones's language is still very much that of the sea-farer; but is there perhaps something a bit more ominous in the words 'sheet' and 'shroud'? This is the Anglo-Saxon period and Jones incorporates into his verse mention of archaeological finds from the period in East Anglia. He portrays a time of fragmentation when those who under the Romans had been city-dwellers have been expelled into the countryside, a time when what will become Britain is a melting-pot a babble of culture and languages. And, as the ship passes the village of Thorpe where Nelson was born, which in Old Norse means Victory, the name of his flagship, Jones manages a mention of Trafalgar: for the people of Britain will always look to the sea for their livelihood and will excel there. On past Scotland, the land of Macbeth into C(h)ronos meer, the sea of time and of the dead, if the reader remembers the voyages of the Celtic wonder-workers. At the end of this voyage, which to the reader is no less puzzling than that of the others, we are brought into our own time, to be exact, the time of the Second World War when brother (at least culturally) will fight with brother. The section ends in sadness at 'the last phase of our dear West'.

REDRIFF

The section begins with an exemplarily accurate description of a journey by ship up the Thames Estuary into the Port of London; and, once again, it is introduced by a question. Is it the same voyage as before? Or, is it that all sea voyages are part of one, huge, eternal sea voyage, a pilgrimage

something like a great journey of mankind? Who knows where she comes from, but her skipper is certainly in a hurry to have repairs made and be on his way again. We have reached nineteenth-century Rotherhithe and the poet introduces the historical, yet obviously fictionalised character of his Grandfather into the course of the poem:

'...for a tidy consideration could she have preference...' would the shipwright scrimp on material and produce only second-rate work? The poem switches from the interrogatory to the definite, NOT. Image piles upon image; images of wood, of docks, of churches and clerics but, if our Captain come in surely from Sicily, would wait, the job would be completed perfectly. Even if Eb. Bradshaw had to build the cross, the symbol of redemption itself, the job would be properly done. Jones gives us a glimpse of the crucifixion where our 'fault' is lashed to the cross to save a world which is little more than a 'bitter sea'.

Within the section the different voices that Jones manages to manipulate poetically are significant: the narrator, the diffidence of the sea captain replete with sailors' argot and the cumulatively angry Eb. Bradshaw, surely one of the best drawn of all Jones's characters who articulate to the reader in the form of a monologue. In the end it is the doing, the making, the artifacture which is important. The job which is done as well as possible is a place where man's redemptive creativity is manifested.

THE LADY OF THE POOL

London is once again the focus for the next section of the poem: not the London of the nineteenth century, when the City stands at the centre of Britain's world sea-power, but late-medieval London, when the British romance with the sea is in a nascent state.

Did he meet...the greatest *burgh* in nordlands?)

As so often before, Jones introduces the section with a series of questions which both clarify and also paradoxically confuse. We are introduced to the reality of medieval London with its meandering and narrow streets at the end of summer through the eyes of a sea-captain who will be the unseen audience towards whom the succeeding monologue will be directed. But an allusive substratum indicates something of the significance of London in Celtic, Norse and Roman mythology. London is heir to the pre-eminent position of Troy which we have discussed in the first section of the poem. In a footnote to this passage Jones explains something of the workings of his mind at this point: '...our tradition is linked with all that that succession can be made to signify; and seeing what we owe to all that, the myth proposes for our acceptance a truth more real than the historic facts alone discover.' (p.124 n.3) It is important to bear in mind the meta-significance that London has throughout this section of *The Anathemata*. It is, in some senses at least, the celestial centre to which the pilgrimage of the voyages tends and yet in other senses it is a respite on the journey, not the conclusion at all.

Who'll try my sweet lavendula ...'twas that as launched the ship.

The summer is coming to its close, autumn will soon be here and through the street-cry of the lavender-seller the poet changes the tone of the language from narration to monologue and introduces the reader at least linguistically to Elen Monica. In earlier sections, we have looked closely at the linguistic strategies which Jones employs with reference to Elen Monica and we begin to hear her voice as the poet develops variations upon the cry of her trade. In the previous paragraphs, he has asked cumulative questions about the geography of London and the time of the

year; the Lady of the Pool continues the subject matter but without the questioning. She heaps statement quickly upon statement, and launches into the geography of London by way of her churches. But, the mixture of London cant and riddle which Jones employs, gives to the list a strangeness which is often baffling, and the reader is grateful for the copious notes shielded by an illustration from the text to which they refer. In this catalogue of churches, the poet is, through the tutelary person of 'The Lady of the Pool', keen to demonstrate something of the pre-Christian, archetypally sacred, nature of the sites of the City. There are 'faiths under Paul' and under many of the City churches. The feminine is well represented, too, not least in that it is a woman who is pointing all of this out to us, but also because many of the churches are dedicated to Mary; beneath them too there is a feminine, chthonic sacredness that makes itself felt from age to age. But there is too a recognisable Mary whose obedience, and hence her being a vehicle for redemption, is celebrated by all the churches dedicated to her name.

Or may I never...and they go, captain.

Another Mary, this time Mary Magdalene, together with all that that can connote provides Jones with a hinge by means of which he fluidly moves Elen Monica from her attention to the churches of London to the first of a series of lovers. This first is a man learned in medieval theology, especially that of Duns Scotus and William of Occam, a theologian learned in the importance of Mary for the divine economy of salvation. The subjects of medieval study are portrayed as dancing together. But he is only a temporary feature in her life.

At Sepulchre's...bid good-night I thought.

A glance at another of the churches of the City sets the scene by Newgate and we are introduced to the second of 'The Lady's' lovers, a stone-mason. The reader hears of a moment of intimacy when the lovers are huddled to shield themselves from the rain against the remains of the Roman wall. Even in this account of carnality Jones brings in references to the crucifixion 'from the *right* side of the gate'(p.130) and, paralleling it, the foundation of London around the cisted head of Bran the Blessed. The account continues to include and stress the Roman foundations of the London myth. The language is all variations on the cockney dialect but slanted, sometimes towards nautical language, latterly to include intimate language from the Song of Songs, is interspersed with references to the Passion. The freestone mason while touching the Roman stone is granted a vision of the coming of Christianity and hence civilisation to London via the River; this too happens in Roman times.

I said, I'm unversed...sleep the sleep with father Ulysses.

Elen Monica turns her attention back away from memories of her stone-mason lover and addresses the captain directly. She has little formal learning but she has been taught the basics of the Christian faith, both by nuns and by men of the sea, all of whom steer by the *Stella Maris* which is to say, Mary. This movement towards the sea brings Elen round to speaking of her next two lovers, both sea captains. The first is the Master of the *Margaron*, a charlatan who tries to palm off upon the academics of Cambridge narwhal tooth as being from a unicorn. But the language here is so thick that it frequently defies plain sense. It is for the next captain, the master of the *Mary*, says the poet, alluding to *Macbeth*; for him Jones reserves his greatest skill. The description which now Elen Monica proceeds to give is one in which nautics and a sensitively wrought allegory about the Annunciation are conflated together with the

vocabulary of maritime insurance. If Mary can be seen as a ship, we are called to reassess the identification of the previous ships with the Church. Our original instinct is not totally without use, however, for the ship image has wide currency within the poem. The ship is the Church, Christ and Mary, because in a sense in the plan of salvation the roles of all three are intertwined. A similar coalescence is achieved by incorporating a sideways glance at the Resurrection into a passage about the Mass of the Annunciation. Once again, Incarnation and Passion are wrought close together within *The Anathemata* ; it is part of the visionary plan of the poem. Having survived a terrible gale which leaves its spars and riggings patched and broken, the *Mary* enters harbour 'but dressed/for the Breaker's Yard'. If we were in any doubt that this ship bears an almost allegorical significance of Mary, Christ's mother, then Jones's inclusion, once again, of a reference to the seven swords piercing Mary's heart will remove any doubt. The poet then returns to the description of the storm achieved by thickly constructed alliterative language heavy with word-play together with rapidly shifting rhymes which sometimes come to a grinding full stop. The poet describes the seas as they crash onto the ship as if to make an apse over the altar. And, beneath the turbulent waters there is calm in the realm of the dead. As so often in this poem, Jones takes the opportunity to remember and indeed to pray in words similar to those found in the Canon of the Mass, for those who have made the journey before. This brief, placid almost lyric interlude comes as a contrast to the strong and incisive language with which he conveys the intensity of the storm.

...the full rant...fire in the hold.'

The reader is returned to the storm, still in full spate with thunder and lightning. For a line or two the persona of Elen Monica rises above her

narrative role and she questions her audience, the ship's master, that the reader meets, albeit obliquely at the start of this section, and reminds him that he, as a ship's captain, should know what she is talking about. But the question directs itself also at the reader, it is part of the strategy whereby Jones ensures the communality of the experience of reading the poem. The reader should know, we all should know, but until it (i.e. the truth of Christ) is revealed we will be, at least metaphorically, in the middle of the storm. In the next breath the revelation is made, drawing on the manifestation of the Jewels of the wounds of Christ on the cross-beam of the Cross described by the author of *The Dream of the Rood*. Jones adapts the yard-arms of the ship to his purpose together with the phenomenon of St. Elmo's fire which, as Jones points out in a footnote¹⁹, was in Classical thought the manifestation of Castor and Pollux. In his commentary Hague remarks; '...pagan and Christian image are happily brought together.'²⁰ The outcome of such a manifestation is, theologically, hope - the confidence that the ship, although seeming in danger of foundering, will not in the end be overcome because it has been divinely guaranteed by the manifestation of the Passion. All this despite the catalogue of woes, both man-made and natural, which threaten the safe passage of the ship.

Suasion by melody...but see the mode's Dorian!

From the description of the storm, Elen turns to a description of some of the wonders which the master of *The Mary* experienced. First, sirens threatening to wreck the vessel by their liturgical song. Elen Monica's unheard audience suggests that they are illusory, which she counters by remarking that her clerk lover had taught her enough philosophy to

¹⁹Ana p142 n.1

²⁰Hague, *Commentary* p174

know the difference. Jones then effects a transformation of Elen Monica into the mythical figure of Britannia, described by the cumulative effect of her clothing and accoutrements. The attention of the reader is directed away from the storm, the siren and the theological niceties which Jones is able to bring into relationship with it, to concentrate on Britain, the centre of the seas of the world.

Don't eye *me* ...his tongue *could tell!*

The Lady of the Pool's self-consciousness at this anachronistic charade gets the better of her and she returns to recounting the adventures of the master of the *Mary*. The ship meets with North African Moslem pirates, those who hate IMAGE - a concept that would be anathema to Jones with his love of images. And, if that were not enough, they are then attacked by a Venetian vessel. The *Mary's* precarious position is conveyed to the reader by a terse, clipped, cumulative list in which problem is heaped upon problem. The clerk calls the crew to prayers and after a broadside has hit the powder magazine of the attacking ship the gunner takes up the invocation : 'To prayers all is won.' The alteration of the punctuation makes the same phrase mean to different things with both of which we must agree. Once again, Jones gives his readers a clue to his method, the sound matters as does the shape in which that sound is conveyed in the poetry. The gunner bows to the superiority of the clerk's theological learning and suggests that he too will have to learn it.

The ship makes its way back through the straits of Gibraltar encountering other troublesome vessels on the way, and finally turns into the English channel. At this point it is to the crew that Jones turns: the surgeon, the priest, the crude Mate, the boasting Welsh Boatswain who, in a similar vein to Dai Greatcoat in *In Parenthesis*, boasts of his involvement in

mythic sea voyages up to and including those voyages in which Welshmen were believed to have been involved, even to North America. All this, and more, says the Lady of the Pool, he swore to be true by all that he held to be Holy, including the Holy Places of Wales, the Gospels, and the mostly fictitious history of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Elen Monica is in full flow and the reader hardly notices that we have moved a long way from the account of the return of the ship and that now we are focussed on medieval historiography. But by what authority are these things considered to be true? after all we may confuse the Ballad of Maid Marian with the *Magnificat* ; are not both about the deposition of the privileged? The Welshman will boast of these all and more in his haste to proclaim the prowess of the Welsh at sea and, what is more, will tell it at the least prompting. His tale, like that of the Ancient Mariner, is one from which the listener cannot escape.

The cook scalded...called his Son.

The reader's attention is returned to other members of the crew: the cook and the Scottish second mate, an educated and yet mysterious man. At this point Elen Monica asserts herself again and puts aside, if only for a moment, the role of narrator. She is only relating what she has been told, even if it is second-or third – hand information. She names her source, a sailor from Marseilles, who tells her wonders of the eastern seas and of how King Alfred, one of the first builders of a Navy, sent a piece of the true cross to the Pope. Finally, she tells of a seventh-century circumnavigation of the African continent, starting and finishing in Egypt. All these wondrous voyages are in some way unbelievable, fantastical, but there is a sense in which the voyage of *The Anathemata*, the voyage

which holds the whole poem together, yet which is symbolically, if not allegorically, the voyage of faith of all believers, is itself not much less strange and mysterious takes over - or is superimposed on London in this respect. All these wonder-voyages, as is too, that of the Church, inevitably circle around Jerusalem, the city which lies at the centre of the world.

That was hers...all poor men besides.

By way of a reference to a fifteenth-century manual of devotion, in which Christ's passion is compared to work at the wine-press, the poet moves in an entirely new direction. In the next few lines Jones describes the events and the effects of Christ's crucifixion. Act and interpretation are woven together with consummate skill and artistry, although it should be said that the poetic tone of these lines owes more to Jones's omniscient narrator than Elen Monica whose own voice has been muted. This passage has been discussed in a previous chapter and it remains only to make some further annotations. For, although there are manifold allusions to children's songs such as 'Yankee Doodle' and 'Sing a Song of Sixpence', the poetry here is by no means childish; indeed it is profoundly serious. Words are balanced against each other in imitation of the metaphor of the scales with which Christ is weighed against the sins of the world. And, if that were not enough in itself, Jones deploys metaphors derived from the myth of the Wasteland, a myth both ancient and, chiefly because of Eliot, profoundly modern to describe something of the work of redemption. In fact, if the careful balance of this section of *The Anathemata* is weighted in any direction it is towards the articulation of the reality of redemption rather than to the centrality of the cross, although it is difficult to separate the two. The biblical narratives are presented as a series of brief vignettes, but it is the truth of salvation, presently guaranteed and made available by the significant reality of the

Eucharist, available to all, with which this section ends, and which the poet wishes to underscore.

And other such prospectors...*sempiternam*.

The poem changes gear once again, both in language and content; but in a sense it is an amplification of the effects of redemption, for now the poet extends the implications of the universal accessibility of the Eucharist. The redemption is there for the forerunners as well as those who come after Christ (we have already been prepared for this by the poet mentioning Christ winning Tartary in the last segment). For all sea-farers, both those who are dead and those still to come, including those who will sail from London's river, come under the sway of redemption; and for all we may pray 'grant them eternal rest'. In the last lines of this segment the distinctive voice of Elen Monica begins to reassert itself and the reader is reminded of the riparian setting of this conversation with the Lavender seller.

And much besides...entasis and all.

Elen Monica, now returned to full monologic spate, has told the captain much but there is more, enough to fill a book, although he is not to confuse her with a bearer of arcane, heretical and magical knowledge, a sibyl or a seer. And after all of this, the reader is surprised to be reminded that all of this was what The Lady was telling to her stone-mason lover, and only secondarily to the captain. Although the reader is not surprised to find him gone she is sanguine about it.

At the Fisher...Who'll buy my sweet Lavender?

We now return to the matter of London and especially to the celebration of the feast of the Holy Cross in the Churches of the City. First in St.Peter's

Cornhill, where King Cole himself was reputed to have been baptised, then in All—Hallows by— the—Tower next to the site of public execution. Then in the other churches around the Tower. And Elen Monica reminds her audience that because of the internment of Bran the Blessed's head beneath the Tower the City has never fallen to invaders. Throughout this section the present reality of the churches of the City is compared with the archaeological finds which lie beneath these sacred sites indicating the continuous response of the people of the city to the numinous. For all those who come before, the Lady wishes to pray. In the same way that The Lady of the Pool brings together all the people of the city and all sea-farers when she prays for their immortal souls so, too, she brings together all the churches of London when she describes the celebration of the finding of the Holy Cross, the feast which marks the end of summer. With that, she bids farewell to the Captain and urges him to be off and she returns to selling lavender, breaking off first to plead and then to threaten the captain for mistreating his cabin boy. After which, we return finally to her lavender-seller's cry, itself a question which seems somehow poignant after all that has preceeded it.

KEEL ,RAM, STAUROS

Did he hear...the trembling tree.

The questions which introduce this section connect it with those at the beginning of 'The Lady of the Pool'. We begin here where we left off there, wandering the streets of London. The time, however, is no longer the fifteenth century, but it is not until the exchange based on a nursery rhyme farther down the page, that Jones asks a question which is central to the meaning of the whole of *The Anathemata* : 'but when is when?' (p.170) and answers himself by references to Pytheas and Pliny in the classical era.

Jones confuses or perhaps conflates Pytheas, who had, according to tradition, circumnavigated Britain, with the Greek sailor - so concerned is he to bring to the reader's attention those sites where Classical deities are syncretised with Celtic gods and goddesses.

Jones focusses his poetry closely upon the captain, using seaman's language (although we should remind ourselves of his footnote on the following page where he informs his readers that; 'My Greek seaman speak cockney'(p.172 n.3)) The Captain is tough and drives hard in charge of a precious cargo which, so we are shown, is rather more than mere provender, the stuff of any voyage, but is the burden of Christ himself. Backhand notice is taken of those who invest and then walk away with the insurance money but who do not themselves take the risks. The reader may be aware of the double meaning implicit in the phrase; 'they're all in the swim'(p.172). Does Jones perhaps want to this stand in some way as a description of what faith is about? If so, then there is an ironic twist when we are reminded that these merchantmen inhabit Pluto's realm far distanced in many ways from the fire of Incarnation. But we should not become too cynical; great civilisations have need of the commonplaces of commerce.

The attention of the sailors wavers just enough for the grumblers in the crew to be fixed with a stare from the captain, who has the 'ichthyoid eye' - for he is, at least typologically, Christ, 'the old ichthys'. A strict disciplinarian with his crew - the description of the master ending with the words 'abaft the trembling tree'(p.173) is a masterful cadence which focusses the reader's attention on to the mast, and thereby on to the Cross.

Down...and over-all.

He shifts the reader's attention to the ship itself, especially focussing on its wooden construction. The poet begins with the mast and passes down into the bowels of the ship: 'the quivering elm on which our salvation sways.' (p.173). The cross 'Prone for us' all rests upon the keel. The language in this passage draws from the reader a sense of wonder. It unfolds slowly almost as a parenthesis to the main thrust of this section of *The Anathemata* . It is language of precision, technical and nautical language, but its precision never deprives the poem either of beauty or rhythmic interest. Indeed, the language seems to exude a cumulative fascination engaging the reader's interest as the poet deploys words carefully to expand the horizon of meaning away from just the ship and its beams. In the first lines of this section the phrase, 'dark inverted vaults' reminds the reader of the typological links between the ship and the church and yet retains a sense of strangeness. In the next few lines the nautical vocabulary presses up against itself but seems to open out after the page turn (p.174) as it achieves a regularity of rhythm for the next few lines. The description of the ship on this page culminates in the description of the Cross which emerges out of the descriptive material. From the overt statement of the central concept to this section, 'All wood else hangs on you', Jones returns to his close description of the ship. But knowing, or rather, having been reminded, of the way in which the wood or the cross and the wood of the ship are related, the reader has a heightened degree of awareness and sees shadows and hints or correspondences throughout the remaining lines of descriptive verse. Knowing what we do, wood can never be just wood, it will always have a greater, saving significance. For a moment, alluding to the crew of the Mariner's ship in Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* , the poet directs his reader's attention to the crew, but it is only for an instant and we return almost at once to the ship and more particularly to its keel.

Timber of foundation...metamorphosed for general release?

From here the poet expands his vision to examine some other uses for wood. First: upright, vertical wood used in maypoles, spoils of war and, perhaps unsurprisingly, gibbets. Then he turns to horizontal uses of wood and the tree becomes a siege engine or some other classical engines of war, blessed by the priest, the irony is that these weapons of war will 'put down the mighty from their seats'. Each machine has a name, describing what it does, the city-taker, the bone-shatterer, names that are compared with the dry unequivocal language of administration they convey more than it ever can. Viewed in the context of its composition during or after the Second World War and bearing in mind the poet's experiences during the First World War (this passage has certain similarities with *In Parenthesis*) we may notice the heavy use of irony here, a sense heightened by the view of the world offered by the perspective of the poem, that of mankind's artistic participation in the reality of salvation.

Or vertical'd?...stans ?

The poet returns to wood set upright, more specifically set up for classical and semitic deities as a cult-object, in a marked contrast with the destruction ironically present in the previous paragraphs. The questions which the reader has experienced so many times before indicate the hesitancy of the poet. Perhaps it is not the *dendron* or the *ashera*, but rather it is perhaps the Cross? Another question effects the transition and the reader finds that he or she is considering the Cross itself and the feast of the Finding of the Cross, celebrated on 3 May. Is the poet aware that the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, so important for the seasonal and theological content of 'The Lady of the Pool', and this feast are in fact the same? As the priests cense the Cross, all people, be they beautiful or not so

beautiful, greet the crucifix. The poet addresses the Cross directly in the second person, recalling *The Dream of the Rood*. Is he aware of these feast days and do they make any difference? The round of offices, the crises, the courtesans all constellate around the Cross. Jones's line of thought culminates on Good Friday at the veneration of the Cross - when the Cross, foreshadowing the Yggdrasil reference in a later section, stands at the centre of the world.

Recumbent for us...holy keel.

The next few lines are immensely strange and are in a sense cast in the invocatory language of a prayer. From the standing Cross we turn back to the horizontal, foundational keel of the ship on which all depends and which relates knowledgeably to us. It relates to us in our bilges for it is the wood of our life. This is unusually personal for Jones, yet even this is held somewhat at arm's length. The wood of the keel, tabernacles that of the mast, the host, and is itself a place of presence. The Cross is the wood for our life - our keel. There is an argument for thinking that this is the fundamental symbol of the poem, although many recent authorities would dispute this.

Ship's master...to schedule?

Nearing home, the ship's master surveys the vessel which is typologically the Church. The language of the poetry is more expansive now, less compressed and is evocative of that of 'Middle-Sea and Lear Sea'. The skipper is returning home which the poet stresses this by repetitions of 'home' and 'known' home to Athens, so the helmsman inclines the ship towards Pheidias' great statue of Athene on the Parthenon. The Master of the ship described as a 'vine-juice skipper', a Eucharistic reference further expanded as words from a religious vocabulary are injected into the

nautical language. He makes his libation to the gods but the reader is left in no uncertainty that this is somehow Eucharistic, that the skipper is Christ-like and that the journey which, in a sense, was stated in the Last Supper in 'Rite and Fore-time' comes to some sort of closure here in an equally Eucharistic way.

MABINOG'S LITURGY

The titles of the sections of David Jones's poems are always significant and he loses no opportunity to extract meaning from a part of the structure of his poem. This section heading is the liturgy of the Mabinogi: the repertoire of a bard, the reservoir of story of a people but also, and this is important, the liturgy of an infant. Is that the prayers of a child, or the prayers based upon the legends of a child? Very probably all of this and more.

Two centuries...Amminius yet our creature?

Jones seeks to locate the historical moment of Incarnation by piling up, one upon another, the historical events to do with the domestication, pacification and eventual Romanisation of the Celtic peoples - the 'Rhine-progeny'. Event is piled upon event in order to define the moment of sacred implosion into the world of secular history. We may compare the introduction of this section with the beginning of others. Most of the rest, as we have noted, begin with the deployment of questions, albeit rhetorical ones. In this instance Jones makes his intentions rather clearer.

In the seven hundred and eighty-third year...bruised flesh for the wheat-offering)

If the first segment of this part . . . of the poem hangs somewhat indeterminately around AD 15, the second section is much clearer. It is AD 30, the time of crucifixion - the moment of intersection of sacred with secular time which is the central point, the axle for the whole poem.

And in mapping out some of these events, evoking, as they do, Roman superiority, Jones makes comments about the historical situation in which he finds himself: the Second World War together with pre-war fascism and its pacification by Neville Chamberlain, '...since the Decreed Peace in our time...'. The Roman world-pacification is portrayed in the light of Nazi atrocities with its cynical . . . adoption of the rhetoric of religion, and its secret police, its 'co-ordinating Gleichschaltung'.²¹ Even the image of Peter, patron of Rome with his keys, is turned upside down in this Sejanus - trying to hold on to the West by stealth and subterfuge, while looking with his weather-eye towards the East, from whence will come the Jews, and of course Christianity, the real 'soter', the true conservator and defensor. It is a year before Sejanus will be imprisoned and die, but two years before Pontius Pilate is replaced. Pilate is in his third or fourth April in office in Jerusalem, the Ariel mountain, and David's threshing floor, where Jesus Christ will be the wheat-offering while the 'articulated instrument of wood' refers both to the Cross and the flail used in threshing. So Jones moves from the world of allusion centred on Roman History to one based on Biblical History. These two favourite places of his, Jerusalem and Rome, tied together by Empire, are linked on the same page.

In the early month...*Stabat* by the Blossom'd Stem?

²¹cf SL p63

The early month is contrasted with a late frost, the sharp spines contrast with the balm. The time is established meteorologically before that, too, is enmeshed into the *P*assion narrative by way of the crown of thorns. And that itself is further dovetailed into the thought world of, or prophecy of, messiahship - not lamentation - and, as if that were not enough, Jones draws his Jeremiah quotation from the Latin Holy Week liturgy. There is a constant movement, therefore, between secular and sacred times. Even the introduction of a child's nursery-rhyme does not seem out of place, as an introduction to the image, compiled from moments of the liturgy of Mary, of the *mundi domina* standing by the Cross, which has, despite the earlier references to the cold, become an image of spring. Resurrection is brought as close as it can be to the moment of death.

Thirty-four years...but us and all our baggage.

Continuing the Marian focus, the scene shifts some thirty-four years to the time of the Annunciation: the March, germinal because of conception and 'terminal' because it was the appointed time when Mary's womb would be fruitful.

Gabriel, portrayed as Hermes, collects the message of supplication '*fiat mihi*' - be it unto me according to thy word. And also here, there is a reference to the Cherry Tree Carol - can the *hic genuflectitur* perhaps allude to the traditional practice during the Creed of genuflecting at the mention of the Incarnation? The scene moves on to Christmas, to the night defined by a single word from Joseph Mohr's nineteenth-century carol, the night the shepherds cry the introit: 'Let us go over to Bethlehem'. Then comes the Epiphany, 'The Showing', when the *kings* will come : does the poetry here somehow mirror or at least draw some of its inspiration from Eliot's poem? Are the Kings that Jones depicts, if only

briefly, representatives of the van-guard of Indo-European culture? Are they then our van ? Jones has an overriding sense that it is in Western European culture that the Christian myth is most easily and naturally articulated despite its Middle-Eastern roots.

In this year...ancient stone.

The poet returns the reader to the central, axial year of AD 30, but this time the time of year is not defined by the weather as earlier, but by the positions of the constellations in a phrase borrowed from the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. The Cross, which earlier was seen to bloom, still blossoms with the five wounds of Christ. This is another of those occasions when Jones demonstrates his indebtedness to *The Dream of the Rood* . But in an almost comic interlude the poet asks whether Chloris and Flora , the maiden aunts of wood-nymphs, have any part in this floriation, this coming of Spring, for this is what Jones is trying to do whilst piling upon themselves references to classical legend. He concludes that neither nymph can help, beyond garlanding icons of the Virgin with flowers.

So, the poet calls for a Sibyl (we should remind ourselves of the epigramme to the poem - *Teste David cum Sibylla*) and finds one in Calypso who saw beauty in the shape of trees while still pining for Ulysses. And if we wanted another allusion to Classical myth, we would find it in Persephone, who was snatched away into hell while picking flowers, but she, too, admires the beauty of the wounds and the wood. Now, while maintaining the classical vein, Jones introduces the reader to Nestor, (René Hague in his commentary²² suggests that Jones really had Tiresias in mind, not Nestor, in which case, there is an allusion here to *The Waste*

²² Hague Commentary p214

Land). Whoever he is, he lives to 'collate' phenomena, a positivist, dealing with the surface world and never penetrating into the depths of signification which lie beneath.

The poet makes another change of perspective, shifting the scene from the Classical world and back to the Biblical world of the Passion. The 'hinge' whereby he achieves this is Martha, meddling and busy with household tasks. A dog, Argos, Ulysses' dog, recalls the Classical world which we have just left and reminds us that there is a link in Christian tradition between Christ and Ulysses. But there is more to it than that; there is a strategy of operation which underlies the whole of *The Anathemata* whereby myth feeds off myth. Neatly, Jones introduces the Corpus Christi Carol, both Eucharistic and Passionate. The dog recognises the reality which lies behind Ulysses' disguise and Christ's wounds.

In the first month...cave his dwelling.

The time is midnight on Maundy or Shere- Thursday, Christ goes out. There is here a strong and pungent scent of Incarnation although the context for this is the Passion. Christmas carols and Southwell's poem *The Burning Babe*, both of which Jones acknowledges in the footnotes, provide the allusive context. Jones employs language akin to that found in the vesting prayers before Mass and in the Pauline epistles in order to describe Christ's acceptance of the garments of the Passion: putting off childish clothing to vest as before a triumph. These events, leading as they do to Christ's arrest, contrast strongly with the events of Christmas. The poet is almost wistful as he remembers them with language which, despite its fragmentariness, still manages to achieve a sense of tenderness, especially when, at the end of this section, we glimpse Mary carrying the Christ in her own 'fair cave'.

Brow of Helen!...on the Stone within the *pared* .)

There is here a shift which some might find uncomfortable and rather clumsy. Nevertheless, Jones shifts the reader's attention to an altogether different scene, which at first sight seems to have only the most tangential connection with the foregoing sections. Mythic beauty leads to mystic beauty, Jones extols the beauty of Helen, Aphrodite, the Blessed Virgin Mary and, finally, Gwenhwyfar, the wife of Arthur, glimpsed at Mass on Christmas Eve, a scene for which Jones received the inspiration from *The Mabinogion*.²³ She is within the screen, separated, dressed in fine cloth under which is a shift of white Dublin flax - the same material that will be used for her shroud. In this and the parenthetical digression we are reminded of the mortality of even human beauty. But, even Gwenhwyfar is still made in the image of God. Geoffrey of Monmouth says that she is the daughter of a Roman, perhaps even associated with Northumberland. Her gold hair, held in clips of British gold, as if to underline her regality, frames her forehead. But is she perhaps already showing signs of maturity? The poetic language of autumnal conventions introduces here a sense of eschatological tension: it would be as absurd to talk of her maidenhead as it would be to talk of collecting the nosegays of May - both are well gone. Gwenhwyfar's forehead is as inaccessible as Venus yet near as well lit by the moon - like candle light from above. But her beauty does have a darker side - her lunar quality brings about the ebb and flow in the tide of the mythic politics of Britain, principally through her devastating love for Lancelot.

There is a slight shift here; the language changes somewhat and takes a different tack, if only for a moment. Gwenhwyfar's beauty has both the

²³cf. Ana. p195 n.3

classical strengths of a column and of the neck of a deer glimpsed only by a one-eyed anchorite in the forest. These two complementary images, the one of beauty that will last, compared to the fleeting vision of the beauty of the deer, combine to enforce the archetypically beautiful quality which Jones predicates of Gwenhwyfar.

The language changes again, this time to something akin to the geographical descriptions of 'Rite and Fore Time'. Jones adapts it for a close description of her clothes, from which he slips into a digressive description of the sea-voyage which brought the ivory of a narwhal tusk from the Arctic. Fifteen days out of the home port in Dyfed, yearning for home, the mariners go into Scandinavia where the mythical tree, which in Norse legends hold the world together is stepped as the mast, which we have seen in earlier sections is used as a metaphor for the Cross. The old sea dog brings back Latin which will be the language in which he will tell the story of the infancy and the Passion, within the wattled enclosure, the importance of which for a concept in the work of Jones we have already discussed in connection with the theme of the City, for *bangor* evokes the security, holiness the place set apart. As earlier, Jones has introduced something of the Passion into the context of Infancy.

Or, was he a liar?...also Him, in sign).

This digression ends, and the poet wonders whether this yarn is the matter of magic, Virgil's art, or a confidence trick, like the passing off of a narwhal's tusk as unicorn horn in 'The Lady of the Pool'. There is a good example of how the ancient and the modern feed off each other in this paragraph and its explicatory note. Virgil is often used as a type of mythological and historical deposits about Rome, and here Jones points out that in modern Welsh, chemists, even Boots, are known as 'an agent

of Virgil'. (p.201 n.4) This is a strategem common in *The Anathemata* but there are few examples quite as well-defined as this.

The poet returns to his description of Gwenhwyfar's beauty, avoiding any description of her face, which like that of Helen of Troy, is 'strong enchantment', except to mention her eyes, one of which, like that of both Aphrodite and Lady Hamilton, has a cast in it. She wears the patrician vesture of a chasuble, or rather a dalmatic, with a crimson stripe glinting in the light and she even affects the decoration of embroidered bees normally reserved for members of the Imperial house of Constantinople; (is the poet sending us out on the imaginative journey mapped out by Charles Williams in his poems, *Talliesin through Logres* ?). This notwithstanding, although the form of the garment and much of the cloth originates outside the British Isles, it is made appropriate for British weather by the addition of local animal skins as a warm lining. In a sense, when Jones is describing this vesture, he is also describing the cultural heritage of Britain - much of it originating overseas but 'made British'. It is one of the dominant themes of the whole poem, and it is foregrounded here in language in which mystery inheres in its palpable strangeness and unfamiliarity.

Gwenhwyfar is architectural perfection in ceremonial dress leaning whether physically or spiritually towards the altar which itself decked overall and waits for the offertory ~~in~~ of bread from the reserve - *granaria* . This indicates to the reader first, that we are in a time of invasions both from Saxon and the Irish (although the Irish invasion is spoken of with approbation). And second, of wine, from abroad which will be mixed with water from British springs which through the rivers which cross the countryside make the whole land holy. And, by way of digression, this includes shoals of fish and the fish sign of Christ. Might we not suggest

that the Johannine description of the outflowing of blood and water at the Passion is not very far buried in the poet's creative consciousness?

No wonder...innate bias of the heresiarchs of Britain.

But of course, there *is* wonder, the whole thing is to do with wonder. The queen leans toward the altar where words of the Classical world and gestures from the Semitic world make of created things the body of the uncreated. It has been argued in this thesis that the concept of *anamnesis* underlies the whole poem. It may be argued further that *The Anthemata* is an exercise in the exploration of what it means in the context of both human and divine sign-making. Here Jones deals with it explicitly: he reveals its importance and the path of its generation. Had the congregation not been concentrating on the revelation of the elevated signs of the Mass they might have directed their worship towards Gwenhwyfar and thus compounded the Pelagian heresy. It does not seem uncharacteristic of Jones for him to affirm his doctrinal orthodoxy in almost the same breath as he explores creatively the heights and depths of sacramental reality and in a way that some may find unsettling or even verging on the heretical.

In the middle silences...tightened on his back.

The opening of the next section with its rhetoric reminiscent of the opening lines of Dante's *Inferno* and having some allusive similarity with Hardy's poem 'The Darkling Thrush' indicates that the perspective of the poem is changing. It is now from the perspective of vegetation and even animals, giving their own praise to the Incarnate God that we look. But not just them, also witches, old women, grannies, soothsayers, the witches from *Macbeth*. For these aged crones know, not least from their sources of familiarity in the underworld, that the baby of Bethlehem is just

one of the manifestations of he who will, in a phrase allusive of both Milton and Langland, conquer hell in his war-soiled harness.

What says his *mabinogi* ?... seems much for a creature?

The infancy narratives of Christ tell of his birth in a stable, in poverty if not an outcast, certainly homeless. But what then of the Boast? The reader should perhaps remember here both the model provided in the poetry of Taliesin and Dai Great Coat's boast in *In Parenthesis* ²⁴ . What of the claims of the mature, timeless Logos? Jones lists epithets drawn from all corners of the Christian tradition; from the Celtic Mabinogion, from Greek and Latin Christianity and from Old English, culminating rhythmically and typographically in WONDERFUL, the cry of Isaiah and later John the Baptist. This cumulative list of Royal Titles leads into a short section, almost apocalyptic in tone, where echoes, verbal and rhythmical, of the *Dies Irae* (which underlies much of *The Anathemata*) mingle with the image of the legions of heaven adopted from St. Matthew's Gospel; only the classical hymn of Sacrifice, the Spondaulium remains. This is no mere digression, for Jones's understanding of the role of the Mass as a centre for *anamnesis* , with all that that entails, means that it is perfectly natural for him to resolve this passage which begins in Nativity, moves to Soteriology and hence into Eschatology, in the eucharistic nexus linking it eventually and naturally to the Passion, 'Himself the Lar and the garner/broken under Marmor's sign.' (p.209) The eschatological/judgemental strand persists and into it Jones introduces Mary, the intercessor under the guise of Demeter, the goddess of corn. Christ, in a typographical echo of the earlier WONDERFUL, is named MISERICORS, merciful. As only he is merciful, yet Mary is styled

²⁴JP pp.79-84

as supPLICator, ruler of earth, heaven and hell - also, and here we are returned to the Arthurian world, the three lands laid waste by the dolourous stroke.

Whose grave eyes...under Pales' thack, *ad praesepe* .

A brief, inverted, allusion to Milton's *L'Allegro* , and a typographical break, indicate a change of perspective once again. The inclusion of the word 'sister' in this line indicates that Jones has changed the tone from the almost-epic to something akin to the dramatic monologue. The next few pages are printed as prose (although the line between it and poetry is blurred), and the reader is introduced to the mutterings and musings of Welsh witches. They start by talking of paradise where God's legions are putting off their armour and replacing it with the liturgical robes of heaven. Then the two witches allude to the *fiat* of Mary in the Annunciation, placed geographically in Palestine, Galilee of the Gentiles (Nations RSV), the Incarnate one is for all peoples. This dovetails into the account of the visitation to Elizabeth, where the underlying eschatological strand is uncovered in the reference to the truth of John the Baptist as introducing the 'Last Age of the World'.

But how did the witches obtain this knowledge? Was it infused, like that of the angels? Or, was it found in scholastic fashion in Oxford, here termed as the omphalos, the centre of Britain, but also surely, like the Omphalos at Delphi, the seat of both oracle and prophecy? And when was this knowledge obtained? Was it even before William the Conqueror was born and the seminal texts of the medieval mechanical world, Euclid and Archimedes, were written down.

The conversation returns to the person of Mary celebrated through the vehicle of the works of Virgil, especially the *Eclogues* , used as the primary

data for sorcery. The witches hymn their praise of Mary in an amalgam of the Fourth Eclogue and scripture. They continue their discussion, however, using the precise scholastic language replete with its hypostases and substantiation. Her place of pre-eminence in the Divine economy is clearly mapped out. And, even sorceresses, skilled in the deployment of illusions, would not cling to the heresy of Docetism which waters down the reality of the Incarnation.

Jones has hinted at it many times before in his poem but now he brings it out into the open, 'Let it be according to thy word', 'It all hangs on her fiat': a fiat in which all can participate. Jones introduces an almost homely touch after the high-flown speculative when he says, 'after all, sisters, he was her *baban* .' This acts as a hinge and the prose/poetry is left and more conventional verse employed for the ensuing Marian hymn, which the witches sing on this her (Christmas) night: *Aves* without the malice of witchery. For on this night all, even animals, may pray.

If much of this is fancy-fed...BECAUSE OF THE CHILD

The poet drops the narrator's mask and intrudes himself into the texture of the poem in order to recount an incident of his own experience. He articulates as himself, points out that all this might be mere whimsy, but that more wisdom is to found in the barn of nativity than in all the learning of Athena. But - and he recounts the story of the 1915 Christmas fraternisation in the trenches - all this, the unthinkable, happened BECAUSE OF THE CHILD.

This is the night...Minerva is sprung from the head of Jove.

It is the night . . . of the of nativity but it is unlikely that Jones is ignorant of the echo of the Easter Exultet that he has used previously in

the 'Rite and Fore-time' section of the poem; especially when he goes on to describe the diaconal proclamation of the gospel. But, being Jones, this is overlayed with images drawn from the Mabinogion, by way of which a connection is made between the Celtic Mother-Goddess and Mary. Jones is constantly probing at some kind of implicit Christianity to be found in the pagan cultus, their gods and such things as the Vestal Virgins. For we, and perhaps he means the Church, or perhaps just his readers in general, signed in baptism, are all spouses of these ancient deities. The reader might ask him or herself: is this a cultural or a theological proposition? The answer is probably that for Jones the two are inseparable and that he demands a new, more fluid way of doing theology.

Beneath the Gospel, as a palimpsest, can be glimpsed the remains of the Eclogues of Virgil. But the Gospel speaks of the New Age dawning, of the call to taxation and how the shepherds came to find the new-born baby. There is a short paragraph break before he continues the story with the account of the message of peace brought by the war-band of heaven. This, then, is the true story, but what then of all the other stories that Jones has used in the making of his poem?

Jones finishes this section not with the Romano-Celtic Mass, but with the first Mass of Christmas day celebrated in Rome at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. From there the gospel will be proclaimed in other Masses in other churches, at dawn in St. Anastasia and then back to St. Mary Major where the story of the Incarnation as the birth of the Logos is recalled. Jones finishes this section, which is an extended meditation on the nature of nativity, with the Nativity rites in the city of Rome itself, preparing the reader for the final section, his exposition of the Passion.

SHERTHURSDAYE AND VENUS DAY

The final section of *The Anathemata* is headed with the old name for Maundy Thursday coupled with the classical appellation for Friday. It is both the title and the description of what will follow.

He that was her son...falls tomorrow

There are no questions, rhetorical or otherwise, at the beginning of this section. The poet plunges his reader into the middle of things, into poetry, with impulse and dynamism. In the latter part of the previous section, Mary has been the central figure, now she is replaced as the key to what action there is by Christ himself, baptised and thus commencing the quest, the journey into the mythical though truth-bearing realms which has been a constant theme throughout the whole poem. Jones's language recalls the tasks of the heroes of other quests as Christ's journey leads him even to hell. Christ is flesh of Mary's flesh but he is also the hero. Now it is that we can understand what Jones meant in the opening lines of the Rite and Fore-Time section when he says 'and by preapplication and for them'. Christ harrowing hell, freeing the waters, includes all in his saving activity. This is in a sense one of the crucial truths of the poem.

Jones has already used the nursery rhyme 'Monday's child' in other sections of the poem. In this instance of allusion, Christ is draining the cup, literally in the room of the Last Supper and metaphorically in the Garden of Gethsemane, and he will finish it tomorrow on Golgotha. For Christ crucified is a ruler, a Marquis, whose cross stands, according to some legends, in the centre of Eden from whence flow the four rivers which water the world. So, from the base of the Cross flow the waters of salvation itself.

Keeping the watery image, Jones moves the reader's attention to the waters of Mary's womb where Christ lay, 'ark'd' i.e. both secure and

presence, like the dead, to whom he will preach in hell. Both the Arks of Noah and that of Covenant are invoked here simultaneously. With the Lukan 'grown in stature', indicating maturity, Christ frees the waters of birth and releases salvation to the world. Christ, like the pagan god, Odin, offers himself to his father and, in his Passion, unlocks the mystery of the prophets.

Christ, the Peredur of the *Mabinogion*, or Percival in the Latin legends of the Holy Grail, grows up nurtured by his mother, until the day when he comes upon his quest. Here Jones develops the image of Christ the knight/soldier to which he has already alluded in Mabinog's Liturgy. Like the knights of the Grail legends, he is a suitor, a searcher for the pearl (of great price) which is also a sideways reference to Helen and the Trojan legends. At the appointed time, Christ keeps the tryst, and carries out what he pledged himself to in the Last Supper: making himself victim.

He would put on...For these:

Jones has already used Scandinavian and Celtic material; now he turns to material from the Latin West in his presentation of the Incarnation as the putting on of armour, an artful reflection of St. Paul. Soon he will include German material too. Like Peredur, Christ has to take the initiative asking the question so that the Waste land may be fruitful. A quotation from the Good Friday liturgy finishes it all off: 'what more should he do/that he hasn't done?' The rhetoric is telling and has a finality and sense of closure about it. The Passion then begins in Jerusalem, the camp, and is total and absolutely no quarter is given, no mitigation offered. It is completed on the mound of Calvary, but there is also the heraldic sense of mound meaning in this case an orb, or the world; the implication will not be lost on most readers. But Jones admits, like the childish singers of Mrs.

Alexander's hymn, we are too naive to understand the consequences of it all, 'we may not know/we cannot tell'.

down the long history-paths...in the lighted apses

Does Jones think of history itself as a journey leading towards the Cross? Or even one leading away from it? Whatever he thinks, and, although we may not understand the meaning of Calvary, it is represented, and more than represented, in the Mass, in the lighted apses - (or, as in 'Rite and Fore-Time' even worse edifices), in the silence and in the breaking of bread. Under the sign of the creature, in the form of bread, 'work of human hands' - available to all physically, metaphorically, comfortable (meaning strengthening - surely a reference to the Book of Common Prayer).

Within, with lights brighted...shall learn his vows to take.

Like the 'railed tumulus' at the beginning of the poem and within the room of the Last Supper or cenacle, Jones fuses the folk-song John Barleycorn and the Coventry Carol. Both carry the weight of sacrificial death: the ancient Corn God and the Holy Innocents. Does Jones wish to suggest that a death is necessary for the sign-making of the Mass? But the reader is moved on quickly almost before he or she is able to dwell on this point. Using terminology from the Roman army, he suggests that both Calvary and the Mass are reaffirmations of a covenant - and, drawing on soldier's parlance of the First World War, he reminds us that there are two sides to the responsibility of covenant and that ours may be a burden.

As a *paterfamilias* ...before your older rites begin.

Christ's offering was, in a paradoxical sense, an offering to himself, a pouring out in the Pauline, Kenotic sense. Christ is *paterfamilias* and Lar

of calvary and *genius loci* of the Church, the family of many peoples which met first in the Upper Room.

This Rite has its form before history 'proper'; it is 'in-formed' - and where does that start? In the tale in Genesis 14 or Melchizedek, interpreted by the Church as a pre-incarnation of the Logos. A few line later Jones, alluding heavily to the Eucharistic hymn, *Pange Lingua*, says 'Levites! the new rite holds/ is here/before your other rites began' - by preapplication, i.e. timelessly. That is, Jones expands our perception by interpreting and elucidating Melchizedek by way of the classical corn-deities Demeter and Triptolemus. Demeter brings agriculture and laid the basis for all arts and human creative self-fulfilment, in Jones's terms the normative mode of existence. Demeter's art and Melchizedek's pre-application make acceptable and valid the Rite of the Mass. Moreover, Melchizedek is in a sense a type of Christ, priest and victim at the Eucharist, which when linked with Triptolemus, the bringer of agriculture, allows the poet to imply some kind of sense of harvest as sacrament, thus throwing into relief the use, for instance of John Barleycorn. The insertion of Melchizedek and this difficult poetry is made a little clearer if it is recalled that at the end of 'Mabinog's Liturgy', Jones alluded to the Christmas rituals in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, a church which has as a part of its decoration a mosaic in which the link between Melchizedek and the Mass is made iconographically exact.²⁵

Here./Where?...where is corn and wine?

Where is such a sign valid? Initially, at Golgotha: once again, Jones draws from Langland for the image of Christ the Knight. But, not everywhere;

²⁵ cf. Edmund Leach and D. Alan Aycock, *Structuralist Interpretations of Biblical Myth*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983,) p89 fig 1.

only in the case of Melchizedec was war booty made sacrament and only in this case of a Roman legal execution was a death made something other. Christ, Lord of the Waste Land, stretches out his hands eternally, in words which echo the rubric of the Mass, while his clothes are made a kind of scavenged booty by the jackals.

Here is the death, but is it the end? The end for the West where there are the very elements necessary for the Mass and hence all kinds of sign-making and humane activity, corn, wine and a living God. The imagery of the Waste Land contrasts with the implicit growth and regeneration connoted by Demeter and Triptolemus. The overall sense that Jones manages to convey is one of emptiness, a distinct pause, not just a matter of typography. It is a pause akin to that which follows the words of institution in the canon of the Mass, the words of consecration.

Calling to mind...RESTITVIS REM.

If the reader is left with a sense of hopelessness and a certain amount of confusion, Jones goes some way to dispel this as he picks up the liturgical thrust once again with the third part of the prayer of consecration. Calling to mind, *unde et memores*, in a sense, that is what the whole poem has been doing. In this instance it introduces a note of hope in the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham's journey, like Christ's, leads him to Jerusalem, the appointed place, Ariel Hill - which, once again, has been mapped out by Jones in the first part of the poem. We may ask ourselves whether the words, 'parched concentric bands', are a description of the poet's understanding of history, concentric circle layered upon concentric circle, with certain 'appointed places', sacred sites, making links between them: Eden, the place of sacrifice, Golgotha, and, by extension, the 'railed' tumulus' of every altar on which Mass is said?

In this place is the hill of dereliction of the city of emptiness, the cry of the maker of the mountains, which is Christ himself. But the focus shifts once again at the turning of a page, and the reader's attention is directed to Mary standing on the hill, both bride and mother of Christ. But also in allusions to the Old Testament Wisdom literature she is Eternal Wisdom, Sophia, standing on the mountain. Seamlessly, we turn to consider water, the most physical of symbols in Jones's work; the reader is enticed to consider the waters of the womb, the waters of the font and all the Holy Wells of Wales baptising the geography of the nation. As the poet unfolds this water imagery in terms reminiscent of the blessing of the font on Easter Eve, with its background of expected resurrection, the focus shifts once again to Christ who has made all waters a sign of divine presence. The land is dry although the clouds, perhaps a backward allusion to *The Cloud of Unknowing* - the clouds of God's presence beyond knowledge itself, are gathering. Jones knots all of this material about waters together in the single word SITIO, I thirst, drawn, as he illuminates in his notes especially from the liturgical proclamation of the Johannine Passion Gospel on Good Friday. This is the paradox, that He who made all waters to be a sign of life is thirsty. He who enables water to flow in the Waste Land is parched. This strong paradox of the thirsty Christ is powerfully executed in the poem, both in terms of the typology and of the poetry itself. But it is not yet the true climax of this mass of material. Christ's parched dereliction is shared by all the naiads and the Tutelar Goddesses no matter what language they speak, but - VNVS HOMO NOBIS/(PER AQVAM)/RESTITVIS REM. - the poet explains the genesis of the allusion in Virgil. For the reader, it is necessary principally to notice that water has become the vehicle for salvation itself in the same way that it is necessary for life.

But tell me his cry...riding the Axile Tree?

Is it a new voice who asks after Christ's cry of emptiness and abandonment? It makes a useful transition to a new tone of language, to the meditational thoughts of the Roman executioners, including a brief thought of the time-keeping of Mariners, thus gathering up into this section the journey material of earlier sections. In a nicely crafted digression, Pilate, the 'fact man', is described as if he were a servant of the British Raj, enjoying an afternoon nap, oblivious to what is happening.

Then immediately the reader's attention is taken back to Calvary at the moment of the death of Christ. The hill has become itself a prophecy, and carrion birds like the sparrow of the parable are sustained by Christ by his own blood, the hydromel (honey) in which the cross is steeped. In another allusion to the Good Friday hymn, *Vexilla Regis*, the unhappy tree is made imperial and splendid by this blood. There is a nicely judged play on the words 'infelix' and 'efflux'. Would even the Roman deities ridiculed by Augustine have denied this love? asks the poet.

There is a final break before the last lines of verse. On the mountain and in the Upper Room, the sacrifice is made according to the ritual of the Jews, but also for all peoples, Latin, Celtic and Teutonic. Once more, all ritual activity, whether maypole dancing or sacrifice on the altar, is drawn together. The wound of the dolorous blow is healed by death in Jerusalem, the second cave of Christ's life. The poet asks whether even a dog recognises him? Christ, like Odysseus, the wanderer. Christ takes, and offers himself, once, in the Upper Room, but also everywhere where by gesture and word the Mass is said. In an allusion to the Mass rubrics, Jones conveys this. Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Incarnation and the Passion mystery are brought together.

But, what is the fate of death? Surely this is one of the greatest questions of the poem. That too fits into these high tales of great deeds. It is in being wedded to Christ's death and accepting the viatic food of the Mass that his death may be celebrated. Jones, unlike Milton, does not abandon the mysterious world of the Classical and Egyptian pagan gods, for they were, in their own way forerunners, but, in an allusion to 1 Corinthians 11.29, he points out that they could not discern the shape of the mystery. All ritual acts depend on these actions which themselves are dependent on others. *Pange Lingua* makes a last fleeting appearance as Christ celebrates the Last Supper. And the poet leaves where in fact he found them, at the celebration of the Mass. He leaves his readers with a question, one more amongst so many which have been thrown out during the course of the poem; does Christ ride the axle tree as if it were the tree on which the whole world revolves? That we are able to answer affirmatively owes much to all that the reader has seen and heard in the course of the poem.

The Conclusion

While addressing a symposium called to discuss the interrelationship between parable, myth and language in the context both of theology and poetry, the American poet Denise Levertov presented a paper in which she said:

Myth can enter poetry as that dominant theme each writer has below the surface of the majority of his works; as allusion to, and incorporation of, specific known myths, the shared mythos of his culture or borrowed from other accessible cultures; or by the invention of new fictions which (whether or not they pertain to that writer's dominant theme) attain mythic stature in the culture (perhaps because they turn out to be new versions of archetypal stories).¹

Another poet, Robert Duncan, in a paper given to the same symposium and entitled 'The Truth and Life of Myth in Poetry' writes:

Back of each poet's concept of the poem is his concept of the meaning of form itself: and his concept of form in turn where it is serious at all arises from his concept of the nature of the universe, its life-time or form, or even, for some, its lifelessness or formlessness. A mythic cosmogony gives rise to the little world the poet as creator makes.²

Between them, these two statements by poets about myth provide a good starting point for our summing up of the findings of this thesis.

From the outset, we have sought to examine David Jones's poem *The Anathemata* in order to ask not so much, 'how was it made?' or 'what processes came together within Jones's mind to get it this way?' Neither have we been particularly concerned to ask 'what is in it?' Although all of

¹Tony Stoneburner, ed. *A Meeting of Poets and Theologians to Discuss Parable, Myth and Language*, (Washington: The Church Society for College Work, 1968) p.19

²in Stoneburner, ed., *Parable, Myth and Language*, p.39

these questions have, to a certain extent, been addressed in the course of the thesis, it has been in many ways only tangentially. The major concern within these pages has been to uncover some of the processes involved in the poem especially as they concern the religious thought - world of Western European Catholicism. We have therefore 'read' *The Anathemata* as a poem which depends on that thought-world of Western Catholicism for both its form and its meaning. Moreover, we have been aware of what we might term a symbiotic relationship; the poem depends on the Catholic culture of Europe for both its shape and its contents, but equally, the distinctive vision that Jones presents to the reader of that culture with its multiplicity of facets is one that is enriching and illuminating. Without the elements of the culture, there is no *Anathemata*. With it, that culture is itself opened to metamorphosis, or is at least seen anew.

The image that we are presented with by Jones in the opening lines of the poem is one which is at the same time both familiar and yet (together with that familiarity he evokes) hopeless. The image is consequently defamiliarized and its usually accepted meaning is replaced by one of hopelessness: the priest saying Mass in what Jones depicts as a twentieth-century dystopic world in which religion, art and maybe even God, is dead. The rest of the poem develops these opening thoughts and images in such a way that, at the end, when the poet evokes for us a real death, that of Christ on the Cross, and returns us to the opening Eucharistic image, we are nonetheless left not with emptiness of the beginning but with the glimmerings of hope. Between the opening and the close the poet unfolds and connects in a complexly sinuous pattern, the elements of that hope; the divine revelation of Incarnation and the Passion together with the specific elements and instances of human sign-making and artistry. His is

a vision which ranges over a canvas of huge proportions, both geographical and historical, and which is conveyed in poetry full of variation and imaginative depth.

Despite the profundity of the vision and the vastness of its execution, Jones rarely if ever loses control. His poem has both a material and linguistic tensive quality by means of which interest is maintained. Two elements of the poem that have been examined in the course of this thesis may be said to achieve this in addition to the linguistic vitality investigated in chapters 4 and 5. First, the strength of the mythic vision which underpins the poem, holding it all together from the point of view of the content of the poem. The myth is *primarily* the Christ-myth, a death and resurrection myth, but a version of it that is portrayed in such a way as to connect with and illuminate all other myths of Western culture, many of which, like those from the Celtic and Classical worlds are also woven into the fabric of the poem. Second, (and closely connected to the first point), is the way in which liturgy, the ritual enactment of myth, becomes a point of crossing between the divine and the human worlds, the point at which there is a sharing and interchange between human and divine sign-making, where art and religion are brought closest together. In the poem, it is brought into, or we might say 'incarnated' into, the world of language, a world, which is in this instance is created by Jones and which depends also upon and articulates his mythic conception of the universe.

We have been led by the realisation that the poem's linguistic and allusive difficulty is part of a strategy of defamiliarisation in which the reader is consciously made to look at the elements of what he is reading, to suggest that the process of reading *The Anathemata* has much in common with the physical religious experience of making a pilgrimage. The truth

of this, that throughout the poem the poet evokes a threshold or liminal state, is to a certain extent born out by the material content of the poem with its stress on journeying and also by the circular form of the poem in the course of which the reader is returned, albeit by a rather circuitous route, to the place of the beginning.

On another plane, we have suggested that we may see in the poem reflections of a psychological state which, in many ways, parallels the liminal state of pilgrimage. The in-between or transitional area of the human psychological make-up between self- and corporate- identity which is characterised in children by play and in the case of Jones's poem both by allusion to the childhood world of nursery rhymes and by language which in a sense delights in its own joyful abundance. It is the area of psychology in which in adults religious feelings and ideas are explored and lived. We might also suggest that it is the area in which we find ourselves able to engage with the epistemological idea of mystery, another concept that we have explored in the context of this thesis and have connected with David Jones's poem.

Pilgrimage, liminality, play, mystery, these together with myth, liturgy and imagination are ideas which may profitably be used to elucidate *The Anathemata* . And, when one has so examined the poem, what then? When one has seen how Jones builds on parallel living traditions of religious thought and literary creation; when his debt to, and use of liturgy, myth and language have been minutely examined; when the reader has come to share in, or leastways understand Jones's understanding of what it is to be human and recognises and respects the poet's own distinctive artistic signature: then we are still left with the mystery of God which in Jones's vision often lies hidden deep below the overlaid folds, fractured and twisted, of both human and natural creation

and yet is, paradoxically, itself woven into the texture of that creation. It is this, the most general of mysteries viewed from Jones's distinctive, perspective as a Welshman and a Catholic living in mid-twentieth-century London, that *The Anathemata* is all about. And it is in this sense that we may conclude that, while eshewing the formal elements of the classics of Western spirituality, he has articulated a spiritual vision for late-twentieth-century humanity in which the religious tradition is developed and mythology is renewed to encompass both man the artist and the discoveries of man the scientist, and which does justice to and addresses the needs of man in his alienation.

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