Catholic Poets of the Great War

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The First World War poetry canon has long been defined by the works of Anglo-Protestant, agnostic, officer class soldier poets. Though the hegemony of this canon has painted the war as a faith-destroying event, poetic representations of the war involving and often celebrating religious faith were plentiful. Catholicism was a major religion in countries on both sides of the conflict: in 1910, 65% of Europeans were Catholic, including more than 40 million French citizens, 35 million Italians, 38 million Austro-Hungarians, and nearly 6 million people in the British Isles (Liu, Jenkins). This dissertation traces representations of Catholicism in British Isles First World War poetry across a variety of contexts, ranging from high modernist works to Catholic poetry written for popular audiences. Likewise, I investigate the influence of Catholicism upon representations of the war by non-Catholics, including uses of Catholic imagery by secular poets as well as influences of Catholic authors upon non-Catholic ones. I argue for the incorporation of Catholic First World War poetry into anthologies and teaching materials based on the widespread significance I establish of both Catholic poetry and wartime imagery derived from Catholicism.

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INTRODUCTION

I. The Catholic Church and the First World War

The Catholic Church's role in the First World War is usually depicted in terms of Pope Benedict XV's pacifist efforts. However, histories which focus solely on papal pacifism oversimplify the Church's response to the war. The Catholic Church responded in varied ways at different levels of the church's leadership hierarchy and in different countries.

The Pope's pacifist efforts were, in fact, significant enough to shape the course of the war. He is best known for his "peace note" in 1917, which is recognized as "the most significant neutral effort to end World War I" (Pollard 36, Snell 151). Likely buoyed by the success of German Center Catholic Party MP Matthias Erzberger – who was "the Vatican's white hope in Germany" – in passing a "peace resolution" in July 1917, Benedict wrote a letter in August to leaders of the belligerent nations communicating his "horror at the carnage and slaughter" and laying out a detailed, point-by-point plan for peace (Pollard 124, "Note to the Heads of the Belligerent Peoples"). The Pope's appeal was variously rejected or outright ignored.[1] Five months later, however, peace was looking more appealing to the allies, and Woodrow Wilson delivered his "Fourteen Points for Peace" speech to Congress; afterwards, these fourteen points were "broadcast throughout the world and were showered from rockets and shells behind the enemy's lines" ("President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points"). Despite Wilson's earlier rejection of Benedict's peace advocacy, his "Fourteen Points" "was so close in content and formulation to Benedict's note that the only conclusion to be drawn is that it was heavily inspired by it" (Pollard

[1] Woodrow Wilson wrote a letter back to the Pope rejecting his proposal; the French never responded. Other nations' responses fell somewhere in between.

128). Though Benedict's appeal may have been ill-timed, its content was powerful enough to be lifted almost verbatim into one of the most influential pieces of wartime rhetoric.

Though Pope Benedict XV was committed to pacifism from the moment he was appointed at the beginning of September 1914,[2] the extent to which Catholics across Europe ascribed to this stance was wide-ranging. This was, in large part, due to competing loyalties to country and religion on the part of the clergy. Across Europe, "the overwhelming majority of Catholic bishops and prominent clerics in the public sphere devoted themselves to national causes" (Houlihan "Local Catholicism" 233). This led to "polarizing war jingoisim" making its way into religious messages and spaces (Houlihan "Local Catholicism" 267). This was also the case in the British Isles. For example, "an appeal for recruits [was] read from pulpits across north-east England" and "Catholic institutes doubled as recruiting offices" (Snape 85).

This is not to say, however, that clerical influence on the faithful was universally at odds with papal influence. In Ireland, for instance, jingoism amongst church leadership was "much less univocal," and on the war front itself, Catholic clergy traversed enemy boundaries (Snape 85, Houlihan "Local Catholicism" 267). In occupied parts of France, for example, French civilians sought "religious pastoral care" from German clergy members (Houlihan "Local Catholicism" 267). This was because France had introduced conscription for clergymen, and in doing so had depleted its home front of much of its church leadership. The French therefore turned to the only priests they had available. Members of clergy were faced with navigating the competing demands of country and religion and often acted in support of the most immediate influences on them. Most often, they faced the demands of recruiting efforts and sometimes

[2] Benedict XV succeeded Pope Pius X. Pius X was not a pacifist, evidenced by how he "continually incited Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary to eliminate the Serbs" due to his desire to weaken the Orthodox church (Frattini).

those of congregants seeking pastoral care across national boundaries – but rarely the demands of the Pope himself.

Voices from outside of church leadership also had significant sway in how Catholicism's relationship with the war was understood. See, for example, these posters issued by the Department of Recruiting for Ireland (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2):

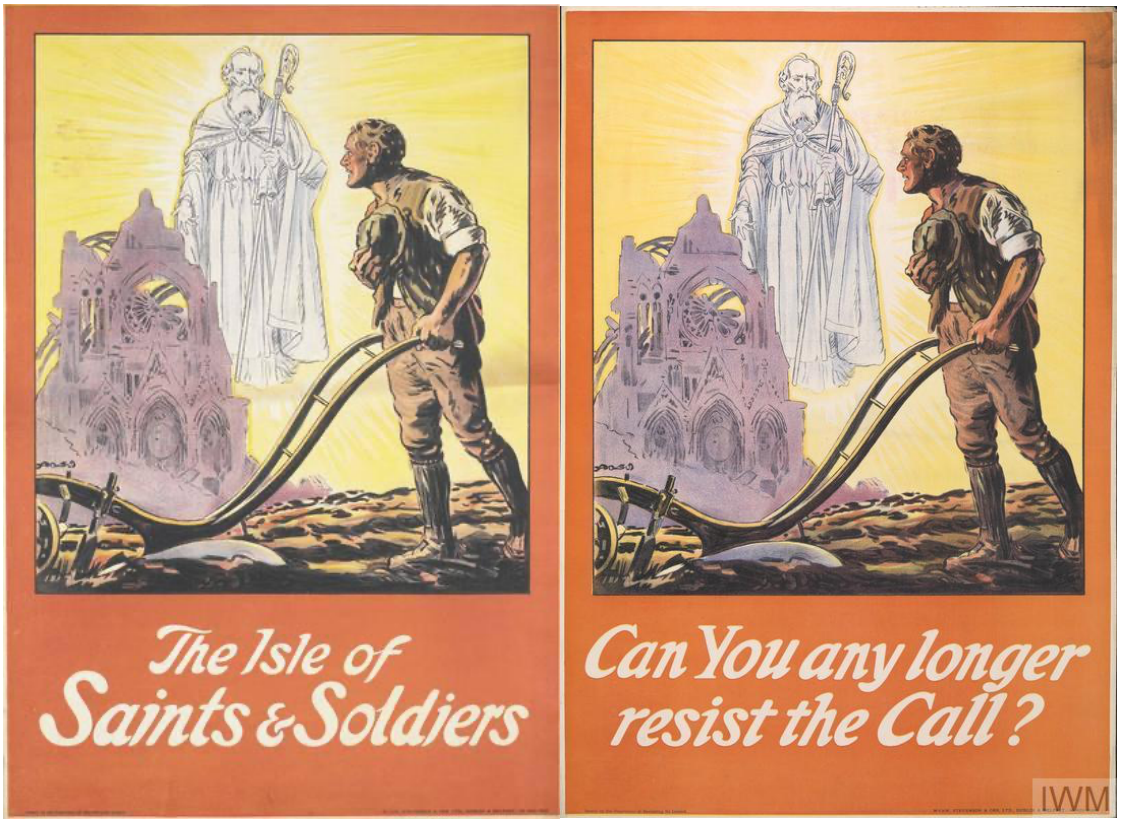


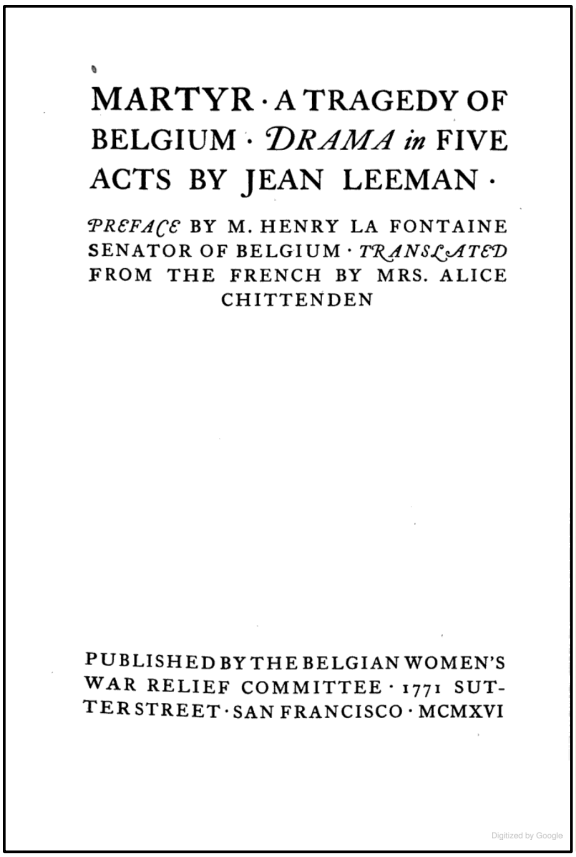
Fig. 1. The Isle of Saints & Soldiers. Department of Recruiting for Ireland, 1915. Imperial War Museum, https://www.vads.ac.uk/digital/collection/IWMPC/id/5549/.
Fig. 2. Can You Any Longer Resist the Call? Department of Recruiting for Ireland, 1915. Imperial War Museum, https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/31635.

The plowman, an image which, as Angela Smith points out is "itself a religious metaphor," is silhouetted in front of Rheims Cathedral, with Saint Patrick suspended behind (48). Both Rheims, destroyed by German shells at the beginning of the war, and Saint Patrick, are ghostlike: they hover behind the plowman who is quite literally grounded in a muddy landscape which,

unlike the one on the Western front, is portrayed as visibly fertile. The posters suggest that the war is a holy cause, that the shared Catholicism of the French and the Irish creates a brotherly duty, and even that the Irish soldier will be watched over by the patron saint of his country on the war front just as he is at home. The posters are powerful pieces of propaganda and are only two of many examples of how Catholicism was successfully mobilized in public discourse. Likewise, many of the poems studied in this dissertation exemplify how Catholic faith was appealed to in support of the war or in protest of it.

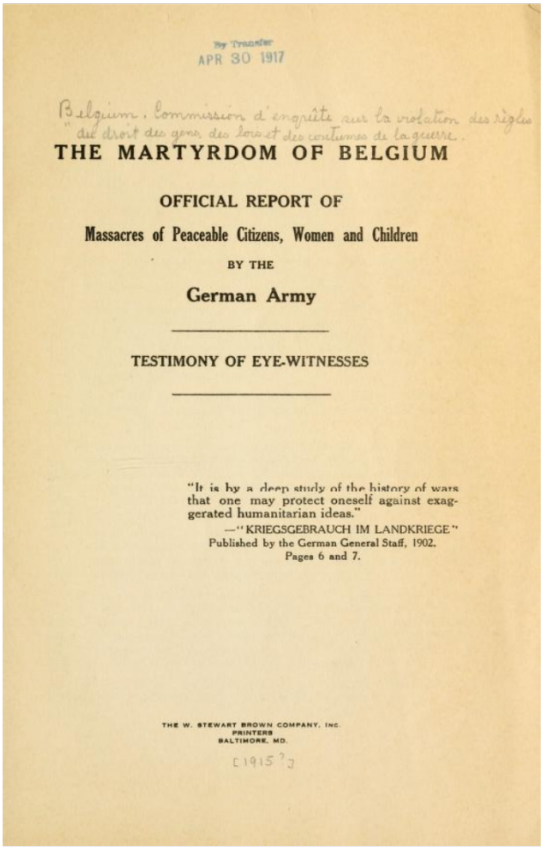
Though myriad events shaped discourse surrounding Catholicism and the war effort, both within the church and in the public sphere, perhaps the most significant was the German invasion of Belgium which began the war on August 4, 1914. The invasion and subsequent occupation of Belgium played "an important symbolic role in Allied rationale for the war" for the war's duration, and rhetoric related to Catholicism frequently filtered into justificatory messages (Houlihan "Local Catholicism" 242). Most significantly, the metaphor of Belgium as a martyr was used to solicit sympathy for the war effort. This was the case in public discourse as well as in official documentation and resonated in Europe and overseas. See, for example, two publications from 1915[3] which foreground this metaphor (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4):

[3] The *Martrydom of Belgium* publication is dated by the Library of Congress as likely, but not certainly, being published in 1915. Regardless, it was published during the war (1917 at the latest per its shelfmark).


MARTYR · A TRAGEDY OF BELGIUM · *DRAMA in* FIVE ACTS BY JEAN LEEMAN ·

PREFACE BY M. HENRY LA FONTAINE SENATOR OF BELGIUM · *TRANSLATED* FROM THE FRENCH BY MRS. ALICE CHITTENDEN

PUBLISHED BY THE BELGIAN WOMEN'S WAR RELIEF COMMITTEE · 1771 SUTTER STREET · SAN FRANCISCO · MCMXVI



Belgium. Commission d'enquête sur la violation des règles du droit des gens, des lois et des coutumes de la guerre.

THE MARTYRDOM OF BELGIUM

OFFICIAL REPORT OF

Massacres of Peaceable Citizens, Women and Children

BY THE

German Army

TESTIMONY OF EYE-WITNESSES

"It is by a deep study of the history of wars that one may protect oneself against exaggerated humanitarian ideas."
—"KRIEGSGEBRAUCH IM LANDKRIEGE"
Published by the German General Staff, 1902.
Pages 6 and 7.

THE W. STEWART BROWN COMPANY, INC.
PRINTERS
BALTIMORE, MD.

Fig. 3. Martyr: a Tragedy of Belgium. Jean Leeman, The Belgian Women's War Relief Committee, 1915.
Fig. 4. The Martyrdom of Belgium (Official Belgian Commission of Inquiry.) The W. Stewart Brown Company, Inc., 1915. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/17016539/.

The Jean Leeman play, *Martyr: a Tragedy of Belgium*, produced in San Francisco, "vividly featured the whole range of German atrocities, including rape, wanton destruction, and excessive cruelty, conveying an especially gruesome reality of German occupation" (Piller 629). The report submitted to the Belgian Minister of Justice by the Official Belgian Commission of Inquiry (certified by the Belgian Legation in Washington, D.C.) mobilizes the martyrdom metaphor in its investigation into "the violation of the rules of International Law and of the Customs of War" (6). Both documents rely explicitly on the rhetoric of martyrdom in combination with depictions of shocking violence to appeal to the sympathy of their audiences (public and governmental, respectively).

In addition to Belgium as a country being portrayed as a martyr, heavy attention was given to the bravery and sacrifice of Belgians themselves. For example, in his hugely influential poem "In October 1914 [Antwerp]" (published January 1915),[4] Catholic poet Ford Madox Hueffer – later, Ford Madox Ford – commends the bravery of the common Belgian in explicitly religious terms: "Those men there, with the appearance of clods / Were the bravest men that a usually listless priest of God / Ever shrived. . ." (18-20). The message of enthusiastic absolution lauds the Belgians' self-defense while the image of the clod-like Belgian (who is elsewhere called "uncomely," "unsightly" and an "ugly coated figure") solicits pity and suggests humility. Religious rhetoric about the invasion of Belgium lent itself to pathos-based appeals, both humanitarian and jingoist. Within the church, the invasion of Catholic Belgium contributed to British bishops' belief in "the justice of the Allied cause" (Snape 85).

An influx of refugees made Belgium's plight particularly visible in England. In the fall of 1914, when Ford's poem is set, about 1,000 refugees were arriving in England every day (Fell). The latter section of the poem depicts Belgian women and children waiting at Charing Cross for their male family members to rejoin them, who in actuality "lie dead in trench and barrier and foss, / In the dark of the night":

> This is Charing Cross;
>
> It is one o'clock.
>
> There is still a great cloud, and very little light;
>
> Immense shafts of shadows over the black crowd
>
> That hardly whispers aloud. . .

[4] T.S. Eliot later called "Antwerp" "the only good poem I have met with on the subject of the war"; and Yeats' famous line "a terrible beauty is born" in his poem "Easter, 1916" likely draws on Ford's line "That is a strange new beauty" (Lewis).

> And now! . . That is another dead mother,
>
> And there is another and another and another. . .
>
> And little children, all in black,
>
> All with dead faces, waiting in all the waiting-places,
>
> Wandering from the doors of the waiting-room
>
> In the dim gloom.

Situating the reader amidst the disorienting crowd and emphasizing the crowd's scale ("and another and another and another"), Ford recontextualizes the "gloom" that earlier in the poem was articulated with passion.[5] Where the gloomy setting of the poem's opening in Antwerp underscores the Belgians' bravery, its use at Charing Cross lends only a sense of desolation. As Matt Foley identifies in his reading of "Antwerp" as an early modernist poem, Ford's depiction of the "crowd of living-dead mourners" evokes both pathos and horror (74).

These two appeals – to sympathy and to a horror at the war's toll on Belgians – permeated rhetoric about the war in England in the early months of the conflict. "Poor little Belgium" and "the Rape of Belgium" became powerful slogans. While the presence of the refugees themselves was "exploited as a means of fostering anti-German sentiment," stories from across the sea in Belgium of "violence against women, children, and the family created a set of seemingly irrefutable moral imperatives with which to silence the pacifist opposition" (Gullance 18). In the poetry in this dissertation, other authors play on these tropes as Ford had.

There were Catholics living across the British Isles at the start of the war, though this distribution was uneven. Ireland had by far the most significant Catholic population: in a 1911

[5] The poem opens: "GLOOM! / An October like November; / August a hundred thousand hours, / And all September, / A hundred thousand, dragging sunlit days, / And half October like a thousand years . . . / And doom! / That then was Antwerp. . . / In the name of God, / How could they do it?" (Ford lines 2-11).

census, 89.6% of those surveyed identified as Roman Catholic ("Religious Change"). In Scotland in 1913, this percentage was about 11.5% and in England and Wales, the Catholic population was around 4.9%.[6] This comprised a total of almost 6 million Catholics in Britain and Ireland during the war, with more than half of this number coming from the Irish population (Jenkins, "Turning the World Upside Down").

This of course means that in some ways, discourse related to Catholicism was localized to Ireland. As we have already seen, Catholicism was incorporated into propaganda specifically aimed at the Irish population, and these kinds of propaganda can be found in the sphere of poetry as well. The reason for addressing propaganda specifically to Irish audiences was due not only to the vast number of Catholics in Ireland, but also because Ireland was navigating a complex set of interweaving political issues as a colonized nation awaiting a belated Home Rule during the war years. But although Catholicism was most prevalent in Ireland, it was a quite visible religion in Great Britain as well, largely due to the influx of Belgian refugees – who accounted for about a quarter million Catholics in Britain during the war years ("How Belgian Refugees Kept the British Army Going"). For example, while church-going amongst Protestants had steadily declined from the mid-19th century, "Roman Catholic mass attendance seems to have kept up, partly because of the large presence of Belgian war refugees" (Field, n.p.). The third chapter of this dissertation will attend to how the visibility of Catholicism on both the home front and the war front inspired usages of rhetoric inspired by Catholicism amongst secular authors.

Though Catholicism was a significant religion and a significant cultural influence across the British Isles – and was disproportionately represented in the armed forces[7] – the

[6] These numbers are based on raw number estimates of the Catholic population pulled from "British Religion in Numbers" and on 1913 population statistics from hansard.parliament.uk.
[7] As Michael Snape writes, "Catholics have been consistently and disproportionately predisposed to volunteer for military service" from the First World War to the present day (80).

Protestantism of the Church of England was the more practiced and more vocal religion. In contrast to the Catholic Church's official stance of pacifism, the Church of England "exhibited a thoroughgoing support for the war" (Barbeau 26). From the outset, the Church of England characterized the First World War as a Holy War and used crusade-like rhetoric to garner both popular support and recruits (Bell 1-2). In response to loss of life, it took a similar approach to the Catholic church, using the metaphor of martyrdom, and, in fact, offering "prayers for the dead, previously solely a Roman Catholic practice" (Bell 3). Though the numbers of people going to church were actually declining (and had been since the 1850s), the "moral climate of the time" led to "wide-ranging appropriation of religious terminology for the purposes of interpreting the war" (Bell, Khan 39). Therefore, depictions of the conflict as a Holy War, as a "modern Crusade," and as a Christ-serving and devil-fighting endeavor were relatively common in poetry about the war, especially in the conflict's early stages (Khan 39-40). Importantly, these poems were often not explicitly religious; rather, like the talking points about Catholic Belgium discussed above, rhetoric filtered from the Church of England into public discourse about the war.

II. Scholarship – Poetry, the War, and Catholicism

The genre of First World War poetry studies emerged following the publication of Paul Fussell's seminal monograph *The Great War and Modern Memory* in 1975. Foregrounding the voices of authors like Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Edmund Blunden, Robert Graves, and other officer-class combatant poets, Fussell made a compelling case for the value of First World War poetry to early 20th century literary studies. Fussell's book shaped the canon in several important ways. First, it homed in on trench poetry and defined this canon against other iterations of poetry about the war, suggesting that combat experience qualified trench poetry as more authentic than

war poetry by civilians. As James Campbell writes of Fussell's argument, "The combatants' resentment is the primary, privileged experience, while that of noncombatants is represented only as a foil to set off the bitter and legitimate irony of the front line troops" (206). In validating the voices of combatant poets like Owen and Sassoon, Fussell also invalidated the perspectives of noncombatants by intoning that only combatants can get at the truth of war through poetry. Second, Fussell portrays the war as a turning point in 20th century English-language literatures. Undermining the themes and formal conventions of Romanticism, he argued, this cohort of trench poets ushered in a distinctly modern (if not modern*ist*) approach to poetry. The success of this latter argument led to a significant increase in scholarly productivity related to British Isles First World War poetry.

Most notably for this dissertation, Fussell's book includes a chapter on "Myth, Ritual, and Romance" which touches on representations of religious faith in First World War poetry. Fussell is particularly interested in how "un-modern superstitions, talismans, wonders, miracles, relics, legends, and rumors" were engaged to represent a distinctly modern conflict (124). On Catholicism, Fussell offers two insights significant for this project. First, he discusses a statue of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus atop the half-destroyed Basilica in Albert, France which was colloquially known as the "Leaning Virgin" because the heavy fighting in the area had all but knocked it down (Fussell 142). Because of its prominence, "it was seen and interpreted by hundreds of thousands of men, who readily responded with significant moral metaphors and implicit allegorical myths" (Fussell 143). Some read the statue as sacrificial, with Mary "throwing the Child down into the battle" whereas others interpreted it as a miraculous feat of hanging on (Fussell 143). Generating "moral metaphor or . . . myth" and inspiring propaganda, the Catholic space that was the Basilica at Albert played into how the war was understood by

countless soldiers and civilians alike (Fussell 143). While Fussell uses this example to support an argument about the viability of myth and superstition on the Western Front, it also demonstrates the significance of Catholic iconography to the war. The Western Front itself was in a space saturated with Catholic imagery. The war front occupied markedly Catholic spaces: the Western Front ran across France and Belgium, both majority Catholic nations. In France alone, nearly 4,000 Catholic churches were destroyed throughout the course of the war (Gearin 1). Fussell's "Leaning Virgin" story is only one of the many examples – explored later in this dissertation – of how the destruction of Catholic spaces in France and Belgium led to the circulation of lore and patriotic rhetoric amongst Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

Fussell's second discussion of Catholicism concerns David Jones' *In Parenthesis*, the epic poem that this dissertation's second chapter focuses on. I discuss Fussell's approach to the poem more extensively at the beginning of this dissertation's second chapter, but Fussell's overarching argument has bearing beyond Jonesian studies and is therefore worth mentioning here. Fussell places *In Parenthesis* "in the tradition" of "Old Testament history, Roman Catholic liturgy," folklore, and Classical literature (amongst other cultural touchstones) (Fussell 157-58). He argues that this tradition "holds suffering to be close to sacrifice and individual effort to end in heroism" and, more decisively, that it "contains . . . no precedent for an understanding of war as a shambles and its participants as victims" and "even . . . validate[s] the war" (Fussell 158). While this perspective is now generally understood by Jones scholars to be flawed and largely unsubstantiated,[8] Fussell's argument that the war's predominant Catholic soldier-poet justified the war using biblical history and liturgy has contributed to an incorrect narrative that organized

[8] As Austin Riede writes in his 2016 *Modernism/Modernity* article on *In Parenthesis*, "Many of the complications *In Parenthesis* brings to modernist poetics and themes have remained obscured by scholars' ongoing refutation of Paul Fussell's influential misreading of the poem as valorizing the war in *The Great War and Modern Memory*" (691).

religion has no place in protest poetry. Fussell's (mis)reading of Jones is one of the foundations that this dissertation responds to.

The Great War and Modern Memory remains incredibly influential despite being published nearly fifty years ago, but critics have, in the interim between its publication and the war's centenary, demonstrated its shortcomings. Perhaps the most influential response to Fussell's book is James Campbell's 1999 article entitled "Combat Gnosticism: The Ideology of First World War Poetry Criticism," which argues that the canon of First World War poetry has been shaped around the Trench Poets and their values. He identifies how noncombatant writers have remained largely excluded from the critical conversation surrounding Great War literature due to residual "combat gnosis," incited via the accusatory and often openly sexist lyrics of the trench poets and perpetuated by major scholars like Fussell. Campbell indicates that this exclusion is particularly true of noncombatant *poets*: because our understanding of the "true" experience of war derives primarily from the Trench Poets, poetry which is at odds with the dominant themes and forms of Trench Poetry has been excluded from the canon lest it challenge the idea that only the lived experience of combat can inspire meaningful poetic representations of the war. Campbell's article helped validate wartime perspectives outside of Fussell's tight canon and it remains an important lens for First World War poetry studies.

The enduring legacy of Campbell's article is evidenced by Jamie Wood's recent publication *Modernist War Poetry: Combat Gnosticism and the Sympathetic Imagination, 1914–19* (2023, Edinburgh University Press). Wood's book locates debates over the importance of gnosis in intra-war literature and traces the impacts of combat Gnosticism and "combat agnosticism" on Anglo-American literary modernisms, using a sociohistorical lens rather than a purely theoretical one like Campbell (3). Wood acknowledges the importance to contemporary

modernist studies of not elevating poetry with a claim to gnosis over other poetic representations of the war since "the valorisation of one side of that space [between fronts], runs counter to the expansionist impulses within modernist studies" (2). But he also pushes back against Campbell's assertion that gnosis is essentially irrelevant. Citing influential texts published after Campbell's, like Sarah Cole's *Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War* (2003) and Santanu Das's *Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature* (2005), Wood argues that "There may be . . . something about the war, its relationship to the body and to the mind, to the mechanisms of endocrinology, which makes it a profoundly alien experience" (4). Because combat *does*, in fact, seem like a categorically different wartime experience from life on the home front, Wood remarks that "Whilst we can accept Campbell's thesis as a description of literary history, it is another matter to accept it philosophically . . . despite the uncomfortable ideological implications" (3).

But why exactly are these ideological implications uncomfortable? Wood suggests that it is because "As literary scholars . . . we recoil from the suggestion that the projective abilities of the sympathetic apparatus might face a limit" (1). In other words, scholars of literature are uncomfortable with trying to draw a line between what is authentic enough and what isn't, and for good reason. All literature, but perhaps poetry especially, relies on ornamentation. It is distinguished from other forms of written expression by its non-documentary nature. Despite the soldier poets that Fussell, Campbell, and Wood take as examples use of verisimilitude as a literary technique, these poets also use metered and rhymed verse forms which necessitate embellishment. And these embellishments are often what gives these poems their emotional resonance and persuasive power.

Take, for example, the opening stanza of Wilfred Owen's "Spring Offensive":

Halted against the shade of a last hill,
They fed, and, lying easy, were at ease
And, finding comfortable chests and knees
Carelessly slept. But many there stood still
To face the stark, blank sky beyond the ridge,
Knowing their feet had come to the end of the world.

Though this stanza creates the illusion of verisimilitude, this is largely accomplished by carefully deployed formal techniques. Alliteration (i.e. halted/hill; fed/finding; comfortable/chests/careless; stood/still/stark/sky), rhyme (i.e. hill/still; ease/knees), and caesuras all supplement the stanza's relaxed feeling, putting the reader "at ease" alongside the soldiers. Together with the specificity of the stanza's language (e.g. "chests and knees") these techniques immerse the reader in the poem's initial bucolic setting. This crafted formalism contrasts with the combat scene later in the poem, where language trips over itself ("like a cold gust thrilled the little word"), dashes hasten one line into the next, and enjambment supplements the feeling of falling off the edge of the world that Owen describes ("the green slopes / Chasmed and steepened sheer to infinite space.") "Spring Offensive" relies on careful formal control – not only to create an immersive and authentic-feeling reading experience, but also to elicit an emotional response to the poem's thematic turn. Owen's protest poetry is famously persuasive not because it tells true and unembellished stories, but because it uses clever and masterful embellishments to immerse the reader and to engage them emotionally. In other words, the limitlessness of "the projective abilities of the sympathetic apparatus" are exactly what Owen successfully leverages (Wood 1). This is not to say, however, that Owen's poems are not inspired and shaped by his real-life combat experience. There are markers of it everywhere: in the smells and sounds he

describes, in the futility he thematizes, in the cold he makes us feel, and, perhaps most significantly, in the way he describes his artistic process ("true Poets must be truthful") (Owen vii). If Owen's persuasive power comes from his masterful control of poetic forms, then his imagery, thematics, and raison d'être come from his combat experience.

As both Fussell and Wood intone, the experience of combat on the Western Front was qualitatively different from life on the home front and from combat experience in conflicts which occurred before the First World War technologized and globalized the war of attrition—a view amply evidenced by impacts upon survivors, which included widespread shellshock and physical disability. The impacts of first-hand experience play out in the trends of the war's poetry, as well: it is an unavoidable fact that more poetry about combat was written by combatants and more poetry about the home front was written by non-combatants. By extension, more combat poetry was written by men and more poetry about losing loved ones to a war overseas was written by women. One notable exception to this trend is the poetry of field hospital nurses, ambulance drivers, and other female front line aid workers. Mary Borden's "The Song of the Mud" and May Sinclair's "Field Ambulance in Retreat" are good examples of frequently anthologized poems about the front lines written by women. But these are trends, not credentials. This dissertation is concerned with compelling poetic representations of the First World War. Some of these compelling representations draw on lived experience of combat like Owen does, as is the case with David Jones's *In Parenthesis*. Others create the illusion of verisimilitude by combining the same thematic and formal elements that combatant poets do, like Margaret Sackville's "A Memory." Others still don't concern themselves with verisimilitude or with combat at all, and instead provide socio-historically significant accounts of the home front.

What all these poetic accounts share is that they are literary representations, often concerned first and foremost with persuasion. Like the verse of Fussell's cohort of soldier poets; their value has never been primarily in their veracity. Therefore, while the biographies of these authors can provide insight into their inspirations as well as to literary trends and lines of influence, the literary value of the poems examined in this dissertation derives from their persuasive abilities and level of formal accomplishment. Neither Wilfred Owen nor Jessie Pope (whom Owen lobbed his harshest criticism at) got at the truth of war. Both are famous because they wrote timely and successfully persuasive poetry which was well received by their intended audiences. Owen is the more famous poet not because he fought in the trenches, but because he wrote technically innovative and formally remarkable poetry. The same can be said of authors across varied demographics as this dissertation will show.

One of the shortcomings of combat Gnosticism that Campbell importantly identified is that it leads to the exclusion of women writers from serious critical consideration. Since the publication of "Combat Gnosticism" (and in part thanks to it) women's First World War poetry has become increasingly visible in anthologies and scholarship. Two competing approaches to the genre, related to the question of gnosis, remain in tension. The first approach – one which is derived from the earliest iterations of women's First World War poetry studies (discussed below) – legitimates this poetry in terms of its socio-historical significance. Wartime poetry by women, this take argues, broadens and nuances our understanding of the conflict by providing insight into situations like being at home while loved ones are away at war or dealing with wartime conditions like rationing. This socio-historical approach shows little concern with poetic quality and is interested in form only inasmuch as form can illuminate historical trends or offer insight into readership. The second approach calls for a recovery of war poetry by women because it is

technically adept and thematically rich. This approach tends towards embracing poetry by women in proximity to combat, like field nurses and ambulance workers, but includes civilian poetry as well. This approach can be found in recent anthologies of First World War poetry, which tend to include poetry by women like Margaret Postgate Cole, Charlotte Mew, Margaret Sackville, May Sinclair, May Weddenburn Cannan, and Vera Brittain.[9] Many of these women saw the war up close, and those that didn't stand out amidst the vast body of female non-combatant poets because they invented or successfully leveraged particularly timely themes or forms (for example, Sackville combines near-rhyme with shocking imagery; Cole represents the war's commodification and consumption of bodies). Both of these approaches subtly perpetuate gnosis, however. They share a bias towards writing what you know and fail to negotiate a space for the non-biographical. One of this dissertation's aims is to negotiate a space for poetry about the war front penned by women, which has previously been dismissed as inauthentic.

The history of women's First World War poetry scholarship begins with the decade following the publication of Fussell's study. Two books on women's Great War poetry were published during this period, each of which owed some of its success to Fussell's insistence upon the value of Great War poetry, but each of which also pushed back against Fussell's conviction that combatant poetry was a more valuable representation of war than poetry by noncombatants. These texts, Catherine Reilly's anthology *Scars Upon my Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (1981) and Nosheen Khan's survey *Women's Poetry of the First World War* (1988), were groundbreaking for the field. By collecting Great War poetry by nearly 80 different female poets in a single volume, Reilly demonstrated for the first time the prevalence of

[9] This is an incomplete list, pulled from recent First World War poetry anthologies like Marcus Clapham's *Poetry of the First World War* (MacMillan, 2017), Constance M. Ruzich's *International Poetry of the First World War* (Bloomsbury, 2020), and Tim Kendall's *Poetry of the First World War* (Oxford UP, 2013).

women's Great War poetry and provided future scholars a corpus to analyze. Khan's study broadened the field further: demonstrating that over 500 women published war poetry during the Great War, Khan provided an in-depth critical analysis both of individual authors and of sub-genres within the field. Her work was groundbreaking also because, for the first time, it stated explicitly the need for women's Great War poetry to be defined as a field and seriously studied. Khan points out that "none" of the scholarship of World War I poetry prior to her own publication "makes reference to women's writing on the subject" and asserts the importance of studying this corpus given that "war is a human event, not a happening which affects one age or sex rather than another" and that "the First World War is notable for having transformed woman's conventional role of spectator of a male event into one of active participant, at various levels, in the war machine" (2). Though these claims may seem like truisms to the contemporary scholar, they are worth reprinting here as a demonstration of how entirely absent the study of women's Great War poetry was from critical conversations thirty-five years ago and how well Khan's initial justification for the significance of the field holds up to today's scholarly trends.

Reilly and Khan's texts led to renewed interest in women's Great War poetry in the years that followed and uncovered vast bodies of work which had hitherto been uncollected and uncategorized. These texts defined the genre, and remain important touchstones for the study of women's Great War literature today. Due to the era in which their books were published, however, they fall short in that they are inappropriately homogenizing. It perhaps need not be said that a volume entitled *Scars Upon my Heart* focuses (too) heavily on the sentimental. Despite the fact that Khan's book is a literary analysis and gives more room to complex commentary, Khan's text too displays the same pitfalls, as Maria Geiger points out: "stereotypical wording [in Khan's monograph] such as 'hysteria' and 'melodramatic' to describe

women's writing has not helped the cause of women's WWI poetry for obvious reasons" (3). Both texts made it easy for future critics to view women's Great War poetry as something set apart -- thematically, aesthetically, and qualitatively -- from the canon already established as Great War Poetry, composed entirely of works by men. It was not until the turn of the 21st century that anthologists and critics made significant efforts to incorporate poetry by women into the existing canon of Trench Poetry. Though in the interim, several anthologies which include women's Great War poetry were published, they often "repeat[ed] both the poets and work from Reilly's selection," which, as Anne Varty notes, led to "repeat[ed] narrowing of representation of women's First World War poetry" rather than to a growing canon (41-42).

The centenary of the war between 2014-2018, and its immediate aftermath, brought with it a proliferation of scholarly output, including in the sub-field of women's First World War poetry. Important examples include Argha Banerjee's *Women's Poetry and the First World War* (2014), Vivien Newman's *Tumult and Tears: The Story of the Great War through the Eyes and Lives of its Women Poets* (2016), Emma Liggins and Elizabeth Nolan's *Women's Writing of the First World War* (2019), Michael Sharkey's *Many Such as She: Victorian Australian Women Poets of World War One* (2019), and Alice Kelly's *Commemorative Modernisms: Women Writers*, *Death, and the First World War* (2020).[10] Conversations continue about the importance and authenticity of women's First World War poetry, as well as about this sub-genre's relationship to the canon of soldier-poets. Related is the question of combat gnosis, which, as

[10] Another particularly important trend ushered in by the centenary and continued in its aftermath is increased interest in war poetry from beyond the British Isles. Works like Santanu Das's *India, Empire, and First World War Culture*: *Writings, Images, and Songs* (2018), Constance M. Ruzich's anthology *International Poetry of the First World War: An Anthology of Lost Voices* (2020), and Jane Potter's *A History of World War One Poetry* (2022) which sets out to consider "poetry in a truly global context" and "reaches beyond the British soldier-poet canon."

evidenced by Wood's recent monograph, cannot be settled without undermining the significance of at least one significant portion of the canon.

Despite important advancements in the field during the centenary, First World War poetry which embraces religious faith remains overlooked and understudied. This neglect results, in large part, both from the enduring hegemony of the soldier-poets' rejection of religion and because "modernist literary representations of the conflict tended to reduce religious belief to a superfluous relic, an archaic vestige of the old order that was no longer relevant in an age of industrialized slaughter" (Houlihan "Local Catholicism" 234). Scholarship which *does* involve religion tends to focus on Protestantism, given poets like Wilfred Owen's Protestant backgrounds and the cultural influence of the Church of England.[11] Even studies beyond the realm of poetry, like religious histories "freely admit that the everyday experience of Catholics during the Great War remains a neglected historical episode" (Houlihan "Local Catholicism" 235). Catholic poetry of the First World War, when discussed in scholarship, tends to come up only in single-author studies. For example, studies of both Margaret Sackville and David Jones touch on these poets' Catholicism and its significance to their literary projects, but Catholic First World War poetry has not been studied as a body of work. This dissertation analyzes Catholic First World War poetry as a field in itself for the first time and negotiates its space within discourses surrounding combat Gnosticism and women's First World War poetry.

Though there are no large-scale studies of Catholic First World War poetry, there has been some recent public interest in the relationship between First World War poetry and Catholicism. In 2018, for example, Margaret Sackville – on whom the first chapter of this

[11] For example, Nosheen Khan's book on women's First World War poetry, discussed above, has an entire chapter on religion but does not mention Catholicism at all. Likewise, histories of the Church of England during the war years (of which there are many) often incorporate mentions of the war poets, like Alan Wilkinson's *The Church of England and the First World War* (2015) which discusses Owen and Sassoon.

dissertation focuses – was given a plaque in Edinburgh for her contributions to First World War poetry by the National Commemorative Plaque Scheme in Scotland ("Plaques to Commemorate WWI Writers"). This was Sackville's first public recognition for her war poetry. During the war's centenary, David Jones's visual art, much of which heavily features biblical imagery, was included in multiple exhibitions and, receiving international recognition in a New York Times piece, where his inscriptions were referred to as "among the most remarkable" of his works then on display at Pallant House England, being "in a literal sense 'the Word made flesh'" (Morris, n.p.). These examples confirm interest in Jones not only as a painter and engraver, but as a *Catholic* painter and engraver. In 2021, Terence Davies' film *Benediction*, which traces Siegfried Sassoon's life and conversion to Catholicism, was released in the United Kingdom. Responding to this budding public interest, this dissertation considers how these and other poets represented the war using religious language, motifs, and references.

My project begins with a chapter on the pacifist poet Margaret Sackville. Despite being largely unknown as a war poet, Sackville published one of the earliest volumes of protest poetry in 1916, titled *Pageant of War*. This volume features Sackville's Catholic faith heavily and uses her religious values to argue for pacifism. My first chapter, "'Our Mutual Dead': Sound and Sense in Margaret Sackville's *Pageant of War*" takes a formalist approach to analyzing *Pageant of War*, placing special emphasis on the poems "Nostra Culpa," "A Memory," and "Reconciliation." I argue two points: first, that Sackville's work must be read within the context of the volume, identifying examples of misreadings arising from analyzing these poems as standalone pieces. Second, I argue that Sackville should be considered a major war poet given her early use of formal elements including near-rhyme and shocking imagery to supplement her

protest poetry. Her work, I conclude, shows that noncombatant poets like Sackville used themes and formal techniques usually credited to the soldier poets as early as 1916.

My second chapter studies simile and likeness in David Jones's modernist war epic *In Parenthesis*. After providing an overview of Jones's uses of the simile in his poem and identifying how these comparisons connect the poem with external referents, some of which involve Jones's Catholic faith, I home in on two special usages: the epic simile and the simile as a clarifying device in Part 7 (the section that recounts the battle at Mametz Wood on the first day of the Somme.) Through my reading of Jones's use of epic simile, I argue that *In Parenthesis* is indebted to epic poems including *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid*, but also to the Christian epic *Paradise Lost.* Jones reworks the epic simile, I argue, to introduce irony into his representation of modernized warfare. My reading of similes in Part 7 supports an argument that a stylistic shift occurs at the beginning of Part 7 and that Jones's uses of figurative language, which in the first six parts of the poem contributed to the density and allusiveness of the poem, now serve to make the conditions of combat more knowable and more visceral to readers. Overall, I maintain, Jones's varied usages of the simile complement other distinctly modernist blendings of the high and low, which have not previously been studied in relation to figurative language.

My third chapter studies depictions of the Catholic eucharist in First World War poetry. I close-read poems from a variety of authors, both Catholic and non-Catholic, including Sackville and Jones but also Katherine Mansfield, Robert Graves, and Wilfred Owen. Comparing uses of transubstantiation as a metaphor for the war effort's consumption of soldiers in these poems, I argue that the widespread use of the transubstantiation metaphor confirms that knowledge of specifically Catholic theological concepts was widely available to authors. This metaphor's repetition across varied wartime literary contexts, I argue, shows that Catholicism was highly

visible to authors of the period, and this helps explain its popularity amongst authors in the following decade.

Overall, "Catholic Poets of the First World War" is significant for three reasons. The first has to do with the widespread nature of Catholicism during the war. As this introduction has outlined, Catholicism was one of the most common religions across Europe at the outset of the war and was thus a major framework for understanding the conflict. It was also a religion that was represented disproportionately in the British Empire's armed forces, and "the early stages of the war gave rise to concentrations of Catholics never seen before (or since) in the history of the British Army" (Snape 85). Catholics played a major role in the conflict on both sides, and instead of destroying religious faith amongst Catholics, the war led to conversions, with "breezy estimates count[ing] the number of war-related converts in the tens of thousands" (Snape 97). Catholics were involved in all facets of the war: fighting for both sides, spearheading humanitarian efforts, successfully encouraging others to convert, advocating pacifism, advocating war, navigating fear and grief. Poetry about the war which records these experiences is plentiful, and its recovery as a canon sheds clarifying light on how one of the predominant religions of the era was practiced during the war.

The second reason for this dissertation's significance has to do with influence, both cultural and literary. Each chapter touches on influence in some form. The first discusses Catholic poet Margaret Sackville's likely influence on Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon. The second features a poet whose wartime experience contributed importantly to his conversion to Catholicism, and who used significant motifs, allusions and language derived from Catholicism in works now recognized as modernist masterpieces. The third argues that the widespread use of metaphors related to transubstantiation demonstrates the cultural resonance of Catholicism

beyond religious spheres. The influences I recover shed light on a broader trend towards Catholicism amongst British authors, with converts including Siegfried Sassoon, Ford Madox Ford, Evelyn Waugh, G.K. Chesterton, and Graham Greene – as well as T.S. Eliot's self-description as an "Anglo-Catholic." While some of these authors, including those discussed in this dissertation, engaged Catholicism from the perspective of pacifism, it is also the case that there was a close relationship between Catholicism in England and fascism in the interwar period, as is demonstrated by Ulrike Ehret in his book *Church, Nation, and Race: Catholics and Antisemitism in Germany and England, 1918-45* (2013). Authors like Eliot echoed "the antisemitism prevalent at the time" in their writings and others, like Chesterton, were openly supportive of Italian fascism (15, 145). This dissertation looks to an earlier moment – 1914-1918 – and establishes a through-line between wartime Catholic pacifism and these varied iterations of interwar Catholicism amongst writers in England.

This dissertation also has bearing upon First World War poetry pedagogy. Across the British Isles and parts of Europe, First World War poetry remains a standard part of curriculum. Due to the canonical hegemony of agnostic, officer-class poets, the war is often taught as a faith-destroying event. Catholic poetry, while it was heavily read, remains largely overlooked. Its future inclusion in curriculum can enable more thorough and complex conversations about the intersections between faith, class, gender, and nationality, since Catholic authors were often women or enlisted men, especially from Ireland. The first step towards enriching and nuancing the canon in this way is to recognize the socio-historical, literary, and cultural significance of Catholic First World War poetry as a body of work. I undertake this study with the goal of recovering a canon of faith-informed poetry which, if taught alongside the agnostic poetry of the

best-known soldier-poets, can lead to a richer understanding of thought during the First World War.

CHAPTER II:

"OUR MUTUAL DEAD": SOUND AND SENSE IN MARGARET SACKVILLE'S PAGEANT OF WAR

I. Margaret Sackville, War Poet

Lady Margaret Sackville (1881-1963) was a London-born poet of Scottish and English heritage. A cousin of Vita Sackville-West, she is perhaps best known for her extended affair with Ramsay McDonald, whom she refused to marry because he did not share her Catholic faith. She published 39 volumes of poetry between 1900 and 1960, many of which were for children. She also became the first president of Scottish PEN International, and given her influence on the Scottish poetry community, her work has remained most popular in Scotland. Despite her support for her contemporaries, she was outwardly critical of modernism, and generally adhered to fixed patterns of meter and rhyme in her own work. Yet, the content she presented in her later poems was comparable to that of writers usually classed as modernist. Categorizing Sackville as modernist, anti-modernist, or simply "not modernist" is therefore difficult. For the purposes of this chapter, however, it is most important to understand that she was aware of and responding to the same movement as her contemporaries were.

This chapter focuses on Sackville's best known volume, *Pageant of War* (1916). Breaking away from her previous subject matter and target audience, this volume responds to the events of the first two years of World War I and presents a resolutely anti-war message. From the outset of the war, Sackville was involved in the peace movement. She was a member of the Union of Democratic Control and participated in women's societies which brought her into personal contact with Belgian refugees. In 1915, her brother was killed in the war. Her 1916 volume reflects her pacifist convictions, her sympathy for (especially Belgian Catholic) refugees,

and her view of complicit civilians as responsible for the death of soldiers. Her verse includes explicit statements of blame directed at readers and oscillates between poems which describe the conditions of combat or refugee status with ones which appeal directly to her peers on a moral level. Sackville frequently references her Catholic faith and employs imagery, figures of speech, and thematics from scripture and Catholic prayer in her verse. Unlike other World War I poets who figure the war as holy, she consistently engages the moral teachings of her religion to argue for pacifism while emphasizing human responsibility in the war effort.

After *Pageant of War*'s publication, Sackville met Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon during their time at Craiglockhart War Hospital. Relatively little is known of her relationship with these poets, but it is clear that she exchanged poetry with them during arguably the most formative period of their writing careers. Of Sackville's relationship with these poets, three facts are widely available. First, Sassoon's poem "Joy Bells" was originally written on Sackville's personal writing paper ("Joy Bells"). This indicates that the exchange of materials between Sackville and Sassoon went beyond simply sharing published work. Second, both Sassoon and Owen received and read copies of *Pageant of War*, and "a copy was found in Wilfred Owen's personal library after his death" (Khan 31, Geiger 8). Third, these authors' reception of Sackville's war poetry was mixed: in surviving letters, Sassoon declared her poems "fairly rotten" whereas Owen "found some of them fairly fine" (Letter from Sassoon to Robbie Ross, 3 October 1917; Letter from Owen to his mother, 2 October 1917). Based upon this evidence and readings of Sackville's poems against poems by Sassoon and Owen, several critics have suggested the direct influence of Sackville upon these poets. Nosheen Khan points out that the lines "Shell and shrapnel, gas and flame, / Their burial service were" from Sackville's poem "The Dead" "are reminiscent of the imagery of 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' which was written

at Craiglockhart" (31). Maria Geiger asserts that Sackville "very well might have influenced both Sassoon and Owen" (8). This information about Sackville's relationship with and possible influence on Sassoon and Owen is important to note because it has been used to argue for the significance of Sackville's work to the canon of Trench Poetry recognized today. However, within the context of this chapter's argument, whether or not Sackville directly influenced these poets is beside the point. Rather than qualify Sackville's work as important because of its influence, I argue that *Pageant of War* is important because it expressed anti-war sentiments through verse in innovative and remarkable ways. Whether or not Sassoon and Owen borrowed from Sackville's work, Sackville was writing valuable pacifist poetry before the Trench Poets were. *Pageant of War* is independently significant, and to argue for its value based upon its relationship to canonical works would be to perpetuate a Trench Poet-centric canon.

Though Sackville's work shouldn't be valued based upon its influence upon the Trench Poets, it is necessary to compare the popularity of Sackville's work to that of other popular Great War authors to address *Pageant of War's* historical significance. Sackville's war poems were initially poorly received, but in the years following the war's resolution, her work gained in popularity. Prior to her volume's publication, she had already published war poetry in *The Nation*, *Everyman*, *The Sphere*, *Form*, and *The Times*, which she compiled for *Pageant of War*. When her volume came out, it struggled to gain popularity because "it was published at a time when British nationalism was booming" (Geiger 8). However, in the years following the armistice in 1918, her war poetry was anthologized alongside major male authors. Four of her war poems were included in Bertam Lloyd's *Poems Written During the Great War 1914-1918* (1918), and were printed "cheek by jowl with work by Siegfried Sassoon" (Varty 38). Two poems by Sackville -- one of which is from *Pageant of War* -- were featured in W Kean

Seymour's *A Miscellany of Poetry* (1919).[12] Likewise, Sterling Andrus Leonard's *Poems of the War and the Peace* (1921) printed Sackville's poem "Quo Vaditis?" alongside other war poetry popular at the time including Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est," Sassoon's "Attack," and Rupert Brooke's "The Soldier." This final example of anthologization is particularly notable because Sackville's poem is featured in the section entitled "Battle." By choosing to include her in this section, Leonard authorizes Sackville not just as a war poet, but also as a meaningful commentator on combat -- with which she did not have first hand experience, and which female poets have been criticized in contemporary scholarship for attempting to represent (Geiger 6). The reception of Sackville's poems during and immediately after the war is enlightening because it demonstrates that the divide between Trench Poetry and noncombatant poetry evidenced in later anthologies and scholarship was a post-war construct, if one enabled by the rhetoric of poets like Owen and Sassoon.

Over the past forty years, Margaret Sackville has been anthologized more frequently than other female Great War poets, which has led to much-needed visibility for her work but has also operated reductively. Her work was included in both Catherine Reilly's anthology *Scars Upon my Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (1981) and Nosheen Khan's survey *Women's Poetry of the First World War* (1988). These texts led to renewed interest in women's Great War poetry in the years which followed and uncovered vast bodies of work which had hitherto been uncollected and uncategorized. Subsequent anthologies drew upon these authors' selections, leading to the three poems I treat in this chapter -- "Nostra Culpa," "A Memory," and "Reconciliation" -- becoming relatively common in anthologies of Great War

[12] This anthology also includes a selection of poems by F. V. Branford, who is featured in this dissertation's next chapter.

poetry. By far the most frequently anthologized poem of Sackville's is "Nostra Culpa" ("Our Fault") which blames women for their silent complicity with the war effort.

"Nostra Culpa" is a valuable poem because it offers a damning portrait of civilians years before Owen and Sassoon's accusatory lyrics. But it also paints only a partial picture of Sackville's ethos, style, and command of formal elements. *Pageant of War* displays a strong and sustained commitment to Catholicism while representing varied perspectives (including those of the combatant, the refugee, and the civilian), and is located at both the Western Front and the "home front." Anthologizing "Nostra Culpa" alone strips away from *Pageant of War* the very elements which distinguish the volume from other women's Great War poetry, because this poem takes place on the "home front" and does not feature Sackville's Catholicism. The frequency with which "Nostra Culpa" is anthologized compared to Sackville's other war poems epitomizes the problem with how the distinction between the war front and the "home front" has been treated. In anthologies including "Nostra Culpa" alone, Sackville appears to be a secular writer who treats women's lived experience, when in fact she is a Catholic writer who occupies the perspectives of various people whom the war affects. Sackville is a more nuanced writer than her anthologized work leads readers to believe.

Despite Sackville having published more than 40 volumes of poetry during her lifetime, *Pageant of War* is the only volume which has received significant scholarly attention. Her other work has been dismissed as "'flowery' and too old-fashioned to be palatable to us today" (Scottish Poetry Library). However, her literary career beyond *Pageant of War* is worth noting because her other work -- which is, admittedly, topically and formally less interesting -- is significantly different from her war poetry. Overall, her other work was "firmly rooted in the traditional lyric style" and was often aimed at children (Scottish Poetry Library). Because

Sackville had a massive oeuvre of mixed quality, she did not receive the kind of recognition that some female poets contemporary to her did during their lifetimes. *Pageant of War* departs dramatically from Sackville's previous subject matter and evidences a break from the "traditional lyric style" of Sackville's other poetry. In representing war, it is mature, innovative, and formally complex. Sackville's less remarkable poetry must not prevent this volume from receiving the critical attention it deserves.

Relatively little secondary scholarship about *Pageant of War* exists, but interest in Sackville's war poetry has increased over the past decade. Four notable studies which treat Sackville's war poetry have been published during this period: Brian Murdoch's "For Empire, England's Boys, and the Pageant of War: Women's War Poetry in the Year of the Somme" (2009), Maria Geiger's "No Trench Required: Validating the Voices of Female Poets of WWI" (2015), Anne Varty's "Women's Poetry in First World War Anthologies and Two Collections of 1916" (2017), and Bruna Bianchi's "Versi Sovversivi: Le Poetesse Pacifiste della Grande Guerra" ("Subversive Verse: The Pacifist Female Poets of the Great War") (2018). None of these studies focus on Sackville alone; rather, each discusses the work of a few notable female Great War poets. These sources are of mixed quality, but they are all significant to this study inasmuch as they have each asserted the importance of Margaret Sackville studies to First World War scholarship. In distinguishing women's poetry which treats lived experience from women's poetry about combat, Geiger makes room for investigation of the value of poetry written from "abstract trenches" (5). Murdoch and Varty likewise treat the politics of Sackville's publication history, laying important groundwork for the study of Sackville's influence on other authors around the time she was writing and treating the politics of anthologization. Bianchi, of the four, spends the most time close reading Sackville's work and approaches *Pageant of War* most

holistically, making reference to a number of Sackville poems to illuminate thematic connections across the volume and to argue that like all female WWI poets, Sackville represented war as a broadly human phenomenon (55). Despite these valuable reappraisals of Sackville's work, sustained studies of Sackville which assert her importance as an author -- rather than her importance as an example of a *kind* of author writing during WWI -- remain absent from published scholarship. This chapter aims to fill this gap, arguing for the unconditional importance of Sackville's work to the WWI canon. Sackville isn't worth rereading because she is an author of good women's poetry or an author of good Catholic poetry -- but because she is a good author. This chapter presents the first single-author study of Margaret Sackville's war poetry in aim of distinguishing Sackville as an important WWI author and moving the conversation about *Pageant of War* away from the sphere of "women's WWI poetry" and into the sphere of "WWI poetry."

This chapter makes two arguments about the way that *Pageant of War* should be treated contemporarily. The first is that Margaret Sackville should be recognized as a major author of WWI. The second is that Sackville's Catholicism and her representations of various wartime perspectives are integral to *Pageant of War*, so secondary scholarship and anthologies which treat Sackville must also treat these aspects of her work. This chapter thus intervenes in the broad category of WWI scholarship, claiming that the work of an underread author should be recovered and included in the canon, as well as in the narrower category of Margaret Sackville scholarship, asserting that formal elements, like use of near-rhyme and shocking imagery, which have been downplayed in anthology selection and secondary criticism are what make Sackville's work particularly valuable.

Pageant of War should be viewed as a major work of WWI literature because it was groundbreaking. It serves as the first identifiable example of an English language volume-length anti-war poetry publication about World War I. Published before any of the Trench Poetry now viewed as canon, Sackville was a pioneer of pacifist poetry and should be credited as such. Because of her social position and gender, she was able to express her pacifism in verse before it was possible for combatant poets to do so (Murdoch 37). Her work demonstrates that thematic and formal elements usually credited to the Trench Poets were available to earlier authors. Innovations usually credited to later, combatant poets include the assignment of culpability to civilians, use of near-rhyme to supplement depictions of the war's destruction, heavy use of assonance, incorporation of shocking imagery, designation of culpability to civilian, and attention to the lasting physical and psychological impacts of war upon survivors. Moreover, Sackville applies these elements to a broader range of subjects than do the Trench Poets, writing war as fundamentally changing combatants, non-combatants, and refugees alike. Credit for these innovative modes of writing is due, at least in part, to Sackville, and her work should be more widely read and should feature prominently in First World War anthologies and literary histories.

Anthologies and Sackville scholarship should also include poems which represent the war front. Through readings of poems from *Pageant of War*, this chapter shows that Sackville was capable of meaningfully representing combat despite not having personal experience on the war front. Sackville's poetry set on the front is masterfully written and has implications for the study of First World War history, as well. Key to understanding women's lived experience during the First World War is recovering the modes of imagining and representing combat available to them, as this illuminates how combat was conceptualized from the home front. My readings show that the way Sackville imagined and represented combat anticipated key ways in

which canonical combatant poets imagined and represented it – in both form and content. Sackville's war poetry demonstrates that skilled poets were capable of representing and protesting warfare regardless of their status as combatant or non-combatant.

In the pages which follow, I focus on three poems from *Pageant of War*: "Nostra Culpa," "A Memory," and "Reconciliation." My analysis of "Nostra Culpa" responds to the critics discussed above, focusing on the poem's framing, both in the initial stanza and within the volume more broadly. Re-situating "Nostra Culpa" within the context of the volume and the historical moment when it was published, reveals that its commentary upon complicity and violence is more complex than previous scholars have recognized. At the same time, I argue that what the poem evidences in thematic complexity, it lacks in formal complexity. My close readings of "A Memory" and "Reconciliation" demonstrate that these poems are as thematically interesting as "Nostra Culpa," but also display a command of formal elements that "Nostra Culpa" does not. Indeed, these poems deploy thematic and formal elements which, when located in verse by the Trench Poets, have been used to lionize them and their verse and establish the canon of World War I poetry, especially the use of assonance and off-rhyme, incorporation of shocking imagery, assignment of culpability to civilian readers, and attention to the lasting physical and psychological impacts of war upon survivors. Sackville applies these elements when treating a broader range of individuals impacted by the war than do the Trench Poets, depicting war as fundamentally changing combatants, noncombatants, and refugees alike. Rather than distinguishing the Trench Poets from other WWI authors, I argue that credit for these innovative modes of writing is due, at least in part, to Sackville, and thus that her work should be more widely read and studied and featured prominently in WWI anthologies and literary histories.

I have selected these specific poems not only because they represent a breadth of wartime perspectives, but also because they are Sackville's most frequently anthologized war poems. In rereading Sackville poems which have received the most (though still not much) attention, I aim not to participate in forming a canon which excludes the other poems in *Pageant of War*. Rather, I argue that even this narrow selection of poems most widely available to readers of WWI poetry anthologies displays an impressive command of formal elements and an enlightening breadth of wartime perspectives. Rather than treating these poems in passing as comparators to other women's WWI poetry as other critics have, I study them as independently important poetic artifacts. At the same time, I emphasize their relationship to other poems in *Pageant of War*, maintaining that Sackville's representation of war is best understood through engagement with the volume as a whole: "Nostra Culpa" provides an incomplete picture of Sackville's views of women's culpability; accounts of "A Memory" are incomplete without analysis of its paired poem, "Refugees"; the future-tense of "Reconciliation" is more poignant when read alongside Sackville's present-tense poems about women's experience of war. I demonstrate in sum the aesthetic and historical value of these poems as works of WWI literature and the necessity and benefits of reading practices which treat Sackville's volume holistically.

II. "Nostra Culpa"

"Nostra Culpa" is an important poem because it presents a direct, accusatory, and unapologetic condemnation of women's complicity with the war effort at a time when pro-war rhetoric was predominant. "Nostra Culpa" has received more attention than any of Sackville's other works. It is included in several WWI poetry anthologies and has been analyzed – sometimes at length – by each of the scholars referenced in this chapter's introduction. Brian Murdoch goes so far as to term it "the archetypal anti-war poem by a woman," a comment which is both dismissive and

demonstrably false (41). Beyond implying that the poem is somehow lesser because of its author's gender, Murdoch's comment seems to miss that Sackville's insistence on shared responsibility for the war amongst the public was a bold and subversive assertion in 1916. Secondary scholarship on "Nostra Culpa" largely treats the poem's content rather than its form, arguably because it is less formally complex than other war poems, adhering to a strict stanza pattern and rhyme scheme and evidencing few examples of evocative syntax. The poem's reputation instead stems from its indictment of women's complicity in the war effort. Sackville's depiction of women, which appears misogynistic by today's standards, and understandably has challenged scholars who are approaching women's Great War poetry through a feminist lens. It is difficult to simultaneously call for the recovery of a poem which depicts women's issues and to defend said poem when it calls women "harlots" and "murderers" (12, 30). This problem has led to sustained critical conversation about "Nostra Culpa."[13] In this conversation, Maria Geiger's response to Nosheen Khan's claim that "Sackville's indictment of women needs to be approached as warily as the trench poet's jaundiced view of them" is most productive for my account (Khan 86). Geiger identifies how Sackville is "not 'indicting' only women" but rather putting "both women *and* men under scrutiny" by describing the ways in which men have directly incited the war effort in contrast to the way women have indirectly incited it (9, emphasis Geiger's). I join the conversation about the representation of women in "Nostra Culpa" by considering the poem's framing and context.

[13] Of the scholars mentioned in the chapter's introduction, Murdoch and Varty's articles maintain that Sackville's condemnation of women is warranted. Bianchi identifies how women's complicity in the poem is contingent upon men. She shows that Sackville doesn't accuse women of agreeing with the war effort, but "del reato di acquiescenza alla visione patriarcale della vita" ("of the crime of acquiescence to the patriarchal vision of life") (43, translation mine).

I argue three key points. First, "Nostra Culpa" includes everyone in its indictment of violence. While focused on women's complicity, its condemnation is not limited to a specific gender or social position (such as the mother of a combatant). Rather than blame women *and* put men "under scrutiny" for different actions at different moments in the poem, Sackville begins the poem condemning all those complicit with the war effort before equating violence enacted by women to violence enacted by men (Geiger 9). Her analysis and criticism are broader than previous critics have recognized. Second, the message of "Nostra Culpa" seems similar to "the trench poet's jaundiced view" of women only when read outside of the broader context of *Pageant of War* (Khan 86). While the poem's description of women's complicity appears unsympathetic and reductive when read alone, when read in the context of the volume it operates as part of a complex commentary upon the relationship between guilt, suffering, and victimhood. Together, these points confirm "Nostra Culpa" is a less misogynistic poem than other scholars claim. Nonetheless, we should not overlook the misogyny that is certainly present in "Nostra Culpa." The poem is remarkable, in part, because it condemned women at a time when jingoism was booming**,** and when most poetry for and about women was primarily sympathetic. Sackville's direct and unapologetic condemnation of women was, if not comfortably feminist, boldly subversive, and must be recognized as such in arguments for including this poem in canon.

"Nostra Culpa" ascribes responsibility to its readers by use of collective voice. The poem repeatedly emphasizes this voice, underscoring the broadly human impulse towards going along with the status quo, while at the same time uncomfortably situating readers—and speaker—within a group of culpable individuals. This collective voice is articulated through a series of heroic couplets, a form traditionally used in epic and narrative poetry. By engaging this form,

Sackville sets up her poem as a narrative in itself, tracing an arc between the value of life "learned at birth" and the poem's conclusion, in which those the collective narrator represents find themselves to be takers of life. At the same time, she elevates these speakers' actions to epic proportions. The words "we" or "our" appear in the first line of each stanza, repeatedly reminding readers that the war effort requires collective justification. In her opening lines, Sackville speaks to a piece of knowledge shared by all humans: "We knew, this thing at least we knew, – the worth / Of life: this was our secret learned at birth." (1-2) By terming the "worth of life" a "secret," Sackville demonstrates how individualism can be destructive. Every person knows this "secret," so it is not really a secret at all. But when it is treated as an individual piece of knowledge rather than as a shared societal value, the "worth of life" can be overshadowed by other values (1-2). Too, Sackville makes the cause-and-effect of keeping this piece of knowledge to ourselves blatant: "We spoke not, so men died." (4) The economy of this statement, as well as its enclosure between two full stops, make this line stand out in a stanza mostly divided by commas. Speech, as my readings of "A Memory" and "Reconciliation" will demonstrate, is a central theme in *Pageant of War*.[14] Here, the power to speak out against the war effort is both past and present: Sackville at once maintains that past-tense failure to speak led to death while, through her poem, speaking out against the war in the present tense. Speech is powerful, in the context of "Nostra Culpa," because it connects individuals who possess shared knowledge. It has the power to turn each person's "secret" into a shared value. By assuming the position of collective speech ("we"), Sackville communicates that because speech was not used to condemn the war effort, it must now be used to take responsibility for it. Making her reader a speaker in the poem, she forces a position of responsibility.

[14] Speech is presented as a form of power that can be mobilized ethically or unethically. The ability to speak is at the same time depicted as an integral part of the self which can be interfered with by the war.

The poem assigns culpability to all readers before its critique becomes gendered. The first five lines of the poem speak to broadly human concerns and knowledge. "We," here, refers to all readers: all had the responsibility to speak out against the war, and all failed to prevent the war. Not until the stanza's final line does the poem's address women alone: "Fearing that men should praise us less, we smiled" (6). The act of smiling, here, is juxtaposed against speech, setting up an active vs. passive construct which surfaces throughout the poem. In the second stanza, (women) following is juxtaposed against (men) leading, and in the third, active violence is contrasted with sleeping. Women are blamed for their passivity in response to men's speech and actions. Yet, in "Nostra Culpa"'s final stanza, these apparently passive acts become tangible acts of violence:

> Reap we with pride the harvest! it was sown
> By our own toil. Rejoice! it is our own.
> This is the flesh we might have saved – our hands,
> *Our* hands prepared these blood-drenched, dreadful lands.
> What shall we plead? That we were deaf and blind?
> We mothers and we murderers of mankind. (25-30, emphasis Sackville's)

Here, staying silent becomes "toil." The speaker (and, by extension, the reader) are implicated physically, with blood on our hands. The impact of inaction is made uncomfortably tangible: where earlier in the poem Sackville describes war in equivocal language, this fleshly imagery compels readers to consider the impact of warfare upon bodies. These lines also revisit the theme of communication ("What shall we plead? That we were deaf and blind?"). And by describing, again, bodily qualities (lack of hearing and sight) – Sackville relates communication to the body. By relating silence to physicality, this stanza places women in the same category as men: as

agents of tangible violence in the war effort. Though "Nostra Culpa" moves from a broad indictment of humans to an indictment of women, Sackville writes all action or inaction which allows warfare as achieving the same ends. To read "Nostra Culpa" as a criticism of women alone ignores Sackville's explicit condemnation of all violence, both in the poem's first stanza and in its comparison of inaction to physical violence.

When read within the context of *Pageant of War*, the rhetoric of "Nostra Culpa" appears less sexist than when the poem is read as a standalone piece. In other poems in *Pageant of War*, Sackville condemns other complicit groups, especially other Catholics who do not actively protest the war effort.[15] When read together, these poems demonstrate that Sackville indicts not a specific gender but all ideological positions which justify warfare. Moreover, "Nostra Culpa" does *not* criticize all women, but rather women who choose silence over pacifist activism. Not only is "Nostra Culpa" consistent with Sackville's accusations against other complicit groups, but the poem's collective voice is standard within the context of the volume. If the power of "Nostra Culpa"'s rhetoric derives from its ability to place the reader in the same position as the speaker to elicit feelings of guilt, then "The Challenge" and "Pax Ventura" do as well.

In other poems, the collective voice is mobilized to seek empathy for victims of the war effort, especially women.[16] Of the nineteen poems in *Pageant of War*, fourteen use the collective perspective ("we" or "our") to require readers to imagine themselves alongside the speaker.

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[15] Examples include "The Challenge" which criticizes military officers, while again operating through the second-person perspective of "we"; "To One Who Denies the Possibility of a Permanent Peace," which condemns warmongers; "Pax Ventura," which depicts in second-person the belief that peace can come only through war; "On the Pope's Manifesto," which contrasts traditional Catholic values with Catholicism being used to justify the war as holy; and "The Pageant of War," which criticizes those who seek financial gain from the war, while also briefly introducing many of the indictments listed above.

[16] In "Victory," the grief of mothers who have lost sons is depicted via collective speech about loss. "Peacemakers," presents a second-person account of women participating in pacifist activism. "Refugees" uses the collective voice to depict the impacts of warfare upon refugees. "Reconciliation," the poem in *Pageant of War* most explicitly sympathetic towards women, depicts healing through collective speech, again in the second person.

What this strategy means to elicit varies: sometimes, it provokes feelings of guilt; others, empathy for victims of war; others still, catharsis. Women in *Pageant of War* do not figure simply as passive agents of violence in the war effort as they appear when "Nostra Culpa" is read alone and reductively; rather, they appear active participants in a complex phenomenon. Influence is bi-directional: they impact the war and the war impacts them. Like other groups Sackville portrays, they are at once victims and responsible parties.

Though the message of "Nostra Culpa" isn't a reductive condemnation of all women, as I have argued, its rhetoric *does* damn *certain* women. Beyond her use of negative gendered language like "harlots," Sackville depicts women's nature in unflattering terms. Women appear as weak and passive, and their passivity is contrasted against and condemned alongside men's *act*ivity. Meek followers, the women of "Nostra Culpa" are the counterpoint in "Nostra Culpa" to men's (too) strong leadership. Yet Sackville attacks passive women in "Nostra Culpa" to spur her reader into activism, the possible results of which are portrayed in "The Peacemakers," where the words of noble pacifist protesters have the power of the sword.[17]

"Nostra Culpa" has rightly gained popularity due to its shocking and subversive rhetoric, but it isn't Sackville's most interesting work in *Pageant of War*. In the following sections, I provide close readings of two poems which better reflect the complex relationship the volume portrays between culpability and victimhood and which are formally remarkable: "A Memory," and "Reconciliation." While "Nostra Culpa" earns the highly regard critics accord it for the shock value of its rhetoric and thematics, "A Memory" and "Reconciliation" deserves comparable admiration. Sackville, in her introduction to *A Book of Verse by Living Women* (1910), explains that "To some, women's poetry is a glass reflecting nothing but themselves"

[17] "We do not fight with swords, / Red iron, explosive fire, . . . We slay you with a thought; We wound you with a word" ("The Peacemakers" 1-14).

(xii). As the following sections argue, "A Memory" and "Reconciliation" demonstrate Sackville's ability to use her verse to speak to concerns beyond those of her own gender.

III. "A Memory"

Sackville's poem "A Memory" should be considered an important contribution to the canon of Great War poetry because it compellingly depicts warfare's impact upon foreign civilians by innovative use of formal elements and shocking imagery. "A Memory" is the only commonly anthologized poem of Sackville's set on the front, despite a significant portion of the poems in *Pageant of War* taking place there. Though the poem has been treated briefly in secondary scholarship, including by Murdoch, Vartry, and Geiger, none of them provide an extended close reading of the poem. Instead, they identify it as an important artifact given "the economy of its imagery" and praise its use of "voiced/unvoiced near-rhymes" (Murdoch 42). Below, I analyze how Sackville deploys these elements in tandem with other formal techniques to represent the destruction caused by warfare. Sackville presents war as an event which distorts perception and leads victims to appeal to God to process that which can't be perceived or understood via the five senses. Despite the poem's religious lens, Sackville ultimately places the responsibility of rectifying what has been fragmented by the war upon surviving humans, once again evoking a sense of responsibility in readers.

"A Memory" also demonstrates the ability of noncombatant authors to compellingly communicate the conditions of warfare to readers despite continued scholarly dismissal of noncombatant authors who write about the front. Poems like "A Memory" are usually dismissed by scholars because they lack "authenticity" (Geiger 6). Such "imposter poems" are deemed "quite unbelievable" because they do not draw upon first-hand experience of combat (Geiger 6-7). Despite this critical consensus, scholars of the soldier poets have long acknowledged that

Trench Lyrics -- the war poetry frequently upheld as "authentic" -- are not in fact "straight reportage" (Campbell 213). James Campbell points out that the most canonical examples of Great War poetry (he cites Owen's "Strange Meeting" and "Dulce et Decorum Est") are not "direct representation[s] of warfare" but rather literary representations of warfare's impacts upon combatants – if these soldier poets often created the illusion of reportage (213). By its very nature, verse form is incompatible with the communication of stripped down facts; rather, it relies on its author to embellish, reconstruct, and stylize subject matter so as to fit it into the constructs of meter, stanza, and line. While the Trench Poets inarguably drew compellingly upon their lived experience of combat, their poetry earns its fame *because* it prioritizes aesthetics and evoking emotion over "truthful" documentation. War poetry must not be judged based upon its author's ability to get at the "truth of war." If the truth of war is available, it cannot be found in poetry. Therefore, poetry about combat must be valued based upon its ability to immerse its reader in the imagined situation of warfare. "A Memory" is a poem that does just exactly that.

"A Memory" immerses its reader through use of sensory stimuli. The first stanza presents an interplay between the presence and absence of sound. The first line, "There was no sound at all, no crying in the village," introduces readers to the eerie feeling of silence which persists throughout the poem, before becoming modified by the second line: "Nothing you would count as sound, that is, after the shells;" (1-2). The idea that nothing can be registered as sound after a shelling serves three purposes. First, it lends the poem a temporal dimension: this scene is occurring before the village has had time to process the shelling, while the impact is still fresh. Second, it presents the idea that war is capable of impacting and transforming modes of perception, communicating the horror of a shelling by representing its ability to modify even the tools we rely on to accurately gauge our surroundings. Third, and most interestingly rhetorically,

the order of the first and second lines -- first, an unambiguous statement that "There was no sound," and then this statement's complication -- forces the reader to be cognizant of the fact that this poem is about how the village *appears* from the perspective of those within it, not what it looks or sounds like from an objective outside perspective. While forcing our awareness of the fact that we are being immersed in the situation of war, then, Sackville dispels any assumptions that this poem is what Campbell would term "straight reportage" (213).

Sackville portrays what remains after the shelling through images and punctuation which continue to play on the reader's perception of sound. The poem's third line modifies the scene further: "Only behind a wall the low sobbing of women," (3). Here, it becomes clearer still that there is dissonance between perception and reality. The crying which the first line tells us the village lacks is now reintegrated in the scene. We, with the villagers, begin to re-emerge and reorient from the soundlessness following the shells' impact, hearing also "The creaking of a door, a lost dog -- nothing else." (4) This final couplet operates as a series of auditory fragments. The women, the door, and the dog can all be heard, and are associated with one another by being placed in a list divided by commas. At the same time, their brevity and seeming arbitrariness make them feel disconnected. The shelling has fragmented the village, leaving only miscellania. After these images is a dash, a pause while searching for further descriptors. Finding "nothing else," the stanza closes with a full stop. It will be the task of the poem to chart a roadmap towards reintegrating these sound bites, to present a moralizing lens through which to generate something meaningful from war's destruction.

The poem's second stanza continues to operate through auditory modification, re-tracing and building upon the first stanza's work via parallel structure:

Silence which might be felt, no pity in the silence,

Horrible, soft like blood, down all the blood-stained ways;

In the middle of the street two corpses lie unburied,

And a bayoneted woman stares in the market-place. (5-8)

For a second time, the state of the village is presented via an opening couplet which reinforces the sense of silence, before moving into a series of images which, despite being related to this couplet as is indicated by their separation via a semicolon, are ultimately not contingent upon it. The second halves of stanzas one and two serve not to expound these stanzas' opening couplets, but to compound their sense of fragmentation. Two modes of perception are simultaneously necessary: at the same time that it is impossible to move beyond the profound sense of silence, emblems of destruction continue to emerge.

Repetition in these stanzas communicates that words are inadequate to account for or represent war. "Sound," "silence," and "blood" proliferate, their repetition lending the scene a sense of the indescribable. Returning almost obsessively to these descriptors, the poem indicates that they serve as the best stand-in for what is incommunicable. Sackville conveys the overwhelming nature of the silence and blood the shelling has left in its wake by piling these words on top of themselves. They are repeated, turned over, and granted new associations. In the second stanza, absence of sound becomes silence: where initially there was nothing ("No sound at all . . . nothing else") there is now "silence," a quality described in the positive (1-4, 5). Where the village was at first characterized by absence -- something which used to be there and now is not -- the movement to positive descriptor allows soundlessness to read as something which has entered the village and taken hold. The phrase "Silence which might be felt" (5) reinforces its totalizing nature. Here, silence overwhelms, taking hold of other senses, and serving as a parallel image to the blood in the subsequent line. Readers are asked to hear and feel the effects of war.

Where the first stanza creates an eerie atmosphere of silence and emptiness, the second depicts an overflowing of sensory stimuli. New "horrible" images overwrite the first stanza, filling in the emptiness that the shelling has left (6). Silence and blood overwhelm, filling the void left by what was, moments before, human life. The three sounds of the first stanza operate behind the scenes, so to speak. Though they indicate destruction and fragmentation, the reasons for these sounds are withheld from us. We do not see what the women are crying over, what or who is making the door creak, or the fate of the dog's owner. By contrast, the second stanza brings images of destruction into full view. Three corpses replace these three fragments of sound, and we see them out in the open. Sackville now renders death in full, public view: the two corpses are "in the middle of the street," the dead woman is "in the market-place" (7-8). Spaces which should – and up until the shelling did – serve as points of community and connection are overwritten by death. These images are all the more shocking because they fill the empty visual space created by the first stanza.

Manipulating verb tense, Sackville demonstrates how warfare confuses agency. Destruction in the village is so extensive that the dead rather than the living are ascribed agency. The grammar of the first stanza, while depicting sounds *caused* by action, removes any sense of agency through its utilization of gerunds. "The low sobbing of women" and "the creaking of a door" subtly withhold verbs, and "a lost dog" even more explicitly disconnects action and sound (3-4). This grammatical move compounds the sense of disembodiedness also indicated by these sounds happening out of reader's purview. Life is still somewhere, but seems feeble compared to the images of the second stanza, which "lie" and "stare" (7-8). Though these verbs involve motionlessness, these corpses are *doing* something, even simply displaying their immobility. The village residents' actions have been uncannily replaced: where they should be carrying about

their daily tasks, walking in the street and shopping in the market, their corpses continue to populate the village, immobile but still acting upon the village, characterizing it very differently. The dead have displaced the living, and those who remain alive are forced behind the scenes. Only death is public now.

The first two stanzas' oscillation between sensory deprivation and sensory overflow succeeds in disorienting readers and communicating not only the overwhelming nature of warfare, not only the inadequacy of words to describe it, but also the inability of our very senses to register its reality. They communicate at once the effects of warfare and warfare's ultimate unknowability to readers. Through primarily auditory descriptors, these stanzas imagine a scene of disorder and destruction. Sound is absent where it should be present, is present only where it appears disembodied, and bodies themselves appear where they shouldn't. Rather than uttering the sounds still faintly audible in the village, they lie out in the open, "unburied" (7). They fill the spaces that should be occupied by the living, and in doing the opposite of what we assume they should -- being buried -- they leave no room for the sounds of human life. At once, there is not enough and too much. Zooming out from the immediate scene of the village, the third stanza's purpose is to reorient the reader, to provide a lens through which to process the indescribable. "A Memory"'s first two stanzas create a problem which must be resolved by the third.

Where the first two stanzas of "A Memory" present only images and sounds and are devoid of visible life, the third puts the scene of destruction into dialogue with the living. By grouping reference to the surviving villagers, the poem's speaker, and the poem's audience together into a single final stanza, Sackville intensifies the divide between the living and the dead, while allowing lifelessness the most space. Though the third stanza presents a lens through

which to think about the images of destruction in the first two, Sackville gives these initial raw images room to speak for themselves before being modified by the living (villagers, speaker, and readers).

Sackville presents through form and content the possibility that prayer can make sense of the disordered images of the first two stanzas. Finally utilizing the true ABCB rhyme scheme which has been hinted at by the slant rhyme in the first two stanzas ("shells"/"else"; "ways"/"place"), she establishes a connection between all the living through a shared prayer:

> Humble and ruined folk -- for these no pride of conquest,
> Their only prayer: "O! Lord, give us our daily bread!"
> Not by the battle fires, the shrapnel are we haunted;
> Who shall deliver us from the memory of these dead?

The villagers must focus on the simplest, most visceral of needs; they can prioritize only survival. The Lord's Prayer – a unifying thread in this volume, invoked also in "Sacrament," "Ora Pro Nobis," and "Refugees" – is reduced to its most physical of pleas. The villagers' "only prayer" is not the Lord's Prayer in its entirety, but rather the specific petition for physical sustenance. In distilling the Lord's Prayer to this single plea, Sackville includes the villagers in her own (and her audience's) Catholic faith, while indicating that they must focus on survival alone. It becomes the burden of the speaker and readers, in solidarity with the villagers, to ponder the immaterial implications of the prayer which the villagers, because of their situation, cannot: "Who shall deliver us from the memory of these dead?" Sackville's return from off-rhyme to true rhyme suggests the possibility of recovery, while her use of collective voice implicates readers in this process of recovery.

Sackville's Catholicism is doubtless a key factor in the critical neglect of her work. But a close reading of how "A Memory"'s final line interacts with the rest of the poem demonstrates that her view of religion is more nuanced than scholars have acknowledged. On the one hand, prayer is the only sound capable of breaking through a silence so intense it "might be felt," the appeal for daily bread appearing as the only utterance in a poem about silence (5). As Varty writes, prayer, for Sackville, "suggests a coming together more primal than language" (48). Yet the final line subverts what is to be expected from prayer in two ways. First, as Murdoch points out, at the end of an ostensibly commemorative poem, the verse "demand[s] . . . that she (or we) be able *not* to remember, but to forget" (53). Sackville communicates that the standard means for coping with death – including prayer – are insufficient to the context of war. While prayer can break the silence, it appears incapable of delivering us from evil. Evil has already come, and the speaker cannot locate a means to heal from the trauma of the village's destruction in her faith. Rather than turning to God as the villagers do for sustenance, she asks: "*Who* can deliver us from the memory of these dead?" The speaker seeks the ability to forget among the living.

Though Sackville's faith offers connection between the reader and the victims of the war, her message in "A Memory" and throughout *Pageant of War* is, at its core, about human responsibility. The poem's turn in the final line from prayer to other possible systems of healing comments less upon God's inability to heal, more on upon her readers' complicity. Elsewhere in *Pageant of War,* Sackville makes clear that the burden of righting the wrongs of war must fall upon those complicit -- which, for Sackville, includes not only combatants but also those who didn't oppose the war effort, as in "Nostra Culpa." While both God and the dead are central to Sackville's understanding of war, the living carry primary responsibility to account for its toll. And for Sackville, this responsibility is not to remembering the dead but to the *living*. In "Ora

Pro Nobis" ("pray for us"), she writes, "These million dead / Need not your tears . . . / pray for us then, but not for these / Who have no portion in our shame" (5-12). Similarly, in the volume's final poem "Who?", the speaker describes her "pity" for refugees over those who died in battle ("These myriad souls outcast, they know not why / Torn, tortured, exiled, driven over-seas") and in a move similar to the final line of "A Memory," concludes the volume with the question "When God remembers, who shall pay the debt?" (1-11). Unlike other religious Great War Poets for whom the war is holy, for Sackville its glorification is blasphemous ("Nostra Culpa"). The war is entirely human, its cause and its effects the responsibility of the living. Those who survive must try -- for the sake of other survivors -- to account for the cost of war. While religion can offer a path towards doing better in the future, it cannot erase or atone for the human errors already committed. In this sense, Sackville's view of war resembles the agnostic approach of the Trench Poets, and her appeals to readers are compelling regardless of her readers' religious beliefs.

IV. Beyond "A Memory"

We cannot fully appreciate "A Memory" without reading its paired poem, "Refugees." Where "A Memory" uses assonance and off-rhyme to convey the fragmentation of warfare, deploys verb tense and repetition to make its imagery shocking, and assigns culpability to civilian readers, "Refugees" attends to the lasting physical and psychological effects of the shelling. "Refugees" presents the aftermath of the village's shelling from the perspective of a survivor, incorporating the Lord's Prayer once again as a through-line between the two poems. As the survivors flee their homes, inclusions of lines from the Lord's Prayer at the end of each stanza read as the speaker's attempt to cling to the familiar. Leaving behind everything they know -- including, shockingly, the speaker's dead sister -- they cling to the words they *can* take with

them. The recitation of the prayer takes on an eerie quality as its rote appeals become inappropriate to the later stanzas' contexts. Where in the first stanza, the appeal for daily bread responds directly to the need for food, the second stanza concludes with the petition "Forgive us, Lord, our trespasses!" after the refugees watch a home burn down -- a trespass against them, not the other way around. Like in "A Memory," there is ironic dissonance between the language the speaker can utter and the situation at hand. Where in "A Memory," language itself appears incapable of describing the effects of warfare, here the specific, familiar language of prayer appears incompatible with the rest of the stanza, reinforcing the loss and displacement the villagers face. The familiar cannot be mapped onto their current situation. Not only are the villagers cold, hungry, and tired; they cannot make sense of their situation through the religious lens usually available to them as well. They are disoriented, both physically and psychologically,.

"Refugees" uses tools presented in "A Memory" – shocking imagery, dissonance between perception and reality, and inflections in verb tense – to render refugees as victims suffering lasting impacts of warfare. Moreover, "Refugees" elaborates "A Memory"'s emphasis on the villager's physical needs by presenting the literal need for bread as both the reason for leaving the village and the reason for appealing to God: "The day we had no bread to eat,/We gathered up our things and ran" (1-2). From the outset, bodily needs are presented as the refugees' reason for their actions. "Refugees" repeats from "A Memory" the same line of the Lord's Prayer at the end of the first stanza ("Give us, O Lord, our daily bread,") picking up the narrative of "A Memory" at the point where the previous poem leaves off while also presenting the need for physical sustenance as the initial reason for prayer (4). As the poem progresses, the lines not borrowed from the Lord's Prayer continue to present unembellished descriptions of

physical functions, which contrast with their utterances of prayer. The refugees crouch, kneel, wait, watch, trudge, and attempt to take shelter from the snow. Even when a member of their party dies on their trek, the refugees continue because "there was nothing to be done" other than to keep pushing forward (16). The refugees' aims, when contrasted with the reasons for participating in or supporting war referenced elsewhere in the volume thus read as humble and innocent. They seek only the most basic of human rights. Refugees appear largely blameless in this volume, wanting for only the most basic of needs and appealing to their faith in the humblest of ways. Sackville treats refugees as the best example of the terrible human impacts of war. In the ideological system *Pageant of War* presents, they are the only true victims. As argued above, Sackville's volume seeks justice not for the dead, but for the living. She justifies this aim by portraying the impact of war upon survivors.

"Refugees" is one of several poems in *Pageant of War* which describes the lasting impacts of war upon the living. Where "Refugees" focuses most explicitly on physical impacts upon survivors, other poems including "Home Again," "Victory," and "Reconciliation," emphasize the emotional and psychological effects of war. These poems portray combatants and noncombatants alike, encompassing the experiences of soldiers, mothers, and women who have lost lovers. Taken together, they demonstrate the breadth of the war's impact, but they also reveal how Sackville's poetic ethics set her apart from other war poets. Where, more often, war poets presented a dichotomy between combatants and noncombatants, grouping combatants as a class who understood the "truth" of war and thus felt alienated upon their return to British civilian society, Sackville contrasts everyone directly impacted by war from those who have not been impacted. Refugees, combatants, and grieving mothers and lovers all experience war trauma and alienation from the rest of society. Their disorientation and emotional estrangement

are described in poems set on the home front. Sackville not only writes about the lasting impacts of warfare before the Trench Poets were, but also extends her description of victimhood to additional groups.

Key to Sackville's depiction of war's lasting impact upon all those it affects is the inadequacy of language to communicate experience. Similar to how "Refugees" demonstrates the villagers' disorientation via the inappropriateness of familiar prayer to their situation, "Home Again" and "Victory" portray alienation by demonstrating the inadequacy of the language and emotional response suggested by members of society not directly impacted by the war. "Home Again" is narrated from the perspective of a soldier returning from the front greeted with "sweets," "cigarettes," "questions," and "respect," but who cannot vocalize the trauma he has experienced to civilians despite them "mean[ing] well" (1-3). Instead, he tells them basic details about the war ("we tells them how we fought and fell on such and such a day") while withholding the emotional impact of the combat he experienced (4). Re-entering a world "gay with flags and girls and noise and light," he is struck by how different being a soldier was from his expectations: "We used to think that *this* was war, before we went to fight" (9-10, emphasis Sackville's). His experience at the front exposed him to realities of war that those at home still enthusiastic about the war effort cannot understand. He feels a divide between himself and the people at home so profound that "'tween the likes 'o them an' us the're days and nights between" which "there ain't no words, not human, to express" (20-21). His statements imbue the poem with a sense of futility. Rather than attempting to communicate the incommunicable or to re-assimilate to a pro-war, civilian society, he accepts that he is now fundamentally different, resigning himself to smiling "when [he] can" (18). The divide this poem portrays between outward expression and internal experience goes beyond demonstrating language's inadequacy

for communicating the experience of war. In addition, it portrays a profound estrangement both from the soldier's enthusiastic past self and from those at home, showing that war leaves a permanent mark and creates permanent difference. Sackville expands this idea to include war's effects upon those who have lost loved ones in the poem "Victory."

Where combatants feel alienated by the actions and rhetoric of noncombatants in "Home Again," "Victory" represents a maternal perspective, juxtaposing the grieving and those not personally affected by war. The mothers in this poem are surrounded by the same atmosphere of enthusiastic patriotism as the soldiers in "Home Again," amidst a "flag of triumph sweeping" and "banners great and golden," a "long, long line" of mothers weep for their fallen sons (1-9). Sackville again emphasizes withholding emotional response, with the descriptor of "silent" applied to the mothers three times within a twelve line poem. Despite this, the poem reveals their suffering via vocalizations which they withhold from those around them but which Sackville makes available to readers. They want to express their grief and disillusionment, but their positions as "outraged women" means that their pacifist message won't be heard, so they "lie beneath [the] armies' feet" (7-8). These women, Sackville intones, are one of the things crushed by the war effort – a sentiment which is echoed by a number of authors in the third chapter of this dissertation who comment upon the war's consumption of bodies. While Sackville treats those war impacts as fundamentally different from those who aren't impacted, she extends the scope of who war touches more widely than do the Trench Poets. More than fifty years before Nosheen Khan declared to readers that war was a broadly "human event," Sackville was already communicating this truth to her audience (2). Comparing "Home Again" and "Victory" reveals that beyond including grieving women in the category of people who experience lasting emotional and psychological trauma due to war, Sackville understands these women's grief as

uniquely subject to erasure. While the soldiers in "Home Again" *could* speak about their experiences if they could find the right words, the grieving mothers in "Victory" will not be heard even if they vocalize what they want to.

IV. "Reconciliation"

"Reconciliation" beautifully crafts a portrait of the lasting impacts of war upon civilian women and warrants particular recognition for its innovative use of formal elements including its future tense, imagery, off-rhyme, assonance, and consonance to depict and emulate the process of recovery. The poem imagines how the grieving will heal once the war has finished by seeking community with other grievers. As argued above, Sackville's primary concern in this volume is with the living. She posits that the living hold responsibility, warrant sympathy, and have the unique power to choose peace. In particular, "Reconciliation" renders connection with other survivors -- not prayer or by visiting a loved one's grave – as the best means to heal from grief. While "Nostra Culpa" blames civilians for not using their voices and "A Memory" depicts warfare's deadening impacts upon the senses, "Reconciliation" describes the process of recovering from sensory disorientation to seek healing through shared speech. It portrays its subjects employing the tool of speech that subjects of the volume's other poems can't or won't, dramatizing the communication's power to heal. While the poem's title most immediately evokes reconciliation in the sense coming to terms with what has happened -- reconciling oneself with the loss one has suffered -- the more important meaning of "reconciliation" to this poem is the act of reconciling with others who are "bound by the same grief" (9). The prefix "re" is especially important to the poem's meaning, as the poem depicts regaining speech, community, and physical well being lost during the war years. Though connection with others is necessarily

on different terms in the aftermath of loss, repeating the act of coming together, which war interrupted, best allows healing.

Sackville demonstrates the war's impact upon civilian women in the poem's first stanza by attending to the physical intrusion of war upon the home front while emphasizing the hypothetical tense of the situation the poem portrays:

> When all the stress and all the toil is over,
>
> And my lover lies sleeping by your lover,
>
> With alien earth on hands and brows and feet,
>
> Then we may meet. (1-4)

By opening with the word "when," Sackville locates this poem in an imagined future. "May" in the final line of the stanza likewise renders the poem's action as a possibility rather than a certainty. "Reconciliation" looks forward from the volume's present tense: at the height of the war, the poem's speakers seek comfort through imagined, future healing. Eschewing the shocking imagery and disharmonic language of the present, the poem imagines a future in which people, emotions, and language reharmonize, while emphasizing the stark difference between the certainty of the present – a time of war – and the uncertainty of what will be lost before peace is attained. Though hypothetical, this future is imagined in tangible terms. References to "hands," "brows," and "feet" call attention to the singular body, situating the loss of the individual within the context of collective loss. Covered in "alien earth," the dead bodies of the speaker(s)' lovers blur the difference between the war front and the home front. Elsewhere in the volume, Sackville depicts the war front intruding upon the space of the home front through the psychological impacts of war upon combatants who return home, refugees who relocate to the British Isles, and grieving family members of soldiers killed in combat. Here, this intrusion is literal: sending

home bodies covered in foreign dirt, the military allows the earth on the war front to mix with that of the home front. The most tangible aspect of the stanza's hypothetical future is the inevitable infiltration of the war into spaces of "peace." We are shown in this stanza that civilian women are not at a distance from the war.

Visual rhyme, assonance, and alliteration in the first stanza convey the possibility of harmonizing that which the war has made disharmonious. The first two lines are paired with visual rhyme, indicating disharmony in a subtle manner. "Over" and "lover" *appear* to rhyme, and it is only through vocalizing these sounds that their auditory difference becomes clear. The subsequent stanza reveals that grief has left the speaker(s) "without sound or speech" (7). By making the disunion between the first two lines recognizable only through vocalization, Sackville demonstrates to readers how silence perpetuates disharmony. Speech is the first step for both readers and the speaker(s) to reconcile elements the war has fragmented. And, importantly, the poem portrays the recovery of such harmony as possible. Where the first stanza's initial couplet contrasts seemingly harmonious elements -- both "over" and "lover" as well as the two iterations of the word "lover" at opposite ends of the poem's second line -- the final line depicts people and language meeting. Each word in the line "Then we may meet" harmonizes with some other element of the stanza. "Then" rhymes and answers the "when" of the opening line. "We" picks up the long "e" of "feet" and "meet" and "may" alliterates with the line's final word. "Meet" pulls the couplet together, with every sound ("m," "ee," and "eet") repeating from elsewhere in the couplet. Meeting is a form of repetition: repeating sounds already presented to readers, it indicates not simply coming together but also coming *back* together. Where the opening couplet depicts proximity – almost rhymed, with the two lovers near

one another both physically and within the line – the second couplet both states and enacts through form the possibility of reuniting the proximal.

The second stanza introduces the act of individuals gathering while positing that recovery possible only after immense toil:

Moving sorrowfully with uneven paces,
The bright sun shining on our ravaged faces,
There, very quietly, without sound or speech,
Each shall greet each.

The stanza's first two lines render the meeting described in the previous stanza possible only after bodily effort. The line's meter picks up the "uneven paces" of the grieving women, which breaks the poem's pattern of 11-syllabled lines with an added syllable. The poem's pacing mirrors the pattern of footsteps, making the act of reading require an effort which mirrors that of laboriously putting one foot in front of another. The second line reminds readers of the poem's emphasis on gathering and reveals the scale of this effort through the word "our": multiple women are depicted already as a group with shared experience prior to their meeting. But, like the two iterations of the word "lover" in the first stanza, they are proximal and paralleled rather than truly unified. Though "our" signifies a cohesive group, the final line emphasizes the women's individuality through the repetition of the word "each." "Reconciliation" depicts the tension between the collective ("us/our") and the singular (the repeated "each"). Sackville represents both the collective and the singular experiences of grief. While her answer to processing trauma is reconciliation, coming back together, she is careful not to erase individuality. She renders the women in this poem as real people experiencing a shared

phenomenon. They make parallel journeys to “greet” one another, at which point healing and reunification can begin.

The stanza’s form reveals that healing must be both physical and psychological. The women have been so affected by grief that their very movements and expressions have been modified, as has their ability to speak. This poem again depicts trauma’s impact upon the ability to deploy language in this stanza’s third line, where the women are “without sound or speech.” The “s” sounds in this line are mirrored throughout the stanza in the phrases “sorrowfully,” “paces,” “sun shining,” “faces,” and “shall.” These sounds evoke whispering and require the reader to speak softly when reading aloud. The stanza thus speaks “quietly” (7). But the final line of the stanza presents the possibility of regaining language. Greeting each other, the women participate in an act of communication, (though whether it is physical or vocal is not revealed). Describing the act of coming together, the line uses the same tools as the final line of the first stanza to communicate the possibility of unity: it picks up sounds from elsewhere in the stanza (“sh” and “ee”) and each word relates to another within the line. “Each” is paralleled with “each,” the “sh” in “shall” rolls off of the “ch” in “each” and “greet” carries the long “e” of “each.” Far from the clunky syllabic transitions and pacing of the stanza’s first line, “each shall greet each” rolls off the tongue fluidly and quietly. Finding, at last, a setting where language may be regained, the speaker(s) allow readers a reprieve while they imagine a reprieve of their own.

The war irrevocably changes both the living and the dead. In the third stanza, Sackville parallels the grieving women and their lost loved ones:

> We who are bound by the same grief for ever,
>
> When all our sons are dead may talk together,
>
> Each asking pardon from the other one

For her dead son.

Though the act of gathering may allow healing to begin and speech to be regained by "asking pardon," Sackville emphasizes too the pervasiveness of grief itself. The women are "bound by the same grief for ever" (9). This phrase communicates two important ideas. First, these women are "bound" to one another -- part of a compulsory rather than a chosen community. Second, the impact of the war cannot be erased. Though people may heal, they are permanently changed. The poem emphasizes this permanence via its first overt reference to death. The speaker(s) imagine the dead talking with one another, holding the same kind of communion that they will with other living mourners. While the dead men "talk together," the women ask pardon of one another, paralleling their sons' speech acts. But, importantly, they speak not to the dead but to each other. Sackville again emphasizes that survivors are responsible to other survivors. Death can only be processed by seeking community with others still living.

The impact of the war in "Reconciliation" is both present and futural. The third stanza is particularly haunting because Sackville reminds readers of the future tense of the poem by use of the word "when." This stanza does not depict women attempting to process their grief for their dead sons by communing with other women; rather, it depicts women *imagining* how they will attempt to process their grief in the seemingly inevitable event that their sons die in combat. In the poem's present, their sons are not dead. The "stress and toil" of the war is so great, and the possibility of losing a loved one so likely, that the only way that these women can imagine finding solace in the aftermath of the conflict is by imagining their sons being dead (1). And this reverie is not a fleeting one: the speaker(s) don't think of the deaths of their sons and recoil in horror. Rather, they sit with this image long enough to elaborate a complex and specific situation in which they can begin to heal from their sons' deaths. In this sense, they are beginning to

process a tragedy that has yet to occur. The word "when" tells us that these women believe, at best, that they might one day heal from a death yet to come. The war has already, in the present tense of the volume, changed them irrevocably.

Repetition and assonance in the third stanza require readers to linger upon the inevitability of war casualties alongside the speaker(s) while reminding readers of the poem's emphasis on grieving women. The latter section of the third stanza repeats and turns over the same few words and concepts. Dead sons are referenced twice within three lines ("when all our sons are dead"; "her dead son") and "all" "together" "each" and "one" each treat the simultaneously singular and collective experience of processing grief. Even the final couplet's vowel sounds fold in upon themselves: the phrase "pardon from the other one" carries the "o" sound through four of its five words, and the stanza's final word, "son" picks the sound back up. The final phrase, "for her dead son," thus refers the reader back to earlier moments in the stanza. The only word in this line *not* repeated from another part of the stanza is "her." This new word alerts readers that despite the necessity of lingering upon the dead (for both the speaker[s] and readers), fallen soldiers are not portrayed as this poem's central problem of emphasis. Rather, the poem focuses on women –their experiences of finding themselves immersed in and irrevocably changed by an event which by all external accounts does not involve them. The poem's women speak to how the war effort will physically and psychologically encroach upon them, and demonstrate the toll it has already taken by imagining the possibility of healing only in its tragic aftermath.

In the final stanza, the speaker(s) consider how the recovery of language and reconciliation -- with other women and with the events of the war -- may be possible:

With such low, tender words the heart may fashion,

Broken and few, of pity and compassion,

Knowing that we disturb at every tread

Our mutual dead.

The quietness of the poem's second stanza now becomes a positive quality as language is recovered. "Low, tender" words are deployed to soothe one another, and the ability to find the words appropriate to the situation of grief comes from the heart. Physical, psychological, and linguistic recovery appears communal and emotive. "Broken and few, of pity and compassion" reads as referring to both the women themselves and the words they speak. At the conclusion of the poem, neither the women nor their speech are represented as perfectly healed; rather, both are reconciled to the situation of grieving. "Reconciliation" does not present the possibility of people and language returning to their pre-war states. Instead, it depicts people finding comfort and healing by developing a new, collective language to process shared grief. The poem's final word, "dead," reminds us that the effects of war are unerasable even when healing is possible.

V. Conclusions: A World "All Too Narrow for These Dead"

War, for Sackville, reaches beyond the front. Refugees carry its images -- ruined cities, corpses, burning buildings -- with them overseas, capable of escaping physical but not psychological suffering ("Refugees," "Who?"). Sackville extends culpability to everyone, drenching, metaphorically, even the home front with blood ("Nostra Culpa," "Sacrament"). The all-encompassing silence which characterizes the village in "A Memory" reaches beyond the battlefield and settles upon the grieving, stifling their ability to speak ("Victory," "Reconciliation"). Bodies appear in spaces associated with community and peace ("A Memory," "Reconciliation"). Each action and each effect described on the front bleeds over into the civilian world, until the whole world becomes a "clot of blood" "all too narrow for these dead" ("The

Challenge," "Sacrament"). War changes sensory perception, renders language itself inadequate, totalizes via its silencing power. It acts upon and interacts with everyone. It operates across geographic, gendered, and combatant/noncombatant boundaries. *Pageant of War* demonstrates that no neat divide separates the home front from the war front; war is a phenomenon enacted and experienced regardless of position.

Sackville's depiction of war shares many qualities with the lyrics of the Trench Poets, though she portrays a broader and more varied subject matter. Like Wilfred Owen, she undermines and deforms conventional formal elements, including rhyme scheme, to represent the physical and ideological disorientation and fragmentation war causes. Like both Sassoon and Owen, she blames civilians for their complicity, focusing too on women who refrain from speaking out against the war effort. Like each of the major Trench Poets, she incorporates shocking imagery and attends to the lasting emotional and psychological impacts of war. *Pageant of War* deserves recognition as a major volume of First World War poetry because it reveals that these modes of representation were not unique to combatant poets and that they were, in fact, already available to civilians writing at an earlier stage of the war. But Sackville's war verse also differs from that of the Trench Poets in two important ways. First, by including grieving refugees and family members of fallen soldiers in her descriptions of people who are impacted by war, she renders war's geographic and temporal scale more broadly than do the Trench Poets. She shows readers that war's impacts are not confined to the battlefield; they reach the home front and will continue to alter individual and collective consciousness long after the conflict's formal resolution. Second, in describing how trauma will live on past the end of the war, Sackville's verse offers readers hope. She imagines how the communion of people in grieving can allow catharsis and the recovery of language, sense, and speech. As early as 1916,

Sackville was already keenly aware that the war would irrevocably change both people and society, that it would incite, in Santanu Das's words, "a new modernity" (1). She portrays the possibility of healing not through the recovery of familiar modes of understanding, but by making use of the ways that the war has reshaped perception and language to live and to speak in new ways.

To adequately access and assess Sackville's complex vision of human responsibility and to fully appreciate her nuanced use of verse form to evoke emotion, one must read poems from *Pageant of War* in context. Anthologies which include only "Nostra Culpa," "A Memory," and/or "Reconciliation" provide an incomplete picture of Sackville's work. "Nostra Culpa" alone does not account for the broad reaches of culpability ascribed to the living. "A Memory" leaves its reader with an incomplete portrait and an incomplete prayer, with what it leaves off resolving in "Refugees." "Reconciliation" requires the reader's knowledge of the volume's present-tense to understand the implications of the poem's future-tense. None of these poems when read alone can account for Sackville's ability to present war from varied perspectives and to portray responsibility, guilt, grief, and victimhood as interlocking facets of wartime identities. Future anthologists and scholars must take into account the relationship between these poems and others in the volume. Rather than reprinting poems selected by Khan and Reilly, they must seek to expand knowledge of *Pageant of War* through new selections or through readings in context.

A pioneer of anti-war poetry, as I've argued, Margaret Sackville deserves recognition as such. *Pageant of War* confirms that modes of representation usually credited to combatant poets were available also to particular noncombatant poets. Sackville's work, too, forces readers to acknowledge a truth important and uncomfortable to those who uphold the combatant/noncombatant binary: all war poetry, whether written by combatants or civilians, is

not fact but literature. As we've seen, Sackville convincingly deployed the very modes of representing war used to distinguish the Trench Poets from noncombatant writers – shocking imagery, depiction of the war's psychological impacts, irony, pacifism, representations of futility, and assignment of culpability to civilians – throughout *Pageant of War*. An attentive reading of the volume dispels the critical myth that the Trench Poets got at the "truth of war" in ways that civilians could not. Margaret Sackville's *Pageant of War* shows her as capable as the Trench Poets of compellingly representing varied wartime contexts, including ones with which she had no first-hand experience. Studies of Great War poetry must dismiss the myth that poetry can convey the "truth of war" and instead must ascribe value to poetry which imagines the war in compelling, innovative, and historically valuable ways.

CHAPTER III:

"LIKE SOMEBODY ELSE'S WAR": SIMILE AND LIKENESS IN DAVID JONES'S IN PARENTHESIS

At the end of Part I of *In Parenthesis*, "B" Company wake up to their first morning in France after crossing the English Channel the day before. They are "given Field Service postcards – and sitting in the straw they crossed out what did not apply, and sent them to their mothers, to their sweethearts" (Jones 8). The Field Service postcard is an infamous genre of First World War communication because of its inability to communicate anything beyond a few predetermined possibilities, boasting "Infinite replication and utter uniformity" as Paul Fussell comments (202). (This was, of course, the point: the postcard prevented sensitive information being leaked by allowing soldiers only to cross out pre-inscribed sentences like "I have been admitted into hospital" and "I am being sent down to base," leaving only the relevant information for their loved ones.) Following on Fussell's critique of the genre, Allyson Booth comments that "thin formulations of official communication constituted the representational limits of the Field Service Card, protecting the imaginative limits of civilians" (15). Representational limits are distilled, here, to the hyper-constrictive example of the postcard, but Jones' point is broader. The experience of trench warfare and the conditions which surround it are unfamiliar and even unknowable to much of Jones' audience. By positioning the postcard scene at the moment "B" Company arrives in France, Jones delineates the familiar space of the Home Front from the unknown, foreign space that his poem will try to represent. The Field Service postcard represents the impossible task of describing the war to those not in it. The full scope of the English language presents parallel representational limits in Jones's view.

Jones' awareness of and frustration with these limits is evident from the poem's *Preface*, in which he discusses the constraints of the monograph form. Already a seasoned visual artist, Jones "intended to engrave some illustrations" beyond the poem's famous frontispiece and tailspiece but was "prevented" (xiii). He also discusses some of the other practical constraints of publishing a written work; he explains that he has had to cut vulgar language and discusses how he has "tried to indicate the sound of certain sentences" through subtle formal choices (xi-xii). At the same time, he reaches into other language traditions – Welsh and Middle English, but also Cockney and the particular vernacular of the Western Front during the first half of the war – to broaden the possible meanings and associations of particular words and phrases. These constraints of the literary form and Jones' desire to traverse linguistic and textual/visual boundaries is one of the ways Jones shows that he sees the English language as incapable of holistically conveying the experience of trench warfare.

The scale of the difference between the Home Front and the Western Front is underscored by describing France as an entirely different world in the paragraph following the Field Service postcard scene. Jones concludes "Part 1" of *In Parenthesis* with the line "You feel exposed and apprehensive in this new world" (9). This new world of the war front, which Jones's protagonist John Ball has just entered, is dramatically unlike anything the character has previously experienced or prepared for in training. It is unfamiliar and unknown. For John Ball, as well as for David Jones — and for every poet representing the war front to civilian readers — this unfamiliarity presents a challenge for representation. The Field Service Postcard thus serves as a metaphor for Jones's project. Not only does he bemoan the very literal crossings-out demanded by the conventions of print publishing, but he features the difficulty of bridging the

gap between the world of the war front and the world of the home front when addressing those without personal experience on the Somme.

So how can this gap between worlds be bridged through written expression? This is a significant challenge negotiated by writers with combat experience in varied ways, and is a question that precludes combat gnosis. One of the ways Jones makes the unfamiliar world of the war front knowable to readers without wartime experience is through use of similes and other forms of comparison, a technique that has been used in war epics since Homer. When Jones likens a wartime experience or phenomenon to something known to his readers, he makes the foreign world of the war front a bit more familiar. For example, when "B" Company and "D" Company enter their nightly shelters after a day of marching near the end of Part 2, Jones writes: "More clear, and very newly chalked, you read the title of your entering, and feel confident, as one who reads his own name in a church pew" (22). This common experience, familiar to readers who share Jones's Catholic faith, is used to make the Companies' movements more immediate and more knowable.

Yet, there is tension here between the simile as a device which elucidates wartime experience and Jones's broader approach to figurative language in *In Parenthesis*. Jones, placed by T.S. Eliot in an exclusive cohort of modernist authors including Pound, Joyce, and himself, is today widely considered an important contributor to literary modernism. *In Parenthesis* has even been called "one of the foremost achievements of literary modernism" (Dilworth 43). One of the reasons for this classification, by Eliot and by contemporary scholars, is due to the difficulty of Jones's work — a difficulty enriched by heavy use of obfuscating literary devices. Eliot, for one, views *In Parenthesis* as dense enough to "undergo the same sort of detective analysis and exegesis as the later work of James Joyce and the *Cantos* of Ezra Pound" (vii). Jones's notes, he

reassures us, are like his own to *The Waste Land*; they "are no prophylactic against interpretation and dissection: they merely provide the serious researcher with more material to interpret and dissect" (vii). Described by contemporary scholars as "opaque to the reader at first reading" and "generally considered difficult" (Potter 38, Dilworth 505), the notion of transparent comparisons runs counter to the primary effects of a dense text supplemented by "abstruse allusions" (Potter 38).

And even as the simile serves to connect the world of the war front to external referents, the effect of this connection is not always clarifying. For example, the prevailing rain and the trench flooding it causes is one of the predominant motifs sustained throughout the poem. In Part 4, John Ball observes this flooding as he moves through the communication trench with No. 1 section: "Grey rain swept down torrentially. The water in the trench-drain ran as fast as stream in Nant Honddu in the early months, when you go to get the milk from Pen-y-Maes" (Jones 77). Though this simile connects a wartime phenomenon to an external point of reference, the situation Jones describes is personal, discrete, and even anachronistic. The places Jones references relate to his time living at Capel-y-ffin, a monastery turned Roman Catholic artistic and craftsman community, in the Black Mountains of Wales during the 1920s. The river Honddu runs past Capel, and Jones walked to get his milk from the nearby farm Pen-y-Maes when in residence there, the farm serving as a "favorite motif" in Jones's paintings from this period (Wakelin 31). This simile is one of the many elements of *In Parenthesis* that must be decoded – or dissected in Eliot's terms – to get at both its meaning and its significance. This linkage between the Western Front and the landscape near Capel visualized through the lens of Catholicism is evidenced also in paintings like "Sanctus Christus de Capel-y-ffin" (see Fig. 5), which recalls *In Parenthesis'* "Frontspiece" (see Fig. 6). In "Sanctus Christus," a river like the

one Jones describes in his simile rushes past the chapel and towards the crucified Christ. But the comparison Jones suggests between the sacrificial landscape of the front and another one he paints into the landscape at Capel is clear only to the reader willing to dissect. The simile does not make John Ball's observations any more transparent to the reader. Its effect is, in fact, the opposite. This obfuscating role is another one the simile plays in *In Parenthesis* and has more in common than Jones's other usages of figurative language, especially allusion.

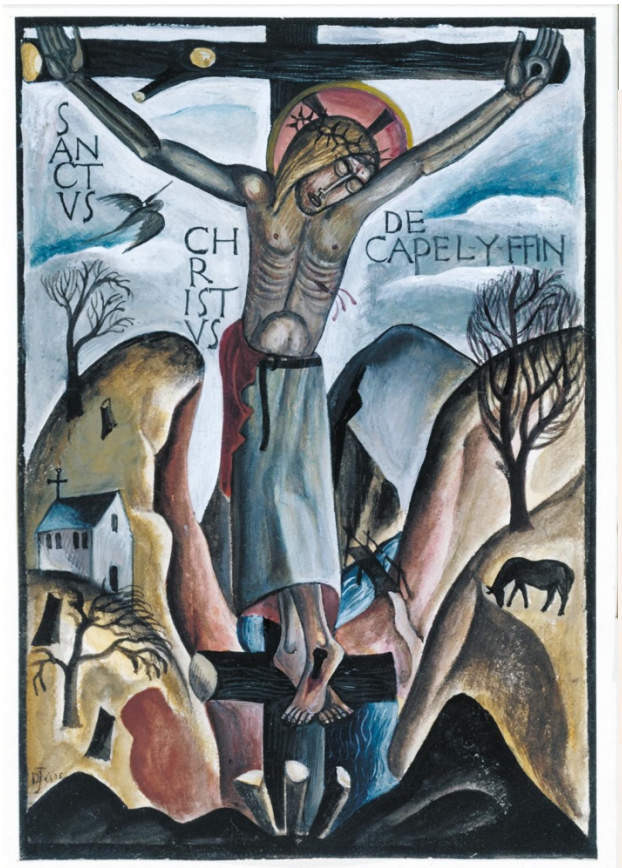


Fig. 5. Sanctus Christus de Capel-y-Ffin. David Jones, 1925. Tate Museum. https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/jones-sanctus-christus-de-capel-y-ffin-t03677
Fig. 6. Frontispiece for "In Parenthesis." David Jones, 1937. Amgueddfa Cymru, https://museum.wales/collections/online/object/16980c1e-7a4f-3b26-a934-55c049ea66a7/Frontispiece-for-In-Parenthesis/?field0=with_images&value0=on&field1=string&value1=mining.

This chapter will investigate when, how, and why Jones uses the simile for different and sometimes contradictory effects throughout *In Parenthesis*. My study is divided into three major

sections. After giving an overview of relevant scholarship, I first provide an overview of Jones's diverse usages of the simile throughout the text. Next, I discuss the role of the epic simile in the poem and analyze how the epic simile is distinct from other forms of comparison. Finally, I compare Jones's uses of similes in the first six parts of the poem against his uses of similes in the seventh and final part of the poem. As I wrap up my reading of likeness in *In Parenthesis*, I briefly discuss non-simile comparisons inasmuch as they inform the poem's commentary on Catholicism.

Across these examples, I establish the prevalence and significance of the simile as a literary device. I also argue that the simile serves diverse narrative and stylistic purposes; where the first section of the chapter demonstrates the breadth of the simile's effects, the second and third sections attend to specific, oft-repeated effects. In the section on the epic simile, I argue that Jones connects *In Parenthesis* to a lineage of epic poetry reaching back to Homer and extending through both the Christian poetry of Milton and the ironic usages of the epic simile by Neo-classical satirists. I focus specifically on Jones's use of the bee simile, a trope in epic poetry and one which is connected through Milton to motifs by Catholics and metaphors about Catholics used in the 17th century. In my section on *In Parenthesis* Part 7, I trace Jones's uses of familiar and commonplace comparators. Where previous readings have focused on Jones's use of figurative language only inasmuch as it obscures or densifies, my chapter shows that Jones's uses of the simile are incredibly varied. This is important because it evidences Jones's mastery of the kind of flexibility between high and low referents characteristic of literary modernism and because it shows that even as Jones creates a text he wants his reader to "interpret and dissect," he is also concerned with conveying the experience of combat, specifically, in direct and visceral terms (vii).

I. The Simile, Its Forms, and Its Counterparts

Several fields of scholarship are relevant to my study. The first is the field of figurative language studies. One surprisingly common point of debate amongst theorists of figurative language is the distinction between the simile and the metaphor. The simile and metaphor are often viewed as "twin manifestations of a single basic phenomenon": a figurative comparison (Israel et. al 123). The two are sometimes distinguished by arguing that the metaphor is an "elliptical simile," other times by maintaining "metaphor as the more basic of the two figures, and . . . simile [is defined] as the explicit expression of a metaphorical mapping," and still others by asserting that "metaphor is a compressed simile" (Israel et. al 123, Brogan & Richmond 1306). These schools of thought share the view that similes and metaphors differ primarily in the way that the comparison is constructed. Their distinctions differ only in "ontological priority," with some defining metaphor in terms of simile and some defining simile in terms of metaphor (Irsael et. al 123-24). However, another important approach derives from Andrew Ortony's book *Metaphor and Thought* (1993). Compiling expertise on the thought process behind the metaphor from scholars across fields ranging from psychologists to linguists, Ortony argues that metaphors and similes are not, in fact, interchangeable. This is because while comparisons themselves are a "psychological process," similes and metaphors are distinct "us[ages] of language" (Brogan & Richmond 1306, citing Ortony).

This distinction becomes particularly important when applying theories of figurative language to poetry: while understanding a connection between *A* and *B* is the reader's task (facilitated by the author), the grammatical structure used to compare *A* and *B* is an important formal choice the author makes. Meter, assonance, alliteration, and emphasis can all be impacted by the construction of the comparison. These formal elements can impact not only the poem's

structure but also the manner and degree of comparison. For example, a simile which alliterates "like" with both *A* and *B* suggests greater similarity than were the same comparison to use "as" or to be constructed as a metaphor. Similarly, an author may imbue irony by constructing a simile which breaks an otherwise tightly metered poem, whereas a metaphor which adheres to the poem's meter would suggest no irony. The choice between simile and metaphor, as well as the way in which the comparison is constructed, can themselves contribute meaning to the text. Because of this, Ortony's model for the distinction between simile and metaphor (above) is the most useful to the study of poetry.

Brogan & Richmond point out Wallace Steven's use of the simile to "[call] attention to the problematic relationship between poetry and what it represents" ("It was like / A new knowledge of reality") (Brogan & Richmond 1307). In World War I studies and in this dissertation, the question of verisimilitude in poetry is central. The simile is one of the key techniques Jones uses to clarify that *In Parenthesis* represents subjective experience rather than objective fact – he tells us what something is *like*, not what it *is*. The simile distinguishes itself from other kinds of figurative language, including metaphor, by insisting upon the audience's awareness of the comparison's figurative status. Through use of "like" or "as" (or, in more contemporary models, other comparators like "resemble" or "seem") the simile makes clear that the relationship between *A* and *B* is one of appearances. While *A appears* to be like *B*, underlying the simile's argument is the assertion that *A* is *not B*. Though *B* gives us new information about *A* – and often clarifies *A* if *A* is unfamiliar – *B* does not claim to fully represent *A*. Instead, it gives us an approximation. Jones uses simile in *In Parenthesis* (especially in Part 7) to allow for better understanding of unfamiliar experiences because it compares commonplace experiences with the

unfamiliar. At the same time, however, it keeps space between the known and the unfamiliar by insisting that two things are alike rather than the same.

Significant critical attention has been afforded to Jones' use of figurative language in *In Parenthesis*, both historically and contemporarily, with critics emphasizing how figurative language interacts with the poem's moral message and also how it qualifies the poem as modernist. Allusion, symbolism, imagery, and metaphor are well-studied literary strategies that the poem deploys. This critical interest in Jones' figurative language was first sparked by Fussell's assertion that *In Parenthesis* is a pro-war text which "can't keep its allusions from suggesting that the war, if ghastly, is firmly 'in the tradition'" (146). Scholars since Fussell have studied figurative language to two ends: first, to push back against Fussell's claim that the war's place "in the tradition" justifies the conflict, and second, to justify the poem as a modernist epic. Studies which argue for the modernist status of *In Parenthesis* have thus primarily focused on usages of figurative language which densify and lend obscurity to the narrative, in order to prove that "*In Parenthesis* is as fastidiously constructed through a dense layer of mythical and cultural allusion as any canonical work of modernism" (Riede 693). After forty years of scholarship involving figurative language, critical consensus confirms *In Parenthesis* as a modernist epic which does not seek to justify or condemn the war, but rather to represent it. This chapter agrees with this critical consensus while asserting that Jones's tapestried approach to the simile shows stylistic flexibility that is not evidenced in Jones's other uses of figurative language. In contrast to other forms of figurative language, Jones's simile is capable of sustaining referents ranging from dense allusion to banal and everyday phenomena.

A broader bias in literary criticism against the simile has likely contributed, in tandem with the factors discussed above, to the simile being overlooked in Jones scholarship. Brogan &

Richmond explain that "there has been a traditional prejudice against simile in favor of the metaphor," dating back to Aristotle and extending into 20th century literary theory (1307). Prior to poststructuralism, "the 20th century was especially rigid in privileging metaphor over simile" and the simile was largely viewed as mere "literary embellishment" (Brogan & Richmond 1307, referencing Darian). Despite this, the simile has been a regularly used literary device since the earliest records of Western literature, with the 20th century being no exception (Brogan & Richmond 1307). Modernists continued utilizing the simile in poetry even after imagism's advocacy for "direct treatment" and deployed it to new ends, as I will demonstrate in the case of Jones (Brogan & Richmond 1307). Likewise, the simile has played a central and even defining role in the genre of epic poetry since Homer. Because *In Parenthesis* is "David Jones's epic of the Great War," the poem's uses of simile warrants study as a genre-specific device (Dilworth 43).

Because Jones devoted significant space and narrative weight to simile in *In Parenthesis*, I argue two related points. First, I argue that Jones's regular use of epic similes evidences Jones's conscious indebtedness to the genre of the classical epic, an indebtedness also supported by Jones's characterization of Welsh soldiers as descended from Aeneas. Beyond connecting *In Parenthesis* to the Trojan war, Jones's uses of epic similes characterize the protagonist and his battalion-mates un-heroically. Reading Jones's bee simile against Milton's parallel simile in *Paradise Lost*, I argue that Jones also connects his poem to the specific tradition of the Christian epic poem. While using the epic simile form to comment on the likeness between two phenomena, Jones also comments on the *un*likeness of his own protagonists to epic heroes through ironic nods to the epic simile, a gesture which borrows from poets like Pope and Dryden. Second, I argue that where the simile is used for varying effects in the first six parts of the poem,

many of which serve similar purposes as other kinds of figurative language, Part 7 uses similes almost exclusively to clarify the unfamiliar. Jones uses concise and familiar referents in this part in combination with second-person narration to render the poem's combat scenes viscerally and with shocking imagery. Supporting my argument by demonstrating the simile's increased prevalence in Part 7, I discuss examples of how its newly direct approach supplements the section's combat narrative and argue that a previously unrecognized stylistic shift occurs at the opening of Part 7.

II. The Simile's Forms

Similes are prevalent in *In Parenthesis* and the frequency with which Jones uses them justifies their sustained study. In the table below (Fig. 7), I provide an overview of the distribution of similes across each section of *In Parenthesis* and compare this distribution against the number of pages in each part of the text. I have excluded from this image similes which appear in the footnotes but included those from the Preface. This is because studies of other kinds of figurative language in *In Parenthesis* generally include the preface while excluding the notes. I additionally excluded front and end matter, illustration pages, and section heading pages (though a simile included in the epigraph to Part 4, borrowed from *Y Gododdin*, will receive comment later in this chapter). Though this table gives a concise overview of the simile's prevalence and distribution, it is important to note that this model is imperfect because it excludes nuance by its nature (for example, while I discuss comparisons that use the phrase "similar to" later in this chapter, this model only includes traditional "like" or "as" similes).

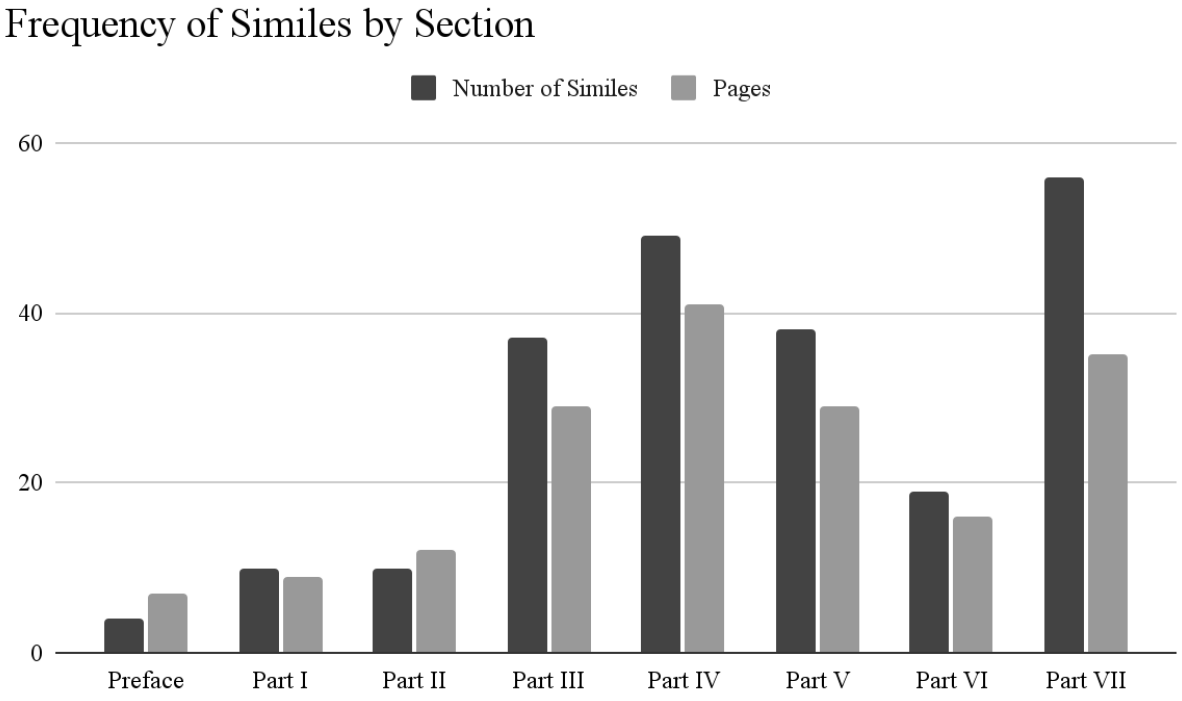


Fig. 7. Frequency of Similes by Section in David Jones's IP.

This model illustrates two important things about Jones's use of the simile. First, it shows that similes occur relatively frequently in *In Parenthesis*, at a rate of about 1.25 similes per page. (Though not represented here, it is also the case that these are distributed across both verse and prose passages.) This frequent usage shows that the simile is an important part of Jones's writing style. Despite it being a literary device overlooked in existing scholarship, then, it warrants discussion given the sheer amount of space it takes up in the text. Second, this chart shows that both the total number of similes and the number of similes per page is highest in Part 7. As I will discuss below, a stylistic shift occurs at the beginning of Part 7 which is evidenced by Jones's increased reliance on the simile.

The simile comes in many forms, and Jones leverages its flexibility as a literary device in *In Parenthesis*. It can be made up of any number of varying constructions and serves a wide array of purposes. Below, I give an overview of some of the simile's formal variations and

purposes before going on to give some examples of the breadth of the simile's effects in *In Parenthesis*. The terms introduced here (including open simile, closed simile, target, source, and grounds) will be referenced throughout the remainder of this chapter.

There are three major variations on the simile form, one of which is the epic simile which I discuss in this chapter's next section. The other two kinds of similes, open similes and closed similes, are both usually relatively brief comparisons using "like" or "as" but differ in their construction. The open simile is the archetypal simile: *A is like B*. The open simile compares two referents using "like" or "as," often in combination with a "to be" verb. This kind of simile is called "open" because the *manner* in which the target (A) is like the source (B) is left unstated. Typically, the manner of comparison is left unstated because it will be obvious to the reader, although a simile can also be left open for other reasons: to compare two things which are similar in more than one way, to withhold the manner of comparison for dramatic effect, or to set up an ironic or humorous turn later in the narrative when the manner of comparison is revealed, belatedly, to be something unexpected. In contrast, the closed simile includes a third element, the grounds, which shows how A and B are alike. In the closed simile, the grounds (G) "[make] explicit the shared quality which is the basis of the comparison implied by the simile" and is often presented as *A is as G as B* (Fishelov et. al 185). By getting at the manner of comparison, the grounds can clarify the relationship between A and B for a variety of reasons, including "emphasize . . . further" a manner of comparison "when it is already fairly obvious," to tell the reader the manner of comparison when there are several possibilities, to reveal a "less-than-obvious" manner of comparison, or "to aid the reader in comprehending the speaker's intention when no obvious ground suggests itself" (Fishelov et. al 187). In short, where the open simile relies on the reader intuiting *how* A is like B, the closed simile states how A is like B explicitly.

Here are two short examples from *In Parenthesis* which illustrate this distinction. Jones uses an open simile when John Ball encounters another soldier when attempting to navigate the trench system in the dark in Part 3, and "His match is like a beacon in this careful dark" (40). This is an open simile because the target ("his match") is compared to the source ("a beacon") using only "like." The manner in which the two are comparable is implied: the match is *as bright as* a beacon, "bright" serving as the unstated grounds. In this example, the reader can be expected to fill in the grounds themselves. Conversely, this simile from the preface to *In Parenthesis* is an example of the closed simile: "Now of *High Germany*, of *Dolly Gray*, of Bullcalf, Wart and Poins; of Jingo largeness, of things as small as the Kingdom of Elmet" (xi, italics Jones'). In this simile, "things" is the target (A), "the Kingdom of Elmet" is the source (B), and "small" is the grounds (G). To understand how the "things" Jones will describe are comparable to the Kingdom of Elmet, the reader needs the clarifying grounds: "small."

Studies of figurative language show that the simile's most common purpose is to clarify. Though clarification is sometimes the effect of the simile in *In Parenthesis* – especially in Part 7 – the simile is a flexible figure of speech which at other times accomplishes varied narrative and formal aims other than clarification. Some common aims of the simile, identified by Roberts & Kreuz and by Leila et. al, include "to be eloquent," "to be humorous," "to provoke thought," "to emphasize," "to de-emphasize," and "to show negative emotion," though this is by no means an exhaustive list (128). Some of these aims can supplement a narrative, such as adding humor or showing emotion, while others are purely formal, like drawing attention or adding eloquence. In contrast to the goal of clarification, these other usages overlap with other kinds of figurative language. Studies of simile have found that multiple figures of speech share these "discourse goals" including metaphor, hyperbole, idiom, irony, and understatement (Leila et. al 124-28,

Roberts & Kreuz). Simile functions uniquely when it clarifies but works in similar ways to other figures of speech when it serves a goal other than clarification. This is evidenced in *In Parenthesis* as well: where the simile as a clarifying device runs counter to the effect of other forms of figurative language, its other uses – irony, for example – work in similar ways to other kinds of figurative language. Before transitioning to my discussion of the epic simile, I give a few examples below of Jones using the simile to varying ends. These initial examples show the flexibility with which Jones deploys the simile and begin to get at some of the ways Jones indebts his uses of the simile to other authors. This flexibility complements the poem's other modes of variation, including variation between prose and verse passages and variation between allusive frameworks. Where this first section demonstrates the simile's harmony with some of Jones's other formal choices, the second and third sections show how it is unique in comparison to other figures of speech in *In Parenthesis*.

In some of *In Parenthesis*'s closed similes, the grounds are used to impart a shift in mood. For example, in the simile "the coats of mares they groom as leisurely as boys in Barsetshire," the similarity between grooming horses on the front and grooming horses in Trollope's *Chronicles of Barsetshire* could be one of many, and "leisurely" is necessary clarification (92). But it also signals a shift from the movement of "D" Company across the French countryside to the period of inaction they will experience upon halting, which is marked with boredom rather than leisure. Likewise, in the simile "this front line trench at break of day as fully charged as any chorus-end with hopes and fears," the grounds ("fully charged") are needed to establish a parallel between a trench and a chorus (Jones 69). The combination of the alliterative "charged" and "chorus-end" reimagines the heightened emotion of anticipation as musical energy. Again from Part 4, a section which foregrounds feeling, this simile heightens the

emotional energy of the passage before going on to undermine this anxious energy through a second simile a few lines later: “Certainly they sat curbed, trussed-up, immobile, as men who consider the Nature of Being” (69). Using these similes in quick succession, Jones demonstrates how quickly the mood can shift from nervous anticipation to boredom.

At the same time, Jones writes religious overtones into his break of day simile by nodding to two religious poems. The footnote to the simile asks us to compare to lines from Browning’s *Blougram:* “A chorus-ending from Euripides / And that’s enough for fifty hopes and fears.” The simile is then connected to Milton’s ode “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity” (a recurring referent discussed in more depth in the below section on epic similes) via a semicolon: “Perhaps they found this front-line trench at break of day as fully charged as any chorus-end with hopes and fears; or els [sic] their silly thoughts for their fond loves took wing to South-Wark Park” (69). The footnote to the post-semicolon phrase indicates that this line should be compared against the eighth verse of Milton’s poem. By drawing a connection between his own lines and two poems about religion – one which casts a Bishop as questioning his faith and the other of which retells the nativity scene – Jones writes religious experience into his “break of day,” a moment which gestures also to the more recent referent of Isaac Rosenberg’s “Break of Day in the Trenches.”

Another simile of thematic importance also borrows upon the lyrics of the recent trench poets. Later in Part 4 – a section which catalogs a day from morning stand-to until night – the narrator remarks on the lack of action since the break of day earlier: “Since dawn, no artillery of light or heavy, neither ours nor theirs, had fired even a single round within a square kilometre of the front they held” (77). Instead, the war happens elsewhere: “Down on the right they were at it intermittently, and far away north, if you listened carefully, was always the dull toil of The

Salient – troubling – like somebody else's war" (77). This passage recalls the first two stanzas of Wilfred Owen's "Exposure," where "Low drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient" and "Northward, incessantly, the flickering gunnery rumbles, / Far off, like a dull rumour of some other war" (Owen 3-9). Jones retains some of the key markers of Owen's description: the salient, the sound of gunfire coming from the North, the dullness, and, most notably, the simile comparing this war to another one. But where Owen's simile compares this war to "some other" one, Jones compares the war to "*somebody* else's" (Owen 9, Jones 77, emphasis mine). This kind of out-of-body experience of the war – the idea that it is being lived by someone else – is echoed in other similes in *In Parenthesis*. In Part 1, for example "they were given tins of bully beef and ration biscuits for the first time, and *felt like real expeditionary soldiers*" (Jones 8, emphasis mine). And finally, as the soldiers move towards the front through "some foreign awfully well made place engineered deep in the gleaming chalk" at the end of Part 6, "all the arrangements of the place," left by the Company preceding them, are "*like somebody else's house*" (Jones 148, emphasis mine). This specific simile construction, in which a target is compared to something experienced by "somebody else," is one Jones uses to convey a sense of self-alienation in the face of the unfamiliar and overwhelming world of the war front. This construction is repeatedly important in providing insight into the narrator's psychological experience, and it derives from Owen's simile in "Exposure" – a poem which is itself concerned with estrangement from one's own body.

Another way that Jones uses the simile is to contribute humor or irony to a passage with brevity. In closed similes, this brevity is heightened, since the grounds allow the simile to communicate with economy levels of meaning beyond "thing A is like thing B," as explained in the following example. In "Part 1," John Ball tries to slip into place in his company parade

without being noticed after arriving late. His attempt is “as ineffectual as the ostrich in her sand” (1). In this case, the grounds work to clarify the manner in which his attempt is like the ostrich burying its head: Ball, like the ostrich, is humorously incapable of hiding in plain sight. The closed simile format enables a brief but complex comparison, providing an early characterization of the poem’s antihero John Ball. Occurring on the first page of Part 1, the very first image the reader gets of Ball is not a description of a man’s physical characteristics, but rather an image of an ostrich sticking out like a sore thumb. This simile shapes the reader’s initial impression of Ball, signaling already that he is out of place and introducing “ineffectual” as an important descriptor for his character.

Jones also sometimes uses a “non-salient ground [to] produce an ironic effect” (Fishelov et. al 189). In a passage from Part 4, for example, John Ball, afforded an hour of leisure time, pulls out a book: “Private Ball groped in his pack to find his book. The India paper was abominably adhered, especially for split finger-tips – and one anthology is as bad as a library and there is no new thing under the sun” (95). Without the grounds, one could reasonably assume that the manner of comparison between anthologies and libraries involves the wealth of information contained in each. The grounds, “bad,” subvert the reader’s expectations and provide commentary upon both the source and the target. In this case, the grounds carry more weight than the compared artifacts: where pointing out likeness between anthologies and libraries is unremarkable, calling either of these “bad” provides insight into Ball’s psyche and makes the passage’s ironic function clear. The poem’s protagonist sees books as useless on both an intellectual level (“there is no new thing under the sun”) and on a physical level (“The India paper was abominably adhered, especially for split finger-tips.”) To Ball, books are useless in the context of war.

Beyond contributing irony to the passage by subverting the reader's expectations of the qualities associated with libraries and anthologies, this simile leads the reader to consider the relationship between books and war. The reader, ostensibly hoping to find something new in this very book, must consider: how can some pieces of paper covered in ink, which become completely useless once exposed to the kinds of conditions Ball describes, ever meaningfully reconstruct these conditions? The ironic simile in this passage is necessary and forceful because it asks the reader to consider the passage (and even the text) as a whole on ironic terms. It communicates these ideas in less than a sentence, and therefore allows the pacing of the text to remain unbroken. Amongst the brief catalog of the various company members' use of their break time, the closed simile uses irony to raise important metatextual questions.

The simile in all of these permutations – open, closed, wrought with shifts in mood, descriptive of psychological state, ironic, humorous – enriches Jones's poem via relatively brief comparisons. In the section which follows, I discuss the simile in its longest form: the epic simile, and I identify how Jones uses the level of detail that this form of the simile allows to communicate multiple comparative, allusive, and symbolic levels of meaning.

III. "Hiving to the Stars": Jones's Epic Similes

Before analyzing Jones' use of the epic (or Homeric) simile in *In Parenthesis,* a few notes on the role of classical epic poetry in Jones' text are in order. In the paragraphs which follow, I support two claims: first, that the connections Jones draws between classical epics and his own text must be read in terms of intertextuality and tradition, since they go beyond allusion and parallel plotline, and second, that the role of the epic poem is more central to *In Parenthesis'* overall logic than has previously been recognized. By briefly treating the wealth of epic significance in

In Parenthesis, I support my sustained study of the simile as a literary device of importance to the epic genre.

While Jones presents an array of historical and literary allusions, the ways he references classical epic poetry are unique. The ways in which *In Parenthesis* is embedded in a rich literary and historical network are well-documented. As outlined in my review of scholarship above, most scholars describe Jones' references to other texts as allusions. However, when Jones incorporates references to Homer or Virgil, the relationship between epic heroes and modern soldiers goes beyond the allusive and operates on both figurative and literal levels. On a figurative level, Jones uses epic heroes as points of comparison for his own text's protagonists, at once drawing upon and resisting the conventions of the epic genre. On a literal level, Jones traces a complex lineage between Trojan warriors and the Welsh soldiers on the Somme, embedding the Great War in a rich patchwork of cultural memory.

While explicitly comparing his characters to figures like Aeneas and Agamemnon, Jones draws his reader's attention to the ways in which the soldiers on the Somme are unheroic in comparison. Other authors have explained the lack of direct parallel between these epic heroes and Jones' soldiers in *In Parenthesis* because Jones patterned his poem most closely on *Y Goddidin,* "an epical poem" (rather than an epic poem) in which multiple heroes (rather than a single hero) "convey a sense of shared sensation and experience" (Robichaud 92, Eaves 59). While this analysis is productive and valid, it overlooks why Jones incorporates reference to the Trojan War at all. References to Aeneas and Agamemnon in particular are important to *In Parenthesis* not because they speak to the poem's genre or narrative structure, but because they contribute irony to the text. By comparing semi-capable, largely unenthusiastic, exhausted combatants to these famed and celebrated heroes, Jones comments upon the irony of a war

greater in scale and technology than the Trojan War being carried out by unheroic combatants. These parallels operate on the level of allusion but are complicated by non-allusive descriptions of mythical lineage.

At the same time as characters are ironically juxtaposed against epic heroes, some are woven into a lineage which traces back to Aeneas himself. On a literal level, Jones' Welsh soldiers are descendants of Aeneas, and, through this lineage, are also associated with a host of Welsh epic authors and heroes who continue this lineage. Before explaining how this lineage is granted broad significance in *In Parenthesis*, it is important to acknowledge how connections between past and present are part of a larger pattern in the text. Lucy Harlow has identified how *In Parenthesis* features a "duality of continuity and rupture, evident of course in the poet's much-documented relationship with the past" (62). By relating his characters (literally) to historic figures but commenting upon how they are *unlike* these figures, Jones at once participates in the epic tradition and undermines it. If a figure like Dai Greatcoat evidences a continuity between past and present by serving as the "archetypical soldier, as inevitable and repetitive as the progress of the seasons," then the Welsh soldiers who fight and die unheroically despite their heroic lineage show that even mythic significance cannot withstand modernized warfare (Coogan 57). By making the connection between epic heroes and modern soldiers literal, Jones makes space to comment not only upon likeness (or unlikeness) but also upon how the present can overwrite the past.

This lineage is explained in "Part 4." The placement of the relevant passage is significant for several reasons. First, it occurs in a section "without any happening," in which tension between the lack of combat and the intensity of physical and mental labor required to sustain life on the front is emphasized (96). Though the soldiers are physically so far removed from combat

that shelling on the salient is only audible "if you listened carefully," Part 4 represents "D" Company battling against the conditions of the front in "a chronicle of thoughtless labor, of soldiers who perform motions, making without thinking what they are making, and making inexorably toward their own disposal" (Jones 77, Riede 694). By drawing the connection between Ball's comrades and epic heroes in this section – and immediately after comparing maintenance of the trench drain to the siege of a fortification – Jones comments upon just how un-heroic participation in modernized warfare seems. The soldier's tasks and actions in this section are banal; instead of heroics, they perform trench maintenance.

Similarly, the philosophical musings of Lance-Corporal Lewis, who reflects upon the Welsh soldiers' lineage, are juxtaposed against the minutiae of daily life on the front. Before and after Lewis catalogs the significances of Welsh heritage, Jones catalogs the repetitive daily tasks undertaken by "D" Company. Though Lewis's musings introduce a system of historical and mythic interconnectedness important to the text as a whole, they *additionally* serve to demonstrate how the conditions of the front are intellectually unstimulating (if intensely demanding.) Between completing lists of banal physical tasks, Lewis comes up with a list of reasons why his participation in the war effort carries meaning. Third, this section is placed a few pages after Dai Greatcoat's lengthy monologue, in which Dai's role as "universal soldier" is expounded (Riede 700). Jones contrasts the historical and mythological weight carried by Dai's character against that of his Welsh soldiers by placing these passages in close proximity.

In Parenthesis' ties to *The Aeneid* are introduced in the following passage and its accompanying footnotes. Near the end of "Part 4," Lance-Corporal Lewis reflects on how his Welshness sets him apart from the other members of his company. He reasons that even though

his fellow company member, Watcyn, is also Welsh, Welshness doesn't carry the same weight of cultural memory for Watcyn as it does for Lewis. Lewis muses:

> 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, for whom Troy still burned, and sleeping kings return, and wild men might yet stir from Mawddwy secrecies. And he who will not come again from his reconnaissance — they've searched his breeches well, they've given him an ivy crown — ein llyw olaf — whose wounds they do bleed by day and by night in December wood (212).

Though this passage is ostensibly about Lewis' view of true Welshness as necessarily involving knowledge of Welsh histories, it is at the core of a system of historical and mythic interconnectedness which is engaged across multiple sections of *In Parenthesis*. The Welsh figures Lewis references – Aneirin, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Twm Shon Catti, ein llyw olaf – are embedded in a lineage which traces back to Aeneas himself.

The footnote to this passage makes the literal connection between Watcyn and Aeneas clear. Of the passage "*descent from Aeneas . . . crooked histories*" Jones glosses: "See the story in Geoffrey of Monmouth (Geoffrey Arthur), of how Aeneas, after the fall of Troy, journeyed to Italy (as in the *Aeneid*), how his grandson Brute eventually came to this island and founded the British Kingdom, with the New Troy, London, as its chief city, and how he is regarded as the father of the British race" (211, emphases Jones'). Agamemnon, too, receives mention amongst Jones's catalog of Welsh poets and figures. This footnote then directs the reader to a secondary

footnote, this one attached to Dai Greatcoat's long speech a few pages earlier in Part 4. Greatcoat, describing his participation in numerous historical battles, claims "we furnished the piquets; / we staked trip-wire as a precaution at / Troy Novaunt." (Jones 81). If Dai Greatcoat was at the New Troy – London – with Brute, Watcyn and Lewis's heritage extends to Brute as well.

By connecting these modern soldiers to Aeneas, Jones draws attention to the ways in which *In Parenthesis* both draws upon and resists the epic genre. With both Dai and Lewis connected to a classical past – Dai through his own memory, and Lewis through a cultural memory instilled by his shared heritage with Aeneas and the Welsh heroes succeeding him – Jones explicitly connects *In Parenthesis* to the classical epic. These connections support the already well-established ties to the epic genre via the poem's parallel plotline to *Y Gododdin* and enrich the poem's epic significance by tying it to the Trojan War. This parallel between the soldiers' experience on the Somme and the battles fought by the Trojan War's heroes are evidenced also by Jones's use of the Homeric simile.

The epic simile, coined by Homer and also referred to as the Homeric simile, differs from the traditional simile in that it "usually continues over several lines, making a direct and often detailed link between two different things" (Johnston, n.p.). There are also specific grammatical markers Homer used but that were not always picked up by authors borrowing the trope: these include beginning the simile with a comparator word or phrase (e.g. "just as") and then "almost invariably containing the phrase 'that's how' (or its grammatical equivalent) to indicate the second part of the comparison" (Johnston, n.p.). Homer uses the epic simile extensively to illustrate his poems, and authors ranging from Virgil to Tolkien have adopted the trope. The epic simile by its nature carries significant force. The use of any simile constitutes "a significant

narratological move in choosing an indirect mode of presentation over a simpler, more straightforward description" and in doing so "calls special attention to an action or an object," but the epic simile carries particular weight given its necessary length (Scott 16). In *In Parenthesis*, Jones draws upon the Homeric simile tradition, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly.

The epic simile is also indebted to a specifically Christian tradition, one which also links the form's most famous iteration – the bee simile – to Catholicism. The epic simile was used prolifically by John Milton in *Paradise Lost,* and, while Milton's usages replicate Homer's form, Milton recontextualized the simile to describe Satan. Milton's "similes work to support, undermine, and complicate . . . the depiction of Satan" and render him as a complex character through extended descriptions (Rogers, n.p.). Beyond introducing the epic simile to the genre of the Christian epic, Milton also replicated the bee similes of previous epics in the final passage of Book I, a gesture which has received wide commentary. In *The Iliad*, Homer famously compares the Achaean troops to "dense clouds of bees" who "pour out in endless swarms" in his poem's first epic simile, and Virgil includes multiple extended bee similes in the *Aeneid* (*Iliad* 2.105). Milton's own bee simile is "generally known to be modelled on [these] bee similes of Homer and Virgil," but the context of this usage within the 17th century Christian epic can also be traced to a then-common comparison between Catholics and bees (Hullinger 37).

Both Milton's *Eikonoklastes* and *Paradise Lost* nod to Catholicism – critically – when engaging the motif of the beehive. The beehive was a relatively common metaphor for Catholics in Milton's time. Originally positively associated with Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, the patron saint of apiculture, after the Reformation it became a Protestant metaphor for "the ornery Catholic hive as a figure of derision" (Jacobs 806). Milton drew upon this history to critique

King Charles in *Eikonoklastes* "as a closeted Catholic" (Jacobs 805). In addition to engaging the history of the metaphor, Milton referenced a recent "sudden bee craze" amongst Roman Catholics that he would have "undoubtedly noticed" when visiting Rome in 1638-39, where he would have seen "multiple bee images, representations, and references" (805). This was due to a recent bee-related "miracle associated with the election of Maffeo Barberini" to Pope (805). Though Milton's criticism of Charles in *Eikonoklastes* is the most overt reference to the Catholicism/bee association derived from both post-Reformation Protestant discourse and Roman iconography, the echoes of this criticism in *Paradise Lost* are of most interest in the context of Jones's use of the epic simile. As Jacobs argues, Milton's bee simile at the end of the first book of *Paradise Lost* "bears an unmistakably papal air" given language like "secret conclave" and "golden seats" (806). In repurposing the bee simile for his Christian epic, Milton also introduces a subtle criticism of Catholicism related to the associations between Catholics and bees at the time he was writing. "Anti-Catholic sentiment" is made explicit elsewhere in *Paradise Lost* – most notably in the Paradise of Fools section – and elsewhere in Milton's oeuvre, even as Milton "sufficiently admired from afar the culture of Catholic Italy to master its language" (Corthell & Corns 4). As Ronald Culthell and Thomas N. Corns demonstrate in their 2017 book *Milton and Catholicism*, Catholic symbols, discourse, and beliefs were highly visible to Milton and he responded to these explicitly.

Milton appears only briefly in *In Parenthesis,* but Jones's references to him evidence careful reading of Milton's works. At three separate moments in *In Parenthesis* – one in Part 2 and two in Part 4, respectively – Jones reworks passages from Milton's ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity." Alerting his reader to these comparisons in his notes to Part 4, he also involves one of his characters, a harmonica player from Rotherhithe, in one of these rewrites:

"Put the fluence on, / Rotherhithe" (68). Later, this musician will recall the imagery of *Paradise Lost* as he thinks about home: "He looked straight-eyed and levelly . . . through all other things to where the mahogany cornices of *The Paradise* – to the sawdust thinly spread" (112-13). When Jones's bee simile appears, then, only two pages after one of Jones's reworkings of Milton's ode – a poem which, like Jones's bee simile, is highly preoccupied with both the weather and the clouds – it appears just as indebted to Milton's Christian epic as to the works of Homer and Virgil. And this indebtedness is to parts of Milton's oeuvre which grapple specifically with post-Reformation religious representation.

The bee simile in *In Parenthesis* occurs two pages after Jones's reworking of verse 17 of Milton's ode as John Ball crosses the French countryside by foot. John Ball looks up at the sky as he walks and

> There spread before him on the blue warp above as though by a dexterous, rapid shuttling, unseen, from the nether-side, a patterning of intense white; each separate bright breaking through, sudden and with deliberate placing – a slow spreading out, a loss of compact form, drifting into an indeterminate mottling. He marvelled at these foreign clouds. There seemed in the whole air above but from no sensible direction, or point, a strong droning, as if a million bees were hiving to the stars (20).

This retelling of the bee simile is an ironic one. Where in both *The Iliad* and *The Aeneid*, the authors emphasize the collective energy of the soldiers, and in *Paradise Lost,* this energy is attributed to the "populous youth about the Hive" of Satan's minions, Jones writes the bees as aimless and disorganized (Milton 770). Through extended comparison, Jones comments upon Ball's insignificance. Where Ball is without agency ("his eyes looked involuntarily"), the clouds are personified (20). This insignificance is heightened by the recollection of Milton's ode from

the preceding pages, since in Milton's poem the clouds are rendered as gates to the heavens and represent a division between the human and the divine. By turning the bee simile trope on its head and describing aimless drifting clouds instead of organized soldiers, Jones comments upon human insignificance.

This insignificance is in relation to the divine, but also to the elements. Throughout *In Parenthesis*, clouds bring rain: "rain clouds gathered and returned with the days [sic] progression," "rain clouds thickened to wintry dark," and, during occasional moments of "clear[ness] after the early rain," Ball observes how far he can see "under the vacant sky" (Jones 76, 147, 18). Mentioned nearly 40 times throughout the poem, the rain is one of the major elements that the soldiers have to contend with, trudging through its mud and trying to prevent further flooding of the trenches. The clouds represent one of the modes of violence against the soldiers, a connection which is supported by associations between bees and "war's frenzy," both in the bible and in popular belief at the time when Milton was writing (Freeman 191). In Milton's simile, for example, "no matter what momentary pacificity the soldiers crowding around Pandaemonium may exhibit, a complete reader must quickly recall the bees' quarrelsome disposition" – one which is founded in biblical associations between the bee and "armies of bumptious enemies" (Freeman 191). By recalling Milton's simile, Jones draws also upon apian militarism when describing the clouds. If the movement of the clouds in Jones's epic simile nods to the divine, then, it also reasserts the power and the violence of the elements over Ball and his Company. In this sense, this epic simile registers more in the ironic vein of the mock-epics of satirists like Pope and Dryden, with an insignificant and hapless protagonist facing insurmountable forces.

One of the most explicit epic similes in *In Parenthesis* occurs near the very end of the poem, after John Ball has been injured and is trying to make his way out of the forest to safety. But the trees are still:

> very high in the wan signal-beam, for whose slow gyration their wounded boughs seem each as malignant limbs, maneuvering for advantage.
>
> The trees of the wood beware each other
>
> and under each a man sitting;
>
> their seemly faces as carved in a sardonyx stone; as undiademed princes turn their gracious profile in a hidden seal, so did these appear, under the changing light (184).

This simile takes on Homer's grammatical structure, offering first the comparator word before unveiling the comparison at the end of the simile. Yet what exactly is being compared to "undiademed princes" in profile is left grammatically ambiguous by Jones's use of the word "these." Though "these" are ostensibly directly compared to the "undiademed princes," this ambiguity as well as the conjunction of this simile with another preceding simile contributes to the blending of the soldiers with the trees. "These," it seems, are both the trees and the men who sit beneath them, become increasingly indistinguishable "under the changing light" as the fallen men take on the immobility of the trees. This is a theme picked up from earlier in "Part 7," when Jones alludes to Birnam wood, commenting on the indistinguishability between trees and men. But where earlier, the trees appear to Ball to move as men do and are themselves threatening, the men are now as stationary as the trees – a stationariness underscored by their likeness to "sardonyx stone." This extended comparison takes up significant space in the final pages of the poem and thus carries significant thematic weight. Through this simile, Jones re-emphasizes one of Part 7's primary motifs – the indistinguishability of trees and men – while also setting up the

arrival of The Queen of the Woods, the goddess-figure who will adorn the dead in the final page of the poem.

Beyond these examples, which nod to the epic simile explicitly by borrowing its motifs (in the first example) and its grammatical form (in the second), Jones includes a significant number of extended comparisons which fall into the category of the epic simile given their length. The first of these can be found as early as the second page of the poem, when the 55th Battalion is organizing itself, still on English soil, in preparation to board the boat for France. John Ball's

> imaginings as to the precise relationship of this general indictment from the book to his own naked mess-tin were with suddenness and most imperatively impinged upon, as when an animal hunted, stopping in some ill-chosen covert to consider the wickedness of man, is started into fresh effort by the cry and breath of dogs dangerously and newly near. For the chief huntsman is winding his horn, the officer commanding is calling his Battalion by name – whose own the sheep are (2).

On its surface, this simile illustrates Ball's frustrations when his exploration of his issued kit is interrupted by marching orders. Yet, by extending the image of the hunted animal, Jones complicates this commentary in several ways. Most importantly, he introduces a theme that persists throughout the narrative and is alluded to in the bee simile as well: that Ball, here animal-like, is subject to the whims of violent and uncaring forces which feed him (in)to the war effort. Here, these forces are human; elsewhere, they will be natural or technological. Even as the comparison of Ball to a hunted animal enables criticism of the huntsman/officer, however, it also reduces Ball himself to the level of the animal, contributing to his "hapless" characterization (Jakubowski, n.p.). This reduction is reinforced by the transformation of the hunted animal from

the beginning of the simile into the sheep at its end. The image of an agile animal outrunning the hunter's dogs becomes an image of sheep to the slaughter – one which is alluded to at other moments in the text.

This simile, too, echoes *The Iliad*. Homer's epic uses the hunted animal as a figure in his similes in several places, including when Hector sends his troops into battle: "Just as a hunter urges on his white-fanged hounds, / to chase a lion or wild boar, that's how Hector, / son of Priam, like that man-destroyer Ares, / urged his great-hearted Trojans on against Achaeans" (*Iliad* 11.332-335). Jones once again uses Homeric imagery to instill irony into his narrative. As in Homer's simile, the commanding officer sets loose his hounds, but where in *The Iliad* these hounds are Hector's soldiers loosed against the hunted enemy, in *In Parenthesis* it is John Ball who is hunted by his commanding officer. The outcome of the hunt is not death but rather a marching order. Ball, shown to be as ill-prepared for the strict demands of the army as he is hapless (already having arrived late) is already more "Like an home-reared animal in a quiet nook" described in Jones's *Y Gododdin*-inspired epigraph to Part 4 than like Homer's "lion or wild boar" (57). In Part 7, as discussed below, the sheep comparison will be extended to others in Ball's battalion.

One of the epic simile's narrative features is its ability to serve more than one purpose. For example, at the end of "Part 5," right before John Ball and his comrades reach their final camp near Mametz Wood, "grass-tufts, too, were like they grow on seaward hills – with small wiry flowers against the whit, and with the return of summer's proper way, after the two days storm, blue-winged butterflies, dance between, flowery bank and your burnished fore-sight guard, star gayly Adam's dun gear" (131). In this example, the unfamiliar landscape of the front that "D" Company is marching through in preparation for the battle at Mametz Wood is

compared to a common landscape – sand dunes covered in clumps of grass. This comparison brings to mind a picturesque and relaxing atmosphere, augmented by descriptors like "small wiry flowers against the white," "blue-winged butterflies," and a "flowery bank" (Jones 131). By comparing this landscape with its "road . . . of downland chalk" to a familiar one, this simile accomplishes three things (Jones 131). First, it creates irony by putting the situation of marching to the front in the context of a peaceful landscape. Second, it shows how Ball finds his situation at once familiar and alienating; while it recalls a pre-war experience, the fact that this setting must be described in terms of the remembered landscape suggests that Ball is already seeking opportunities for escapism. Third, it immerses the reader in the rich and familiar sensory experience of visiting the seaside, allowing for identification between Ball and the reader.

Famously, W. H. Auden declared that *In Parenthesis* was "for the British and Germans what Homer did for the Greeks and the Trojans" (Penick 32). Though Auden's commentary ostensibly only compares Jones against Homer on the surface – as two war poets who wrote the premier epics of their respective eras – his comment has implications for the nuances of Jones's style as well. For while *In Parenthesis* is widely regarded as an epic poem and its indebtedness to other epics, especially *Y Gododdin*, is well-studied, its relationship to the earliest epics remains understudied. As I have argued above through my reading of Lance-Corporal Lewis's heritage, for Jones, the Trojan war is at the locus of a cultural memory which reaches through *Y Gododdin* (*In Parenthesis's* primary epic touchstone) and into the present. Jones's use of epic similes acknowledges this literary and cultural indebtedness while setting up opportunities for ironic comparisons of Jones's "D" Company against epic heroes. These are only a few of the epic similes Jones uses in *In Parenthesis*. In my section on the similes' role in "Part 7" below, I discuss additional examples which complement the broader goals of the simile as a clarifying

device in Part 7. Even as these iterations of the epic simile nod to the form's indebtedness to a long tradition of epic poetry, they depart from the irony and heavy allusiveness of those in the first six parts. Instead, by developing extended comparisons between the war front and imagined situations on the home front, Jones renders events at Mametz Wood in greater detail than shorter or non-comparative descriptors.

IV. "Moving Like a Birnam Copse": Jones's Combat Similes

Throughout *In Parenthesis,* but with increased frequency in Part 7, similes are presented from the second-person perspective that characterizes the hybrid John Ball/"you" narrator. By addressing the reader directly, similes in second person contribute an additional mode of likeness. In these second-person similes, the reader is explicitly involved in the comparison itself. This distinction is important because the second-person simile involves a multi-layered comparison in which the reader is compared to the soldier (in the case of Part 7, the soldier in active hand-to-hand combat) in addition to the target being compared to the source. The use of second-person "establish[es] an intimate connection between the reader and the poetic voice" and forces a "sharing of perspective" (Simecek 1-2). The second-person simile asks the reader to share two layers of perspective – the narrative perspective of the soldier and their perspective on whatever is being compared, the latter of which is often made intimate to the reader by comparing it to a familiar experience.

Second-person similes represent multiple perspectives, not only John Ball's and the reader's. In the first six parts of the poem and in the beginning of the seventh, the second-person perspective operates as a reminder of the "epic storyteller" voice even as John Ball's point of view is hybridized with the reader's own (Gemmill 314). Second-person narration "implies the shadowy relationship between the central consciousness and Ball," carrying the triple meaning of

first, second, and third person perspectives (Gemmill 317-18). They position the reader as one with the combined storyteller-character. As the seventh part of the poem progresses, the "you" of this hybrid voice loses its omniscience, associating the reader more closely with Ball and casting the reader alongside Ball as the agent of action. Along with this shift in narrative style, "Part 7" is marked by similes deployed with increased frequency and clarity.

The vast majority of similes which address the reader directly through the "you" voice occur in "Part 7." Defining these similes as ones which include second-person pronouns on the clause-level and excluding similes which occur in second-person passages but which do not use second-person pronouns for comparison, I identify 17 second-person similes in Part 7 alone (followed in frequency by Part 5, in which there are only five). When including similes embedded in second-person passages but without direct address to the reader within the comparison, the number is greater. Below, I read how these similes, alongside others which engage familiar referents, illustrate the battle at Mametz Wood in gruesome detail.

As is evidenced in the chart at the beginning of this chapter, the most similes – as well as the most similes per page – occur in Part 7 of *In Parenthesis*. This part of the poem retells the battle at Mametz Wood, tracing John Ball's dizzying experience of counting down to his Company's advance to the front lines and of the slaughter that unfolds around him. The narrative style of Part 7, though composed of the same tapestry of prose, verse, and dialogue interjections as the rest of the poem, has a different character from the poem's first six parts. For even as it "retreats into ritual and myth" in the vein of Northrop Frye's theory regarding how "man falls back upon myth when *in extremis*," it also takes on a precision and clarity and immerses the reader in combat alongside John Ball in a visceral manner (Penny 55). Though Jones in this section of the poem makes no attempts at verisimilitude – retaining its parallel plotline with *Y*

Goddidin, bringing in figures like the Queen of the Woods, and ascribing sacramental significance to the narrative's events – he relies, as other soldier-poets do, on shocking imagery. This shocking imagery is supplemented by the simile. Since the simile is used to supplement descriptions of John Ball's visceral experiences, it takes on a different purpose in Part 7. The simile's primary effect in this part of the poem is to clarify, making Ball's encounters with combat seem more immediate to the reader.

Clarification is a common goal of the simile. In 1994, Richard M. Roberts and Roger J. Kreuz conducted a study entitled "Why Do People Use Figurative Language?" Their study, which is still widely cited today, found that clarification is the most common goal of the simile. A similar, smaller study conducted by Erfaniyan Qonsoli Leila, Sharifi Shahla and Meshkatod Dini Mehdi in 2013 similarly found that "to clarify" and "to be eloquent" were the most frequent reasons for using the simile (128). These studies show that the simile is unique in its ability to clarify something which would remain obscure in the absence of a comparison. By stating that something unfamiliar is like something familiar, the author of a simile can provide clarifying context. In contrast to the simile's varied effects across the rest of the text, the simile serves in Part 7 to make the conditions of warfare more knowable to readers.

This section's similes work primarily to make the war more knowable to the reader by using two specific techniques: first, they use sources that would be familiar to the reader, and second, they provide enough detail to sufficiently immerse the reader in the situation at hand. While some of these similes are relatively brief and compare a simple source against a simple target, others are complex enough to fall under the category of the epic simile. This latter category, instead of relating a familiar source to an unfamiliar target, compares an unfamiliar target against a situation described in enough detail to resonate as realistic with the reader. What

these similes have in common is their effect of supplementing an immersive reading experience, which is created also by other rhetorical techniques like Jones's use of John Ball-focused second person narration and regular references to Ball's interactions with his surroundings – his movements through the wood as well as frequent references to the chalky earth being two examples.

The similes in Part 7 communicate the horrors of war using vivid imagery. For example, as "D" Company rushes at last towards the wood after a seemingly infinite seven minutes of waiting as other waves of soldiers precede them, "The immediate foreground sheers up, tilts toward, / like an high wall falling" (164). This simile instills in the reader a sense of vertigo enabled by the comparison's source; the simplicity of the image of the "high wall falling" illustrating Ball's dizzied perspective. The sonic movement of this simile, too, from the alliterative "tilts toward" to the assonance of "wall falling" rushes the lines' pacing, underscoring the immediacy communicated at the simile's outset. Similarly, the battle's destruction of bodies is illustrated using vivid comparisons. In a brief reprieve from the confusing maze of fog, trees, and thicket, Ball watches a flare illuminate the battlefield around him, noting the mixture of "many men's accouterments medleyed and strewn" from soldiers of varied battalions (180). Amongst these debris, he sees "the severed head of '72 Morgan / its visage grins like the Cheshire cat / and full grimly" (180). The uncanny image of the Cheshire cat's disembodied grin is instantly recalled by the reader, underscoring the horror of Morgan's severed head in only a brief allusive phrase. Likewise, shortly thereafter, the bodies of soldiers are described as "lying disordered like discarded garments or crumpled chin to shin-bone like a Lambourne find" (182). In this double-simile, Jones offers two supplementary images. In the first, the bodies are indistinguishable from the aforementioned "many men's accouterments"; in the second, Jones

calls on a piece of English cultural heritage as he references the Seven Barrows burial mounds. These two images – one of a piece of clothing tossed off and the other of a skeleton preserved since the Bronze Age – both underscore the anonymity of the battlefield while again creating a vivid image. Each of these similes calls upon the familiar to illustrate the battle with concision and shock value.

Even where Part 7's similes do not elicit shock, however, they take on familiar sources and communicate events clearly and succinctly. For example, as No. 3 section advances, they make their way through a spot where "a sequence of 9.2's have done well their work of preparation and cratered a plain passage" (167). Squeezing together to clamber through, "They bunch, a bewildered half dozen, like sheep where the wall is tumbled" (167). Though this image is pastoral and peaceful, its familiarity illustrates No. 3 section's clumsy movements and nods to the first pages of the poem, in which Ball is compared to a sheep. Similarly, the pastoral English landscape is called upon as a contrasting image to the landscape at Mametz Wood: "The gentle slopes are green to remind you / of South English places, only far wider and flatter spread and grooved and harrowed criss-cross whitely and the disturbed subsoil heaped up albescent" (164). Casting the Somme's "grooved," "harrowed," and "disturbed subsoil" in light of a familiar landscape renders it in greater detail than would a description of this new landscape alone. Moreover, the contrast of South England's green hills with "whitely" and "albescent" soil suggests underlying barrenness to a landscape which, before it was overturned by the war, appeared as fertile as the one back home. These descriptors supplement "Part 7"'s emphasis on the chalky whiteness of the "deep protected way" that cuts through to the front lines and serves as a similar motif to Eliot's "white road" and to Margaret Sackville's "starkly white . . . long road" (153). Both of these similes, by using pastoral landscapes of the English countryside,

illustrate through juxtaposition while also suggesting uncomfortable and uncanny similarities between the war front and the familiar landscape of home.

Many of the similes in Part 7 call upon the reader's five senses to achieve all the more vivid imagery. For example, in the immediate aftermath of being wounded, John Ball feels blood dripping into his boot: "The warm fluid percolates between his toes and his left boot fills, as when you tread in a puddle" (183). The experience of a boot filling with blood after being wounded is related to the experience of stepping in water. The comparison recalls a familiar feeling, heightening the reader's identification with Ball's experience by evoking an inconvenience that has been experienced by most readers. The words "warm" "fluid" and "percolates" in combination with the specificity of "between his toes" and "left boot" bring to life the sensation of water filling one's shoe. Through this comparison, the reader feels what Ball feels. The simile succeeds in approximating Ball's sensory experience, allowing the reader to better envision his situation. Similarly, as the fog closes in, Jones declares of the hybrid Ball/second person narrator: "You sensed him near you just now, but that's more like a nettle to the touch; & on your left Joe Donkin walked, where only weeds stir to the night-gusts if you feel with your hand" (179). In this example, Jones makes dual-reference to sensory experience, commenting upon the likeness of a kind of sixth sense to the literal experience of touch. The bite of a stinging nettle illustrates the fear of an enemy soldier's nearness, again putting the reader on edge alongside Ball.

This kind of appeal to the sixth sense is used again a few pages later, when "In the very core and navel of the wood there seemed a vacuum, if you stayed quite still, as though you'd come on ancient stillness in his most interior place" (181). Here, the comparison to the five senses is removed altogether and Jones relies upon the reader's recollection of a particularly still

place in the middle of a forest. Asking the reader to bring to mind their own memory of the kind of immersion Ball experiences, Jones supplants a remembered sensory experience with the imagined one Ball encounters. This is immediately followed upon by the re-intrusion of active combat: “And high away and over, above the tree-roofing, indifferent to this harrowing of the woods, trundling projectiles intersect their arcs at the zenith” (181). The reader is re-immersed in the battle after their shared reprieve with Ball. The sensory experiences Jones draws upon in Part 7’s similes, whether appeals to literal or figurative “senses,” supplement the immersive experience of the second person narration by getting the reader to feel what Ball feels.

The epic simile communicates the horrors of combat in Part 7 by developing complex and detailed situations as sources. For example, as Ball and his companions huddle against the chalky earth, waiting for their turn to advance, Jones compares their position to men in a long-ship:

> And the place of their waiting a long burrow,
> in the chalk a cutting, a steep clift —
> but all but too shallow against his violence.
> Like in a long-ship, where you flattened face to kelson for the shock-breaking
> on brittle pavissed free-board, and the gunnel stove, and no care to jettison the
> dead. (155)

While conveying the narrowness of the Company’s position in a fissure of the chalky landscape, Jones references the naval might of the Vikings. But he also draws up a specific and immersive situation; the reader becomes the Viking crouching against the boat’s innermost support as it is pummeled under attack, the sounds of enemy fire ricocheting off the boat’s reinforced exterior and the stove at its hull. Already, this simile shows, the soldiers feel surrounded, so pinned down

that they can think only of flattening themselves to the ground to avoid a battleground that seems as a lurching sea around them. The third line of this comparison, "but all but too shallow against his violence," contributes to the disorientation described in this passage. As elsewhere in "Part 7," pronouns become blurred through imprecise syntax, and exactly who is doing or experiencing what is as unclear to the reader as it is to John Ball. Before "D" Company even enters the fray, then, "Part 7"'s first epic simile sets the stage for the overwhelming and disorienting nature of the battle by use of vivid description of the Vikings in the long-boat paired with syntactic vagueness.

In another epic simile, Jones comes as close to verisimilitude as he ever will — not to represent the war front, but to represent a situation which is *like* Ball's experience on the war front. Ball and his companions are in the forest now; having just witnessed a "First Field Dressing" and a flare with its "slow parabola" above the battle, the hybrid John Ball/second person narrator looks down to see the pallor of the men around him, the living no longer distinguished from the dead:

> And white faces lie,
> (like china saucers tilted run soiling stains half dry, when the
> moon shines on a scullery-rack and Mr. and Mrs. Billington
> are asleep upstairs and so's Vi — and any creak frightens you
> or any twig moving). (175)

The extended comparison between the white faces in Mametz Wood and this detailed portrait of the domestic creates a kind of ironic juxtaposition. On the one hand, Jones "open[s] the reader's mind to some sense of terror which it has experienced, by interweaving it with the domestic landscape" (Silkin 320). But the specificity of this "domestic landscape" takes on an air of

realism that goes beyond appeals to the reader's familiarity with like situations. Introducing characters otherwise unknown to the reader and describing in detail the appearance of saucers drying in the dish rack in the moonlight, Jones imbues the situation with realism. It registers as the kind of remembered image so vivid that it cannot be forgotten. (This is the kind of gnawing vividness, Jones hints, with which these soldiers will remember Mametz Wood.) The simile reflects cognitive dissonance on the part of John Ball: overwhelmed by the bloodshed surrounding him, he attempts to account for what he is witnessing in terms more familiar to *him*. This is Ball's first battle and the "domestic landscape" is as familiar to him as it may be to the reader. That the reader shares in the heightened adrenaline of a twig snapping in the night is a supplement to the irony of the battlefield looking like a kitchen in the moonlight.

As the battle progresses, Ball's grip on reality slackens and the mythic becomes increasingly apparent, culminating with The Queen of the Woods's entrance in the final pages of the poem. Yet Jones communicates even the fading of a sense of time and place through extended and detailed comparators. For example:

> And so till midnight and into the ebb-time when the spirit slips lightly from sick men and when it's like no-man's-land between yesterday and tomorrow and material things are but barely integrated and loosely tacked together, at the hour Aunt Woodman died and Leslie's Uncle Bartholomew, and Miss Woolly and Mrs. Evans and anybody you ever heard of and all these here lying begin to die on both parties (181).

In this simile, the slippage between time, life, and death is first communicated via a rather opaque source; the spirit leaving the body is compared to the "no-man's-land between yesterday and tomorrow" (181). Since no-man's-land is itself a wartime phenomenon, this comparison is

impenetrable to the civilian reader, even as it recalls the "kind of space between" that the poem purportedly attempts to describe (xv). But this vague comparison is immediately expounded upon through reference to the deaths of acquaintances, the specific identities of "Aunt Woodman," "Leslie's Uncle Bartholomew," "Miss Woolly and Mrs. Evans" all combined into a single moment of death (181). Though these specific identities are unfamiliar to the reader, the situation of a distant relative or a family friend passing away is brought to mind by these examples. If a single death like this is only a minor sting, the deaths of "anybody you ever heard of" occurring in rapid succession communicates the psychological impact of unknown soldiers falling around Ball (181). Even as this comparison elicits the death-by-a-thousand-cuts impact of bloodshed that Ball is experiencing on the battlefield, it underscores Ball's loss of grip on reality. The situation of the battle he is immersed in slips into the remembered situations of these acquaintances' deaths, suggesting that Ball is experiencing some cognitive dissonance and is trying to make sense of the battle by way of unrelated memories.

The simile is not alone in having an altered purpose and effect in "Part 7." Other kinds of figurative language operate in similar ways in this section of the poem, though their frequency does not increase in the way the frequency of the simile does. For example, as John Ball endures an agonizing seven minutes counting down to his Company's advance at the beginning of the section, he hears the beating of his heart:

> From deeply inward thumping all through you beating
> no peace to be still in
> and no one is there not anyone to stop
> can't anyone – someone turn off the tap
> or won't any one before it snaps (156).

The desperation of these lines and the feeling of your heart beating out of your chest, communicated by enjambment as well as the hastened run-on effect of the punctuation-free stream of consciousness, is supplemented by the imagery of the dripping tap. The end-sounds of "stop," "tap," and "snaps," recall water droplets hitting a basin, relying on auditory immersion to convey the urgency and adrenaline Ball experiences. Like this section's similes, this image contributes to the reader's immersion.

Even allusions in "Part 7" are newly transparent. For example, the soldiers "seek to distinguish men from walking trees and branchy moving like a Birnam copse" as they make their way through the forest during combat (179). Unlike Jones's other Shakespearean allusions, which by and large use *Henry V* to connect England's "medieval past to the imperial present" by way of often subtle nods to the play's details, this *Macbeth* reference is part of general public consciousness (Poole 91). The reference to Birnam wood will for most readers imbue the battle at Mametz Wood with the significance of Macbeth's fated demise. More immediately, it will communicate the confusion felt by Ball's Company as they mistake men for moving trees. By calling upon a shared cultural knowledge, Jones makes the impact of his allusion more immediate; gone is the part of the poem that requires a "serious researcher" (Eliot vii).

Part 7's similes contribute to the visceral quality of Jones's poeticized account of the battle at Mametz Wood. But it is a last, subtly articulated comparison in the final lines of Part 7 that returns to an important mode of comparison set up earlier in the poem. John Ball, wounded and slowly dragging himself away from the front lines, has begun to repeat to himself what has, by the poem's final stanzas, become almost a mantra: "Lie still under the oak." After this mantra's final repetition, Ball having reached his intended resting place, Jones leaves us with a final comparison:

Lie still under the oak

Next to the Jerry

and Sergeant Jerry Coke. (187)

After combat, these three identities – Ball, his comrades, and their foes – are leveled figuratively as well as quite literally. They lie side by side, the comrade Ball knows so similar to the German soldier next to them that they are both "Jerry," placed in parallel in successive lines. Ball's resting place beneath the oak is rhymed for the first time despite its now regular repetition, marrying Ball's own position, wounded but alive, with that of the dead sergeant. These lines convey that in the wake of combat, all are indistinguishable – friend from foe, living from dead. Yet even as Ball lies next to the two Jerrys, "The feet of the reserves going up tread level with your forehead" (187). These "green" soldiers (new, but also already marked with the terrors of the green wood they charge into) are the only ones different from those who lay on the ground. Mametz Wood has affected those who fought in it so deeply, Jones purports, that a wounded British soldier is more similar to a dead German than to a soldier like he was an hour ago.

"Like produces like." So says James Frazer in his theory of sympathetic magic. In a poem filled with likenesses – between the war front and memories of home, between the mythical past and the mechanized present, between the imagined and the real, between the traumatic and the beautiful – this truism subtly asserts itself. At the end of the battle, all are equalized and all are alike, the soldiers' movements having torn down the enemy and the self. Yet, Jones reminds us, this final likeness is not all; these men were alike all along. At the end of Part 6, before the battle, Jones tells us:

all the old women in Bavaria are busy with their novenas, you bet your life, and don't sleep lest the watch should fail, nor weave for the wire might trip his darling feet and the dead Karl might not come home.

Nor spill the pitcher at the well – he told Josef how slippery it was out there.

O clemens, O pia and

turn all out of alignment the English guns amen (149).

Jones's footnote to this passage cites Frazer's theory of sympathetic magic. Just as the mothers of England pray for the failure of German guns, so do the mothers of Germany pray for the failure of the English. These prayers, Jones intones, will lead only to mutual destruction.

Likeness between "us" and "them" was a common thread of commentary during the war. It can be found in poetry, both Catholic and not, and can also be found in the Catholic church's rhetoric (as discussed in this dissertation's introduction.) But where other examples of commentary on this theme tend to take one of two stances – either, *fighting each other is hypocritical and the war must be stopped* or *God supports our cause* – Jones treats it with considerable nuance. Written in the context of the distinctly Catholic and the distinctly feminine (these mothers sing *Salve Regina*), Jones casts these women sympathetically even as he comments on how the war has caused even the most pious and caring to resort to prayers for the other side to fall; he writes their prayers in a tenor that he himself believes in and respects even as he likens these prayers to sympathetic magic. *Salve Regina*, on the lips of these desperate mothers, is at once violent and deeply human. By drawing our attention to the likeness between these Bavarian Catholic mothers and those back home in England, Jones sets up the violence and the humanity that will resonate throughout Mametz Wood in the poem's following section.

Scholarship on *In Parenthesis* since *The Great War and Modern Memory* has discussed figurative language only in the context of qualifying the poem as a dense and historically embedded modernist masterpiece, by identifying complex and allusive iterations of figures of speech. Jones's use of the simile, in many cases, fits in with this commentary. Jones's similes are, at times, embedded in rich mythic or historic sources and serve complex narrative, formal, and thematic goals. In these cases, they fit in with other uses of figurative language in *In Parenthesis* by embedding the poem "in the tradition" and making the narrative more "dense" (Fussell 146, Reid 693). Yet just as frequently, similes are used to clarify. As I have discussed above, Part 7, especially, uses the simile to make combat more immediate and knowable to the reader through comparison to concise and transparent referents. Similes simplify complicated phenomena and make the narrative more transparent. Far from undermining arguments for *In Parenthesis's* status as a historically embedded modernist epic, however, Jones's varied deployments of the simile including both "high" and "low" usages support Jones's status as a premier modernist writer. Similes in all of their permutations – whether rewriting Homer and Milton, connecting the war front to the remote Welsh landscape where Jones worked and painted after the war, or embellishing a profanity – enrich Jones's project of the modernist epic.

CHAPTER IV:

"DEAD MAN'S BREAD": TRANSUBSTANTIATION IN FIRST WORLD WAR POETRY

The war front was a site where cultural practices were exchanged. Regiments of mixed religions were common and Catholic soldiers interacted with soldiers of other religions from a variety of countries. Soldiers regularly interacted with comrades of varying faiths and army chaplains served interfaith demographics (Mislin 828). Exchanges of faith also permeated the battlefield in unofficial ways. "Fiery slogans," such as "*Gott mit uns*" and "*Dieu est avec nous*" "had considerable social power, even among those who did not hold traditionally observed religious practices" (Houlihan "Religious Mobilization" 3-4). In addition to religious rhetoric like this, individuals brought Catholic practices to the battlefield "in their moments of deepest personal need," using rosaries in prayer and reciting the Lord's Prayer or "Ave Maria" for protection (Houlihan "Religious Mobilization" 1). Soldiers of varying faiths bore witness to these practices. The war front was a space of religious exchange and, at times, of religious tension.[18] Meanwhile, Catholicism was experiencing a "resurgence in the number of the faithful," especially in Northern France, partially due to these wartime exchanges but also because of Pope Benedict XV's advocacy (Brennan 2). One of the ways ideas related to Catholicism were shared – and an example of the "increased . . . public expression of faith" – was through poetry (Brennan 2).

Not only was Catholicism at large experiencing a resurgence, especially in France, but the importance of Holy Communion to the Catholic faith and to the ritual of Mass was reasserted at the beginning of the 20th century. Holy Communion, in which bread and wine are consecrated, is where transubstantiation happens; Catholics believe that the bread and wine are

[18] In particular, efforts were made to convert Jewish soldiers to Christianity (Mislin, Houlihan "Religious Mobilization" 10).

imbued with the body and blood of Christ. Pope Pius X, Pope from 1903-1914, is colloquially referred to as "Pope of the Eucharist" given the emphasis he placed upon the ritual of Holy Communion (Baum 138). In fact, "He may be said to have ushered in a Eucharistic Century" when "in 1905 [he] issued the decree for frequent Communion in general for all Christians, and in 1910, the decree on early and frequent Communion of children" (Baum 138). These two decrees brought transubstantiation to the forefront of both Catholic theology and tangible practice. And Pius X was unambiguous: "Holy Communion is the shortest and safest way to Heaven," he declared. Thus, even as Pope Benedict XV's appointment at the outset of the war brought changes to interpretations of doctrine – and significant changes to the church's relationship with the war effort[19] – the import of the Eucharist remained at the forefront of doctrinal concerns. By the start of the war, transubstantiation's significance had been successfully reasserted.

The kinds of exchanges that happened amongst a number of Western religions described above were perhaps most visceral with Catholicism. The Western Front itself was in a space wrought with Catholic imagery. The trenches ran across France and Belgium, both majority Catholic nations, and the war front therefore occupied distinctly Catholic spaces. It forced Catholic refugees overseas and, in France alone, destroyed close to 4,000 Catholic churches (Gearin 1). The war's impact upon Catholic France and Belgium led to the circulation of lore and patriotic rhetoric amongst Catholics and non-Catholics alike. For example, the half-destroyed Basilica in Albert, France featured a statue of the Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus, which was famously called the "Leaning Virgin" because the heavy fighting in the area had all but knocked it down (Fussell 142). The shelled cathedral produced "moral metaphor or . . . myth" in accounts

[19] See this dissertation's introduction for a detailed account of this relationship.

of the statue (Fussell 143). And where destruction of Cathedrals did not lead to literary moralizing or mythologizing, it produced patriotic rhetoric. When Reims Cathedral was shelled, for instance, the French responded by declaring that the Germans aimed "to destroy French culture" by targeting "a sacred national monument" (Gaehtgens, n.p.).[20] Since Catholic basilicas and cathedrals were viewed not only as places of worship but also as emblems of French culture, attacks on Catholic spaces were received as attacks on Frenchness. This made events like Reims easy to propagandize; both French and German propaganda intensified in the aftermath of the shelling (Gaehtgens, n.p.). As discussed in this dissertation's introduction, the British government even succeeded in presenting the cathedral's destruction as an Irish issue because of the Catholic connection. Many of those who built a story around the destruction of these churches were not Catholic, but found moral or political significance in this Catholic architecture nonetheless.

Catholic imagery was significant to Catholics and non-Catholics alike in the realm of poetry, as well. Immersed in Catholic spaces and oftentimes in Catholic regiments, soldier-poets drew inspiration from the symbolism around them. Take, for example, Wilfred Owen's "Le Christianisme," which describes one of the shelled churches on the front:

> So the church Christ was hit and buried
> Under its rubbish and its rubble.
> In cellars, packed-up saints lie serried,
> Well out of hearing of our trouble.

[20] In fairness to the Central Powers, this was a bit of a setup. The French were storing weapons in the Cathedral at Reims because they thought that the Germans wouldn't dare attack a sacred monument. This just goes to show the extent to which the sacred nature of Cathedrals was exploited in support of the war effort.

One Virgin still immaculate

Smiles on for war to flatter her.

She's halo'd with an old tin hat,

But a piece of hell will batter her.

Another example of this phenomenon can be found in Mary Borden's *The Forbidden Zone*. A war nurse, Borden also witnessed the destruction at the front and engaged the emblem of the Virgin Mary statue in her poetry to convey this destruction. The poem "The Virgin of Albert" describes the "Leaning Virgin" statue at the Basilica in Albert, France famously discussed by Paul Fussell:

Oh, the poor Virgin!

She is throwing herself from heaven;

She is plunging down from the high tower

With the child in her hands.

Like countless others (what Fussell describes as "hundreds of thousands of men," ignoring authors like Borden), Borden "responded with significant moral metaphors" (Fussell 143). Some authors read the statue as sacrificial, with Mary "throwing the Child down into the battle" whereas others interpreted it as a miraculous feat of hanging on (Fussell 143). Borden essentially falls into the first camp, but the act of throwing does not read as sacrificial:

With the child in her terrible pointing hands,

She is diving down;

She will dash the child down, on to the stones

of the desolate abandoned street.

Language like "terrible pointing hands" and "dash the child down" conveys nefarious motivation. Likewise, Mary's motivation for the dive, "divine despair," implies suicide rather than sacrifice. The sense of futility Borden's poem evidences is, as Fussell points out, only one of many responses to this specific Basilica. Across the front, non-Catholic authors were making what Fussell calls "moral metaphor or . . . myth" out of Catholic spaces. These spaces were ascribed near-religious significance by a wide variety of authors who were not of Catholic faith but were in proximity to culturally significant emblems of Catholicism, like Owen and Borden. Likewise, non-combatant poets who were exposed to discussions about Catholicism – often surrounding Belgian Catholic refugees or because they were immersed in the French Roman Catholic revival (as in the case of Katherine Mansfield, discussed below) – applied traditionally Catholic symbolism to otherwise secular poems. This chapter examines how one particular analogy – that of transubstantiation – was used by a diverse set of authors to achieve essentially the same goals.

To understand how transubstantiation is deployed by the authors discussed in this chapter, it is important to understand the rite's significance in Catholicism. Transubstantiation is most literal and most important in Catholicism. Catholics "believe in the real presence" of Jesus in the bread and wine (Petruzzello, n.p.) The Eucharist "emphasize[s] the intimate relationship between Jesus and the communicant" and is one of the most important Catholic rituals because it is believed to be a literal transformation (Petruzzello, n.p.).[21] Though Protestant sects vary in

[21] In contrast, Protestants do not agree with Catholics that the bread and wine are transubstantiated into body and blood, though some Protestant sects like Anglicans and Lutherans still believe in Christ's "real presence" when they take Communion. This is a complicated distinction, debated even amongst clergy, but the short version is that Anglicans and Lutherans believe in consubstantiation, in which Christ is present "in, with, and under" the bread and wine – but importantly does not *transform* into bread or wine. Many Protestants, then, believe that Christ is present in the Eucharist, but they disagree with Catholics about the *manner* in which the bread and wine become body and blood (Douglas 427). In other Protestant sects, Christ's presence in the Holy Communion is removed altogether. This stems from the Protestant Reformation, during which both Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin "rejected the role of the sacraments in obtaining grace" (Petruzzello, n.p.).

their beliefs about Christ's "real presence" and about the importance of sacrament, they agree on one front: that transubstantiation is not part of the Holy Communion ritual. Because transubstantiation is a uniquely Catholic aspect of the Eucharist, its use in war poetry is particularly interesting. Tracing how and where it is referenced can show the influence of Catholic theology and symbolism on First World War poets.

Though scholarship on representations of transubstantiation in poetry exists, most focus on works from before the Reformation. Transubstantiation's role in the literature of Early Modern England is particularly well studied. Sophie Read's 2013 book *Eucharist and the Poetic Imagination in Early Modern England* is one example, but individual studies of its role in the works of authors like Milton (King 41) and Robert Southwell (Eggert 55) also exist. Likewise, transubstantiation in Middle English poetry has received critical attention, evidenced by publications on authors like Chaucer (Costa 27), Robert Mannyng (Garrison 894-5), and Shakespeare (Dean 281). A few works on transubstantiation in modernist literature complement this larger body of work on Middle English and Early Modern poetry. Most notably, Douglas Burnham and Enrico Giaccherini's 2005 book *The Poetics of Transubstantiation: from Theology to Metaphor* engages transubstantiation in a variety of religious and secular contexts, with special interest in how the concept is used as metaphor. Chapters in this volume include readings of Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf. Though some of these readings use transubstantiation not as a concept related to the Eucharist but as a term for transformation of essence (as opposed to transformation of appearance), each puts the concept of transubstantiation into conversation with modernist form.

The concept of transubstantiation has not been commented on in the works of any of the authors this chapter discusses with the exception of David Jones, whose use of transubstantiation

as a metaphor for artistic creation in his later works has been well-studied. Where scholarship on the significance of transubstantiation is lacking, however, other commentary on the authors I analyze helps contextualize my readings on transubstantiation. At the outset of my reading of each poem, I provide a brief overview of relevant critical sources. In the case of the non-Catholic poets discussed in this chapter – Mansfield, Graves, and Owen – scholarship on their various relationships with Catholicism remains sparse. For example, some research has been conducted into Mansfield's peculiar relationship with the French Catholic literary revival and into Owen's tourism of Catholic churches in France immediately prior to the war. But both of these avenues of inquiry are relatively recent (from the past ten years) and have not (yet) made it into the best-known biographies of these authors. There is significant space, then, for the continued study of Catholic influences upon the non-Catholic authors in this chapter. By overlooking the transubstantiation metaphor, scholars have also overlooked a widespread knowledge of rituals specific to Catholicism that is evidenced in works by major authors like Mansfield, Graves, and Owen. The interest in Catholicism and its specific sacramental practices shown on the part of these authors shows the widespread cultural influence of Catholicism on authors depicting the Western Front.

This chapter charts the significance and use of the transubstantiation metaphor in two contexts: Catholic Great War poetry and non-Catholic Great War poetry. First, I discuss depictions of transubstantiation by the two Catholic authors discussed in this dissertation's first two chapters. I investigate David Jones' understanding of transubstantiation in both secular and religious contexts, drawing examples from his letters, his visual art, and his poetry. Then, returning to my thesis regarding the value of reading Margaret Sackville's volume holistically, I trace the use of the transubstantiation metaphor across her poems and describe how it connects

with the volume's overarching moral message. Turning to secular authors, I analyze Katherine Mansfield's sonnet "To L.H.B.," close reading it with the influence of the French Catholic Revival on Mansfield in mind. Next, I compare "To L.H.B." to a remarkably similar sonnet by Robert Graves, "The Morning before the Battle," published also in 1916. Finally, I discuss Wilfred Owen's poem "The City Lights" (or "The City Lights along the Waterside"). Using the revised manuscript of the poem from his stay at Craiglockhart, I compare this poem's religious symbolism against Owen's other work from the same period.

I find that transubstantiation was a metaphor that was used broadly. It was engaged by Catholics and non-Catholics, by combatants and non-combatants, and by authors from around the world. As is to be expected, these usages question the compatibility of war and religious faith, but they also comment upon the soldier's role in the war effort. Almost universally, the transubstantiation analogy is deployed to represent the metamorphosis of the soldier into either fodder or nourishment for the war effort. As a point of transformation from flesh and blood into food, transubstantiation as a metaphor is apt for the exploration of what exactly death feeds during wartime. More, the metaphor signals a blurring of boundaries between life and death. By focusing on the moment of conversion, the authors in this study emphasize the proximity of these states of being.

This chapter also shows that transubstantiation was used as metaphor by both Catholic and secular authors to comment upon human actions and human suffering. Even as Catholic authors engage other language related to religious belief when portraying the war's impacts, their use of the Eucharist metaphor comments upon human rather than divine actions. By portraying humans as agents of action in these metaphors, these Catholic authors emphasize human responsibility even as they supplement descriptions of the war with religious ideology and

motifs. Likewise, the use of the transubstantiation metaphor in entirely secular contexts by non-Catholic authors shows that these authors were familiar enough with Catholicism to know the specifics of its sacraments and found its ideas resonant enough – both culturally and personally – to engage them when portraying the war. This interest in Catholicism for its resonant motifs, echoed also in Mansfield's and Owen's biographies as discussed in the sections on these authors below, is an early iteration of a trend toward flirting with or even converting to Catholicism which would continue into the 1920s. This trend was participated in by some of the foremost authors of literary modernism, as discussed in this dissertation's introduction. This chapter shows that some of these flirtations were happening as early as 1914, as is the case with Owen.

I. Transubstantiation in David Jones and Margaret Sackville's Poetry

The only significant scholarship on transubstantiation and Great War poetry involves David Jones' use of the concept across his poetry, visual artwork, and letters. Transubstantiation plays an important and relatively frequent role in Jones' oeuvre and is extrapolated from its sacramental context to a philosophical one. In addition to finding significance in transubstantiation's religious context, Jones uses the concept as a model for how art interacts with what it represents. In a letter to his friend Jim Ede from 1943, Jones compares the Protestant model, in which "the Eucharistic rite was a re-presentation only of a historical event" against an Orthodox theologian's explanation that transubstantiation "actually was that historic event." Referencing Walter Benjamin, he intones that art is more than a representation: the painter transubstantiates the canvas and the paint into mountains, so to speak. This perspective places incredible significance on the artist's role of creation.

Critics have commented upon the relationship between this concept of art-making as transubstantiation and on the role that transubstantiation plays in Jones' poetry and visual art.

Thomas Goldpaugh, for example, connects the idea of re-presentation to the relationship between past and present (i.e., the artist re-presents something that "he . . . 'recalls'") to argue that Jones' second epic poem, *The Anathemata*, "can be seen as Jones' attempt to achieve anamnesis through an act of transubstantiation" (17, 3). Goldpaugh connects transubstantiation to "fusing form and content," evidencing how Jones was concerned with the latter at the same time as the former was entering his writing (18). Another critic, Alison Milbrank, contextualizes Jones' "language of liturgy, sacrament and transubstantiation" by connecting it with "the context of the modernist understanding of historical fracture" (62). She argues that readers, especially Christian ones, are tempted to read or view his work as "seamless[ly] sacramental," where in fact, the ability to make sacramental references relevant to the context of modernism involves "difficulty" that should not be overlooked (Milbrank 62). Likewise, Jack Dudley argues that for Jones, modernisms' techniques – especially of "juxtaposition, allusion, and parataxis to create newness" – are "religious in structure and nature" (106). Importantly, however, Dudley explains that for Jones, the kind of presence that art achieves is not "in the theological sense of real presence;" rather, the relationship between the process of creating art and transubstantiation are linked by analogy (106, referencing Jones' "Art and Sacrament"). Transubstantiation as a form of art-making is a metaphor for Jones, not a literalism.

Dudley's point is an important one, and one that may be easily overlooked in Jones' aforementioned letter to Jim Ede. But immediately after explaining his theory of art-as-transubstantiation through the lens of Benjamin's theory of re-presentation, Jones writes, "But of course, these ideas are full of holes & difficulties & cannot be pushed far in any direction but that there <u>is</u> an analogous truth I'm certain. It is a principle which all good artists accept unconsciously. Whoever they are & to whatever civilization they belong, it need have, of course,

no immediate connection with that particular theological Xtian[22] doctrine." Despite an understandable desire on the part of critics to ascribe consistent meaning to Jones' ideas about transubstantiation, the truth is that Jones grappled extensively with what he himself meant. As Goldpaugh points out, Jones' "aesthetic developed in three stages" between 1919 and 1940 (3). His ideas about the relationship between form and content, the relationship between artist and artwork, and the relationship between sacramental rhetoric and art-making all changed and grew during these shifts in aesthetic. At the time that he was writing *In Parenthesis*, he was still only just beginning to think about how the relationship between form and content operated in literature: "writing to Rene Hague in 1973, [Jones] said that he 'began *In Parenthesis* . . . with no other idea than to find out . . . in what fashion these problems of "form" and "content" cropped up in this totally different media of written words'" (Goldpaugh 11, citing Jones' letter to Rene Hague). Jones wrote *In Parenthesis*, which I discuss an excerpt from below, at a moment in his career before he had embraced transubstantiation as a metaphor for the seamless integration of form and content. Instead, he wrote *In Parenthesis* at a time when he was actively integrating the relationship between form and content – as well as the meaning of transubstantiation to his work – into his aesthetic, as I will demonstrate.

Jones' burgeoning interest during the period he was writing *In Parenthesis* in the relationship between form and content in poetry is evidenced in the introduction of the poem and in his letters from the period to his friend Jim Ede. As Goldpaugh points out, the *Preface* "discusses the issue of form and content, raising the question of what matter is available within the current civilization" (11). Both the *Preface* and his letters to Ede convey a dual fascination and frustration with problems of form which border on the obsessive. At the most basic level,

[22] "Christian" – this replacement is used elsewhere by Jones as well.

Jones was concerned with achieving what he was already comfortable doing as a visual artist – to "make a shape with words" (*In Parenthesis*, x). A letter to Ede from February 1936 (earlier in the year when *In Parenthesis* was published) evidences similar concern with visual form: "It is imperative that he[23] should print it, from every point of view, as the Typographical form of it will be important" (L.26.1977, 1). But the needs of the poem's content get in the way of this shape; as he writes in the *Preface*, "There are passages which I would exclude, as not having the form I desire" (*In Parenthesis,* x). More broadly in the *Preface*, Jones laments having to subordinate formal freedom to the demands of content. In a passage which takes up nearly an entire page of the seven-page *Preface*, he explains the formal choices he has made for both aesthetic and practical reasons. Some practical constraints he notes throughout the *Preface* include incorporating "notes of exclamation, interrogation, etc., when the omission of such signs would completely obscure the sense," being "hampered by the convention of not using impious and impolite words," and, most pointedly, "hav[ing] been prevented" from incorporating original engravings (xi-xiii). These concerns are mirrored in his letters from just before and just after the poem's publication. In the same letter to Ede, he writes that "publishers are the very devil" and explains that the only way to have a say in a text's printing is "to say 'this is how it is going to be printed, you can publish it if you like!!'" (L.26.1977, 1). In May of 1937, just after the poem was published, Jones writes to Ede again. This time, he laments, "it is nothing like I hoped it [would][24] look . . . somehow when all is said & done – publishers get their own way & there it is" (L.36.1977, 1-2). These creative differences are reflected in his comments about being prevented from incorporating engravings. He writes that the problem, despite his publisher being

[23] Jones is referring to René Hague. Hague was a printer and scholar who met Jones in Monmouthshire in the mid-1920s and printed *In Parenthesis* in 1937 at his Pigotts Press. He was an important figure in Jones' life and provided commentary and editing for a number of Jones' works ("Hague, René").
[24] Jones likely intends to write "would" here but his handwriting is unclear.

"very considerate," is that "my idea of a book is, I find, rather different from theirs" (L.36.1977, 1-2, emphasis Jones's). His struggles with form, therefore, involve dual constraints: practical constraints related to readerly understandability and creative differences with his publisher.[25]

Form and the manner in which it contributes to the text's shape take on multiple, related meanings for Jones. His fascination with form evidences an already unique and thoughtful approach to the subject around the time *In Parenthesis* was published. He understands form from the perspectives of both a visual artist and a poet. As with Jones' visual art, he is concerned with creating literal shapes. The discrepancy between his understanding of what a book should be and his publishers' involves his desire to present his poem as visually engaging upon first glance. In this sense, form for Jones in 1936 precedes and supersedes content: the first thing the reader should see is the very literal "shape" of the poem. At the same time, Jones is of course aware that form is inextricably tied to content and discusses form in the sense that it is typically understood in literary studies: as a set of creative choices which interact intimately with and supplement the meaning of the content. To this end, he notes how he has tried to use subtle formal shifts "to indicate some change, inflexion, or emphasis" (*Preface*, xi). In short, form takes on multiple meanings. The most important of these meanings is synonymous with form in visual art – the literal shape of the text. The second meaning is form as a tool for inflecting content – form as it is integrated into the text. The third is an understanding of form as something which blurs with content, which involves both above meanings. For example, he comments that "impious and impolite words" "have . . . of necessity become part of the form this writing has taken" (*Preface* xii). Here, form means both the literal and figurative shape of the text – how visual aesthetics, formal inflection, and content come together to create an impression of the war for the reader.

[25] In this latter sense, form relates directly to visual form – the way the text and any accompanying images are presented to the reader.

This is what Jones means when he calls *In Parenthesis* "a shape in words" (*Preface* x). This final, synthesized understanding of form is important because it has bearing upon his use of transubstantiation as a metaphor, both in *In Parenthesis* and later.

As we have already seen, transubstantiation for Jones comes to mean the artist's seamless integration of form and content as he produces the work of art, and his descriptions in *In Parenthesis* of the transubstantiation of John Ball's regiment anticipate this later meaning. Transubstantiation comes to mean *taking shape*, as I will demonstrate via two examples below.

The opening of Part 3 of *In Parenthesis* sets the scene for the upcoming reference to transubstantiation. John Ball is marching with his regiment towards the front after a period of relative inaction. Part 3 opening with a reference to the rituals of Good Friday:

> Proceed . . . without lights . . . prostrate before it . . . he
> begins without title, silently, immediately . . . in a low voice,
> omitting all that is usually said. No blessing is asked, neither
> is the kiss of peace given . . . he sings alone. (27, *elipses Jones'*)

In this passage, "D" Company is, for the first time, given directions with some urgency. After the waiting around of Part 2, command is at last given with a stripped-down sense of purpose. The ellipses, indicating pauses in the passage, also convey the efficiency of the language in which the company is told to get down and move forward in darkness. Already in the first line, the phrase "prostrate before it" hints at the religious symbolism so important to the opening of Part 3. This phrase is literal in addition to its religious overtones, indicating that the company must move while low to the ground. This meaning is complemented by what Jones identifies in a footnote as a reference to "Good Friday Office (Rubrics), Roman Rite" – the instructions given to the Company are compared at the end of the passage to Catholic Good Friday services (*Notes–Part*

3, 194). "No blessing is asked" refers to the fact that Catholic rituals are without Mass on Good Friday – rather, service typically involves only the Stations of the Cross. Similarly, the reference to "the kiss of peace given" refers to how, on Good Friday, the ritual of wishing "peace be with you" – originally accompanied by a kiss in Roman Catholicism – is not part of the service. Instead, the rituals of Catholicism are stripped down. Though the congregation gathers, neither Mass nor the Eucharist take place and the church bells do not ring. It is a silent affair overall, and one which removes the sacrament involving transubstantiation. Jones' reference to Good Friday contributes to the sense of efficiency, purpose, and importance described in the opening of Part 3. But it also foregrounds and juxtaposes the description of transubstantiation later on the same page.

As he marches towards the front, John Ball sees the busywork "D" Company has been doing taking shape before him:

> For John Ball there was in this night's parading, for all the fear in it, a kind of blessedness, here was borne away with yesterday's remoteness, an accumulated tedium, all they'd piled on since enlistment day: a whole unlovely order this night would transubstantiate, lend some grace to. (*Part 3*, 27)

At last marching through the trenches is accompanied by "fear" but also by a sense of clarity and purpose that were not evident to John Ball in Parts 1 and 2. This clarity derives from the transformation of individual tasks ("all they'd piled on since enlistment day") into a cohesive whole ("a whole unlovely order"). For the first time, Ball can see everything his Company has done so far as serving a single purpose.

In this passage, transubstantiation is already about form, and it already hints at a meaning related to the integration of form and content. On the most obvious level, it is about form in the sense that it involves a set of tasks, previously seemingly disjointed, being revealed to form a whole. Ball experiences something akin to what Jones hopes he has created by making a "shape in words"; he watches pieces be transformed into a whole. But the actions of the soldiers in previous days are not all that take on a new shape in this passage; the soldiers themselves take the shape of a cohesive parade. Even more important is the way the text itself transforms. Where earlier on the page, the narrative was disjointed and strung together with ellipses, here, the text flows fluidly in paragraph style and indicates clear cause and effect with the use of the colon. Unlike Good Friday Rites, which commemorate death and involve a stripped-down Mass without church bells or Communion, Ball's rendering of the affair focuses on what has been created through his Company's work and recounts the scene with alliterative musicality.[26] This rendering anticipates the later meaning of transubstantiation that Jones writes about in his letters, one in which the author seamlessly integrates form and content.

It is important to note that this passage is, for reasons unrelated to forms or shapes, a controversial one. This is because Paul Fussell discussed it in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (and therefore it must be debated endlessly). Fussell has been criticized for reading the passage's religious "metaphors as 'doctrinal and chivalric' . . . claiming they contribute to Jones's redemptive project for the war" (Dudley 110). This is part of a broader, oft-repeated criticism that Fussell inappropriately reads Jones as defending and even celebrating the war effort, when a more thoughtful and contemporary reading contends that Jones is concerned with representing the experience of the soldier without casting moral judgment. Instead of celebrating

[26] For example, 'the thumb at seam smart cut away from the small' and 're-numbering re-dressing two-inch overlap pernickety poshers-up' (Ibid.)

the war effort in this passage, Dudley argues, Jones uses his "characteristic ambiguity" to complicate the passage's doctrinal imagery: "Ball anticipates grace to come" but "The poetic voice . . . immediately undoes these expectations in the lines that follow" using phrases like "its an *ungracious* way of life," "a *kind* of blessedness," "lend *some* grace to" (Dudley 110, citing Jones *IP*, emphasis Dudley's). Just as important as the qualification of blessedness with words like "kind" and "some" is the passage's perspective and actors. First, though readings of *In Parenthesis* which completely conflate John Ball's voice with Jones' are all-too-common, it is not in fact the "poetic voice" that does the blessing (Dudley 110). The sense of blessedness is clearly "for John Ball" (Jones *IP* 27). It is from Ball's perspective and speaks to his perception as the sentence points out at its opening. Moreover, the passage's transubstantiation comes not from the divine but rather from the night itself: "the night would transubstantiate, lend some grace to" (Jones). The passage is not "doctrinal and chivalric" because it is not about religion at all. Rather, it uses the *language* of Catholicism as analogy and descriptor. Regardless, Dudley makes an important point: this event "seems to preface [Jones's] understanding of sacrament and art" because "Transubstantiation, so we think, graces our sufferings." In addition to anticipating the ways in which Jones aims to create shapes in art and literature, then, the passage hints at the role of the artist becoming, for Jones, one of grace-giving.

One final, important way this transubstantiation metaphor operates is to create a boundary point. Like other authors discussed in this chapter, Jones uses the transubstantiation metaphor at a boundary between life and death. Fully entering the space of the war front for the first time at the opening of Part 3, the soldiers already seem to Ball to be transformed into a cohesive whole in which individuality is stripped away. At the same time, they are "like gravediggers," the profession perhaps closest associated with occupying a boundary point

between life and death. The closer the Company goes to the front lines, the smaller this distance between life and death becomes and the less soldiers appear as individuals – instead, they become part of the war machine. Later, the connection between transubstantiation and the moment between life and death will be articulated more clearly: "When a soldier 'sinks on one knee / and now on the other, / his upper body tilt[ed] in rigid inclination' (166), his death here is presented as if he was taking the Eucharist at the Catholic rite of Communion" (Kiczenski 13). Though the soldier is the one doing the consuming, here, rather than the one being consumed, Jones connects the Eucharist with the moment of transformation from life to death here in the vein of the other poets in this chapter.

The above passages are not the only place in *In Parenthesis* where the transformation of commensurate parts into a whole is associated with taking on a new form or shape. In the poem's *Preface*, Jones devotes a page to describing his "companions in the war" and discussing what it was like to be part of a Company (x). He notes how varied his fellow soldiers' identities and backgrounds were, noting particularly the differences between the Londoner and Welsh soldiers. He writes, "no two groups could well be more dissimilar" (x). In spite of this dissimilarity, he describes them becoming a whole. He writes that he watched "them shape together to the remains of an antique regimental tradition" and "react to the few things that united us – the same jargon, the same prejudice against 'other arms' and against the Staff, the same discomforts, the same grievances . . . oneself apart of them" (x). Like the description in *Part 3* of seemingly disconnected actions coming together to form a whole in the face of the war front, Jones describes his own company transforming from a set of unconnected and diverse individuals into a single, cohesive shape. This passage provides yet another example of how Jones was already interested in the transformation of parts into wholes. He observes this kind of transformation at

this stage with a kind of wonder; later in his career he will view his own role as artist as a transubstantiator of shapes.

For Jones, then, the most important meaning of transubstantiation in *In Parenthesis* is the process through which pieces of something take on a cohesive form and create a whole. But his use of transubstantiation as an analogy or descriptor for this process in the context of the Great War also raises the same questions about the compatibility between war and religion that the other usages of it analyzed in this chapter do. Because Jones was a Catholic poet, it is natural to read Catholic imagery in his work sympathetically and to view it as a celebration of at least certain aspects of the war effort, as Fussell does. But Catholicism for Jones holds power in awesome and terrible ways and is engaged to make sense of both the beautiful and the horrible. It serves as a lens for describing the war, not as an apology for it or even explanation of its origins. How Jones feels about the war cannot be identified in his decision to use his own predominant worldview, his religion, to describe it. Catholicism is simply one of many lenses – alongside his knowledge of mythology and literature, in particular – he used to render the war a "shape in words."

A few references to Margaret Sackville's poem "Sacrament" can be found in secondary scholarship. As discussed in this dissertation's first chapter, Sackville's poems have appeared with relative frequency in anthologies of Great War poetry – and especially of women's Great War poetry. Though poems from *Pageant of War* have received increasing scholarly attention over the past ten years, only the same few poems anthologies select – "Nostra Culpa," "A Memory," and "Reconciliation" – have been used as examples of women's Great War poetry or as comparator texts. "Sacrament," Sackville's poem involving transubstantiation, has therefore received relatively little scholarly attention. References to it crop up in a 1998 article on

motherhood in Great War elegies by Jan Montefiore, a 2019 Master's thesis on Sackville by Madelein Descamps, and a short 2006 piece on religion in women's Great War poetry by Vicky Simpson.

Of these sources, the first two involve an important misreading. Montefiore connects Sackville's "Biblical image of the Lord trampling the grapes of wrath" with "Macbeth's apprehension that not even the ocean will cleanse his bloody hands, enforcing a powerful sense of guilt" (377). Montefiore's argument about God trampling grapes, however, is a misreading. As Simpson points out, the line "'Yet doth he tread the foaming grapes no less' . . . astutely uses a lower-case letter for the masculine pronoun, implying that humans, not God, are to blame for the bloodshed" (10). This is in keeping with Sackville's insistence throughout the volume that the war is the responsibility of humans alone. It is also a good example of the point I make in this dissertation's first chapter: that Sackville's war poems must be read in the context of *Pageant of War* as a whole. When Sackville's war poems are read in a vacuum, it is easy to mistake commentary upon human responsibility in poems like "Sacrament" for commentary upon divine responsibility. Likewise, Descamps claims that "Sacrament" "shows Sackville's wavering belief in God as she is incapable of understanding why, when so many men have died already, God does not intervene to put an end to the conflict" (55). There is no evidence of a "wavering belief in God" in "Sacrament" or in any of Sackville's other war poems, however. Instead, "Sacrament" begins with appeals to God to end the suffering the war has brought as Descamps intones but by the poem's end, the appeal has been turned to fellow humans. As in many of Sackville's poems, the final line of "Sacrament" emphasizes collective responsibility: the tears cried by all those culpable for the war cannot account for the damage already caused. Guilt

cannot erase sin. As Simpson writes, the poem in fact “sharply delineates between religious rites and war” (10).

“Sacrament” reads:

Before the Altar of the world in flower,
Upon whose steps thy creatures kneel in line,
We do beseech Thee in this wild Spring hour,
Grant us, O Lord, thy wine. But not this wine.

Helpless, we, praying by Thy shimmering seas,
Beside Thy fields, whence all the world is fed,
Thy little children clinging about Thy knees,
Cry: 'Grant us, Lord, Thy bread!' But not this bread.

This wine of awful sacrifice outpoured;
This bread of life — of human lives. The Press
Is overflowing, the Wine-Press of the Lord! . .
Yet doth he tread the foamings no less.

These stricken lands! The green time of the year
Has found them wasted by a purple flood,
Sodden and wasted everywhere, everywhere; —
Not all our tears may cleanse them from that blood.

"Sacrament" portrays the outcome of transubstantiation rather than the moment of transformation. In keeping with the other poems discussed in this chapter, the metamorphosis of the soldier into fodder for the war effort is a major theme, but in the moment the poem records, the soldiers have already become the bread and wine that serve as sustenance for the war effort. Why? Because, as I have identified above, "Sacrament" is concerned with human responsibility. The speakers of this poem petition God for wine and bread but insist upon it being "not this wine" and "not this bread." This shows the hypocrisy of the war effort and provides a lesson in reaping what you sow. Instead of accepting the outcome of the bloodshed they have caused, the speakers ask God to intervene to solve a problem they themselves have created. Sackville characterizes this poem's Catholic speakers as wanting the rewards of religion with none of the responsibility. They don't want to focus on bodies turning to bread; they simply want the nourishment of the bread itself.

Moreover, referencing transubstantiation *after* the moment of change de-emphasizes the soldier's likeness to Jesus and emphasizes the soldier's likeness to food. As Simpson remarks, "she transforms the illusion, the symbolic convention of 'bread of life' into the realistic 'human lives', reminding her reader that there is nothing abstract or idealized about war" (10). Simpson makes an important point: "Sacrament" makes the food/body comparison literal rather than analogic. What Simpson misses, however, is that this literalization is entirely in keeping with the teachings of transubstantiation in Sackville's own faith: for Catholics, the bread *really is* the body of Jesus. The title reminds us of this, with "Sacrament" referring to the role of divinity in the transformation. Of course, some level of metaphor remains in Sackville's poem; she does not claim that civilians are literally drinking the blood of soldiers. However, there is a slippage between metaphor and literalism. In the final stanza, the landscape is "wasted by a purple flood,"

with the descriptor "purple" pointing to wine rather than blood. In the following lines, however, the "purple flood" is made literal: "Sodden and wasted everywhere, everywhere; — / Not all our tears may cleanse them from that blood." At the end of the poem, the "sodden and wasted" landscape is the very real landscape of the front, and wine and blood are one and the same. Describing transubstantiation's after-effects plays down the comparison of soldiers to Christ (and thus any implicit suggestion of religious martyrdom on their part) and allows Sackville to linger upon the war effort's consumption of bodies. By the end of the poem, the extent to which this consumption is literal is made clear.

The war effort and Catholic faith are incompatible for Sackville. She makes this clear throughout *Pageant of War*, going so far as to call complicity with the war effort "blaspheming God" ("Nostra Culpa"). "Sacrament" contributes to this anti-war, pro-faith message. However, in order for this message to be received, readers must register the poem's critique of Catholics turning to God for help in undoing the damage that they themselves created. Unfortunately, as evidenced by the misreadings in Montefiore and Descamps pieces, the poem's critical tone is all too easy to overlook when read outside of the context of the volume. But this criticism becomes clearer when we examine the manner of comparison between soldiers and Jesus. As Simpson writes, Sackville is "playing with the perception of the 'awful sacrifice' as both something to be revered or wondered at, and something unthinkably atrocious" (10). However, what Simpson reads as a duality can be more logically read within the context of *Pageant of War* as a juxtaposition. Sackville is indeed drawing upon the double-meaning of "awful," but is contrasting the wonder of Christ's sacrifice against the atrocious death of soldiers. The poem comments upon how inappropriate it is to view the death of soldiers as a spectacle of Christlike sacrifice. The death of soldiers can't be seen as symbolic; it is all too common and the blood all

too literal. “Sacrament” critiques how Catholic civilians are being nourished by the death of other Catholics. This is one of the key ways in which Sackville denounces the war effort as blasphemous.

While both David Jones and Margaret Sackville are Catholic authors, both use the concept of transubstantiation outside of its sacramental context. For Jones, transubstantiation takes on a broader meaning related to the integration of parts, achieved by the night itself in his passage from “Part 3” and, in later works, by the artist himself. Sackville’s transubstantiation is also incited by humans rather than God, with those complicit with the war machine squeezing wine from the bodies of soldiers. Despite using transubstantiation as an analogy outside of the context of the Eucharist ritual, however, both authors situate their use of the metaphor within distinctly Catholic contexts. For Jones, the metaphor supplements and juxtaposes references to Good Friday rituals; for Sackville, transubstantiation is enabled by the repetition of the Lord’s Prayer. While these Catholic authors integrate their transubstantiation metaphors into faith-based frameworks for conceptualizing the war, however, neither portrays God as responsible for the war effort. By using transubstantiation as an analogy – if one grounded in faith-based knowledge – Catholic authors engaged Catholic audiences without shifting blame away from the humans who incited, participated in, and enabled the war effort.

II. Transubstantiation beyond Catholic Poetry

New Zealand modernist author Katherine Mansfield was influenced by the Great War and borrowed Catholic imagery to portray its effects. Getting “a privileged perspective on the effects of the war at first hand” by “travell[ing] alone into the war zones” and living through multiple waves of Parisian air raids, Mansfield was affected by the war even before the death of her brother, Leslie, who was killed during training in 1915 (Kelly 2). These experiences shaped

Mansfield's work both explicitly and inexplicitly: she wrote about the war in works like "To L.H.B (1894-1915)," "An Indiscreet Journey," and "The Fly," but also "acknowledge[d] the unintentional influence of the ongoing war on her own rhetorical structures, using the metaphors of creeping, oozing and trickling to describe its pervading effects" (Kelly 2-4). Though she was not personally religious, Catholicism played an important role in Mansfield's biography. Celebrated by the "perpetrators of the [French] Catholic revival," Mansfield inadvertently became a figurehead for the French Catholic reaction against modernism despite being "now generally regarded as one of the forerunners of twentieth-century Modernism" (Kimber *TVFF* 182). Despite attempts made by her cousin after the war, Mansfield never converted to Catholicism; she instead embraced from "as early as 1908 . . . opinions which today we might almost term 'new age'" and was influenced in her spiritualism by "her deep fascination with the Orient and its traditions" (Kimber "A Child of the Sun" 49, Kimber "Tea, Zen, and Cosmic Anatomy" 11). Though the importance of Catholicism to influences by and upon Mansfield's biography is well-established, her incorporation of Catholic imagery has been largely overlooked. The following reading demonstrates how Mansfield uses the idea of transubstantiation in her sonnet "To L.H.B (1894-1915)" to describe the war's "pervading effects" (Kelly 2).

"To L.H.B. (1894-1915)" represents the nonlinear process of mourning by emphasizing transitions and transformations. Moreover, this process is described through oscillation between states of dreaming and waking. Boundaries between states of being and linear sequences become confused for both the speaker and the reader. Like "many poems . . . In the modernist tradition" that "thematize dreams or try to adopt their form," Mansfield's sonnet employs both formal and thematic elements to mimic the process of navigating a dream (Mønster 1). Subverting the

structure of the sonnet, Mansfield blurs the boundary between states of consciousness and unconsciousness.

"To L.H.B. (1894-1915)" uses sonnet form to evoke the state of being between sleep and waking:

> Last night for the first time since you were dead
> I walked with you, my brother, in a dream.
> We were at home again beside the stream
> Fringed with tall berry bushes, white and red.
> "Don't touch them: they are poisonous," I said.
> But your hand hovered, and I saw a beam
> Of strange, bright laughter flying round your head
> And as you stooped I saw the berries gleam.
> "Don't you remember? We called them Dead Man's Bread!"
> I woke and heard the wind moan and the roar
> Of the dark water tumbling on the shore.
> Where--where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?
> By the remembered stream my brother stands
> Waiting for me with berries in his hands …
> "These are my body. Sister, take and eat."

The poem follows a unique structure that Mansfield also employs in her sonnet "Loneliness." Using iambic pentameter, the rhyme scheme of the octave consists of ABBA ABAB. The sestet takes the French sonnet rhyme scheme of CCDEED but maintains the pentameter of the first half. However, this structure is broken in two key places. First, there is an extra "A" line that

interjects between the octave and the sestet. The line's content itself is an interjection which breaks from the poem's iambic pentameter. The line includes eleven syllables, the last of which is stressed. This unexpected, stressed and stressful syllable appears as the speaker is jolted awake from her dream at the sonnet's volta. The pentameter picks back up as the speaker reorients to the waking world at the beginning of the sestet, but breaks down for a second time as she searches for the thread of her dream: "Where--where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?" This thirteen syllable line subverts the standard structure both formally and in the content it introduces. Where the volta would traditionally signal a unidirectional shift, Mansfield's sonnet turns *back* in its final three lines as the speaker returns to her dream-state to finish the conversation with her dead brother. The poem's movement from dreaming to waking and back again to dreaming is punctuated and emphasized by formal idiosyncrasies. The slippery, bi-directional quality of this movement is one of the ways in which the poem describes mourning: neither dream nor consciousness lasts long enough to allow the speaker to process the brother's death. Like berries which turn into flesh, nothing stays the same long enough to allow closure.

The disorientation elicited by the poem's formal turns is underscored by references to nonlinear movements. Movements of time, emotion, and the dream's "path" itself all contribute to the kind of "derealization" typical of modernist dream poems (Mønster 1, referencing Friedrich 56). The poem's opening line, mimicking the dream-state, calls attention to temporal cues and reorganizes them. The first time-related marker, "Last night," is immediately contrasted against "the first time." "First" appears in the line after "Last," forgoing expected linear sequence and already undermining the notion of finality or closure. A poem about a conversation with a dead brother, "To L.H.B." starts with a word related to finality but introduces a complex system of the relationship between life and death within the first line. The final phrase, "since you were

dead," posits death as a state of being. The action is not dying ("since you died") but *being* dead. The first line, which already modifies the expectations of linear movement and states of being, is itself modified by the second line, "I walked with you, my brother, in a dream." The dream-state isn't revealed until the end of the second line, at which point the "path" of the poem is already a nonlinear one. The poem's topic – a dream the previous night about the dead brother – is unveiled slowly and out of sequence.

Two more descriptions of nonlinear movement complement this theme which is introduced in the opening lines. First, the reference to the "beam / Of strange, bright laughter flying round your head" indicates circular motion while also transforming "laughter" – a sound and emotion – into something visible. In addition to being the first explicit transformation in the poem, the laughter becomes a halo for the brother, "circling" him in the poem. Second, the dream's "path," is broken at the volta. The line "Where--where is the path of my dream for my eager feet?" calls back to the second line in which the speaker "walked with you . . . in a dream." The path, which is both the narrative of the dream and the route followed by the speaker and the brother in the dream itself, is momentarily lost. Each of these descriptions of broken sequence and nonlinear movement contribute to the poem's dreamlike quality. Additionally, by making the "circled" brother the focal point at the center of the poem, Mansfield contrasts the desire to reunite with the brother against the undesired task of mourning his death in the waking world.

The Eucharist is associated with escapism in "To L. H. B." If "dreams are often described as places to which the modernist poet flees when trying to escape from reality," then the Eucharist scence at the end of the poem represents the possibility of permanent escape from the waking world (Mønster 1). After waking and seeking re-entry to the dream world – already turning away from reality – the speaker is presented with a multi-layered possibility. The brother,

who was “waiting patiently” for the speaker’s return, offers a tantalizing, multifaceted opportunity. The line “These are my body, Sister, take and eat” promises communion, death, and reunification. The brother, taking on the combined role of priest and Christ – the one who offers communion and the one who is transubstantiated – addresses the sister using the capital “S” as though she is a nun. Put into the language of a Catholic mass, the berries-as-body represent the same things that communion does: they offer the opportunity for the sister to fully commit herself to the brother, and offer in return sustenance of the soul. Of course, this commitment means death. The berries, already emphasized to be poisonous and warned against by the very brother who now offers them, will kill the sister if she accepts. Full commitment to the brother means bodily death, if also the possibility of spiritual reunification. The dream state has, until this point, offered the speaker access to the brother. Now, she is presented with an ultimatum: eat the poison and reunite with the brother or return to reality. In the dream’s logic, communion means death and life means spiritual renouncement of the brother.

Mansfield’s poem describes clearly what other war poems about transubstantiation intone subtly: that spiritual fulfillment and existence during wartime are incompatible. The brother can be accessed in the dream, but this access is temporary. Permanent access to him, the speaker knows, means death. And the brother that the speaker will be able to access in death is not the same brother she remembers standing by the stream in childhood. The war has already taken his body and has transformed him. The berries he holds represent a body consumed by the war effort. But they also represent a fractured self. The speaker’s choice involves choosing, in death, a brother – not tangible and not quite complete – or choosing to return to the tangible, war-wrought waking world. And this world is the opposite of the Edenic scene with the “remembered stream.” The “dark” and “tumbling” seaside represents the tumultuousness both of grieving and

of the omnipresent war effort. The berries offer reunification, communion, nourishment, and death. They tempt the speaker by offering the kind of certainty and fulfillment that can't be found in the waking world when grieving. Transubstantiation is an important metaphor for Mansfield because it represents a boundary point between life and death where the poem's speaker must decide between the loss of her own life and permanently letting go of her brother. What the war has already taken is the ability to have both.

Robert Graves (1895-1985) was an English Trench Poet who joined the war effort as a junior officer during the first year of the war. A close friend of Siegfried Sassooon, he also fought alongside Sassoon in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. In addition to his war poetry volumes *Over the Brazier* (1916), *Fairies and Fusiliers* (1918), and *Country Sentiment* (1920), Graves is known for his autobiography *Goodbye to All That* (1929). He continued writing after the war and is also celebrated for later works, especially *The White Goddess* (1948).

"The Morning Before the Battle" was first drafted in 1915 and published in 1916 in *Over the Brazier*, Graves' first book of war poetry. The full text of the poem, as printed in Beryl Graves and Dunstan Ward's *Robert Graves Complete Poems* (1995), follows:

> To-day, the fight: my end is very soon,
> And sealed the warrant limiting my hours:
> I knew it walking yesterday at noon
> Down a deserted garden full of flowers.
> ...Carelessly sang, pinned roses on my breast,
> Reached for a cherry-bunch---and then, then, Death
> Blew through the garden from the North and East
> And blighted every beauty with chill breath.

I looked, and ah, my wraith before me stood,

His head all battered in by violent blows:

The fruit between my lips to clotted blood

Was transubstantiate, and the pale rose

Smelt sickly, till it seemed through a swift tear-flood

That dead men blossomed in the garden-close.

"The Morning Before the Battle" is almost entirely overlooked in secondary scholarship. It has been commented on only in two pieces by Anne Mounic from 2012 and 2015, respectively,[27] and in a few graduate theses.[28] Of these sources, only Mounic comments on the transubstantiation metaphor, writing, "contemplating looming death . . . [Graves] uses the adjective 'transubstantiate' which recalls Christ's crucifixion interpreted as sacrifice for the whole of mankind. Yet individual suffering is not denied ('violent blows,' 'clotted blood') and the transformation of the 'fruit' into 'clotted blood' contradicts any idealistic delusion" (Mounic 73). Mounic's commentary gets at the tension between the sacrifice of the soldier as representative of all wartime sacrifice and the attention to individuality of the soul and body of the transubstantiated soldier.

Despite coming from a wildly different background from Katherine Mansfield — being English, an Anglican leaning towards atheism, and an officer on the front lines — Graves wrote

[27] "Robert Graves: Death and Poetry, History and Myth" (2012) and "'To Tell and Be Told:' War Poetry as the "Transmission of Sympathy" (2015).

[28] Fischer, Rodney. "Waking the Dead: Voices of Truth in the Darkness of War." *Georgetown University*, 2011; Trogdon, Ronald Lee. "Thinking Through the 'Present Mad Muddle': The Author as Arbiter of Reconstruction in Inter-War Britain, 1919-1945." *Durham University*, 2018; Davis, Robert A. "The Origin, Evolution, and Function of the Myth of *The White Goddess* in the Writings of Robert Graves." *University of Stirling*, 1987.

a poem remarkably similar to "To L.H.B." Also a sonnet,[29] the poem's themes and events are almost identical to Mansfield's: a speaker walks through an idyllic, pastoral landscape and becomes enticed by red berries they want to pick and eat. The act of reaching to pick the berries incites a turning poem from an Edenic natural scene to a cold and windy one, this time with Death itself personified as the cold wind. Again like Mansfield's poem, the sonnet's conflict involves the speaker confronting their feelings about someone who has died in the war. Instead of a loved one, however, the dead man is a soldier the self, and in a moment reminiscent of Owen's "Strange Meeting," the speaker is brought face to face with the dead soldier. It is at this point that the transubstantiation happens; the berries becoming the "clotted blood." This confrontation with death leads Graves' speaker, like Mansfield's, to consider their own death. Because of this encounter, the speaker tells us at the beginning of the sonnet, "my end is very soon." Though this speaker's death appears fated rather than chosen, it is the slippage between life and death — between nourishment and "clotted blood" — that signals the proximity of the speaker's death.

Despite the uncanny similarities between "To L.H.B." and "The Morning Before the Battle," Mansfield and Graves probably did not influence each other. Both poems were published in 1916 and there is no evidence that Mansfield and Graves knew each other. Instead, the similarity between the two sonnets more likely indicates that the two authors were responding to the same cultural influences. Both authors secularize the concept of transubstantiation and use it to describe processing death; both incorporate inedible berries, uncanny confrontations with the dead, and Edenic natural scenes.

[29] Although Graves poem is a sonnet, it blends sonnet forms by using ABAB CDCD quatrains with an EFEFEF ending common only to the envelope sonnet (which traditionally uses ABBA CDDC quatrains). Thus, it too draws attention to how the poem appropriates the sonnet's form.

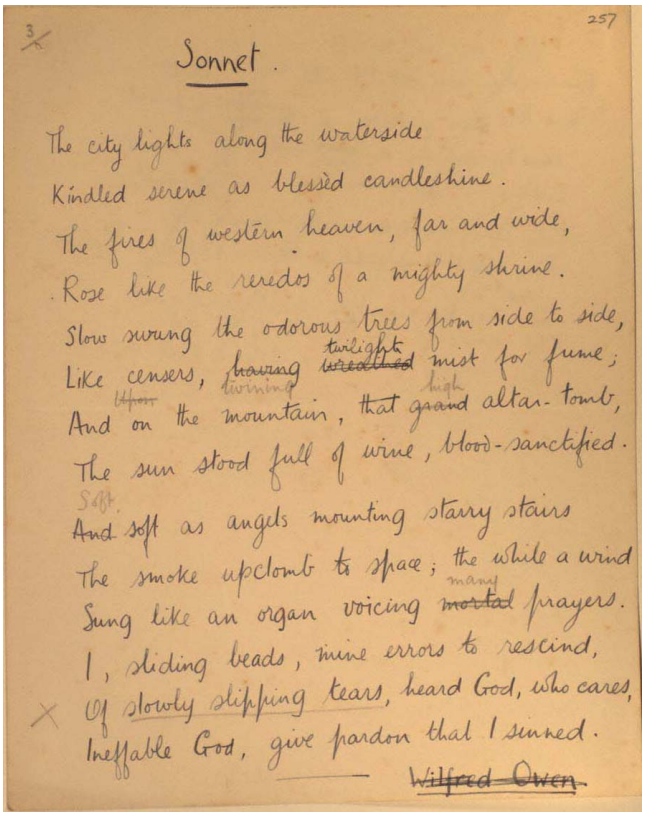
Both Mansfield and Graves use the Eucharist to signal the blurring of boundaries between life and death. This blurring is an incredibly common theme in Great War literature, "articulated by both combatants . . . and by noncombatants," and deriving in large part from the extent to which the living were, for the first time, expected to occupy the same spaces as the dead (Booth 50-51).[30] Graves draws upon the literalism of the Catholic Eucharist to make the confrontation with death more visceral. The berries are transformed into "clotted blood" on the speaker's lips, literally becoming the blood of the dead man. Immediately afterwards, a non-literal transformation occurs: "dead men" *"seemed*" to blossom in the garden. The distinction between the berries which are literally turned to blood (as wine is in the Catholic mass) and the dead men which only *appear* to become flowers is an important one. In the war, death is in such immediate proximity to life that it is always intruding in visible and literal ways upon spaces meant to be occupied by the living: "soldiers inhabited worlds constructed, literally, of corpses" (Booth 50). In contrast, the idea of death leading to some kind of renewal — especially within the blighted natural world near the war front, where the poem takes place — likely seemed, in 1916, a remote and idealistic possibility. Though metaphors about soldiers being planted in gardens crop up sporadically during the war years, it isn't until *The Waste Land's* publication in 1922 that the planted soldier becomes a major metaphor for the possibility of reconstruction after the war. And even then, this notion of regrowth comes with the possibility of the effects of war resurfacing.[31] "Clotted blood" is what is described as literal because of death's immediacy.

Like for the other authors discussed so far in this chapter, Graves uses transubstantiation to depict the transformation of the soldier into fodder for the war effort and blurs boundaries

[30] The dead "blended with the mud," the living were "buried in fallen dirt," and the bottoms of the trenches themselves were often littered with bodies slowly mixing into the muddy ground (Booth 50).
[31] "'Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men, / 'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!" (Eliot).

between states of being. The enemy soldier seeks nourishment in the body and blood of the dead, but, importantly, the speaker who eats the berries is himself doomed. The berries that feed the speaker nourish only a war effort that will consume him, it seems, "to-day" (Graves 1). For Graves, all that is generated from the war will immediately be re-consumed by it. Likewise, by blurring boundaries between life and death, Graves underscores how tenuous the relationship between these states of being are on the war front. The encounter with the dead enemy soldier figures the speaker already inhabiting an in-between state between life and death where neither realm is fully accessible to him. Finally, these themes raise questions about the compatibility between war and religion. Graves' message is similar to Mansfield's: although he doesn't comment clearly on the relationship between organized religion and war, the clotting of the berries-turned-blood as the speaker eats intones that spiritual fulfillment can't be achieved in this wartime context. Graves' soldiers are doomed to consume each other endlessly in a space where they aren't quite living and aren't quite dead.

An example of the transubstantiation metaphor can be found even in the most famous soldier-poet's oeuvre. "The City Lights" by Wilfred Owen involves a conversion of blood-to-wine amidst other religious imagery. The sonnet was likely written prior to the war but was revised either during Owen's stay at Craiglockhart War Hospital or immediately afterwards during his time at Scarborough ("The city lights along the waterside"). Thus, it was edited during the same period that Owen was drafting his most famous works such as "Dulce et Decorum Est." Owen's line edits during his time on leave from the war can be observed in Fig. 8., below.



Sonnet.

The city lights along the waterside
Kindled serene as blessèd candleshine.
The fires of western heaven, far and wide,
Rose like the reredos of a mighty shrine.
Slow swung the odorous trees from side to side,
Like censers, twining twilight mist for fume;
And on the mountain, that high altar-tomb,
The sun stood full of wine, blood-sanctified.
Soft, soft as angels mounting starry stairs
The smoke upclomb to space; the while a wind
Sung like an organ voicing many prayers.
I, sliding beads, mine errors to rescind,
Of slowly slipping tears, heard God, who cares,
Ineffable God, give pardon that I sinned.

Wilfred Owen.

Fig. 8. "The City Lights Along the Waterside." October 1917-January 1918. The First World War Digital Poetry Archive, http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/english.

A transcription of the poem follows:

The city lights along the waterside

Kindled serene as blessèd candleshine.

The fires of western heaven, far and wide,

Rose like the reredos of a mighty shrine.

Slow swung the odorous trees from side to side,

Like censers, twining twilight mist for fume;

And on the mountain, that high altar-tomb,

The sun stood full of wine, blood-sanctified

Soft, soft as angels mounting starry stairs

The smoke upclomb to space; the while a wind
Sung like an organ voicing many prayers.
I, sliding beads, mine errors to rescind,
Of slowly slipping tears, heard God, who cares,
Ineffable God, give pardon that I sinned.

Owen applies the transubstantiation metaphor to the natural world in 'The City Lights.' After moving from descriptors of the city surrounding the speaker to a landscape fully immersed in the natural world, the poem depicts the sun undergoing sanctification. 'Blood-sanctified,'—the sun is described as 'full of wine.' As it illustrates the colors of a sunset, this image underscores the poem's emphasis on the natural world by removing the transubstantiation metaphor from the realm of humanity. The sun is sanctified – in this case, both consecrated and purified – by the process of transforming blood into wine. One of the only hints of humanity in the poem, blood, is collectively appropriated to lend strength and purity to the natural world. It isn't until the final three lines that the poem is revealed to be in first person: 'I, sliding beads, mine errors to rescind, / Of slowly slipping tears, heard God, who cares, / Ineffable God, give pardon that I sinned.' Praying the rosary, the speaker at last interacts with the natural world that the sonnet spends most space describing.

Two critics have commented on "The City Lights" or, as it is sometimes called, "The City Lights Along the Waterside." Most importantly, Guy Cuthbertson identifies how "The City Lights" features specifically Catholic themes and connects this Catholic imagery to Owen's experiences in Bordeaux in 1914 which "introduc[ed] Owen to the charms of Roman Catholicism" (96). As evidence of this budding interest in Catholicism, Cuthbertson cites Owen's reading during this period of "books by Catholic apologists" as well as a letter written by

Owen in May 1914, in which Owen admits he "fell, only for a few minutes, it is true, under the spell of the Catholic Religion" (96, citing Owen's *Collected Letters*). And though Cuthbertson doesn't actually clarify the *manner* in which "The City Lights" is "evidence of a Catholic tendency that persisted deep into the war," the reasoning is transparent enough: the poem prominently features transubstantiation and the praying of the rosary, both practices associated specifically with Catholicism (96). The poem unmistakably portrays a Catholic religious experience, but whether Owen identifies with the poem's speaker, as Cuthbertson hints, isn't supported by the poem. The only other mention of "The City Lights" in secondary scholarship appears in Douglas Kerr's *Wilfred Owen's Voices*, in which Kerr claims that the poem "expands, a little woodenly, some rich hints from the imagery of Baudelaire's." The Baudelaire connection, as well as the poem's connection to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's description of Florence, Italy in *Aurora Leigh*, as identified by Cuthbertson, are worth noting because they support the hypothesis that "The City Lights" is not about Owen's own spirituality. It was undeniably written at a time when Owen was grappling with his own faith – with growing alienation from his Protestant upbringing, attraction to Catholicism, and burgeoning agnosticism in the face of war – but it is more likely that Owen was attracted to the aesthetics of Catholicism rather than its theology. This possibility is supported by the way he talks about "fall[ing] under the spell" of Catholicism and by the way he tries on the imagery of other authors as a burgeoning poet. It is also evident in the way he writes elsewhere about Catholic iconography on the Western Front. For example, in the poem "Le Christianisme" he described the shelling of a Cathedral: "So the church Christ was hit and buried / Under its rubbish and its rubble. / … One Virgin still immaculate / Smiles on for war to flatter her." (1-6) This description, too, is interested in the aesthetics of Catholicism and their symbolism beyond, rather than within, theology.

If Owen's interest in Catholicism was primarily an aesthetic one, then, the question becomes how these aesthetics relate to the war. In the case of "Le Christianisme," war interacts directly with icons of Catholicism. War infringes upon the space of worship but the personified statue of Mary "smiles on" (6). In the case of "The City Lights," however, Owen's representation of Catholicism is removed from the situation of war. Of course, this is likely because the poem was drafted shortly before the outbreak of the war while Owen was living in France. Yet it was revised during Owen's time on leave, which supports the conclusion that the poem was still worthwhile to Owen in some way. Along with other poems from Owen's pre-war time in France, "The City Lights" was revised *after* most of his time in the war. In the context of the other kinds of graphic imagery Owen was using at this time to represent the war with verisimilitude, the poem's romantic, Baudelairian imagery seems out of place. "The City Lights" is as unlike trench poems like "Dulce et Decorum Est" as possible.

Though the poem is not explicitly about the war, its revision during the same period in which Owen was writing specific and graphic depictions of death on the Western front raises similar questions about the compatibility between war and religion that the other poems discussed in this chapter do. From Owen's other poems from this period, we know that he saw organized religion, at least, as incompatible with trench warfare. For example, in 'Exposure,' 'Love of God seems dying, in 'The Last Laugh,' 'Whether he vainly cursed or prayed indeed, / The Bullets chirped – In vain, vain vain!', and in 'Anthem for Doomed Youth' the 'passing-bells' are for 'those who die as cattle' and the only 'choirs' 'shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells.' So, how both views can coexist during Owen's period of leave – one where war and religion are incompatible and another where poems featuring religious symbolism in an ostensibly positive light are worth revising – can best be understood in one of two ways. The first

possibility is that religious fulfillment must happen in a separate sphere from war, and perhaps, that religion can offer a psychological escape from the immediacy of war trauma. The second possibility is that Owen revised 'The City Lights' during the war because the poem's emphasis on God's 'ineffable' power, within or outside of organized religion, was something Owen was still grappling with and found applicable to the situation of war. The poem juxtaposes God's all-encompassing power against the powerlessness of the speaker. In either model, religion and war are incompatible. In the first, they are divided into two separate spheres. In the second, the idea that an individual would need to ask forgiveness from an all-powerful God becomes ridiculous, given the juxtaposition between the individual and God's power over life and death.

'The City Lights' is a significant poem because it confirms that Owen's interest in the aesthetics of Catholicism continued beyond his Bordeaux period and because it evidences his ongoing grappling with the relationship between Catholic aesthetics and the conditions of war. Like the other authors in this chapter, Owen uses transubstantiation to represent a boundary point, but unlike the other authors in this chapter this boundary point is less about the distinction between life and death and more about the distinction between the natural world and the divine world, which become entwined. Owen's use of the transubstantiation metaphor shows, once again, how commonly poets used this metaphor during the era to represent the inexplicable.

The diverse usages of the transubstantiation metaphor analyzed in this chapter share several common threads. Sackville, Mansfield, and Graves depict the soldier being transformed into fodder for the war effort, whereas Jones and Owen emphasize the spiritually nurturing nature of the Eucharist by applying the metaphor to natural forces. Likewise, the same set of authors – Sackville, Mansfield, and Graves – implicitly compare soldiers' deaths to Christ's ultimate sacrifice. Sackville, especially, illuminates the scale of the war effort by emphasizing

how many soldiers are making this sacrifice. By applying the metaphor to the movements of an entire Company, Jones, too, attends to the war's scale but does so to emphasize camaraderie rather than sacrifice (though this camaraderie lends emotional weight to deaths later in the poem). All the poems treated in this chapter depict the Eucharist as a boundary point between life and death. It allows slippage between these two states, whether the boundary point is a place, like the Trench system for Jones, or an event, like the encounter with the dead soldier for Mansfield and Graves, or the encounter with God for Owen. Moreover, all these poems question the compatibility between war and organized religion. Rather than comment upon this relationship explicitly, however, authors juxtapose religious imagery against the conditions of the war. Even Owen's poem evidences incompatibility between war and religion: only in a setting entirely removed from the war is Owen willing to represent religion in an ostensibly positive light. Ultimately, every author except for Jones shows that war and spiritual fulfillment cannot coexist (for Jones, this remains an open question). Perhaps most importantly, the transubstantiation metaphor's use across both secular and religious wartime contexts confirms both the cultural relevance of the Eucharist *and* a deep understanding of and interest in specific theological concepts even amongst non-Catholic authors.

Why was transubstantiation such a compelling metaphor for poets during the Great War? I offer two answers to this question. The first answer involves the broader trend toward imagery related to the consumption of the soldier. The transubstantiation metaphor was only one of many ways authors from the period represented transformation or consumption of the body and the soul, and similar metaphors are relatively frequent outside of Eucharistic contexts. Sometimes, these transformations represented the war's toll on society, like in Margaret Postgate Cole's 'Afterwards' which parallels the war effort's consumption of soldiers with consumption of

natural resources. Like the 'corpses of the larches' Postgate Cole's speaker observes, the war years have transformed her lover 'into a pit-prop, / To carry the twisting galleries of the world's reconstruction.' In other poems, bodily transformation was represented as a means of processing death, as in Ivor Gurney's 'To His Love' where the speaker, in trying to 'forget' 'that red wet / Thing' that his friend's body has become, is capable only of remarking 'His body that was so quick / Is not as you / Knew it.' In still other poems, the blood or bodies of soldiers are consumed in secular contexts, like Rosenberg's 'Poppies whose roots are in man's veins.' These consumptions often carry Eucharistic overtones even if they do not draw explicitly on liturgy, such as Kipling's 'wine-press of the Wrath of God'. Expenditure of the spirit or soul is a related trope evident in some of the war's most famous poems. For example, Rosenberg's 'Dead Man's Dump' queries where the soul goes: 'Earth! Have they gone into you? / Somewhere they must have gone, / And flung on your hard back / Is their soul's sack.' Likewise, 'I would have poured my spirit without stint' in Owen's 'Strange Meeting'[32] brings to mind the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.[33] Transformations and consumptions of the body – within and outside of religious contexts – abound in World War One poetry; the transubstantiation metaphor is just one of many ways these popular themes are addressed.

The second answer I offer to the question of why the transubstantiation metaphor was particularly apt to the situation of World War One is sociohistorical. Douglas Burnham, addressing the transubstantiation metaphor's relevance in English literature from the Reformation through literary modernism – 'even for writers . . . who are not particularly

[32] Wilfred Owen, 'Strange Meeting', *Poetry of the First World War: An Anthology*, ed. Tim Kendall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 168-69, line 37.
[33] Acts 2:16-21.

interested in religion or spirituality' – remarks that the metaphor's widespread use derives from its historical and cultural significance in Europe:

> transubstantiation, as a key and highly visible element both of Catholic doctrine and liturgy, and thus one of the principal battle-grounds of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, is a concept that had an unparalleled role to play in the formation of modern Europe. For it not to have cultural resonance would be strange indeed (Burnham 1).

By the outset of the war, transubstantiation already had broad cultural significance across the European continent. It was a particularly apt metaphor for the Great War given the frequency with which the war effort was justified through religious rhetoric. In fact, for many, the war 'was a thoroughly religious event, in the sense that overwhelmingly Christian nations fought each other in what many viewed as a holy war, a spiritual conflict' (Jenkins 5). This is evidenced by the frequency of 'holy war' narrative in poetry from the period (Khan 39-40). Engaged in a war variously emboldened by, justified by, denounced by, and moralized by churches across Europe, it is natural that authors turned to one of the metaphors most readily associated with large-scale European religious conflict. And not only does transubstantiation represent 'one of the principal battle-grounds of the Reformation,' but it also represents the sheer *insignificance* of differences between the Allies and the Central Powers. As a 'principal battle-ground of the Reformation,' transubstantiation when referenced in war poetry remonstrates just how quickly Christian nations are ready to vilify one another.

The poems studied in this chapter also evidence a depth of understanding on the part of authors of the Eucharist's meaning – of its literal and symbolic implications and of its overall importance to Western European culture. Underlying the broad threads of the metaphor's

sociohistorical significance is the idea of real presence, and by extension, questions of literalism. What becomes of conflict when it moves from the sphere of ideology and politics onto the tangible space of the battlefield? What happens to the physical body in the most literal sense as it is consumed by the war effort? Where, for Catholic nations and Catholic combatants, is Christ in all of this? These are questions brought to the forefront by authors who force readers to be mentally present in the space and moment of the soldier's death and his body's transformation. The transubstantiation metaphor presents the specific, visceral, and bodily outcomes of Christian nations once again engaging in war with one another.

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