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The Failure of Chivalry, Courtesy, and Knighthood Post-WWI as Represented in David Jones's In Parenthesis

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The Failure of Chivalry, Courtesy, and Knighthood Post-WWI as Represented in David Jones's *In Parenthesis*

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes David Jones's *In Parenthesis* to demonstrate the failed notion of chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood in modernity during and after the war. Jones's semi-autobiographical prose poem recounting his experiences of WWI was published in 1937, nineteen years after the war ended. Jones applied the concepts of chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood to his experiences during WWI through *In Parenthesis*. Jones used these concepts, which originated in the classical period and the Middle Ages, to demonstrate how they have changed over time, especially given the events of WWI. The best way for Jones to demonstrate the impact of WWI was to use the medieval ideas of knighthood (which were arguably idealized up until the war) to describe how the modern world could no longer be identified with those ideals.

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PREFACE

In March 1918, a French propaganda poster, created by Victor Prouvé, was released depicting the ruin of French land during World War One. The title of the poster is "La Voix des Ruines" ("The Voice of the Ruins"). The image is printed on ivory paper, and it includes decaying trees, the remains of damaged buildings, a bleak, dreary sky, and the muddy ground of No Man's Land. The image is shaded in black, without any color, which reflects the desolation of the scene. Toward the bottom of the poster is the text that reveals its intended meaning. It is written in French, but the English translation is as follows:

> A voice is rising from the devastated earth, from the destroyed orchards, from the burnt factories, from our crushed villages, from the collapsed walls and from the deserted ghost cities. This voice is neither harrowing nor lyrical or even frightening. This voice is something quiet and merciless; it is just the voice of the Right claiming compensations regarding the facts. ("French poster")

Prouvé gives a voice to the ruins, which in turn gives a voice to the trauma of the land. According to Prouvé, this trauma was inflicted by the German soldiers specifically. The "merciless" voice reflects the brutality of the war, which was apparent in all aspects, from the trauma inflicted upon the land to the suffering of the soldiers. It is important to focus on the destruction of land, as this propaganda piece brings to light, but one should not forget those behind the destruction: the soldiers. They had no choice but to inflict devastation upon the land. Prouvé demonstrates how the land holds trauma, and he calls for "compensations"; however, he does not address the more troubling problem of trauma within the soldiers. French soil absorbed a vast amount of damage, but the soldiers themselves suffered much worse. Where is their

compensation? Prouvé's poster sheds light on the destruction of land, but it also provides a means to understand the cause of the soldiers' trauma.

It is hard to comprehend the scale of death from the First World War. The newly mechanized warfare the soldiers were exposed to resulted in fatality numbers that had never been seen before. In *The First World War*, John Keegan provides a breakdown of these numbers to demonstrate just how shocking they are:

> To the million dead of the British Empire and the 1,700,000 French dead, we must add 1,500,000 soldiers of the Habsburg Empire [Austro-Hungarian Empire] who did not return, two million Germans, 460,000 Italians, 1,700,000 Russians and many hundreds of thousands of Turks; their numbers were never counted. … Calculated as a percentage of the youngest and fittest, the figures exceed by far what was emotionally bearable. Male mortality exceeded normal expectation, between 1914 and 1918, seven to eightfold in Britain, and tenfold in France, in which 17 per cent of those who served were killed. … "Between 1870 and 1899, about 16 million boys were born [in Germany]; all but a few served in the army and some 13 per cent were killed." … "[In France and Britain] Year groups 1892-1895, men who were between 19 and 22 when war broke out, were reduced by 35-37 per cent." (423)

With these numbers, it is apparent why so many soldiers suffered from trauma during and after the war. Death was all around them. The destruction and ruin of the land depicted in Prouvé's poster, "The Voice of the Ruins," reflect the internal ruin of the soldiers as well. The trauma they endured is incomparable. Before WWI, this trauma would not have been understood. It is because of WWI poems, diaries, testimonials, and other first-hand accounts that a soldier's

trauma from WWI is now understood. The culture before WWI explains the cause of this immense amount of trauma and why it was misunderstood.

Paul Fussell provides the means to understand the culture of Britain before WWI in his book *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Before the war, chivalry was respected, romanticized even. Men were expected to follow the chivalric code, and when the war broke out, the soldiers were expected to follow the same code. Following the chivalric code in wars before WWI might have seemed appropriate, but with the drastic change in warfare that came with WWI, it was no longer viable. The fiction of chivalry died with the First World War. Trying to follow a code that had no place in WWI did not fare well for the soldiers. Instead of feeling they were fighting in an honorable war, the soldiers became miserable, angry, and deeply traumatized. This was their reality. On the home front, the "reality" of the war was entirely different. This was due to the romanticized viewpoint of chivalry and propaganda. Though chivalry did not function in the war, civilians still viewed it in an uncritical way. The concepts of honor, glory, gallantry, and courtesy were idealized in the home front. Propaganda perpetuated these ideas. Posters portrayed the war based on the assumptions of the civilians. They were accustomed to the chivalric culture before the war. They were not aware that these ideas were dying with the war, as Fussell states:

> the Great War took place in what was, compared with ours, a static world, where the values appeared stable and where the meanings of abstractions seemed permanent and reliable. Everyone knew what Glory was, and what Honor meant. (22)

Fussell continues to describe the change in culture:

> Although some memories of the benign last summer before the war can be discounted as standard romantic retrospection turned even rosier by egregious contrast with what followed, all agree that the prewar summer was the most idyllic for many years. … For

> the modern imagination that last summer has assumed the status of a permanent symbol for anything innocently but irrecoverably lost. (25)

The soldiers did not agree with the propaganda posters because they realized the hypocrisy within them. They were not accurate and did not represent the reality of war. Many WWI poets wrote poetry to make the public aware of their reality and to demonstrate the failure of chivalry.

Many participants in WWI wrote significant poetry, including Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, and David Jones. This analysis will emphasize Sassoon, Owen, and Jones. Sassoon and Owen wrote lyric poetry during the war as an immediate response to the hypocrisy of war. When reading their poetry in chronological order, one can see the toll the war took on their mental health. The longer they remained in the war, the more their poetry represented their trauma, bleak outlook on life, and despair. Jones's semi-autobiographical prose poem recounting his own experiences of WWI, *In Parenthesis*, was published in 1937, nineteen years after the war ended. Jones expanded Sassoon and Owen's concepts, demonstrating a more complete portrayal of the change in culture and the failure of the chivalric code. At the same time, he was able to describe his own trauma and the impact WWI had on him. All three poets applied the concepts of patriotism, chivalry, courtesy, knighthood, and honor to their experiences during WWI through their poetry. The poets used these concepts, which originated in the classical period and the Middle Ages, to demonstrate how they have changed over time, especially given the events of WWI. The Great War was a drastic turning point in modernity. The best way for Sassoon, Owen, and Jones to demonstrate this impact was to use the medieval ideas of knighthood (which were arguably idealized up until the war) to describe how the modern world could no longer be identified with those ideals. There was no courtesy, chivalry, or knightly actions in the war, and there would not be again.

Context: Poetry, History, Ideology

Sassoon and Owen are Jones's contemporaries. Their poetry allowed Jones to portray his reality years after WWI ended. Sassoon and Owen described the war as it was, and they brought awareness to the misery and trauma of the soldiers. Jones was able to build on their work and take it further. His work is one of the most significant pieces of literature to derive from WWI, and for this reason, Jones's *In Parenthesis* is the main focus of this analysis. Sassoon's and Owen's poems are briefly analyzed to provide the necessary context to understand Jones's text. Sassoon, Owen, and Jones use the classical and medieval concepts of patriotism, chivalry, courtesy, knighthood, and honor to represent their failure during and after the First World War. Sassoon's and Owen's poetry demonstrates the failure of classical and medieval concepts during WWI, whereas Jones's *In Parenthesis* demonstrates the failure of classical and medieval concepts after WWI. By implementing poetry during and after WWI in this analysis, the relevancy of these concepts, their association with the war, and the effect of WWI on modernity will be explained.

In order to understand the failure of the classical and medieval concepts, it is important to understand the concepts themselves. Sassoon and Owen incorporate broad classical and medieval concepts, but Jones uses specific references to strengthen his depiction of the failure of classical and medieval concepts, and especially to Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* which establishes the concepts of chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood. Jones uses direct references from Malory to convey the stark contrast between the themes within Malory's work and the failures of those themes in WWI. Jones's *In Parenthesis* will be analyzed by using the influence of

Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* to demonstrate the failed notion of patriotism, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood in modernity during and after the war.

T. S. Eliot wrote an introduction to Jones's text, praising his work and explaining how he was partly responsible for the first publication. His influence and the similarity of styles could be the reason why Eliot enjoyed Jones's text as much as he did. He even went as far as comparing them outright:

> David Jones is a representative of the same literary generation as Joyce and Pound and myself, if four men born between 1882 and 1895 can be regarded as of the same literary generation. David Jones is the youngest, and the tardiest to publish. The lives of all of us were altered by that War, but David Jones is the only one to have fought in it. (Jones viii)

Eliot then goes on to say he was "deeply moved" and "regarded it … as a work of genius" (Jones vii). Eliot looked highly upon Jones's work, and the most obvious reasoning for this is because Jones took what Eliot had started with *The Waste Land* (representing the trauma of WWI through classical and medieval references), connected his first-hand knowledge and experience of the war to this concept, and created *In Parenthesis*. As Eliot mentions, Jones was able to accomplish what Joyce, Pound, and Eliot could not: portray a realistic version of WWI, incorporating the failure of classical and medieval concepts, because of his experience. His work then becomes the most relevant and representative of the time period and of the soldiers' experiences. Sassoon and Owen accomplished a similar feat on a smaller scale with their lyric poetry before Eliot wrote *The Waste Land*. Sassoon, Owen, and Jones represent the same concepts, depict the worst side of their trauma, and provide an opportunity for an in-depth analysis into the failure of chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood.

Sassoon's and Owen's poetry are analyzed in the introduction; Sassoon has the first half, and Owen has the second half. The poems in Sassoon's section are "They," "The Hero," "The Effect," and "Glory of Women." "Lamentations" is also compared to "The Effect," but it is not one of the main poems in Sassoon's analysis. All five poems come from Sassoon's *Collected Poems*. For Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est," "Mental Cases," "S.I.W.," and "The Next War" are the poems that were chosen from his collection, *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen*. His "Preface" is referenced, and "Exposure" is briefly mentioned alongside "Dulce et Decorum Est" as well. Using Sassoon's and Owen's writings will demonstrate the contemporary background for Jones's own writing. Jones expanded the concepts present in the lyric poetry of his peers before him and took their themes even further by creating his epic style poem in seven parts. By analyzing Sassoon's and Owen's shorter, lyric poems, a stronger basis is formed to interpret Jones's text.

Because Jones's *In Parenthesis* is divided into seven parts, two chapters are dedicated to his work. This study's first chapter focuses on analyzing parts one through three, and the second chapter focuses on parts four through seven. Malory's influence will be apparent in these chapters because they will demonstrate how Jones used Malory's text and how he has altered Malory's themes to apply to the modern world during WWI. W.S. Merwin wrote a foreword to Jones's text, and he comments on Jones's references stating they "inform the resonant language of *In Parenthesis* and give it its pace and power and scope" (Jones v). He continues by saying his "associations … contribute a profound dimension" to his text (Jones v). Alongside Malory, several of the references that Jones integrated into his text are incorporated into this analysis. This will explain how references other than Malory's text contribute to the representation of the failure of classical and medieval themes within Jones's text. For both sets of analyses on these

poets, their themes of a broken chivalric system, a lack of courtesy, and absent knighthood is highlighted. Similarly, the failure of patriotism and honor is demonstrated as well. Alongside these themes, trauma theory is incorporated to highlight the poets' trauma and give a reasoning for their depiction of classical and medieval themes failing during and after WWI.

Reading and Depicting Trauma

Two concepts associated with trauma theory are emphasized in this study: trauma as a war-wound and trauma as a disruption of a narrative. Alongside wounds or casualties caused by bullets, artillery, shrapnel, gas, weather conditions, or disease, trauma is considered a war-wound. For this study's interpretation of Sassoon's, Owen's, and Jones's poetry, it is important to view trauma as another kind of war-wound. Trauma can be an extension of the war-wounds outlined above, but it can also be a separate, individual type of war-wound. Because of this, trauma is associated and intertwined with the overall war experience. Sassoon and Owen were aware of their trauma, and they used their poetry as a coping mechanism. Jones's trauma was subconscious; he did not realize he was traumatized by the war until 1933. His symptoms were "agoraphobia, neurotic anxiety about illness, fear of germs and animals (snakes, dogs, horses, wasps), and depression accompanying 'colds of a certain kind'" (Dilworth 156). In October 1933, he was diagnosed with "neurasthenia owing to shell shock, a 'severe … Depressive Psychosis'" (Dilworth 158). All three poets suffered life-long trauma, surfacing and worsening in different times and conditions. Though this aspect of trauma is straightforward, it is important to remember trauma as a war-wound when analyzing Sassoon's, Owen's, and Jones's poetry.

The other important concept in trauma theory within this study is trauma's relationship to language. Cathy Caruth succinctly describes this relationship in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*:

> The language of trauma does not simply originate in a theoretical knowledge that stands outside of trauma but may emerge equally from within its very experience. Yet this inner link between the experience of trauma and its theory, or between the language of survivors and the language of theoretical description, need not imply a lack of objectivity or truth, but the very possibility of speaking from within a crisis that cannot simply be known or assimilated. (144)

It is hard to describe the experience of trauma and to put that experience into words. Sassoon, Owen, and Jones, though they write about trauma, do not describe the *feeling* of trauma. They relay the *cause* of trauma. It is important to distinguish this difference. There is another way to state this: trauma disrupts a narrative. A narrative can be reflected in a society, such as the concept of the chivalric code before WWI, or it can be a literal narrative of a text. The trauma from WWI disrupted the narrative of the chivalric code. In Jones, this concept is more literal. Artillery shells and other scenes of trauma disrupt the narrative of his text. The three poets write about trauma very well, and they portray a clear image of the cause of trauma; however, it is hard to describe the effects of trauma on one's mental state in a way the reader will understand, especially in the form of a lyric poem and an epic poem. Because of this, their depiction of trauma disrupts the narrative, whether it is the text itself or the narrative of the chivalric code. The way that these poets translate their trauma into a means of understanding for the reader is through classical and medieval references, specifically classical and medieval war references.

These references also remove the reader from the text by calling on them to reflect on these references, another disruption.

In this analysis, trauma is seen as a war-wound and as a disruption of a narrative. Though the main emphasis of this study is the failure of classical and medieval concepts, trauma is incorporated to serve as a reason for these failures. Trauma is mentioned in the analysis of Sassoon's and Owen's poems, but Jones suppresses his trauma and the trauma of the poem. For this reason, trauma theory is used on a broad level to support the failure of classical and medieval concepts within Jones's *In Parenthesis*. Trauma theory is useful in Sassoon's and Owen's poetry but not as useful for Jones because of his suppression. Because Sassoon and Owen are only being analyzed to introduce Jones's work, their poems are not analyzed as closely as that of Jones; therefore, trauma theory does not take on as prominent of a role as it could in a more thorough analysis of just Sassoon's and Owen's work. Regardless, it is important to remember these concepts as they are relevant to Jones's text.

Jones's Method in In Parenthesis. Jones's text is rich with historical, mythological, and literary references. A large amount of WWI literature involves looking back at medieval types of mythical characters, comparing them to WWI soldiers. Jones takes this idea and completely dispels it by showing how this trope no longer applies to modernity. Those mythical concepts (patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood) died with the war. Jones provides a reasoning for why he incorporated so many references and focused on classical and medieval concepts in *In Parenthesis* in his Preface:

> For I think the day by day in the Waste Land, the sudden violences and the long stillnesses, the sharp contours and unformed voids of that mysterious existence,

> profoundly affected the imaginations of those who suffered it. It was a place of enchantment. It is perhaps best described in Malory, book iv, chapter 15 – that landscape spoke 'with a grimly voice'. (Jones xi)

Jones comments directly on the violence and the still moments with no violence he witnessed during the war; he states that this juxtaposition contains a sort of magic. Yet at the same time, he still compares this phenomenon to a "grimly voice," reflecting the French propaganda piece described earlier. This understanding of the war sparked his and many other poets' imaginations, and they created the poetry that is still studied today. The idea of "enchantment" provides the reasoning for why Jones incorporated classical and medieval ideology into his poetry.

Jones's explanation provides an understanding for the context and importance of this analysis. WWI affected Sassoon, Owen, Jones, and many others so deeply that they relied on poetry to cope with their experiences. In order to explain what they witnessed in the war, these poets had to present their poetry outlining the failure of classical and medieval ideologies to show the drastic impact of the war. In his Preface, Jones provides his own understanding of WWI to explain why he wrote *In Parenthesis*:

> This writing is called 'In Parenthesis' because I have written it in a kind of space between – I don't know between quite what – but as you can turn aside to do something; and because for us amateur soldiers (and especially for the writer, who was not only amateur, but grotesquely incompetent, a knocker-over of piles, a parade's despair) the war itself was a parenthesis – how glad we thought we were to step outside its brackets at the end of '18 – and also because our curious type of existence here is altogether in parenthesis. (xv)

His existence in the war was in parentheses, in the "space between." Not only did he write poetry as a coping mechanism, but it also serves as a glimpse into his state of mind. Everyone assumed the soldiers' lives would return to normal, but as Jones points out, their experience and their trauma from the war followed them long after it ended. His poetry allows one to view the space between who he was as a civilian before the war and who he became after the war ended. One can learn as much about the poet as a person as one can learn about the war itself. By studying Sassoon's, Owen's, and Jones's poetry through the failure of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood, the effect of the war on their mental states will be revealed, and it will demonstrate why their space between the war and the years that followed is crucial to understanding the effect of WWI on modernity.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION: SASSOON AND OWEN DIVE DEEP INTO THE HYPOCRISY OF THE WAR

Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen are well-known World War I poets, and because of this, there has been a significant amount of scholarly work published on their poetry. Their poems have been analyzed in many different lenses in these publications, but for this analysis, only the failures of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood are highlighted. The poems that have been selected for this analysis demonstrate the contemporary background for Jones's *In Parenthesis*. In order to understand Jones's text, it is necessary to discuss Sassoon's and Owen's contributions, which Jones ultimately furthers. They depict the hypocrisy and irony of war, and they rebuttal the chivalric code and the ideology of propaganda on the home front. While Owen depicts these concepts, his poems are more personal and heartbreaking. Sassoon portrays these concepts succinctly, but they are still just as powerful.

Sassoon's Bitter Portrayal of the War

Siegfried Sassoon was the first prominent poet to enlist in the First World War. The day after Britain declared war on Germany, Sassoon was in his uniform (Roberts 81). He served as a second lieutenant of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers from May 1915 to July 1918 when he returned home after a head injury. At first, he seemed optimistic about the war, thinking that he was fighting for a worthy cause. An excerpt from *Memoirs of a Foxhunting Man*, one of his six autobiographies, describes his opinion of the war early on:

> The war was inevitable and justifiable. Courage remained a virtue … I had serious aspirations for heroism … My one idea was to be first in the field. In fact I made quite an impressive inward emotional experience of it … My gesture was, so to speak, an individual one, and I gloried in it. (Roberts 81)

As Sassoon explains, he went into the war with the preconceived desire of achieving knightliness, in a figurative sense, and honor. He thought it would be courageous to join the war. He even mentions having "aspirations for heroism," which is another common association with knighthood. Many soldiers, alongside Sassoon, had these same aspirations, but Sassoon's aspirations quickly turned south once the war became a reality.

For Sassoon, it was not until approximately June 1916 that he perceived the war in a bitter, negative manner. He witnessed the death of a friend and learned of his brother's death, which pushed Sassoon into a reckless assault on a German position where he won the Military Cross "for bombing and capturing a German trench single handed" (Roberts 299). He often dealt with his emotional imbalance in manic ways, performing near suicide attempts in battle, which earned him the nickname "Mad Jack." His poetry went from being patriotic, celebrating the just spirit of war, to defiant, dark verse condemning the brutality and hypocrisy of the war. After the reality of the war became apparent to him, he was no longer patriotic and often protested against it; his Protest Statement of July 30, 1917, which was read in front of Parliament, serves as an example of this. Along with his protest statement, he also refused to fight. He condemned generals, the church, the government, and other authoritative figures for prolonging the war. Several of his poems outline these protests, but they also serve as a glimpse into his own trauma. He became disillusioned by his personal trauma, and many of his poems depict this. He defines the hypocrisy of the war by delving into the reality of it as the soldiers experienced, the false

concept of honor that comes from fighting for one's country, the failed notion of chivalry in the war, and the lack of courtesy in the representation of "malingerers" as cowards. Most importantly, his poems describe the failure of the classical and medieval concepts of patriotism, chivalry, courtesy, knighthood, and honor during WWI.

Shortly after Sassoon's perception of war changed, he wrote "They" in October 1916. This poem demonstrates his condemnation of authoritative figures in the war, but specifically of church figures. In the first stanza, he details a patriotic speech given by a Bishop to civilians depicting a justification for the war and what to expect of the soldiers when they return home. The irony that Sassoon intended with this speech is evident:

> The Bishop tells us: 'When the boys come back
> 'They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
> 'In a just cause: they lead the last attack
> 'On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
> 'New right to breed an honourable race,
> 'They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.' (21, 1-6)

The preconceived notion of honor and justice that many expected to come out of the war is apparent in the Bishop's speech. The chivalric code that defined English culture is also evident. It was common among civilians to retain these ideals of honor and justifications for the war, and it was the goal of many WWI poets to dispel these ideals. The language of a "just cause," "attack on Anti-Christ," and "an honourable race" are a few examples of these ideals. Oftentimes the enemy was made into the Anti-Christ to give a proper justification for the deaths caused by the war. The Bishop makes the soldiers out to be patriotic and honorable and acts as if they have a

choice to "challenge Death." He acknowledges that they will not be the same, but as Sassoon's intended irony brings to light, he is missing the point entirely.

The second stanza of "They" portrays the reality of the soldiers' experience. Sassoon included common injuries that would permanently disable the soldiers to combat the Bishop's misleading speech. He begins the second stanza with a continuation of the first; portraying the reality of the changed soldiers, Sassoon demonstrates how wrong the Bishop is:

'We're none of us the same!' the boys reply.
'For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
'Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
'And Bert's gone syphilitic; you'll not find
'A chap who's served that hasn't found *some* change.'
And the Bishop said: 'The ways of God are strange!' (21, 7-12)

Instead of a change in character where the soldiers become an honorable race as the Bishop entailed, the soldiers change for the worse in physical appearance and their mentality. Sassoon includes disabilities obtained by artillery fire and gunfire, disease, and trauma. The notion of "*some* change" includes all forms of trauma that are not as easy to diagnose as physical disabilities. In this stanza, the soldiers are trying to get the Bishop specifically, but other civilians as well, to listen to their personal experience rather than the false portrayal of the war that was common in the home front. By describing their disabilities and their traumas, they are commenting on the lack of patriotism and honor in the war. What they endured was not worth it, and there was no "just" cause for their suffering. The soldiers' desperate pleas to listen are overshadowed by the Bishop's last line, which relates their suffering back to the ways of God. To Sassoon and many others, this answer is not a sufficient justification for their trauma. As

some soldiers became disillusioned and lost a majority of their moral character, they no longer saw God in the war. The Bishop is stuck in the old way of perceiving war, which revolves around honor and justifications, and he will not listen to the soldiers who are in the right. Dominick LaCapra details the importance of history and memory together when reflecting on trauma in his Preface to *Writing History, Writing Trauma*:

> And a key problem is how to understand and analyze bearing witness and giving testimony with respect to both events in the past and the experience of those living through or, subsequently, having an affective response to them and to those undergoing them. (xx)

As LaCapra states, it is important to listen to those that have witnessed traumatic events and accept their experiences. Sassoon's depiction of the Bishop demonstrates how this was a problem during WWI, meaning that the soldiers' trauma was not understood or affectively cared for. Their reality was overshadowed by the chivalric code and propaganda. The concept of courtesy was ignored because of the lack of care for the soldiers when they returned home, especially in regard to their mental health. Sassoon develops this lack of courtesy further with "The Effect."

"The Effect" was written in 1918, and it was published in Sassoon's second collection of war poems, entitled *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*. In this collection it is apparent how bitter Sassoon became, and "The Effect" shows the irony in his tone and the hypocrisy that he felt surrounded the war. He addresses death on a large scale, and he responds to a war correspondent's comment on the amount of death he witnessed. Sassoon's poem is a direct commentary on the failed notion of honor and courtesy and a reflection on trauma:

> '*How peaceful are the dead.*'
>
> Who put that silly gag in someone's head?

'*He'd never seen so many dead before.*'

The lilting words danced up and down his brain,

While corpses jumped and capered in the rain.

No, no; he wouldn't count them any more…

The dead have done with pain:

They've choked; they can't come back to life again. (66-7, 5-12)

To begin his poem Sassoon reflects on the common perception of death and comments on the hypocrisy of that statement. The death the soldiers witnessed was not peaceful, and the corpses of the dead would be stuck in the same terrible position that they died in. Similar to "They," this is a direct commentary on the difference between how civilians perceive the war and how soldiers experience it. Continuing with this concept, the second stanza represents the soldier's trauma from the corpses that surround him. The narrator's trauma is represented by the dancing corpses. A commonality from those that suffer from shell shock is to replay a traumatic scene over in their head, and Sassoon's narrator cannot get past the image of his fellow soldiers dying around him. He also must tell himself not to count the corpses to lessen his trauma. He tells himself that the corpses are "done with pain" and that they cannot "come back to life." As he is recovering from the battle, he is trying to cope with his trauma, but it is not as easy to move beyond the death that surrounds him.

Sassoon's narrator then begins to relate the corpses around him to a more personal death that he had recently witnessed:

When Dick was killed last week he looked like that,

Flapping along the fire-step like a fish,

After the blazing crump had knocked him flat…

'*How many dead? As many as ever you wish.*

Don't count 'em; they're too many.

Who'll buy my nice fresh corpses, two a penny?' (67, 13-18)

To add onto the narrator's recurring trauma, he also replays his friend Dick's death, so he has two different traumatic scenarios running through his head. He also retells himself not to count the bodies. The last three lines of the poem turn into the narrator's own chant to cope with his trauma, but they are also representative of the hypocrisy many soldiers felt the war amounted to. Those at home viewed the war in a patriotic light, but the soldiers on the front line did not view it this way. One can see trauma disrupting the narrative of the poem with the chant like lines. There is also a lack of courtesy in these lines, which contributes to the hypocrisy, because those at home do not truly respect the soldiers that have died. Without understanding how the soldiers died and thinking that it was peaceful, they become nothing more than an image. In "Lamentations" Sassoon depicts the scene of a man who found out his brother had died. It is a more personal account of death, but it is closely related to "The Effect." In describing a brother going west and dying because of it, Sassoon describes the toll this takes on a family member: "Moaned, shouted, sobbed, and choked, while he was kneeling / Half-naked on the floor. In my belief / Such men have lost all patriotic feeling" (69, 8-10). When a soldier becomes overwhelmed by grief, they lose sight of the intent of war and their purpose in it. The emotion in this poem could have been how Sassoon felt losing his brother, Hamo. It also continues the theme of the failure of honor that surrounds WWI; there is no glory in dying or losing a loved one. The deaths they witnessed contributed to the trauma they suffered, and as "The Effect"

shows, these deaths contribute to an unending repetition of their own trauma, constantly cycling through a lack of honor and courtesy that was all around them.

This trauma was not understood by civilians. Those that remained at home could not comprehend the inherent irony that came from a successful attack. Soldiers were glad to escape with their lives, but many did not celebrate the death of the enemy, especially when the cost of victory resulted in a massive scale of death on both sides. Civilians often celebrated a victory without reflecting on these concepts. "Glory of Women" was also included in *Counter-Attack and Other Poems*. It is a sonnet that depicts the romanticized version of WWI, specifically from the point-of-view of women. Like several of his other poems, Sassoon begins "Glory of Women" from the perspective of women:

> You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,
> Or wounded in a mentionable place.
> You worship decorations; you believe
> That chivalry redeems the war's disgrace.
> You make us shells. You listen with delight,
> By tales of dirt and danger fondly thrilled.
> You crown our distant ardours while we fight,
> And mourn our laurelled memories when we're killed. (72, 1-8)

It is easy to see how these lines represent the romanticized vision of war many civilians possessed. For this sonnet, women are the civilians Sassoon addresses. They view their soldiers (sons, brothers, husbands) as heroes, and they brag on them whenever they get injured "in a mentionable place," which insinuates that they were wounded in an intense altercation with the enemy. These wounds would be considered "safe" wounds as they were not fatal. The women at

home could brag on their soldiers because they would have proof their soldiers were honorable in battle. Bragging on their soldier's wound as a demonstration of honor is a romanticized and immoral concept. The women also make them gifts and feel delighted whenever they listen to the soldiers' tales, as if they were only a piece of entertainment rather than a real encounter. Sassoon also incorporates many references to the classical and medieval ideals that the women are romanticizing. Laurels were associated with knights that won battles or jousting matches as rewards, but Sassoon associates the laurel with the soldiers that have died. He also includes the line on chivalry, incorporating a direct example of the failure of chivalry during the war. He comments that women use chivalric actions and the chivalric code as excuses for the horrors of war, but Sassoon argues that there is no chivalry in the war. Even if there was, it would never "redeem" the terrors that the soldiers witnessed.

As Sassoon ends the sonnet, an example of the war's horror is included to demonstrate this failure of chivalry:

> You can't believe that British troops 'retire'
> When hell's last horror breaks them, and they run,
> Trampling the terrible corpses – blind with blood.
>
> O German mother dreaming by the fire,
> While you are knitting socks to send your son
> His face is trodden deeper in the mud. (72, 9-14)

Because of the romanticized version of the war, women (and most other civilians) were unable to accept the bitter reality of it. As Sassoon states, not all soldiers were fit for warfare, and many "retired" away from the front line because of the horror they witnessed. WWI was often associated with Hell, so for a large number of soldiers, the hell they witnessed created an

overwhelming amount of trauma they had to endure. While the civilians were safe at home, the soldiers were encountering horrendous scenes, daily. Chivalry was no longer an excuse for warfare. For the women knitting socks for their sons, they missed the point of their son's struggle. Socks would not help their trauma. There was nothing for the civilians to be proud of, and no gift would make up for what the soldiers endured. Similar to the Bishop from "They," the women at home missed the point of the soldiers' experience. They could not understand the true reality of the war and the trauma that stemmed from it because they were too wrapped up in their false, romanticized depiction of it. Unfortunately, civilians were not the only people that did not understand the trauma of the soldiers.

"The Hero" was written in 1917, and it details a vivid depiction of trauma in the midst of an altercation with a mine. Though Sassoon incorporates subtle hints of trauma in his poems, "The Hero" is a direct commentary on the affect trauma can have on a soldier. The poem begins with a mother reading about the death of her son and being proud that he died as a hero. As the poem continues, Sassoon reveals that the son did not die courageously as the mother initially thought:

> Quietly the Brother Officer went out.
> He'd told the poor old dear some gallant lies
> That she would nourish all her days, no doubt.
> For while he coughed and mumbled, her weak eyes
> Had shone with gentle triumph, brimmed with joy,
> Because he'd been so brave, her glorious boy. (26, 7-12)

The themes of courtesy and honor are present in this stanza; however, they are not true representations. The Colonel and the other officer fabricated lies about the death of Jack (the

soldier) so the mother would believe her son was an honorable soldier. They showed the mother courtesy, but in this false manner, is it courteous? The mother would believe lies about her son for the rest of her life, and there would be no true respect for her son because of these lies. He is portrayed as knight-like to comfort the mother, which aligns with the desired concepts of classical and medieval ideals that many projected onto WWI. Unfortunately, there was no honor in his death, and the false courtesy given to the mother is not comforting. Jack's trauma was ignored, and as the poem continues, he was anything but knight-like.

As Jack's actual death is described, the extent of his trauma is revealed. Sassoon also incorporates the viewpoint of other soldiers and commanding officers that did not understand this type of trauma:

> He thought how 'Jack', cold-footed, useless swine,
> Had panicked down the trench that night the mine
> Went up at Wicked Corner; how he'd tried
> To get sent home, and how, at last, he died,
> Blown to small bits. And no one seemed to care
> Except that lonely woman with white hair. (26, 13-18)

Often, soldiers will repress the feelings of trauma so that when another traumatic event or a trigger comes along, they become shell shocked. They freeze up and are unable to respond appropriately. This is exactly what happened to Jack. The explosion of the mine caused Jack to become shell-shocked, and he panicked, begging to be sent home, until he died. This concept was not understood during WWI, and many soldiers suffering from shell shock were deemed "malingerers" and despised or shamed, often referred to as cowards or nuisances. David

Marlowe describes the worst outcome for malingerers in his book *Psychological and Psychosocial Consequences of Combat and Deployment*:

> Men whom we would today classify as combat-stress casualties were shot for "cowardice." Ferguson (1999) indicates that a significant proportion of the 346 British soldiers executed were shot for cowardice, many of whom were suffering from shell shock. … In Britain, "cowardice" was punishable by death until 1930. (41)

Sassoon incorporates this viewpoint in the last stanza. Jack is referred to as "useless swine," and the poem ends with the indication that no one cared for Jack's trauma. Soldiers were not malingerers; they were traumatized by the viciousness of the war. There was only so much one could take of constant artillery and bombardment. Their trauma became a severe war-wound, comparable with other serious wounds. Soldiers like Jack eventually had enough and experienced a full mental breakdown. When this occurred, there was nothing honorable, courteous, or knight-like about it. Sassoon could speak on this subject because he was sent to a hospital for a mental breakdown in 1917.

Craiglockhart War Hospital in Edinburgh is where Sassoon ended up in July 1917. He was sent to the hospital after his protest statement due to the assumption that he had gone mad. Craiglockhart was known for assisting soldiers who suffered from shell shock. Before Sassoon returned to the front line in November 1917, he met Wilfred Owen in August. They quickly developed a friendship, and Sassoon became a mentor to Owen. The influence on his poetry is evident; Sassoon instructed Owen to develop a more "earthy style" (Roberts 307). Sassoon's words spurred Owen into a creative frenzy, and in a week, he wrote six poems, including "Dulce et Decorum Est." There is no doubt that Sassoon was traumatized, but not to the same extent as Owen. Their trauma informed their interpretation of WWI, which comes across in their poetry.

Owen pushed the theme of trauma further than Sassoon ever conceived of, and it made his poems even more profound and impactful. As the poems above outline, Sassoon captured the failure of the classical and medieval themes of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood because of his experiences, but Owen expanded these failures further with his trauma-oriented depictions of the events of WWI.

Owen's Tragic Depiction of the War

Unlike Sassoon, Owen was not in favor of joining the war. He was serving as an English tutor to French children when the war broke out. In letters to his mother, Owen describes his unwillingness to join the war, and in an August 1914 letter, he makes this clear:

> The war affects me less than it ought … I can do no service to anybody by agitating for news or making dole over the slaughter … I feel my own life all the more precious and more dear in the presence of this deflowering of Europe. (Roberts 105)

He continues this explanation in a letter from December 2, 1914:

> The *Daily Mail* speaks very movingly about the "duties shirked" by English young men. I suffer a good deal of shame. But while those ten thousand lusty louts go on playing football I shall go on playing with my little axiom:- that my life is worth more than my death to Englishmen. (Roberts 105)

The continual pressure from others and shame he felt finally drove him to enlist in October 1915. He served in three different regiments: first in the Artists' Rifles until June 1916, second as a second lieutenant in the Manchester Regiment until December 1916, and third in the Lancashire Fusiliers until November 1918.

Owen was not suited for war; he was a devout Christian and a sensitive man. The brutality of the war resulted in an intense bout of trauma that he would suffer from until he died. Because of this, he found himself in and out of hospitals for his shell shock. After Owen met Sassoon in 1917, he entered an intense state of poetic inspiration, and he composed meticulous poems with the overall goal of incorporating them into a book of poetry about the war. He also felt a disdain for war like Sassoon, but Owen manifested his protest differently. Instead of refusing to fight, he felt compelled to rejoin the front line. He argued that he would only be able to convey successful poetry, representing the horrible reality of war, if he was a part of the action. Speaking to his brother, Owen said the following: "I know I shall be killed. But it's the only place I can make my protest from" (Roberts 319). Following through with this plan, Owen fulfilled the role of the soldier. In October 1918, he earned the Military Cross for capturing a German machine gun and inflicting "considerable losses on the enemy" (Roberts 320). He continued to fight in this manner until, unfortunately, on November 4, 1918, one week before Armistice, Owen was shot and killed outside of Ors village.

This transformation in Owen came at a cost. From October 1917 to November 1918, Owen became numb to morality. He lost all moral feeling, which many soldiers experience, and this is reflected in his poetry; however, he still suffered from the trauma he had accumulated in the year before. His poetry demonstrates the lack of sensitivity he grew accustomed to, the recurring trauma he dealt with, his disillusionment, and the growing loss of moral feeling as he stayed in the war. In preparing his book of poetry, Owen wrote a Preface to describe what the goal of his poetry was. In it, he speaks on the characteristics above, but he also outlines the failure of the classical and medieval concepts that have become prominent in this analysis. Owen states:

This book is not about heroes. English poetry is not yet fit to speak of them.

Nor is it about deeds, or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion, or power, except War.

Above all I am not concerned with Poetry.

My subject is War, and the pity of War.

The Poetry is in the pity.

Yet these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolatory. They may be to the next. All a poet can do today is warn. That is why the true Poets must be truthful. (31)

Owen dispels many of the characteristics common in warfare up to WWI that were no longer applicable in the modernized way of fighting. He addresses the false notion of heroes in war, and he also comments on the failure of glory, honor, majesty, and power. These were all common nouns to describe the expectations of the outcome of war, and they are associated with the chivalric code. To Owen these things are not important or relevant, but the subject of war itself, the true reality of war, is. Most importantly, he wants to focus on the pity of war, which is a direct commentary on trauma and the failure of common classical and medieval concepts that had been successful until WWI. His words transform into poetry because of the emotions they elicit in the reader, so his poems only become poetry because of the pity that is generated. Owen accomplishes this better than almost every other poet from this period. He wanted to be truthful to the reality of his experience and others like him. Every poem in his collection accomplishes this goal, and they demonstrate Owen's truth and the warning that WWI provides to future generations.

Owen's most famous poem, "Dulce et Decorum Est," accomplishes his warning powerfully and succinctly. Written in October 1917, it begins with a depiction of the soldiers'

utter exhaustion followed by a ruthless gas attack. He takes the classical idea of honor in fighting for one's country and demonstrates its falseness, and, at the same time, he captures a scene of immense trauma. Before demonstrating the severity of the trauma from the gas attack, Owen portrays the exhaustion of the soldiers first:

> Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots
> But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
> Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
> Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind. (55, 5-8)

The soldiers are fatigued to an extreme sense. They are blind to their surroundings, both visually and audibly. To ignore five-nines is significant, and it shows the extent of the soldiers' exhaustion. This exhaustion foreshadows the gas attack and the terrible outcome for one of the soldiers:

> Gas! Gas! Quick, boys!–An ecstasy of fumbling,
> Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;
> But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
> And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime…
> Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,
> As under a green sea, I saw him drowning. (Owen 55, 9-14)

As soon as a gas attack occurred, soldiers had to put their gas masks on as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, one soldier was unable to do this. Their extreme exhaustion caused them to let their guard down, so the soldier was unable to react as quickly as he should have. His companions had to watch him suffocate on his own fluid as the gas penetrated his lungs. This

would be a memorable scene for anyone, but this is especially true for the soldiers that witnessed his death.

After detailing this brutality, Owen ends the poem with these lines:

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,–
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori. (55, 21-28)

The last four lines discuss the failure of courtesy and honor in modernity in several ways. Owen uses Latin, a language commonly used in medieval Europe, "Lie" is capitalized to emphasize the death of the classical idea of honor—analogous to medieval chivalry, and he is suggesting that it is not honorable to die for one's country, the ultimate reversal of classical and medieval ideals. This last point brings attention to why the soldiers were fighting in the first place. If there was no honor in dying for one's country, what was the point of the war? The issues of honor and courtesy are important because they question the logistics of the war itself. These lines are a direct rebuttal to the chivalric code and the assumptions on the home front. As Owen establishes this failure, he also gives equal attention to trauma from gas attacks. The description of blood coming from the lungs is vivid enough to stay with the reader, so it is possible to imagine how a scene like this would affect a soldier in person. The image of the soldier suffocating from his own blood, sores covering his tongue, eyes turning white will haunt the narrator for years to

come. Owen also alludes to this trauma succinctly: “In all my dreams, before my helpless sight, / He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning” (55, 15-6). These lines demonstrate the lasting effect of trauma. They also reiterate the closing statement of the poem: if one could have experienced this, they would not be preaching the glory of death in war. This commentary on the lack of honor and courtesy and the trauma that stems from it can also be seen in a similar poem.

“Exposure,” written in February 1917, describes the harsh winter conditions the soldiers had to endure. Detailing the same level of exhaustion, in often dizzying verse details, as “Dulce et Decorum Est,” Owen also questions what the point of the war is. Without enduring any combat, as reflected by the repetitive line “But nothing happens,” he describes how soldiers would freeze to death from the exposure to winter weather. The enemy of the soldiers becomes the weather itself, and Owen depicts this using violent, descriptive words to personify the wind, cold air, and blizzards. In the closing stanza of the poem, Owen describes the fate of the soldiers:

> To-night, His frost will fasten on this mud and us,
> Shrivelling many hands, puckering foreheads crisp.
> The burying-party, picks and shovels in their shaking grasp,
> Pause over half-known faces. All their eyes are ice,
> But nothing happens. (49, 36-40)

Once more, the subject of honor and pride are at the forefront of the poem. Soldiers were not meant to die in this manner; there is no pride or honor in their deaths. This poem represents the opposite of what the soldiers volunteered for. Trauma is reflected in this stanza as well by the pause of the burying-party. Seeing a frozen man, eyes literally frozen in ice, is another image that would stay in one’s mind for years to come. The various means of dying in WWI led to varying kinds of trauma, and some soldiers were able to handle trauma better than others. In one

of Owen's most haunting poems, he builds off the violent imagery and trauma within "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Exposure" to detail the worst possible scenario for trauma in "Mental Cases."

"Mental Cases" was written in May 1918, after Owen had experienced the darkest side of the war, developed an immense amount of trauma, and decided to return to the front where he no longer cared for his own life. In his loss of morality and disillusionment, he created a stark, realistic depiction of trauma in the soldier. "Mental Cases," better than most poems from the war, depicts this trauma in a closeness to the soldier as if the reader was in the soldier's mentality. Because of this, Owen portrays the reality of trauma; what makes this poem so effective is the stark language he uses:

> –These are men whose minds the Dead have ravished.
> Memory fingers in their hair of murders,
> Multitudinous murders they once witnessed.
> Wading sloughs of flesh these helpless wander,
> Treading blood from lungs that had loved laughter.
> Always they must see these things and hear them,
> Batter of guns and shatter of flying muscles,
> Carnage incomparable, and human squander
> Rucked too thick for these men's extrication. (69, 10-8)

Trauma was not the same for everyone. Soldiers reacted differently to trauma, and it was caused by different elements of the war. As Owen demonstrates here, these soldiers are traumatized by witnessing murders, the sound of guns, the sight of a body being obliterated, and corpses strewn across the land. With this type of trauma, soldiers were sent to hospitals specifically treating

shell shock to recover, demonstrating the severity of trauma as a war-wound. Doctors did not understand why soldiers were unfit to return to battle because the research on PTSD was not yet developed, so when a soldier showed no signs of improvement, they were stuck in these hospitals for months on end. Soldiers were left to replay their trauma repeatedly, and like the soldiers in this poem, they could not move beyond their trauma and were constantly haunted by the dead. As Owen continues the poem, it is evident what effect this can have on a soldier.

For a traumatized soldier, it can seem like the entire world is encapsulated with triggers to their trauma. Owen demonstrates how the sky itself, with sunlight, sunset, and sunrise, can be a trigger to their trauma:

> Therefore still their eyeballs shrink tormented
> Back into their brains, because on their sense
> Sunlight seems a blood-smear; night comes blood-black;
> Dawn breaks open like a wound that bleeds afresh.
> –Thus their heads wear this hilarious, hideous,
> Awful falseness of set-smiling corpses.
> –Thus their hands are plucking at each other;
> Picking at the rope-knouts of their scourging;
> Snatching after us who smote them, brother,
> Pawing us who dealt them war and madness. (69, 19-28)

Even the rise and fall of daylight can seem traumatic to soldiers. Owen depicts the sunlight as an open wound, synonymous with a blood smear. Night is the reflection of dark blood; dawn renews the cycle and reopens the wound. This is a direct description of trauma as a war-wound. These soldiers are surrounded by their wounds, and for Owen this wound is the repetition of their

trauma. He goes on to compare them to living corpses. The war killed their humanity, so they are only left with their trauma. This is true for Owen as well and could provide the understanding for why he wrote this poem. He ends the poem with a message to those that were unaffected by this level of trauma; he addresses those that "dealt them war and madness." To Owen, and many others, the real enemy of the war were those that pushed to continue it. The traumatized soldiers turn their attention to these people in an effort to get them to understand their plight. This poem creates an awareness surrounding trauma for these soldiers that went ignored for far too long. The lack of courtesy and the failure of chivalry is apparent in his message. Owen was the best poet to depict this level of trauma, and fortunately, he created several poems around the subject matter.

A vivid, haunting portrayal of a desperate soldier is apparent in "S.I.W.," written in September 1917. Similar to "Mental Cases," "S.I.W." (the abbreviation for self-inflicted wound) portrays a soldier with an overwhelming amount of trauma, but instead of ending in a hospital, this soldier's fate is much different. The poem is comprised of four sections: The Prologue, The Action, The Poem, and The Epilogue. It reads as a narrative poem, so it is easy to see the meaning Owen intended. To begin, Owen portrays a soldier leaving to war, and his family, his father in particular, maintains an idealized viewpoint of the war where many classical and medieval themes are apparent:

> Patting good-bye, doubtless they told the lad
> He'd always show the Hun a brave man's face;
> Father would sooner him dead than in disgrace,–
> Was proud to see him going, aye, and glad. (74, 1-4)

Owen continues by depicting the rest of the family's idealization of the war, but the most important person is the father. He represents the notion of honor that many believed the soldiers should possess. On top of the brutality of war, this soldier felt the pressure from his father to maintain this knight-like image in battle. Unfortunately, he could not uphold this unrealistic image. As he experienced the war, he soon became deeply traumatized, and his courage waned. His father's words remained in his head as his trauma deepened: "'Death sooner than dishonour, that's the style!'" (Owen 74, 23). He is constantly compared to the image of a knight, and he is in a constant state of awareness of his own honor. With this forced image placed upon his son, the father represents the opposite of chivalry and courtesy. As Owen continues his poem, this theme develops even more.

The soldier in the poem witnessed other soldiers creating a S.I.W., and at first, he viewed the men with disapproval. As his trauma intensified, it becomes clear that he changed his mind. In The Action, Owen reveals the fate of the young man:

> One dawn, our wire patrol
> Carried him. This time, Death had not missed.
> We could do nothing but wipe his bleeding cough.
> Could it be accident?–Rifles go off…
> Not sniped? No. (Later they found the English ball.) (74-5, 25-9)

When he was discovered, it was believed that his death was an accident or a normal casualty by the enemy. As the end of the stanza reveals, it was no accident. He was shot by his own bullet. He created a S.I.W. so severe it took his life. This was the price that some soldiers were willing to pay in order to escape the war. An S.I.W. could also be the embodiment of a soldier's trauma, which could be beyond his control as well. The next section, The Poem, reveals that his fate was

caused by “the reasoned crisis of his soul” (Owen 75, 30). There was an inner battle between life and death in his mentality, and Death ultimately won. This concept of intense trauma reflects the same message as “Mental Cases.” When trauma is extreme, soldiers will do anything to lessen their suffering, and because of this, the perceived notion of knighthood and honor (like the soldier’s father possessed) failed. There was no true help for these men; therefore, there was no courtesy or chivalry for them. If there was, it was a fake courtesy, reflected in the closing section of the poem. Owen ends “S.I.W.” with The Epilogue: “With him they buried the muzzle his teeth had kissed, / And truthfully wrote the Mother, ‘Tim died smiling’” (75, 37-8). Tim’s parents believed he died honorably, but according to his father’s ideals, that was not the case. An S.I.W. was frowned upon, and it represented cowardice to some. For soldiers like Tim, it represented their only means of escape. Tim was buried with his gun, but that is the last item he would have wanted with him, representing the false sense of courtesy and chivalry. “S.I.W.” is a direct commentary on the concept of dishonor by suicide or self-inflicted injury/wounds to escape the hell that is war, and as Owen so clearly portrays, this commentary demonstrates how the concepts of knighthood, honor, courtesy, and chivalry failed during WWI.

In “The Next War,” Owen comments on how this failure will continue as WWI ends and time moves forward. Written in September 1917 while he was in hospital, Owen seems to capture a poem that was ahead of its time, quite literally. He introduces the concept of the next war beyond WWI, and in doing so, he continues the idea that classical and medieval concepts have failed and will never regain power in modernity. Interestingly, Owen also reveals the soldiers’ relationship to Death:

> Out there, we’ve walked quite friendly up to Death;
>
> Sat down and eaten with him, cool and bland,–

Pardoned his spilling mess-tins in our hand.

We've sniffed the green thick odour of his breath,–

Our eyes wept, but our courage didn't writhe.

He's spat at us with bullets and he's coughed

Shrapnel. We chorussed when he sang aloft;

We whistled while he shaved us with his scythe. (86, 1-8)

The most common aspects of war are included in this stanza, from semi-pleasurable to terrible. Eating times and mess-tins are mentioned, and Death joins the soldiers in this simple act, becoming one of them. As the stanza continues, the more trauma-filled moments of war are mentioned: Gas attacks, the firing of bullets, and artillery. Now, Death is responsible for these traumatic moments in warfare. The concept of courage, synonymous with honor, is brought up, but Owen states their "courage didn't writhe." This seems to be drastically different from his other poems. Usually he mentions the diminishing of honor, but here their courage did not waver; however, the use of "writhe" indicates their courage is in some kind of pain. In closing the poem, the reason for this is evident.

The concept of the real enemy of the soldiers, a theme common across many poets' work, is brought to the reader's attention in Owen's poem as well. The reasoning for Owen's reversal of honor is conveyed as the true enemy is revealed:

Oh, Death was never enemy of ours!

We laughed at him, we leagued with him, old chum.

No soldier's paid to kick against his powers.

We laughed, knowing that better men would come,

And greater wars; when each proud fighter brags

He wars on Death–for lives; not men–for flags. (86, 9-14)

The enemy is not Death, as Owen explicitly states; the enemy is the institution of the state/country. In other words, the enemy are the ones that control and continue the war, but they do not experience the war itself. They have no real understanding of trauma or the terrible experiences the soldiers have endured, so to Owen, and others, they have no place in the outcome of war. They do not care about the soldiers, their lives, their trauma, or Death; they only care for the representation of their flags and to win. For this reason, Owen and Sassoon's representation of the failure of knighthood, honor, patriotism, courtesy, and chivalry becomes true. These classical and medieval concepts had no place in the war, and they never would again.

Sassoon and Owen depict many misconceptions of WWI in their poetry, but what is most prominent is their interpretation of trauma and their representations of the failure of the classical and medieval themes of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood. Each poem included in this introduction reflects this. They comment specifically on these failures during the war, directly rebutting the idealized or romanticized view of the war perpetuated by the chivalric code and propaganda. Their trauma-oriented poems are haunting, and they portray exactly what the soldiers endured and suffered from. It is because of their poetry that one can begin to understand their experiences. Sassoon and Owen became the poets they were because of their experience of the First World War. The same can be said for David Jones. All three poets took their encounters and transformed them into poetry to preserve them for as long as possible. Sassoon and Owen accomplished this with succinct, haunting poetry, but Jones took on a larger goal. Expanding upon the foundation that Sassoon and Owen created with their lyric poetry, Jones created an epic-style poem to delve into the failure of classical and medieval themes. Because of this length, Jones directly references classical and medieval texts to portray a clearer

message of their failure. One can transition to Jones's *In Parenthesis* after obtaining an understanding of the importance of Sassoon's and Owen's poetry and their depiction of the failure of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood during World War I.

CHAPTER 2. *IN PARENTHESIS* PARTS 1-3: JONES'S COMPLEX BEGINNINGS

It would be impossible to discuss WWI poetry in this context without mentioning T.S. Eliot's groundbreaking work: *The Waste Land* (1922). Unlike the three poets in this analysis, Eliot was not a soldier in WWI. He saw the impact of WWI on the world, and he was aware of the trauma among those who did serve. Even though he did not have firsthand experience, he still wanted to present his interpretation of the war. He wrote *The Waste Land* to represent the trauma of a mechanized modernity, including the effects of modern warfare. To accomplish this, he uses mythical and medieval references, descriptive imagery depicting the Waste Land, and vivid scenes of trauma within individuals. One of the most important references that he uses is the legend of the Holy Grail, which can be traced in literary works before the eleventh century. It is apparent that the third section of Eliot's poem, "The Fire Sermon," contains references to the Grail legend; however, the theme of the Grail legend is present throughout the entirety of the poem. Eliot transforms the legend so that it mirrors the trauma prevalent in society after WWI. The main subject from the Grail legend that he implements is the Fisher King. By utilizing the image of the Fisher King through the Grail legend, Eliot comments on the failed notions of the classical and medieval past as society moves beyond the First World War. Alongside Sassoon and Owen, this accomplishment of using classical and medieval references is what inspired David Jones to do the same.

Sassoon and Owen initiated the depiction of the failure of classical and medieval concepts in WWI, and Eliot furthered their depiction with *The Waste Land*. Jones built on Sassoon's, Owen's, and Eliot's poetry, creating an epic style poem that went beyond what the three poets accomplished. This poem was *In Parenthesis*. Jones's semi-autobiographical prose

poem was published in 1937, nineteen years after the war ended. With nearly two decades to reflect on his experiences, Jones created an in-depth depiction of WWI that went beyond other poets' depictions. This amount of time allowed Jones to nurse his war-wounds and detail exactly what he wanted to portray in his text. His poem shows a distinct response to the war that is different from Sassoon's and Owen's direct, immediate response. Unlike the majority of WWI poetry, Sassoon's and Owen's poetry included, Jones's fictional soldiers have names; the reader becomes invested in them and grows attached to them. Their struggles are highlighted as the audience follows them from training to the Somme. Jones consistently connects the reader to the narrative of the text through the main character, Private John Ball. He uses second person pronouns to accomplish this, creating a powerful and personal connection that deeply impacts the reader. Interestingly enough, Ball is a fictional representation of Jones himself. Because of this connection, the audience can understand soldiers' experiences in WWI better than they could before. After understanding how and why Sassoon and Owen depicted the failure of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood in their poetry, one will see how Jones depicts the same concepts in more detail.

David Jones was an Anglo-Welsh poet who served in World War I as an infantryman on the Western front from 1915-1918. Thomas Dilworth, the leading expert on David Jones and his work, comments on Jones's time in the war: "He had seen more active duty in the war than any other British writer. With time subtracted for convalescence and leave, he spent a total of 117 weeks at the front" (53). He enlisted in the war on January 2, 1915. Before this date, and for much of his life, Jones was dedicated to art; he was particularly invested in medieval Welsh subjects, animals, and the themes of struggle and loss. W. S. Merwin, in the foreword to Jones's *In Parenthesis*, outlines how this becomes significant in the context of WWI:

> [Jones commenting on the Dying Gaul] "At least I sensed a continuity of struggle and a continuity of loss." His sense of these perennial qualities would remain with him when, after, he had been at art school for several years, World War I broke out, and he found himself in a battalion of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, where his companions were a mixture of Welsh and English, like his parents. (Jones iii)

Once Jones enlisted, he began training in Wales. After this ended, Merwin explains where Jones went next: "Then they transferred to England, and in December 1915 his division was sent to France, to an area of the trenches already battered and churned, north of Givenchy" (Jones iii). After enduring a winter of trench warfare, Jones's battalion marched toward the Somme. The Battle of the Somme resulted in a massive number of casualties. Peter Hart describes these casualties in his book, *The Great War: A Combat History of the First World War*: "British losses on the Somme totalled 419,654 (131,000 dead), while the French lost 204,253. The German figures have been endlessly debated, but they probably totalled between 450,000 and 600,000" (239-40). Merwin also explains the totality of the Somme:

> In the main battle of the Somme, in that July, 19,000 English soldiers were killed on a single day. "On 10-11 July," David Jones wrote, "in a confused attack on Mametz Wood, I was, along with many, many others of my unit, wounded and was evacuated to England." The six months in the forward trenches, and then the attack on Mametz Wood, were the period that became the subject for *In Parenthesis*. (Jones iv)

Through *In Parenthesis*, Jones provides an in-depth look into a six month period of the war, focusing on one of the most important battles of WWI, the Battle of the Somme.

Jones, like all other poets from WWI, felt compelled to document his experiences, but it was not easy. Dilworth provides context for Jones's process in his book *David Jones: Engraver, Soldier, Painter, Poet*:

> Jones read little war poetry but over a dozen war books [including Sassoon's *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930)]. He thought that they exaggerated fear and calamity, failed to convey war as 'like ordinary life … only more intensified', failed to convey the sense of historical continuity that he and others had felt, and failed to show the 'extreme *tenderness* of men in action to one another'. They also failed to find a language true both to the war and to the modern present. [After reading *All Quiet on the Western Front* in 1929, Jones said] 'Bugger it, I can do better than that. I'm going to write a book.' (128)

Merwin also provides some insight into Jones's process:

> He said that he began writing it because nothing he had read about the war had conveyed the experience of it as he remembered it. But he remained dubious about the undertaking, and the encouragement of friends, above all that of Harman Grisewood, kept him going. (Jones iv)

Grisewood was Jones's close friend, and he was Jones's literary executor. Considering the scope and depth of Jones's text, it is easy to see why he remained dubious, but the outcome was well worth the endeavor.

Because of Jones, one can see exactly how the classical and medieval themes of patriotism, chivalry, courtesy, honor, and knighthood failed during and after WWI in a single text. His many classical, medieval, and mythical references help to accomplish this as well. Merwin includes Jones's thoughts on one of the most well-known medieval figures, King Arthur, to provide insight on why he used classical and medieval references:

> In one of the notes to *In Parenthesis* Jones says, "We who know Arthur through Romance literature incline to think that the Norman-French genius has woven for us the majestic story of the Table and the Cup, from some meagre traditions associated with a Roman-British leader … But there is evidence shining through considerable obscurity of a native identification far more solemn and significant than the Romancers dreamed of, and belonging to true, immemorial religion–an Arthur…the Protector of the Land, the Leader, the Saviour, the Lord of Order carrying a raid into the place of Chaos…" And he quotes C. S. Lewis's statement that the medieval romance makers, in their use of Celtic material, "have destroyed more magic than they ever invented." (Jones v)

By using Sir Thomas Malory's work, *Le Morte Darthur*, as inspiration, Jones ultimately compares the war between King Arthur and Mordred to WWI to demonstrate the eradication of those medieval, mythical ideals in modernity. He utilizes the figure of King Arthur to show his tale beyond the romance genre; Arthur was prominent in many battles, duels, and jousts in literature throughout the Middle Ages. Jones expands on this and applies the Arthurian legend to WWI. He also references other famous wars in the classical period, such as the Gallic War, and the Middle Ages, the most notable being the battle at Catraeth which inspired Aneirin's *Y Gododdin*. Using these war references, Jones ultimately creates a commentary on all wars, with the focus being WWI.

Similar to Sassoon and Owen, Jones felt the only way to successfully portray the war was to use these classical and medieval references; through them, he could truly interpret the war and represent his experience. As his epic prose poems develops, the references become more prominent and frequent. Each of the parts (seven in total) delve into these references with clarity, but at times, just as in the war itself, Jones's text can become quite confusing. This is both a

realistic depiction of war's literal chaos and representative of the disillusionment and trauma that many soldiers faced; however, the beginning of his text is easy to follow.

Part 1, titled "The Many Men So Beautiful," begins after John Ball's regiment completes their training. Upon meeting Ball, the audience can immediately see the resemblance to Jones, if they are familiar with his biography. Ball is clumsy, late to parades, and informal to the Commanding Officers. He is a member of the Royal Welsh Regiment, 55th Battalion, B Company, No. 7 Platoon. The audience is also introduced to Sergeant Snell, Mr. P.D.I. Jenkins, Lance-Corporal Aneirin Merddyn Lewis, and other minor characters, such as Private Saunders and Corporal Quilter. Besides getting the audience acclimated with the characters, the main objective for Part 1 is to describe the journey from the training camp to France and the many obstacles that come with it. Along the way, Jones provides a few instances highlighting the failure of classical and medieval themes.

One scene in particular that stands out is Jones's statement that warfare has changed, which comes early in Part 1. It is a very subtle remark. Jones states: "but we don't have lances now nor banners nor trumpets" (2). All of these items were associated with duels, jousts, and battles in the Middle Ages. No one expected WWI to become so modernly mechanized, and Jones himself speaks on this in his Preface:

> The period of the individual rifle-man, of the 'old sweat' of the Boer campaign, the 'Bairnsfather' war, seemed to terminate with the Somme battle. There were, of course, glimpses of it long after – all through in fact – but it seemed never quite the same. … Just as now there are glimpses in our ways of another England – yet we know the truth. Even while we watch the boatman mending his sail, the petroleum is hurting the sea. So did we

> in 1916 sense a change. How impersonal did each new draft seem arriving each month, and all these new-fangled gadgets to master. (ix)

Even though the soldiers in Part 1 of *In Parenthesis* have not reached the Somme yet, Jones anticipates the change in modern warfare. The period of one-on-one fighting by bayonet or sword, or even the rifle, ended in WWI. Jones's simple statement about the lack of classical and medieval instruments of war brings to light the failure of this style of fighting.

Jones also outlines the physical conditions of WWI. He does not shy away from descriptions of the weather or the state of the soldiers. As the men are traveling to a dock to board a ship to France, Jones details the first sign of winter: "It's cold when you stop marching with all this weight and icy down the back" (5). Regardless of the cold weather, with the load the soldiers had to carry, often between seventy-five to a hundred pounds, they would end up sweating, and in cold weather, this made it worse. Jones includes this detail as he expands the previous description of winter weather:

> The rain increases with the light and the weight increases with the rain. In all that long column in brand-new overseas boots weeping blisters stick to the hard wool of grey government socks.
>
> I'm a bleedin' cripple already Corporal, confides a limping child. (6)

Before making it to France, the soldiers are already weary, and they are already suffering from a war-wound, even if it is just blisters. Though the image is not overly graphic, Jones does depict a clear image of the blisters. The reader can see the toll carrying this load in the rain and the cold takes on a soldier. Another interesting thing about this section is Jones's use of "child." Using "child" draws attention to the youth of the soldiers. He also calls the soldiers "innocents" a few lines after this section. This makes the massive death toll of the war and the deaths in *In*

Parenthesis even more harrowing. Jones could also be setting up the scene for the soldiers' trauma as the epic poem continues. The youth of the soldiers alongside the mechanization of the war could have been one reason why so many soldiers were traumatized. They were completely unprepared for what they were heading into.

Jones ends Part 1 with a common theme present among soldiers at the beginning of the war and those at home. Romanticization of the war was very common due to the chivalric code, and for Jones, he had to include this element early in his poem: "They were given tins of bully beef and ration biscuits for the first time, and felt like real expeditionary soldiers" (8). Such a simple thing resulted in these soldiers feeling like *real* soldiers, and this is reflective of the romanticization of the war. The commentary on youth and the romanticization of war reflects ideas that Jones possessed himself, which Dilworth includes in his work: "He later confessed that during the war he was immature and, unlike Wilfred Owen, believed 'the old lie'" (44). Jones was very young, entering the war at only twenty years old, so he includes this commentary in his text because of his own experience. With nineteen years to reflect on these ideals, Jones was able to take a step back and evaluate their validity. He realized the totality of WWI, which is represented in the latter half of his text, but it was important to him to reflect and include these misconceptions to represent the full experience of the war. Part 1 ends with Ball's regiment entering France to continue their journey to the trenches. Their arrival is portrayed as a beacon of light: "Men move to left and right within the orbit of the light" (Jones 8). However, Jones alludes to the seriousness of the situation. After three days of closing in on the trenches, Jones ends Part 1 with this line: "You feel exposed and apprehensive in this new world" (9). Even with the romanticization of the war, Jones still ensures the reader realizes the severity of the situation. As the poem continues, the severity of the war becomes evident.

Part 2, “Chambers Go Off, Corporals Stay,” begins three weeks after the end of Part 1. The regiment has camped in between farms where they practice drills and listen to lectures. After they receive orders to travel to a new location, they pack up their belongings and their gear and march toward the trenches. Along the way they see various signs of war, alluding to their proximity to the trenches, but these signs mostly go unnoticed. This section warns the soldiers as much as the reader as to what is to come in later parts. As the soldiers travel, their weariness is explained in more detail, and their thoughts on Commanding Officers are revealed. This part informs the audience of any other important information about the soldiers they need to know, and it presents a vivid scene of artillery fire, indicating the violence that is to come in later parts.

The farms that the soldiers stayed at were peaceful and untouched by the war. The only things that plagued them were the rain and a few boring lectures; they were not yet exposed to the harsh reality of trench life. Jones continues to place emphasis on the modern instruments of war, and in one of the lectures the Mills Mk, IV grenade is mentioned. The Bombing Officer who introduces the grenade refers to older grenades as “elementary, amateurish, inefficiencies” before referring to the new grenade as a “compact and supremely satisfactory invention” (Jones 13). This furthers Jones’s emphasis on the old methods of war versus the new methods. After this brief commentary on modern grenades, the soldiers begin to hear rumors of their departure. It is not long before the rumors are confirmed, and the soldiers resume their journey to the trenches. Preparing to leave, one of the minor characters, Private Saunders, reflects on leaving the comfort of the farms to rejoin the line: “It had all the unknownness of something of immense realness, but of which you lack all true perceptual knowledge” (Jones 15-6). The reality of war begins to sink in for many of the soldiers, and the fear of the unknown and unexpected starts to become overwhelming. This is a prevalent theme throughout Part 2 and Part 3.

Resting for three weeks allows the soldiers to recuperate and relax. When they resume their trek, their packs are heavier, which causes them to grow wearier more quickly. Jones includes many references to this weight, such as "greatly encumbered bodies" and "a weighted colliding on the stones" (16). Jones expands on these descriptions later in the part: "They went on again more feebly, more pain in the soles of the feet – that renewal, and increase of aching, which comes after the brief halting" (20). On top of this weight and the aching the soldiers felt, they have to endure "narrow lanes" (Jones 16) and bitter cold. Jones describes this cold: "a futile chill sun; strong wind shivered their left sides, and blued the bent knuckles about the cold iron of their sloped rifles clasped" (17). The cold weather and the narrow lanes serve as distractions from the soldiers' surroundings. Besides the narrow lanes, the roads are in terrible condition due to artillery bombing. The soldiers are too focused on staying in formation to notice these conditions. On top of this, the Brigade Commander begins scrutinizing the soldiers as they march past him, which results in many insults and mockeries from the soldiers, including "old wall eye," (Jones 17) "Amanuensis Nancy can't jot his damaging hogs-wash fast enough," and "Cotsplut! there's bastards for you" (Jones 18). The soldiers even discuss a divine judgement that is awaiting the authoritative figures. All of this demonstrates the lack of courtesy between the Commanding Officers and the soldiers. There is no level of respect and no understanding between them. Because of these numerous distractions, the soldiers do not notice the obvious signs of war they are nearing,

Instead, the soldiers pay attention to the beautiful scenery around them, which is depicted as a normal December day. They notice the holes in the road or on the side of the road, but they do not put two and two together; however, their senses seem to acknowledge the peril of their surroundings. Jones highlights this feeling of the unknown: "They heavily clambered down, in

their nostrils an awareness and at all their sense-centres a perceiving of strange new things" (18). The soldiers are also quiet as they travel, and Ball refers to himself "as part of a mechanism" (Jones 19). His "indifference to what might be" (Jones 19) is mentioned as well, which alludes to the disillusionment that already plagues him. This is astonishing given that he has not yet reached the trenches. Beyond the conditions of their journey mentioned above, the soldiers' awareness of the positive elements of the land contributes to their obliviousness to the perilous elements.

There are several signs that go unnoticed by the soldiers, and the main reasoning could be because they are searching for old signs of warfare. Even though they are aware of new weapons, like the Mills Mk, IV grenade, they do not expect to see destroyed buildings, holes in the ground, or a massive amount of wiring in a truck. This is another way for Jones to highlight the changes in modern warfare. He continuously highlights these changes to demonstrate the failure of the chivalric code. The first thing the soldiers come across is a building that has been boarded up. Ball believes a fire could have damaged the building, but in reality, it was artillery. Next, the soldiers see duck boards and wiring in a truck. Jones includes this line to portray the soldiers' thoughts on the purpose of these materials: "made evidently to some precise requirement, shaped to some usage yet unknown to any of that halting company" (19-20). Halting has two meanings in this line. The first meaning describes how the company halts to look around. The second meaning implies the company is maimed, imperfect, and hesitating. This meaning depicts the first of many moments throughout *In Parenthesis* when Jones foreshadows what is to come. The materials in the truck are unknown to the soldiers because they have not seen the trenches, and no one would have known the purpose of these materials outside of the trenches because trench warfare was an entirely new type of warfare. Right after passing these materials, Ball sees lines

of white smoke in the sky, which he thinks are clouds. Jones describes them as "sudden and with deliberate placing – a slow spreading out, a loss of compact form, drifting into an indeterminate mottling" (20). As they march, they cross over "filled-in circular roughnesses pitting the newly-mended road" (Jones 20). They even come across large holes in the ground beside the road and in the middle of the road; stone fragments from the blast were near the holes. These are all signs of artillery, and what makes this more obvious is the bombardier that unexpectedly enters the scene. All of these events foreshadow the first artillery bombing Ball's platoon experiences.

The artillery bombing that Jones describes is based on his first encounter with artillery on December 19, 1915. Jones's experience and the scene in *In Parenthesis* are identical. After Jones informally gave his lieutenant a match when asked, his sergeant went to upbraid him, but he quickly ducked into the barn where his platoon was resting. Jones was able to sense the incoming artillery shell, and as he was outside, the shell made contact fifty yards away from him. In *In Parenthesis*, Jones portrays his experience:

> He looked straight at Sergeant Snell enquiringly – whose eyes changed queerly, who ducked in under the low entry. John Ball would have followed, but stood fixed and alone in the little yard – his senses highly alert, his body incapable of movement or response. The exact disposition of small things – the precise shapes of trees, the tilt of a bucket, the movement of a straw, the disappearing right boot of Sergeant Snell – all minute noises, separate and distinct, in a stillness charged through with some approaching violence – registered not by the ear nor any single faculty – an on-rushing pervasion, saturating all existence; with exactitude, logartithmic, dial-timed, millesimal – of calculated velocity, some mean chemist's contrivance, a stinking physicist's destroying toy. (24)

Without seeing the shell, Ball experiences a bout of shell shock. His body is frozen in time, and everything slows down. He recognizes the severity of the situation and observes every sound and movement around him as if it could be his last. This moment saturates his existence and everything around him. He acknowledges the instrument of war that has caused majority of the damage his platoon has encountered thus far.

This scene continues in slow motion as the shell makes contact with the ground. Jones transforms his terrifying experience into a poetic, vivid depiction of this violence:

> Out of the vortex, rifling the air it came – bright, brass-shod, Pandoran; with all-filling screaming the howling crescendo's up-piling snapt. The universal world, breath held, one half second, a bludgeoned stillness. Then the pent violence released a consummation of all burstings out; all sudden up-rendings and rivings-through – all taking-out of vents – all barrier-breaking – all unmaking. Pernitric begetting – the dissolving and splitting of solid things. In which unearthing aftermath, John Ball picked up his mess-tin and hurried within; ashen, huddled, waited in the dismal straw. Behind 'E' Battery, fifty yards down the road, a great many mangolds, uprooted, pulped, congealed with chemical earth, spattered and made slippery the rigid boards leading to the emplacement. The sap of vegetables slobbered the spotless breech-block of No. 3 gun. (24)

Jones captures a terrifying scene, but he describes it with such detail that one can place themselves in his position. It is possible to see the trauma that originates after an encounter like this. Dilworth describes this experience for Jones: "He was shaken. The explosion, which he would poetically commemorate, tore time in two, separating his early years from all to follow" (37). An event like this can have a profound impact on an individual; this is true for Jones, and it will be for Ball as well. This separation of his early years and those to follow could be where

Jones's concept of being in parentheses came from. His trauma stemmed from his first experience of warfare, which created his expectations for the rest of the war; the same can be said for Ball. As *In Parenthesis* continues, Ball's experiences worsen.

"Starlight Order" is the title of Part 3. For the first time, the audience experiences nightfall alongside the soldiers. Jones details the struggles and hardships the soldiers endure during their trek to the frontline at night. They are extremely fatigued, and there are many confused moments where the lack of visibility affects the soldiers. The reader gains an understanding of how crucial light is to the soldiers, which becomes relevant when platoon No. 7 (Ball's platoon) gets separated from No. 6. As the soldiers near the front line, the signs of war become more obvious, and they have no choice but to acknowledge them. They encounter a close call from the enemy, creating apprehension among the platoon, and they experience flares, a few artillery shells near them, and distant gun shots. They also observe the different jobs associated with the trenches, including the carrying-party, battalion signalers, the artillery unit, and the bearers. These elements of trench life portray the culture of the trenches. Eventually, Ball's platoon reaches their designated trench, relieves the platoon that was stationed there, and assumes night sentries. Jones's mythical and medieval references intensify as Ball's platoon nears and reaches their designated trench. Malory is incorporated for the first time, and King Arthur becomes a prominent figure, melding his journey alongside Ball's platoon.

The confused language of Jones's text becomes evident in Part 3. At this point, the soldiers have been marching since 4:30 in the morning without any sleep; they are weary and exhausted, physically and mentally. Jones refers to the soldiers' exhaustion several times in Part 3, including "unrested bodies, wearied from the morning, troubled in their minds, frail bodies loaded over much," (27) "they moved rather as grave workmen than as soldiers from their

billets' brief shelter," (27) and "so he dreamed where he slept where he leaned, on piled material in the road's right ditch" (32). These lines occur before the soldiers enter the trenches, but once they reach the trenches, their exhaustion seems to intensify:

> He hitched his slipping rifle-sling for the hundredth time over a little where the stretched out surface skin raw rubbed away at his clavicle bone. He thought he might go another half mile perhaps – it must be midnight now of some day of the week. He turned his tired head where the sacking-shield swayed. (Jones 37-8)

Though the soldiers are exhausted, they know they must continue moving forward. Jones depicts this exhaustion with a newfound sense of adrenaline once the soldiers travel in the trenches: "And this burst spent, they moved on again, alertness bringing new strength to their ill condition; awareness for their aching limbs" (42). Jones's jumbling of ideas and phrases, which can be confusing to the reader, is representative of the soldiers' exhausted mentality. His language reflects the interior dialogue of the soldiers:

> Obstacles on jerks-course made of wooden planking – his night phantasm mazes a pre-war, more idiosyncratic skein, weaves with stored-up very other tangled threads; a wooden donkey for a wooden hurdle is easy for a deep-sleep transformation-fay to wand
>
> carry you on dream stuff
>
> up the hill and down again
>
> show you sights your mother knew (Jones 32)

As the soldiers are traveling, they become lost in their own thoughts, thinking of anything and everything. They reflect on their pre-war lives, training, sleep, and rest. Their thoughts are jumbled and random, reflecting their mental fatigue. What is most significant about this section is that it introduces the language of magical elements. There is a magical undercurrent that runs

throughout Jones's text, but this is the first time he introduces it. As the sky and their setting continues to darken around the soldiers, the magical undercurrent intensifies.

Nightfall is significant to the magical language employed in Part 3. There are two characteristics associated with nightfall that contribute to this magical language. The first characteristic is the cold weather. Jones continues to emphasize the temperature throughout this part, especially because it gets colder as the night progresses. When the soldiers reach their designated trench, they begin sentry duty. Ball is first. Jones details the cold he experiences: "How colder each second you get stuck here after the sweat of it, and icy tricklings at every cavity and wherever your finger-tips stray, the slug surface" (49-50). Another factor of this cold is the rain. With rain comes the lack of visibility, which is the second characteristic associated with nightfall. The rain contributes to the soldiers' miserable conditions; they are cold, wet, fatigued, and they are unable to see anything. Jones introduces this concept early on: "The rain increased where they miserably waited, there was no sound at all but of its tiresome spatter; the clouded moon quite lost her influence, the sodden night, coal-faced" (30). As the night goes on, these conditions remain: "Intermittent gun flashing had ceased; nothing at all was visible; it still rained in a settled fashion, acutely aslant, drenching the body; … moving west, moving invisible, never known, no word said, no salutation" (Jones 33). Without the rain, the soldiers would have had the light from the moon, and this demonstrates how significant the moon is. Jones places quite an emphasis on the moon's source of light.

At one point, the rain briefly stops, and for the first time, the reader sees the soldiers' appreciation for the moon. They plead to her as if she holds divine power:

grace this mauled earth–

transfigure our infirmity–

shine on us.

I want you to play with

and the stars as well.

Received,

curtained where her cloud captors

pursue her bright

pursue her darkly

detain her–

when men mourn for her, who go stumbling (Jones 35)

They praise her light when she is free and mourn her when she is curtained. Without her light, they stumble through the trenches, unable to see their surroundings. The moon is constantly veiled and unveiled, which Jones highlights: "The hide and seek of dark-lit light-dark yet accompanied their going; the journeying moon yet curtained where she went" (39). As the soldiers travel, the moon accompanies them, whether she is visible or not. Because of the divine power the soldiers associate with the moon, there is an element of magic that accompanies them as well. Praying to the moon is associated with mythology and pagan gods and goddesses, and it is also associated with the veneration of the Virgin Mary – to whom Catholics pray for protection. From this point, Jones begins to incorporate classical, mythical, and medieval references into his text, and he relates them to WWI. Because of his ingenuity, he incorporates these references rather seamlessly, and they provide an understanding of experiences from the war. These references become signs and symbols to translate Jones's reality of the war.

When Ball begins his sentry duty, a corporal speaks to him about the cold and his lookout duties. In this conversation, the two characteristics of nightfall (the cold and lack of visibility)

are interpreted through magical language. The Celtic underworld is associated with these characteristics, therefore, No Man's Land transforms into a place of magic:

> This seventh gate is parked tonight.
>
> His lamps hang in this black cold and hang so still; with this still rain slow-moving vapours wreathe to refract their clear ray – like through glassy walls that slowly turn they rise and fracture – for this fog-smoke wraith they cast a dismal sheen.
>
> What does he brew in his cauldron,
>
> over there.
>
> What is it like.
>
> Does he watch the dixie-rim.
>
> Does he watch–
>
> the Watcher.
>
> Does he stir his Cup – he blesses no coward's stir over there. (Jones 52)

The first section details the intense cold of the underworld. There are regions in the Celtic underworld that are frozen, and there is a glass tower that shines brightly that Jones associates with intense cold. The lamps are also associated with the eight gates of Hell, which insinuates that Ball's platoon has entered Hell. For many soldiers, the concept of No Man's Land as Hell was true. To further this concept, Arthur is introduced for the first time. In Taliessin's *Preiddeu Annwn*, Arthur descends into Hades "to obtain the magic cauldron which would hold the drink of no coward" (Jones 200). This magical section ends with the corporal reflecting on the enemy's actions. He acts as if the German soldiers are the gatekeepers to Hell who possess the magic cauldron with this drink. The lack of visibility, both from the night and from the cover of the trenches, is depicted in the cauldron scene as well, and it contributes to the corporal's

speculation. The unknown is another reason for this speculation, and it contributes to the magical undercurrent here and in other places in the poem.

The fear of the unknown is a theme Jones emphasizes throughout Part 3. With a lack of visibility, the soldiers are unaware of what is near them. This can cause them to imagine seeing or hearing movement and entities that are not there. The fear of the unknown intensifies when the soldiers enter the trenches. With low visibility, the soldiers cannot see in front of them, and they cannot identify the sounds they hear around them. All they can do is reflect on their situation: "Half-minds, far away, divergent, own-thought thinking, tucked away unknown thoughts; feet following file friends, each his own thought-maze alone treading; intricate, twist about, own thoughts, all unknown thoughts, to the next so close following on" (Jones 37). Jones implies that the soldiers are so fearful of the unknown that they cannot recognize their own thoughts. This is another way Jones demonstrates the change in warfare, and it is also representative of the lack of patriotism and courtesy in the war. Before WWI, soldiers were familiar with the weaponry, but with the drastic changes in technology and weaponry, it was unknown what to expect. Soldiers were not enthusiastic to enter the trenches, depicting the failure of patriotism, and they were not told by Commanding Officers what to expect, depicting the failure of courtesy. This fear of the unknown increases when No. 7 platoon is separated from No. 6, losing the guide in the process:

> Is that you sir, Sergeant Snell sir, we've lost connection with No. 6, sir – they must have turned off sir – back there sir.
>
> Where's the guide.
>
> With No. 6 sir.
>
> Lovely for them

…

There's no kind light to lead: you go like a motherless child – goddam guide's done the dirty (Jones 34)

Their frustration is evident. Not only can they not see, but they have lost the guide that knows where they are going. "Done the dirty" implies that the guide has wronged the soldiers. This interaction intensifies their fear of the unknown because, essentially, they are now on their own. They know they can get lost at any time, and it will be harder for them to find their way in the dark.

Tensions are high, from the cold weather, the lack of visibility, and the fear of the unknown, so the soldiers find themselves cycling through many emotions at once. Jones depicts this plethora of emotions:

The night dilapidates over your head and scarlet lightning annihilates the nice adjustment of your vision, used now to, and cat-eyed for the shades. You stumble under this latest demonstration; white-hot nine-inch splinters hiss, water-tempered, or slice the cross-slats between his feet – you hurry in your panic, which hurrying gives you clumsy foothold, which falling angers you, and you are less afraid; you call them all bastards – you laugh aloud. (47-8)

In a potentially traumatizing situation, this soldier is so exhausted and so unaware of the peril he nears, that he experiences panic, anger, and relief instead of trauma. Jones uses second person to place the reader into his poem, which allows the reader to form a personal connection with the soldiers and their experiences. In this section, the reader experiences the unknown and the many emotions that accompany it alongside the soldiers. When Ball is on sentry duty, he encounters a

similar experience. As he performs his duty, he cannot see his surroundings, so he becomes easily frustrated:

> You could weep like a child,
> you employ the efficacious word,
> to ease frustration;
> be rid of,
> last back-breaking straws. (Jones 53)

Jones incorporates second person again to engage the reader as much as possible. He wants the reader to feel as if they were looking through Ball's eyes. As he continues his duty, his imagination taunts him, and he believes he sees something. Jones uses second person to depict this scene:

> You draw back the bolt, you feel 'the empty' hollow-lob, light against your boot lacing, you hear the infinitesimal disturbance of water in the trench drain.
>
> And the deepened stillness as a calm, cast over us – a potent influence over us and him – dead-calm for this Sargasso dank, and for the creeping things. (53-4)

Ball is ready to fire his rifle before he realizes the noise he heard was water from the trench drain. This demonstrates the tension the soldiers' experience. They are on edge and have so much pent up adrenaline that they are ready to fire their rifles in an instant. Jones contrasts this with the calm atmosphere of No Man's Land at night. Though it is not always calm, when it is, the stillness contributes to the tension the soldiers feel. The fear of the unknown is also increased by this stillness. This is due to the apprehension the soldiers feel at the possibility of unexpected enemy fire. To add to this tension, the conditions of the trenches make the soldiers uneasy too.

Similar to the roads near the trenches, there are many artillery holes in and around the trenches. They cause many challenges for the soldiers as they travel, causing them to trip or fall into the holes. The soldiers remain quiet for most of their journey to avoid being heard by the enemy, but the only words they utter involve warning their peers of obstacles. “Mind the hole” is repeated throughout Part 3, and “mind the wire” is another commonly used phrase. Another hazard within the trenches is the rainwater and mud. The more it rains, the more the trenches flood because they could not drain the water fast enough. Along with the artillery holes, the water quickly becomes a problem: “sometimes the flanking chaos overflowed its madeness, and they floundered in unstable deeps; chill oozing slime high over ankle; then they would find it hard and firm under their feet again” (Jones 41). This section describes the fluctuation of the trenches; they would go from being flooded to hard and firm. This makes the duckboards hard to maneuver as well. If the trench is flooded, the duckboards could get dislodged and float, causing the soldiers to smack their shins against them. There is also a problem with communication. The trenches are expansive, so it is hard to relay messages to every trench line. Because of this, Ball’s platoon has to travel on both the road and in the trenches due to certain trenches being closed. Some trenches are flooded or collapsed, and one road has an enemy gunner on it. Either route is perilous, but the soldiers have to choose one route at a time. This peril also contributes to the fear of the unknown. Beyond these conditions, the soldiers enter a specific culture in the trenches.

Jones portrays this culture clearly. It is a subtle description that will become relevant in later parts. This culture is what creates the comradery between soldiers. Without it, their experience would have been worse. Jones introduces this culture as Ball’s platoon reaches their destination: “sense here near habitation, a folk-life here, a people, a culture already developed, already venerable and rooted” (49). The culture of the trenches is set in stone, and it allows for a

commonality among soldiers. As Ball's platoon begins to settle into their designated trench, Ball realizes he is now a member of this culture: "And you too are assimilated, you too are of this people – there will be an indelible characterization – you'll tip-toe when they name the place" (Jones 49). Once more, Jones uses second person to connect the reader to this experience. The soldiers' long journey to reach the trenches is finally over, and they are now assimilated into this culture, and ultimately, into WWI.

There is one remaining element in Jones's text that needs to be clarified in order to understand the remaining four parts of his poem: the incorporation of the Arthurian legend. Jones uses the figure of King Arthur and his legend as symbols to portray his experience of WWI. In Part 3 of *In Parenthesis*, there are three important sections to mention where Jones incorporates the Arthurian legend. The first is when Ball is on sentry duty. Now that he is stationary, he can observe No Man's Land. The low visibility makes it hard to identify everything, and because of this, he believes he sees an image of Excalibur: "corkscrew-picket-iron half submerged, as dark excalibur, by perverse incantation twisted" (Jones 50). This simple image reflects the change in warfare. Instead of seeing Excalibur, Ball sees an iron stake submerged in the ground. He is interpreting his reality as magical, which lends itself to Jones's magical language. This theme continues as Ball subconsciously thinks about his fatigue. As he watches his peers sleep, he cannot help but think of their restoration: "Spell-sleepers, thrown about anyhow under the night. / And this one's bright brow turned against your boot leather, tranquil as a fer sídhe sleeper, under fairy tumuli, fair as Mac Og sleeping" (Jones 51). When Jones mentions "fairy tumuli," Avalon, a place of healing and restoration due to magical properties, is implied as the place of restoration for these soldiers. Avalon is where Arthur was taken after he obtained his fatal wounds in the battle with Mordred. For Jones to incorporate this location early on is interesting.

If the soldiers are being transported (so to speak) in their sleep to Avalon to restore them, what will happen when they sustain war-wounds in battle? Where will their form of escape lie? Incorporating Avalon alludes to the magical language Jones uses. This magical element is also demonstrative of the power of sleep after being without it for so long. To these soldiers, who have traveled for almost twenty-four hours, sleep is a magical experience. The third reference to the Arthurian legend involves one of the main works in Arthurian literature: Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*.

There is only one reference to Malory in Part 3, and it comes before Ball's platoon reaches the trenches. Jones focuses on Launcelot's encounter with the Chapel Perilous, one of the main elements involved in the Grail quest. Jones incorporates this scene to demonstrate the peril the soldiers are entering as they near the trenches:

> Past the little gate,
> into the field of upturned defences,
> into the burial-yard–
> the grinning and the gnashing and the sore dreading – nor saw he any light in that place. (31)

This scene is very similar to the scene at the end of Part 3 where the corporal translates No Man's Land as Hell. Jones uses the element of the Chapel Perilous to foreshadow this scene and to demonstrate the peril to come. The scene in Malory has a few differences, but for the most part, Jones's scene parallels Malory's:

> Ryght so sir Launcelot departed, and whan he com to the Chapell Perelus he alyght downe and tyed his horse unto a lytyll gate. … he sawe on the frunte of the chapel many fayre ryche shyldis turned up-so-downe, ... [upon seeing thirty knights] all they grenned

and gnasted at Sir Launcelot. And whan he sawe their countenaunce he dredde hym sore (280, 1-10)

In line 18, Malory states Launcelot "sawe no light" (280). Jones kept several words and phrases Malory originally used: grinning, gnashing, sore dreading, upturned defenses, little gate, and no light. Using this reference allows Jones to relate WWI to the Middle Ages, which allows him to represent the stark changes in warfare, ultimately demonstrating the failure of classical and medieval ideas.

Malory, the Arthurian legend, and classical and medieval references become prevalent in the last four parts of *In Parenthesis*. Merwin provides the relevancy of these references to Jones's work: "The layering of the immediate and the imaginary, the present and the already re-echoed or divined, would characterize his work all his life" (Jones ii). This is true for *In Parenthesis* as well. Jones preferred the latter half of his work (Dilworth 182). This could be due to the intensity of the poem and the many references he includes. In order to understand the complexity of the last four parts, it was necessary to delve into the first three parts in great detail. In the first three parts, Jones prepares the reader for the remainder of his poem; the characters are introduced, important themes are touched on, and, most importantly, he eases the reader into the references that would become synonymous with his work. Jones conveys this in his Preface:

> I have only tried to make a shape in words, using as data the complex of sights, sounds, fears, hopes, apprehensions, smells, things exterior and interior, the landscape and paraphernalia of that singular time and of those particular men. I have attempted to appreciate some things, which, at the time of suffering, the flesh was too weak to appraise. There are passages which I would exclude, as not having the form I desire – but they seem necessary to the understanding of the whole. (x)

It is necessary to analyze the beginning of his work in order to understand the latter. With the framework that has been laid, it is possible to delve into the last four parts with more clarity and a better understanding of how Jones depicts the failure of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood in *In Parenthesis*.

CHAPTER 3. *IN PARENTHESIS* PARTS 4-7: THE NIGHTMARE OF THE SOMME

Now that the first three parts of David Jones's *In Parenthesis* have been explained, it is possible to understand the complexity of the remainder of his poem. Jones begins, in Part 4 and after, to emphasize the trauma of WWI, he incorporates several classical, mythical, and medieval references, and the Arthurian legend is related to John Ball's experiences. All of these elements help Jones convey his own experiences of the First World War. The magical undercurrent of the poem begins to increase with these elements as well. As Jones's references and incorporation of trauma are analyzed, it becomes apparent why there are so many magical elements in his text. Magic overcomes patterns, therefore, magic is a way to overcome trauma, as most trauma from WWI dealt with a pattern of repetition. Not only does Jones provide a way to understand the terror and impact of WWI, he creates a specific coping mechanism for his own suppressed trauma. This also allows the reader to interpret the suppressed trauma of WWI. These elements are the focus of this chapter, and as *In Parenthesis* Parts 4-7 are analyzed, trauma, his classical and medieval references, and the Arthurian legend are emphasized.

Part 4, entitled "King Pellam's Launde," begins where Part 3 ended. Daybreak occurs in the trenches, and all of the unknown elements of No Man's Land are revealed. Ball and his platoon can see the artillery holes, wiring, enemy trenches, and woods near their own trench. With daybreak, the soldiers must stand-to in preparation for an enemy attack. Once the sun fully rises, the soldiers stand-down when there is no attack. After that, the reader sees a complete reversal of the previous night. The soldiers are aware of their surroundings, are no longer fearful, are warmer than before, and are able to rest as much as a soldier can. Instead of experiencing multiple emotions at once, the soldiers mainly experience boredom from a lack of activity.

Alongside the differences between night and day in the trenches, the classical and medieval references increase. Jones incorporates six sections from Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, and he references *Y Gododdin* and *The Mabinogi* as well. In the middle of Part 4, "Dai de la Cote male taile" makes a boast connecting several wars and time periods together. In this section, Jones includes many classical, mythical, and medieval references. There is also a small section where Jones compares the Welsh soldier to the English soldier. Lastly, trauma begins to surface in the text with artillery bombings.

After assimilating into the trenches, the soldiers are continuously fatigued. They have only been in the trenches for a few days without much conflict, but, understandably, traveling to France and suffering from a lack of sleep is exhausting. The Lewis Team of No. 8 gets orders to move to their day-target, and their reaction demonstrates their lack of patriotism:

> They stood unhappily, and believed themselves to be ill-fortuned above the common lot, for they had barely slept – and a great cold to gnaw them. … Night-begotten fear yet left them frail, nor was the waking day much cheer for them. … for they were unseasoned, nor inured, not knowing this to be much less than the beginning of sorrows. (Jones 64-5)

Instead of complying with orders, the soldiers express their disdain for the war by commenting on their own misery. It seems as if they are forced to defend their territory, which is the opposite of patriotism because of their unwillingness. If they were patriotic, they would not complain about performing their duties as a soldier. The toll WWI takes on these soldiers causes them to grow unpatriotic, especially when their actions are compared to the chivalric code that is still romanticized on the home front. Jones does not refrain from depicting this lack of patriotism, which can also reflect the opposite of propaganda. Later on, he uses a mythical reference comparing the Nordic myth of the grey wolf to the German soldiers. By doing this, Jones uses a

mythical reference to portray the lack of patriotism and propaganda in WWI. He also depicts the German soldiers in the same light as the English soldiers, which propaganda pieces did not do. The scene is as follows:

> Come from outlandish places,
>
> from beyond the world,
>
> from the Hercynian–
>
> they were at breakfast and were cold as he, they too made their dole. (Jones 67)

Jones incorporates this myth conception of the grey wolf because the German figures moving among their trenches "was a sight to powerfully impress us" (204). The first three lines represent the Nordic myth, and the last line depicts Jones's application of this myth to the German soldiers. He portrays the enemy as relatable and humane. This is the opposite of propaganda, which reflects the failure of patriotism, because soldiers would not have perceived their enemy in this way if they were patriotic. Any sympathy toward the enemy was frowned upon and not tolerated; however, Jones shows the reality for many soldiers. They did not view the war in black and white. They did not feel patriotic or justified in killing the enemy. In fact, there is more sympathy employed toward the enemy than there is to a veteran.

A veteran in WWI has served in the war since 1914. There is a section where a veteran discusses the war tactics in Ypres, comparing those tactics and Commanding Officers to the classical period and Alexander the Great:

> They get warmed to it – they're well away in
>
> tactics and strategy and
>
> the disciplines of the wars–
>
> like so many Alexanders – are perfect in the great commanders names (Jones 78)

This veteran provides valid insight into the tactics used in Ypres, yet what follows demonstrates a lack of courtesy from soldiers that are new to the frontline: “They’re a milintary house the Clarks – ’14, / ’14 be buggered–” (Jones 79). These soldiers mock the veteran for giving his opinions before implying that his experience does not matter. They do not show any respect to this veteran. With this scene, Jones accomplishes two things. He uses a classical reference (Alexander the Great) to demonstrate the change in warfare, and he depicts the failure of courtesy in the war. Combining the failure of patriotism and courtesy, leads one to question the point of war. In Part 4, there are four sections where the soldiers either question their own lives or the point of the war. As Part 4 develops, these questions intensify. The soldiers question “the Nature of Being” (Jones 69). Two pages later, they “blasphemed the whole order of Being” (Jones 71). They begin by questioning the concept of “Being” before deciding to blasphemy it. The soldiers question the point of the war as they are constantly at work, unable to rest, and they scoff at their treatment: “They’re worthy of an intelligent song for all the stupidity of their contest” (Jones 88-9). This sentence questions the purpose of working tirelessly to remain unappreciated. The most powerful questioning comes at the end of Dai’s boast, where Jones wrote six pages of powerful text relating classical, mythical, and medieval references to WWI.

Jones obtained Dai de la Cote male taile’s name from Malory. In Book IX, Brewnor le Noyre comes before King Arthur to request knighthood. He is dressed in an elaborate overgarment, described as a “ryche cloth of golde” (Malory 459, 7). Because of this, Sir Kay calls him “La Cote Male Tayle,” referring to his badly tailored coat, as a mockery. Dai is a significant character in Part 4. Though he is not dressed in rich clothing, his speech is rich in content. Essentially, Dai presents many classical, mythical, medieval, and biblical examples of war to connect WWI to all previous wars in history. He includes many famous references,

including the crucifixion of Christ, the Gallic War, the twelve battles of Arthur in Nennius's *Historia Brittonum*, the Welsh myth of Brân the Blessed, and the Welsh version of Percival, *Peredur ap Evrawc*. What makes this boast so profound is that Dai speaks of these events in history with first-hand knowledge as if he was there. He incorporates a scene from Malory early on: "I was the spear in Balin's hand / that made waste King Pellam's land" (Jones 79). This quote refers to Balyn le Sauvage, the "Knight with Two Swords." Balyn and his brother Balan entered King Pellam's land, and without recognizing the other, they killed each other in a duel. Brother killed brother in the name of honor. Later on, Dai provides a classical reference, but he specifically relates it to WWI: "I am '62 Socrates, my feet are colder than you think / on this / Potidaean duck-board" (Jones 80). Jones references Plato's *Symposium* when he says to "'62 Socrates." He also refers to the Battle of Potidaea (600 BC) when he mentions the "Potidaean duck-board," and he relates this battle specifically to the cold and the duckboards of WWI. Jones incorporates these references throughout Dai's boast, but there are two insightful references from Malory's text that need to be highlighted.

The first alludes to the continuation of the war between Arthur and Mordred. In Malory, there is a tense meeting between Arthur, Mordred, and their knights. Arthur and Mordred instruct their knights that if they see a knight from the other side raise their sword, they are to fight at once. All is well in the meeting until a knight is stung by an adder. Malory describes this scene and its consequences: "he drew hys swerde to sle the addir, and thought none othir harme. And whan the oste on bothe partyes saw that swerde drawyn, than they blewe beamys, trumpettis, and hornys, and shoutted grymly, and so bothe ostis dressed hem togydirs" (1235, 23-7). Arthur goes on to call this event an "unhappy day" (Malory 1235, 28). "Unhappy" in Malory's Middle English means "unlucky." Dai speaks with first-hand knowledge of this adder. This insinuates

that he was the cause of the war between Arthur and Mordred. Jones relates Malory's scene to Dai's boast:

> I the adder in the little bush
> whose hibernation-end
> undid,
> unmade victorious toil (80)

"Undid" and "unmade" explain the end of peace between Arthur and Mordred. Ultimately, neither side was victorious as they lost considerable numbers, and Arthur and Mordred were mortally wounded. The same can be said for the outcome of WWI. There was a resolution, but, philosophically, neither side was victorious; each side lost considerable numbers and faced repercussions that led to the Second World War. Jones includes another scene from Malory related to the war between Arthur and Mordred. Though the following quote appears after the adder section, the scene in Malory occurs before the adder scene. Ultimately, Jones places blame on Agravaine for the cause of the war between Arthur and Mordred: "In the baized chamber confuse his tongue; / that Lord Agravaine. / He urges with repulsive lips, he counsels: he nets us into expeditionary war" (83). In this instance, Jones uses the character of Agravaine to reflect the directive of getting involved in WWI. In Malory, Aggravayne (in Malory's spelling) represents much the same fate, "'Falle whatsumever falle may,' seyde Sir Aggravayne, 'I woll disclose hit to the Kynge!'" (871, 7-8). In this quote, Aggravayne is referring to Launcelot's adulterous affair with the queen. As this is revealed, the war between Mordred and Arthur is set in motion, which the adder accelerates. For both texts Aggravayne/Agravaine is undoubtedly one of the causes for each war, reflecting Malory's lasting impression on Jones for his own experiences of WWI.

The last significant section of Dai's boast circles back to the point of the war. He says:

You ought to ask: Why,

what is this,

what's the meaning of this.

Because you don't ask,

although the spear-shaft

drips,

there's neither steading – not a roof-tree. (Jones 84)

There are two meanings to this speech. Dai asks the soldiers why they do not question his boast or his knowledge. He is alluding to the Fisher King (King Pellam) and the Grail with the dripping spear-shaft. Essentially, the Fisher King is wounded in the thigh or groin and must wait for a healer as his realm suffers alongside him. The Holy Grail heals the wound, restoring the Fisher King and his land. Dai states that the Fisher King will remain wounded as the Grail cannot be obtained in WWI. Similarly to Eliot, Jones incorporates the Grail into WWI to explain the need for restoration for the soldiers and the land. He is questioning the soldiers to get them to see this message through the differing references he used. Dai also questions the point of the war, which his references indicate as well. He addresses questions soldiers had and that Jones alludes to in the beginning of Part 4. He is direct, and his questions convey the meaning behind his boast. He finishes it with a soldiers' song, "Old Soldiers Never Die." The last two lines reveal his meaning: "Old soljers never die they / Simply fade away" (Jones 84). The soldiers of WWI are connected to the soldiers of previous wars and time periods, which is a direct commentary on all wars connecting. The boast is also reflective of Jones's work as a whole, as Merwin states:

> The boast, indeed, embodies just what Jones is doing in the whole work: it declares that the experience of the present terrible circumstance bears within it the experience of such

> circumstances that have returned again and again through the past. It says, "I was there, I was there." (Jones vi)

This quote helps provide context for why Jones uses so many classical and medieval references in *In Parenthesis*, and in the latter half of his epic these references become even more important.

Another significant theme in Part 4 is Jones's comparison of Welsh and English soldiers. Lance-Corporal Lewis observes Private Watcyn's mannerisms and feels conflicted about his validity as a Welshman. Jones details these thoughts:

> Anyway he kept the joke to himself for there was none to share it in that company, for although Watcyn knew everything about the Neath fifteen, and could sing *Sospan Fach* to make the traverse ring, he might have been an Englishman when it came to matters near to Aneirin's heart. For Watcyn was innocent of his descent from Aeneas, was unaware of Geoffrey Arthur and his cooked histories, or Twm Shon Catti for the matter of that – which pained his lance-corporal friend (89)

Jones includes many Welsh references that Watcyn was unaware of, mainly associated with Welsh history. This is a theme that runs throughout Jones's text. It is important to Jones to represent the Welsh soldier alongside the English soldier. He comments on this in his Preface:

> My companions in the war were mostly Londoners with an admixture of Welshmen, so that the mind and folk-life of those two differing racial groups are an essential ingredient to my theme. Nothing could be more representative. These came from London. Those from Wales. Together they bore in their bodies the genuine tradition of the Island of Britain, … Both speak in parables, the wit of both is quick, both are natural poets; yet no two groups could well be more dissimilar. (Jones x)

This explains Lance-Corporal Lewis's thoughts toward Private Watcyn. There is a sense of connection among the soldiers for serving together, but there is no connection with their Welsh descent. Because of this, there is a feeling of isolation for Lewis. Jones develops this isolation as the text continues.

Part 5, "Squat Garlands for White Knights," begins six months after Part 4. The soldiers are no longer in a winter war; they are in the middle of a summer war, specifically in June. Over the past six months, the soldiers have become accustomed to warfare, including enemy encounters, the trenches, and sounds of war. The reader now discovers the soldiers are no longer in the trenches. Jones does not reveal where they are, but it is apparent that they have access to a bar and restaurant. Because of this, the bar owners are introduced, providing another perspective to the war beyond the soldiers. Jones also details the negativity associated with new soldiers. The reader discovers that many things have happened since Part 4. Watcyn is promoted to a Corporal, but he is soon demoted to a Private, Mr. Jenkins suffers from disillusionment after his friend, Talbot Rhys, dies, the soldiers continue their parades, and they enjoy quite a bit of rest and activities, like a concert for soldiers. The incorporation of religion, the role of horses, and other weapons are mentioned as well. Throughout Part 5, there are several rumors about the next phase of war. Toward the end of Part 5, the rumors are confirmed, and the soldiers begin to travel to the Somme. As they near the Somme, tensions begin to rise. Similarly, the soldiers become fearful, demonstrating their suppressed trauma. Jones begins to foreshadow their fate as they march into more perilous territory and are informed of battle tactics and updates. As Part 5 concludes, the soldiers reach their "place of rendezvous" (Jones 131).

In order for Jones to depict the development of trauma and fear in the soldiers, he has to reemphasize the change in warfare. In the six-month time jump, the war has become more

chaotic and brutal. Artillery becomes heavier, shrapnel becomes more intense, gas attacks increase, and enemy bombardments lengthen. This intensity creates a tense environment for the soldiers. Jones details these changes:

> it used to be fourteen in and five out regular – knew where you were – everything conducted humane and reasonable – it all went west with the tin-hat – that harbinger of their anabasis, of these latter days, of a more purposed hate, and the establishing of unquestioned ascendancy in no-man's-land – and breaking his morale and – this new type of toffee-apple, and these very latest winged-pigs, whose baleful snouts rend up no mean apocalypse, and the mk. IX improved pattern of bleedin' frightfulness. (114-5)

Though it has only been six months, it seems as if the soldiers are now in an entirely different war. They imply that it is no longer humane. They feel hatred toward their enemy, which causes them to break their moral system. The last two lines reflect the new weapons the soldiers must encounter. This quote makes the war seem chaotic and irrational, a theme Jones focuses on for the remainder of the text. In Part 5, when discussing the war, Jones presents the opinions of many people. A few pages after the quote above, Old Sweat Mulligan says the following:

> we've come on as to guns, anyhow quantitatively, but where's the musketry of '14 – and what will these civvy cissies make of open country and how should Fred Karno's army know how – to take proper advantage of cover. … where's the discipline / requisite to an offensive action. (Jones 117)

Mulligan harbors nostalgia, mainly toward the chivalric code of previous wars, and it is apparent that he does not understand trench warfare. No Man's Land was a new type of warfare for everyone. It was hard to adjust to the combat required of this barren landscape and of the trenches, especially for offensive action. Jones includes this opinion to show the stark contrast of

this thought compared to the Old Lie. Like many other sections in his poem, Jones depicts the Old Lie succinctly: “They tried to tell him it was British gunfire; that the war would soon be over – but he paid no heed” (118). Nostalgia and new, brutal weapons did not correlate with the Old Lie. There are so many rumors and routes the soldiers are exposed to, and these differing statements contributed to the rising tension.

The rise of tension among the soldiers can lead to many things. For Mr. Jenkins, it leads to disillusionment. He is the first soldier or Commanding Officer in *In Parenthesis* to suffer from disillusionment. The loss of a friend causes his disillusionment: “Mr. Jenkins got his full lieutenancy on his twenty-first birthday, and a parcel from Fortnum and Mason; he grieved for his friend, Talbot Rhys, and felt an indifference to the spring offensive” (Jones 107). When a soldier suffers from disillusionment, he disassociates from the war. This is exactly what Mr. Jenkins does. He does not celebrate his rank. He does not reflect on the spring offensive. He simply exists. It is interesting that Jones portrays a lieutenant suffering from disillusionment rather than a soldier. It demonstrates how dangerous it can be for an officer to become disillusioned. If they are indifferent to the war, are they fit to command soldiers? This doubt is also reflected in traumatized soldiers, whom tension affects as well. The soldiers that were unfit for battle were deemed “malingerers” by those who did not understand their trauma. Jones also introduces malingerers for the first time: “it’s the Minnies what gets you down … they say the swinger’s posted to another mob – we shall lament his going from us, and miss his angel voice an all and show our legs to another” (103). “Swinger” is another term for malingerer. A “Minnie” is a type of trench mortar-projectile. Jones incorporates the Minnie to demonstrate the potential source of trauma for the swinger. The soldiers discussing this do not harbor negative

opinions toward the soldier. In fact, they "lament" his posting. Jones typically associates sympathy with scenes of trauma, and he accomplishes this in multiple sections in Part 5.

Jones has depicted trauma in a subtle manner up to Part 5. There are two scenes where Jones portrays the severity of trauma. The first occurs after the soldiers have marched closer to the Somme. They have to rest after a storm halts their movement. A priest visits the soldiers, they realize the peril they near, and they begin to reflect on their trauma. Jones's language on trauma is powerful:

> When Bomber Mulligan & Runner Meotti approach the appointed channels you can count on an apocalypse, you can wait on exceptional frightfulness – it will be him and you in an open place, he will look into your face; fear will so condition you that you each will pale for the other, and in one another you will hate your own flesh. (121)

Jones does not clarify if the Bomber and Runner are Germans or Englishmen. It is obvious that soldiers can become traumatized by the enemy, but it is fascinating that Jones implies one can become traumatized by their peers. The two can go hand-in-hand. A soldier can become traumatized by enemy fire, and when his peers take offensive action, the trauma can resurface. Regardless, Jones clearly details a scene of trauma. This scene also depicts how trauma disrupts the soldiers' actions. They are so fearful of each other that their duties are interrupted, which is similar to shell shock. Because shell shock was not understood during WWI, it is possible that soldiers became disappointed in themselves for experiencing it. This is reflected in the last line. The soldiers are so disappointed in themselves for being traumatized that they begin to hate themselves. With this, Jones portrays a side of trauma that is not commonly seen in WWI poetry. The second scene depicts the soldiers receiving their orders for the coming battle. Alongside a list of detailed positions, Jones includes the soldiers who are too traumatized to fight. He calls

them “the broken men” (Jones 126). They will carry the ammunition, picks, and shovels to contribute, but there is a possibility they will not be able to: “(the helpless wethers will only stand by, agape at you, like an awkward squad; barge in under, to avoid the worst of it)” (Jones 126). This section describes what a soldier will do during a battle when he is traumatized. Though this description is not as detailed as the first, it is just as vivid. It also reflects the literal disruption of the narrative with the parenthesis. The trauma of the broken men disrupts the narrative of Jones’s text. Both of these scenes depict the peril that is to come.

Jones incorporates tension and fear to foreshadow the coming Somme battle. The end of Part 5 combines these themes in a powerful moment. The soldiers sing a song where they state they do not want to die: “*Oh my I don’t wantter die* / *I want to stay – in my office* / *all day*” (Jones 130). This is significant because of the casualties from the Somme battle and because the soldiers begin to fear their fate. Jones develops this fear in the closing of Part 5. Instead of depicting the fear of the soldiers, Jones depicts the fear of their loved ones:

> their Rachels weeping by a whitened porch
>
> and for the young men
>
> and for Dai and for Einion
>
> and for Jac Pryse, Jac Pryse plasterer’s son. (131)

Incorporating the soldiers’ loved ones’ mourning is a powerful tool. The trauma and fear of death is usually portrayed in the soldiers, not their loved ones. For Jones to incorporate this detail shows that he has considered all aspects of the war. The fear, tension, and foreshadowing present within Part 5 increases in Part 6.

“Pavilions & Captains of Hundreds” is the title of Part 6. It continues many of the same themes as Part 5, but the tension becomes overwhelming. As the Somme battle nears, the soldiers

prepare for the battle in multiple ways. Ball catches up with his friends, and they mock the coming battle, the war in general, and the concept of patriotism. The soldiers receive their rations and try to rest as much as possible. Religion, the sense of isolation, and the misery of the soldiers are highlighted as well. There are still many rumors about the logistics of the battle, which contributes to the fear of the soldiers. Unlike in Part 5, they do not have much time to reflect on the rumors because they must pack up their belongings and move to their positions. As they travel, they near the Germans, so they experience close encounters with their artillery and gunfire. Jones incorporates this to foreshadow the tragedy that is to come in Part 7. As Part 6 ends, Ball's platoon moves into position for the Somme.

Jones incorporates several scenes from Malory's text to reflect the final preparations for the Battle of the Somme. To begin Part 6, he includes three separate references to Malory. Jones uses the same language as Malory, so it is easy to recognize Malory's voice: "And bade him be ready and stuff him and garnish him … and laid a mighty siege about … and threw many great engines … and shot great guns … and great purveyance was made on both parties" (135). The first line is from the first book and first chapter of *Le Morte Darthur* when Uther Pendragon prepares for a battle with the Duke of Tyntagil over the Duke's wife, Igrayne. Jones duplicates the first line from Malory. In Malory and Jones, this quote reflects preparing for battle. For Malory, the battle between Uther and the Duke sets the scene for the rest of the text. For Jones, this line reflects preparations for the Somme battle. "Laid a mighty siege" is a reference to Arthur's first attack on Mordred. This line and the ones that follow insinuate a large battle is to come, another foreshadowing moment. The last line reflects the outcome. There is a great toll on both sides; the battle requires a great deal of preparation, both mentally and physically. In

Malory, this line originates when Gawain and Launcelot duel before the war between Arthur and Mordred. In their duel, the concept of chivalry begins to break down, which Jones takes note of.

There are a few other references to Malory in Part 6. Elias the Captain is mentioned. Malory uses Elias's messenger to initiate a battle between King Mark and Elias, in which Tristram ends up defending Mark. This battle parallels the final battle between Arthur and Mordred, and for Jones, this reference foreshadows the Somme battle. Jones incorporates one more reference to Malory. The line Jones uses is simple, but it harbors a deep meaning: "He said that there was a hell of a stink at Division" (138). This line stems from Book XX, chapter one in Malory. Aggravayne has just revealed Launcelot's affair with the queen to Gawayne, and he does not take it well. He says: "'Alas!' seyde sir Gawayne and sir Gareth, 'now ys thys realme holy destroyed and myscheved'" (Malory 1162, 31-2). This quote depicts Aggravayne's mischief, which leads to the war between Arthur and Mordred. Though Jones does not use the same language as Malory, the meaning of the two quotes is the same. There will be destruction and a hellish outcome after the Somme. Jones uses these sections from Malory to prepare the reader for what is to come and to place them into the headspace of the soldiers.

Jones references Aneirin's *Y Gododdin* (dated between the seventh and eleventh century) throughout the text. *Y Gododdin* is a Welsh poem that depicts the Battle of Catraeth where only three Welshmen survived. The poem consists of elegies dedicated to these men. Jones uses a quote from the poem as an epigraph to each part. They inform the reader of what to expect, and they provide insight into how the poem influenced Jones. For Part 6, the epigraph he uses is both informative and powerful given the proximity of the Somme battle: "Men went to Catraeth as day dawned: their fears disturbed their peace. / Men went to Catraeth: free of speech was their host … death's sure meeting place, the goal of their marching" (Jones 133). In Part 6, the

soldiers' peace is definitely disturbed. They have difficulty resting, they continue to travel closer to the battleground, and there are many moments of self-reflection. From this point on, there will be no peace for the soldiers. "Death's sure meeting place" reflects the substantial number of deaths to come. "The goal of their marching" is an interesting line because it insinuates that death has been the soldiers' fate all along. For Jones, this seems true, and Part 7 reflects this.

Analyzing Malory's and Aneirin's influence on Part 6 also reveals a theme that becomes prevalent in the latter half of Jones's text: the failure of patriotism. Ball and his friends mock many things during Part 6. Among these things, their mockery of patriotism distinguishes itself. One of the main forms of patriotism among the home front was propaganda. Jones incorporates propaganda into his depiction of patriotism's failure: "this Conchy propaganda's no bon for the troops – hope Jerry puts one on Mecklenburgh Square – instead of fussing patriotic Croydon" (143). Essentially, Jones states that propaganda does not benefit the soldiers. To them, majority of the propaganda did not accurately represent the reality of war. They also did not believe propaganda was patriotic. To further this concept, the soldiers even refer to the Somme battle as a "show" (Jones 144). Incorporating this section into Part 6 when the soldiers are preparing for the Somme and their fate is foreshadowed multiple times is significant. When the soldiers reflect on their fate, which they fear, they cannot help but mock patriotism. For a soldier harboring a vast amount of fear, patriotism does not exist. Jones represents the reality of many soldiers during WWI. It was hard for them to justify the war when they suffered from immense fear and trauma.

As Part 6 develops, Jones incorporates more moments of foreshadowing. Part 5 and Part 6, especially, begin to depict the nightmare that was WWI. The Battle of the Somme is the worst episode of that nightmare. Jones incorporates fear and tension in these parts to develop these

nightmarish scenes. When he foreshadows Part 7 with these elements, he is alluding to the fully realized nightmare of the Somme. At the beginning of Part 6, Jones provides the first piece of foreshadowing:

> Besides which there was the heavy battery operating just beneath the ridge, at a kept interval of minutes, with unnerving inevitability, as a malign chronometer, ticking off with each discharge an exactly measured progress toward a certain and prearranged hour of apocalypse. (135)

Jones frequently compares the Battle of the Somme to an apocalypse. He understands that the fate of the Somme battle is inevitable, and it is unnerving. With each page in Part 6, the soldiers inch closer to the Somme, exactly like a chronometer. Similarly, Jones also states: "And the Regimental was getting hourly more severe. He was beginning to speak of *exigencies* and of the *impending action*" (136). As each hour passes, the atmosphere intensifies, and there is a sense of impending doom. The reader becomes as scared as the soldiers. Encounters with the enemy become more severe. "Impending action" is on the soldiers' minds and the reader's mind. Every element in Part 6 leads up to the final moments in Part 7, and ultimately the Somme battle, which affected Jones's life and many other soldiers' lives in varying ways.

Part 7, "The Five Unmistakable Marks," details and reveals the outcome of the Battle of the Somme. The themes present throughout *In Parenthesis* come to a head in Part 7. Jones builds tension and emphasizes the fear of the soldiers in the last minutes before the Somme battle. Some of the soldiers plead for someone to stop the battle, but their calls are unanswered. As they move into their positions, Jones reveals the unfortunate soldiers who die minutes before the battle begins from artillery and gunfire. He then depicts the nightmare that was the Somme. Every element of the battle is chaotic, though it becomes more chaotic at night. There are traps

throughout the woods, gunners in every direction, and inescapable artillery. The soldiers engage in back-and-forth combat. German POWs are captured, and some of them willingly surrender to escape the battle. Many of the characters the reader has become attached to die, including Aneirin Lewis, Mr. Jenkins, Dai, Sergeant Quilter, Saunders, and Wastebottom. Other characters die as well, including Talacryn, '45 Williams, long Tom, Major Lillywhite, Morgan, Billy Crower, and several other soldiers. Jones highlights several concepts with these deaths: trauma is incorporated, little sympathy is expressed for the dead, soldiers do not have time to mourn for their peers, the importance of the bearers is emphasized, disabilities are mentioned, and Death is personified. Similarly, the woods are personified. They become integrated with WWI weapons, and the oak tree becomes the Dyrad. Shrapnel is associated with Balder. The soldiers plead to the earth for protection; however, the trees are wounded alongside the soldiers. The last significant section in Part 7 focuses on Ball. The reader discovers he has been shot in the leg, but Jones does not say whether he lives or dies. Ball sees the Queen of the Woods caring for the dead as he crawls to safety. Jones's final lines of *In Parenthesis* state that the text was created based on his experiences, and if the reader does not understand this, they missed the point of the text.

The epigraph to Part 7 contains the final lines from *Y Gododdin* that Jones took inspiration from. They reflect the severity of the Somme battle, and they possess a grave tone fitting for the final part. Gododdin, the descendant of the Votadini from northeastern England, is called upon for support and protection: "Gododdin I demand thy support. / It is our duty to sing: a meeting / place has been found" (Jones 151). Calling upon Gododdin reflects the magical, mythological undercurrent that is prevalent in Part 7. Jones incorporates several mythological figures, and many elements of war are personified, such as death and weaponry. This makes the battle of the Somme truly nightmarish as he combines the reality of the war with these

mythological figures. It is hard to distinguish reality from the imaginary, but Jones melds these concepts together to represent the chaos of the battle. “Our duty to sing” represents the duty of the soldiers, and the “meeting place” is the Somme itself. These lines set the pace for Part 7 by demonstrating the powerful, intricate language Jones uses.

Trauma is implied throughout Part 7, but there is one scene where trauma is prominent. Jones does not like to emphasize the trauma of the soldiers. The majority of the soldiers’ trauma in his text is subtle or suppressed, much like his own. It could be that he did not want to highlight the soldiers’ trauma because he did not want to remind himself of his own; however, he does focus on the trauma of civilians. Father Larkin, a priest who frequently communicates with the soldiers, suffers from a traumatic episode during the Somme battle. He is speaking with a few soldiers, telling them to eat their rations, pondering why the soldiers have not been sent water, and instructing bearers to rescue the injured. At first the reader believes that Larkin is speaking to wounded soldiers. It is not until Jones reveals Larkin’s reality that the reader realizes he is traumatized: “But why is Father Larkin talking to the dead?” (173). Instead of speaking to wounded soldiers, Larkin is speaking to the dead. It is possible that Jones incorporates this scene of trauma to demonstrate how the war affected civilians in close proximity to it. Larkin witnesses the battle, and though he is not engaged in combat, he is equally as affected by the brutality of it. He obtains his own war-wound. There are many scenes of trauma within the woods, but the mythological references and magical language overshadows the trauma.

Jones has foreshadowed the magical undercurrent of the woods throughout *In Parenthesis*, but it is not until Part 7 that the reader understands why. Jones transforms Mametz Wood into a magical, mythical place, and there are a few ways he accomplishes this. First, he integrates the woods with WWI weapons: traps, wiring, artillery, and machine guns. The soldiers

are unable to distinguish the woods and the weaponry; they become one. Similarly, Jones associates shrapnel with the Norse god Balder who is known for being just and is a figure of suffering. This is an interesting comparison seeing as shrapnel causes others to suffer, so because Jones associates shrapnel with Balder, he transfers Balder's suffering onto others. Jones succinctly portrays Balder's assimilation with shrapnel:

> up in the night-shades
> where death is closer packed
> in the tangled avenues
> fair Balder falleth everywhere (177)

Jones goes on to detail the destruction Balder causes, particularly to the trees. Shrapnel also injures a few soldiers, and Jones ends the section by describing how the soldiers wait for the bearers to carry them to safety. The trees that are wounded cannot be removed from the area. Jones extends his magical language to the trees and personifies their wounds: "their wounded boughs seem as malignant limbs" (184). By doing this, Jones demonstrates how WWI weaponry (artillery, shrapnel, grenades, or gunfire) did not just affect the soldiers; it affected the landscape as well. Though these scenes harbor trauma, the mythological references and magical language is more prevalent. These scenes also prepare the reader for the Queen of the Woods, a significant figure toward the end of the text. Her purpose will become apparent after Ball is wounded.

Jones has relied on Malory's text throughout *In Parenthesis*, but in Part 7, Malory's influence is most evident. In Part 7, there are ten sections from *Le Morte Darthur* that Jones pulls inspiration from, including scenes alluding to the Holy Grail and the Chapel Perilous, Garlon the invisible knight, and Mordred's siege of the tower. Though all ten sections will not be mentioned, there are a few that need to be distinguished. The first two sections refer to Balyn and

Balan's tragedy in "The Knight with the Two Swords." Jones refers to their tale twice in the final minutes before the Somme. The first is as follows: "who gives a bugger for / the Dolorous Stroke" (Jones 162). This refers to the scene in Malory when Balyn comes upon King Pellam. They engage in a duel, and Balyn smites him forcibly: "And therewith the castell brake roffe and wallis and felle downe to the erthe. And Balyn felle downe and myght nat styrre hande nor foote, and for the moste party of that castell was dede thorow the dolorouse stroke" (85, 11-14). Balyn's strike is so powerful that he tears down the castle, injures King Pellam, and exhausts himself. When Jones uses "Dolorous Stroke," he is implying that there is a massive amount of destruction to come. The soldiers lie to themselves to ease their fear by believing the Dolorous Stroke will not come to fruition, but it is of no use. Jones depicts the Dolorous Stroke as Death personified. He describes how she fulfills her appetite with soldiers similar to figures from the Middle Ages:

> like those other who fructify the land
> like Tristram
> Lamorak de Galis
> Alisand le Orphelin
> Beaumains who was youngest
> or all of them in shaft-shade
> at strait Thermopylae
> or the sweet brothers Balin and Balan
> embraced beneath their single monument. (Jones 163)

Most of the figures mentioned above are from the Arthurian legend. Jones ends the allusion to the Dolorous Stroke by referring to Balin (in Jones's spelling) and Balan's fate. They kill each

other over a misunderstanding. It is possible that Jones implies the Dolorous Stroke led to this; therefore, it is safe to say Jones uses the image of the Dolorous Stroke to reflect the brutality the Germans and Englishmen inflict on each other. Regardless, by using the Dolorous Stroke, Jones alludes to the destruction to come and the beginning of the waste land.

Part of this destruction involves the deaths of two important figures: Lance-Corporal Aneirin Lewis and Mr. Jenkins. Unfortunately, Lance-Corporal Lewis dies within the first three pages of Part 7. Though Jones does not explicitly state how he dies, it is evident that he is blown up by an artillery shell. The description of Lance-Corporal Lewis's death is gruesome. Jones incorporates several Welsh references to illustrate this:

> No one to care there for Aneirin Lewis spilled there
> who worshipped his ancestors like a Chink
> who sleeps in Arthur's lap
> …
> more shaved he is to the bare bone than
> Yspaddadan Penkawr.
>
> Properly organised chemists can let make more riving power than ever Twrch Trwyth;
> more blistered he is than painted Troy Towers
> and unwholer, limb from limb, than any of them fallen at Catraeth
> or on the seaboard-down, by Salisbury,
> and no maker to contrive his funerary song. (155)

It is apparent that Lewis represents the full-blooded Welshman. Jones almost treats him like a royal figure, especially when stating Arthur himself cares for him in the afterlife. Jones honors him with numerous Welsh references as his death is described. At the same time, Jones also

demonstrates the destructive power of artillery. In an instant, Lewis is gone. The references used to describe his wounds show the scale of artillery because Jones uses some of the most powerful, destructive figures in Welsh history. He implies that artillery is more powerful than these figures. After Lance-Corporal Lewis dies, the presence of a full-Welshman is gone, and other half-Welshmen begin to question their heritage. Lewis's death spurs the deaths to follow. It seems as if Jones implies that once Lewis dies, and his Welsh heritage with him, the battle stems into chaos. The reference to Malory supports this. In Malory, Arthur dreams of his death in Salisbury. After this, the remainder of Malory's "Last Battle" episode turns chaotic. This parallels Lewis's death. Jones ultimately compares Lewis to Arthur. He is the one holding his soldiers together and taking care of their land, but once he dies, there is no hope left, allowing chaos to ensue.

Lance-Corporal Lewis's death is not the only tragic death. As the Somme battle begins, Mr. Jenkins joins those who have died. His death is grim and vivid. Jones does not state how he dies, but one can assume he dies from a gunshot. There are no literary references to relate his death to. Instead, Jones details Mr. Jenkins's death as it happens:

> He makes the conventional sign
>
> …
>
> He sinks on one knee
>
> and now on the other,
>
> his upper body tilts in rigid inclination
>
> this way and back;
>
> …
>
> Then stretch still where weeds pattern the chalk predella – where it rises to his wire – and Sergeant T. Quilter takes over. (166)

There are also lines describing Jenkins's struggle to remove his helmet, which could allude to a head or neck wound. Jones uses vivid language to outline Jenkins's painful death. The reader is engaged in the moment and feels Mr. Jenkins's pain. Jones ends this section with a scene of peace as Jenkins is no longer in agony. It is even insinuated that he is honored at an altar as he dies with the "chalk predella." Sergeant Quilter assumes the leading position, and the battle continues. Majority of the deaths in Part 7 occur in this manner. They are concise, there is no grieving process, and the soldiers resume combat. The destruction outlined by the Dolorous Stroke is reflected in Lewis's and Jenkins's death. They are injured beyond repair, and their bodies are unable to save them. They die almost as soon as they are struck. Ball does not experience the same fate.

Ball encounters many close calls throughout Part 7, but toward the end of the text, he is shot in the leg. Jones describes his injury with the same amount of detail as Lewis and Jenkins:

> And to Private Ball it came as if a rigid beam of great weight flailed about his calves, caught from behind by ballista-baulk let fly or aft-beam slewed to clout gunnel-walker below below below.
>
> …
>
> The warm fluid percolates between his toes and his left boot fills, as when you tread in a puddle – he crawled away in the opposite direction. (183)

Though his injury is swift, he is left to suffer from the pain for the remainder of the text. Ball can only crawl, so he crawls as far away as he can. There is a large section where Ball grapples with leaving his rifle behind, which is frowned upon as the rifle is meant to be viewed as a "best friend" (Jones 183). After struggling with the decision, Ball decides to leave the rifle under a tree. He discards most of his weapons and ammunition, but he keeps his mask. It is evident that

Ball cares more for his rifle than he does himself. The importance of the rifle was drilled into him during training, which is what makes the decision so difficult. This reflects a lack of courtesy during training. Officers care more for the weapons of WWI than the soldiers who control them. If courtesy was present, Ball would not have had a difficult time making the decision.

In the middle of Ball's decision, the Queen of the Woods is introduced. She visits the soldiers and gifts them with flowers to welcome them to the afterlife. Jones explains her role before she rewards specific soldiers:

> These knew her influential eyes. Her awarding hands can pluck for each their fragile prize.
>
> She speaks to them according to precedence. She knows what's due to this elect society. She can choose twelve gentle-men. She knows who is most lord between the high trees and on the open down. (185)

She will gift twelve soldiers specific flowers to accompany her. They are given these flowers for their sacrifice. Jones includes this scene to state the soldiers of WWI are heroes. This section reads as a eulogy, and it is evident Jones honors the soldiers of WWI. Among the twelve soldiers, Mr. Jenkins, Dai, and Lewis are rewarded with flowers. Jenkins receives his flowers before Dai: "She plaits torques of equal splendour for Mr. Jenkins and Billy Crower" (Jones 185). Dai was injured in the middle of the battle, but the reader discovers he died when the Queen searches for him: "Dai Great-coat, she can't find him anywhere – she calls both high and low, she had a very special one for him" (Jones 186). Lewis is the last soldier to receive flowers: "She carries to Aneirin-in-the-nullah a rowan sprig, for the glory of Guenedota. You couldn't hear what she said to him, because she was careful for the Disciplines of the Wars" (Jones 186).

Once more, Jones treats Lewis like royalty. He is associated with *ein llyw olaf* who was a well-respected, holy figure in Welsh history. Every Welshman lamented his death, and Jones refers to a song stating "the course of nature is changed" (212). Lewis receives the same treatment. He is honored above all others, and it is fitting the Queen visits him last.

After Ball leaves his rifle under the oak tree, he is left to wait for the bearers. Jones mentions the significance of the bearers multiple times in Part 7. They serve as a beacon of hope for the soldiers. They know that when they are rescued by the bearers, they will be taken to safety, no longer having to endure the brutality of the battle. When Ball calls upon the bearers, he does not view them in the same manner. Instead, he comments on the failure of chivalry in the war: "But why don't the bastards come– / Bearers! – stret-cher bear-errs! / or do they divide the spoils at the Aid-Post" (Jones 187). Ball insinuates that the bearers are looting the wounded soldiers instead of rescuing the injured. This reflects the failure of chivalry and courtesy because the wounded soldiers are not the priority. There is a similar scene in Malory. After Arthur is mortally wounded and removed from the field, robbers come onto the field to loot the knights: "pyllours and robbers were com into the fylde to pylle and to robbe many a full noble knyght of brochys and bees and of many a good rynge and many a ryche juell. And who that were nat dede all oute, there they slew them for their harneys and their ryches" (Malory 1238, 1-4). The robbers are not courteous or chivalrous because they do not have any respect for the knights. Instead of caring for the knights, they are robbed and disrespected in their death. Jones emphasizes this failure, and it becomes his final statement on the war as Ball is left to wait, for the bearers or for his death, under an oak tree.

In Parenthesis is a complex but rewarding read. There are several layers to unpack, from the suppressed trauma to the symbolism of the numerous references. Ultimately, Jones portrays

the failure of the classical and medieval concepts of patriotism, honor, courtesy, chivalry, and knighthood. Jones emphasizes the failure of patriotism, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood throughout his text. His soldiers mock patriotism, the lack of courtesy between the soldiers and Commanding Officers is highlighted, he outlines how chivalry is absent from the war, and he represents the eradication of knighthood by emphasizing the change in warfare. Using classical and medieval references, Malory especially, demonstrates these failures even more. Jones relies on their symbolism to reflect these failures and to allude to the trauma from the war. Jones does not emphasize trauma, but there are powerful moments where trauma is the focus. Because of this, his representation of trauma seems more realistic than other poets. This type of representation is what Jones wanted to accomplish with *In Parenthesis*. Though his symbolism through the classical and medieval references can be hard to follow, Jones depicts the war as it was: confusing, brutal, nightmarish, chaotic, tragic, exhausting, without respect, unpatriotic, informative, and life-changing.

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION

This analysis has proven how the classical and medieval concepts of patriotism, chivalry, courtesy, knighthood, and honor failed during and after World War I. David Jones details these failures in *In Parenthesis*, an in-depth, complex, epic prose poem. As it has been shown, Jones furthered the poetry of Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen and took inspiration from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. He went beyond what these poets were able to accomplish, but one can see their influence in Jones's text. Sassoon and Owen represent the failure of classical and medieval concepts in their concise, powerful, lyric poems. Their references are direct given the length of their poems. They depict the tragedy of WWI as they witnessed it, and they felt the immediate need to reveal the failure of classical and medieval concepts in order to portray the reality of the war. Jones's text has several sections where his language is succinct yet powerful. Eliot inspired Jones with his literary references comparing the classical period and the Middle Ages to modernity. Jones applies the same concept specifically to WWI relying on classical and medieval references to represent the failures mentioned above. Similarly to Sassoon, Owen, and Eliot, Jones also incorporates trauma into his work to demonstrate how substantial it was during the war. Even though Jones takes inspiration from Sassoon, Owen, and Eliot, Jones's response to WWI is much different from their interpretations. Though his text is complex, he portrays the most realistic depiction of the war. Ultimately, he creates a commentary on all wars, describing how WWI is integrated into this commentary. Though Jones integrates WWI, he still depicts how it is unique from previous wars because of the failure of classical and medieval concepts. These elements represent why *In Parenthesis* is so significant.

The failure of chivalry and courtesy is reflected in Jones's poetry because he highlights the fact that soldiers were not properly cared for. They were not respected, they were not mourned, their trauma was not taken seriously, and they were taken advantage of. The lack of chivalry and courtesy is reflected in many relationships: the soldiers and commanding officers, new soldiers and veterans, and civilians and soldiers. Jones also mocks the concept of patriotism. To anyone that understood the reality of WWI, there was no sense of patriotism in the war. He often demonstrates the lack of patriotism with the false reality of propaganda. The lack of patriotism is associated with an absence of honor. If the soldiers did not feel a sense of patriotism, they did not believe there was honor in the war. Jones highlights the failure of knighthood in WWI with his commentary on the changes in warfare. There is no respect in modern combat, and weaponry has completely changed. The chivalric code that previously defined warfare is eradicated in WWI due to the drastic changes in warfare. By reading Jones's *In Parenthesis*, one obtains a full understanding of the failure of classical and medieval concepts in WWI.

Jones establishes the failure of classical and medieval concepts before and after the war. He wrote about events that happened to him during the war, but his text is also representative of the failure of these concepts after the war because of the time that had passed from WWI to 1937. Jones understood the change in warfare and recognized the failure of classical and medieval concepts, but he also took inspiration from Sir Thomas Malory to represent the war with an original interpretation. Jones uses many references throughout *In Parenthesis*, but Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* is the most significant source. By incorporating scenes from Malory's text, Jones demonstrates that classical and medieval concepts failed before WWI. Malory wrote about many of the same concepts as Jones, over four hundred years before him.

WWI reinforced the failure of classical and medieval concepts for the modern world. This explains the largest difference between other WWI poets' poetry and Jones's poetry. Jones's allusions to these failures are subtle. The same can be same for his representation of trauma.

Jones suppressed his trauma. He did not want to be reminded of his trauma, so he mainly described the trauma of civilians rather than the soldiers' trauma. Instead of being direct, Jones relies on magic through signs, symbols, and his language to process and represent trauma. His representation of trauma is insightful because he describes suppressed trauma rather than recognized trauma. His contemporaries focused on vivid, grim depictions of trauma, but Jones's portrayal of trauma is realistic and haunting. He also describes trauma as a war-wound and how it can disrupt the narrative of WWI and the literal narrative of his text. The scenes of trauma within *In Parenthesis* demonstrate the varying amount of trauma within the soldiers and civilians.

Jones successfully dispels the concepts of patriotism, honor, chivalry, courtesy, and knighthood during and after WWI. These concepts no longer function in modernity, and this shift became apparent in WWI. The concepts developed within this analysis are important because they lead to the exploration of modernist poetry and society as a whole. WWI poetry is closely associated with modernist poetry, which ultimately leads into post-modernist poetry and beyond. Many of the themes that Jones explored appeared in later poetry. Understanding this new shift in poetry after the First World War, especially in complex poetry like Jones's *In Parenthesis*, leads to the understanding of more recent war poetry, such as works by Kingsley Amis and A.R. Ammons (World War II poets) or Brian Turner (an Iraq war poet). By understanding the significance of war poetry, one can become more informed about their society and culture. Jones's *In Parenthesis* represents the significance of war poetry. Without his text, one would not

understand the reality of WWI, the impact and development of trauma from WWI, and the change in modernity after the war.

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