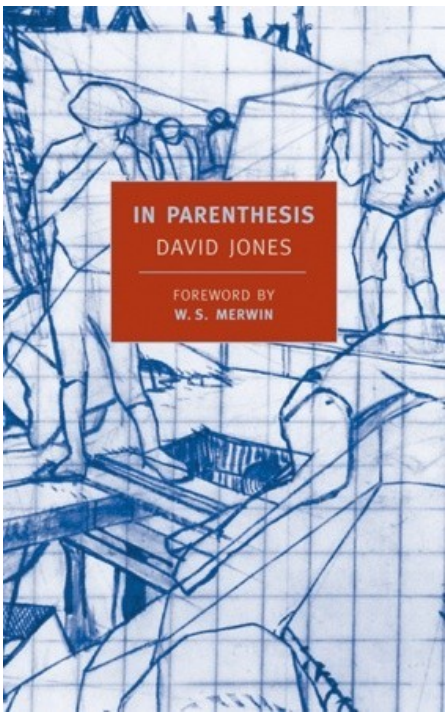

In Parenthesis

David Jones , W.S. Merwin (Foreword by) , T.S. Eliot (Introduction)

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"This writing has to do with some things I saw, felt, and was part of": with quiet modesty, David Jones begins a work that is among the most powerful imaginative efforts to grapple with the carnage of the First World War, a book celebrated by W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot as one of the masterpieces of modern literature. Fusing poetry and prose, gutter talk and high music, wartime terror and ancient myth, Jones, who served as an infantryman on the Western Front, presents a picture at once panoramic and intimate of a world of interminable waiting and unforeseen death. And yet throughout he remains alert to the flashes of humanity that light up the wasteland of war.

In Parenthesis Details

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From Reader Review In Parenthesis for online ebook

Deanne says

Must admit when I ordered this from the library it was titled In Parenthesis: seinnyessit e gledyf ym penn mameu, was wondering if it was a welsh language edition. Fortunately it was in english, my welsh consisting of Iechyd da, and a few place names in snowdonia.
The copy I picked up contained a poppy pressed between the pages, which I've left inside, and I noticed that the last time it was out of the library was armistice day in 2009.
As for the book, thought provoking with a mixture of poetry, prose and the authors welsh roots add to the story with stories and sayings. Did flick through the notes as I find that fascinating, being 1/8 welsh.

Anna says

‘In Parenthesis’ is an extended prose poem of great beauty, recounting a soldier and his company joining the front line of the 1915 Western Front. It is dense with allusions to the bible, Malory, Welsh mythology, and contemporary culture that are explained in part by a pleasantly readable set of author notes (‘...which I seem to have heard about somewhere’). I greatly approve of T.S. Eliot’s introduction, which states, ‘Those who read ‘In Parenthesis’ for the first time, need to know nothing more than this… Good commentaries can be very helpful: but to study even the best commentary on a work of literary art is likely to be a waste of time unless we have first read and been excited by the text commented on without understanding it’. (This is why I wish editions of literary classics did not include analysis before the text. Why would you read that first, without having had your own experience of the book? T.S. Eliot gets it.)

In any event, it would require very detailed commentary for me to unlock a fraction of this poem’s secrets, given my lack of grounding in the referenced legends (although I found Le Morte D'Arthur very entertaining). It was nonetheless a powerful and evocative vision of the trenches and the men who fought in them. I was reminded of Zola’s La Débâcle, which may not be poetry but is also a barely-fictionalised account of unimportant soldiers experiences in war. In both works, the troops are confused and demoralised by constant marching, bad provisions, and lack of confidence in their commanders. They rely on bonds between themselves to survive.

David Jones’ use of language is sometimes too advanced for my comprehension, however much of it is incredible. To pick an arbitrary example:

> No man’s land whitened rigid: all its contours silver filigreed, as damascened. With the coming dark, ground-mist creeps back to regain the hollow places; across the the rare atmosphere you could hear foreign men cough, and stamp with foreign feet. Things seen precisely just now lost exactness. Biez wood became only a darker shape uncertainly expressed. Your eyes began to strain after escaping definitions. Whether that picket-iron moved forward or some other fell away, or after all is it an animate thing just there by the sap-head or only the slight frosted-sway of suspended wire.
>
> A long way off a machine-gunner seemed as one tuning an instrument, who strikes the same note quickly, several times, and now a lower one, singly; while scene-shifters thud and scrape

behind expectant curtaining; and impatient shuffling of the feet - in the stalls they take out watches with a nervous hand, they can hardly bear it.

John says

A devastating portrait of life in WWI, written by a soldier using a mix of prose and poetry. But rather than maps and cities and accounts of historic military actions, Jones offers us a map of what it means to be human in the destruction that is trench warfare. Filled with references to Welsh myth, Arthurian legend, poems of all sorts, and the Bible, the book radiates on every page. Jones includes extensive notes for his literary references, as well as for some of the more obscure solider-language and typical objects from the war. The book begins in England, and covers a period of a few months in France, culminating with a British attempt to advance on a German position. This is one of those books I expect to come back to, for nothing else than to bask in the beauty of the language and the craft involved in putting it together.

Paul says

In Parenthesis – A Forgotten Masterpiece

Faber Faber has re-released the poem that made David Jones a household name in 1937 along with both prefaces that were written by T.S. Elliot. Now as in 1937 it is still hard to categorise In Parenthesis as a poem or as a novel, as it is a mixture of poetry and prose and has been called an example of High Modernism. In the 1961 preface T.S.Elliot compares Jones with himself, Ezra Pound and James Joyce, high praise indeed.

As a historian I have used poetry and prose other than the primary sources to convey the feeling of men at war when one explores their thinking, the feeling of the ordinary soldier in the trenches. In Parenthesis is often forgotten not just by historians but those who teach war history and go for the shorter form of War Poetry. This edition is a timely reminder of why we should remember In Parenthesis for study and an example of the complex feelings of the men fighting in the trenches.

In Parenthesis is based around the events leading up to and including the fighting at Mametz Wood between 7th July and 12th July 1916, the events that took place here would later influence his writings and paintings. It took Jones until 1937 to write and have published In Parenthesis as he struggled for the right words to convey their feelings of those times and the horror of battle.

In Parenthesis, a wonderful mixture of poetry and prose published as a seven part book that has been described as one of the best Great War books ever published. For some unknown reason In Parenthesis seemed to fall out of favour in the 1960s just as teaching War Poetry fell in to fashion, may be they thought it too long to teach or the High Modernism to complicated for students to understand.

Part One “The Many Men So Beautiful” is the narration and introduction of Private John Ball (Jones) as a member of the Royal Welch Fusiliers and the training and movement of the men from England to France in 1915.

Part two, “Chambers Go Off, Corporals Stay” is about the further training that they are undergoing in France

with the endless drills but this is also where we get the first indications of the violence that is to come. Part Three, “Starlight Order” is about the final march towards the trenches and the orders they have received. Part four, “King Pellam’s Launde” is about being on the front line and the undertaking of your duties and all the mundane duties for a soldier in forward positions in the Great War.

Part five, “Squat Garlands For White Knights” is about the events leading up to the Somme offensive which began on 1st July 1916. This section deals more characters and is an accurate narrative of what Jones would have faced at that time. Part six, “Pavilions & Captains of Hundreds” in turn deals with all the events and anxieties that led up to the assault on Mametz Wood, something which speaks directly from the heart straight to the reader.

Part seven, “The Five Unmistakable Marks” is Jones recollection and account of the attack on Mametz Wood and the horrors of what he had to do and the area he had to cover. They had to cover 500 yards of no man’s land which then dropped into a small valley before rising again for 400 yards to the edge of the wood making them easy targets to be shot at.

To me this is a beautiful account of one man’s war who took twenty years struggling to find the right words to portray the battle scene. To some the Modernism of the poem may make it seem complex especially from Part Five onwards but that complexity brings out the full force of war and that there is no seemingly right answer to it.

Paul Taylor says

Jones was an accomplished artist, poet and writer; history has overlooked him in favour of Graves, Sassoon and Owen.This book should be read by all who are interested in WW1 history, poetry and literature. Drawing on a variety of sources including Malory, Shakespeare and the Bible Jones renders an account of life as a private soldier (using, in part, the cockney demotic of the common soldier) taking the reader from basic training through trench life to an attack on German lines. I commend this book to you.

Joel Zartman says

In Parenthesis is David Jones’ telling of the birth of the modern sensibility. Not modern as in contemporary, but that which is best represented in T.S. Eliot, characterized Pound, and to which Yeats adjusted.

The work is classified as a poem, but is mostly prose, though it rises often into the cadences of poetry; the lines break off like waves and it lies waiting, like the sea. If it is a sea, it is full of ancient fish: allusions, especially to Mallory–that work of failure and what might have been. What Jones does is to narrate along freely, then suddenly start juxtaposing, build into a rhythm of incantation and at that point deliver his poetic insight, which, Jones’ being Catholic, is sacramental. Sacramental: when ordinary objects are suddenly caught up and set apart by becoming luminous in an otherworldly light that shines through with Christian meaning. (That’s my own definition and, I suspect, defective, but perhaps still adequate.) He has such a remarkably sensitive ear for the cadences of language, for juxtaposing ancient expression with modern and for establishing a continuity of sense in a bewildering variety of expression.

You should read this book if your ear is not of tin and you at all care about the wider world. It leads you with the soldiers into the experience of the trenches, and seeks even in what many made into meaningless desolation, meaning. It really is an astonishing work of art, and you do not need me to endorse it; just check with Eliot, Yeats and Auden.

J. Alfred says

Even back when I was a kid and thought I was tough, I couldn't take war movies. Now that I'm a grown man and know that I'm not tough, I go into such war books as I do read with full recognition that books of that sort leave long lasting bruises on my heart. I still haven't gotten over Catch 22 or Slaugterhouse Five, for example, even though I haven't read either of them in years.
This book is astonishing. It is modernist to the core, using all the nifty tricks that our modernists built up for themselves, but does so in such a way as to remain relatively understandable. It doesn't just go for your emotions either, the way some war poets do, but just kind of lets things take their course: the horror of war is very much there, but it's also mixed with the general crankiness of being human, the sporadic joy of life, and the sometimes-medicinal possibility that it might all mean something.
The end of the dedication reads:
...AND TO THE ENEMY
FRONT-FIGHTERS WHO SHARED OUR
PAINS AGAINST WHOM WE FOUND
OURSELVES BY MISADVENTURE

(It's not all in caps-lock, just the dedication. If you're feeling brave and want to be shocked and saddened and humbled by the human condition, this is a good one for that.)

Caroline says

I have been reading David Jones' In Parenthesis for nearly nine months now. I started after returning from a visit to the battlefields of the Somme during which I realised I did not know enough about the ordinary every-day experiences of the men on the Western front. David Jones was with the Royal Welch Fusiliers and a large part of his motivation for writing In Parenthesis was to remember and honour the men he fought alongside.
He began the book in 1928 and it wasn't published until 1937 so my spending some months getting to grips with it seems only fitting. It is a great poem, T S Eliot who was responsible for publishing it described it as a work of genius. I recognise that this might put some people off and it has been regarded as difficult but I've found it far easier to relate to than other long poems of that era like The Waste Land. It has a strong narrative thread which pulls the reader through the poem. It begins with the Army in training in England - they get told about Mills bombs or rather "the new Mills Mk. IV grenade, just on the market...". There are no crowds to cheer them on their way to France because "it was late in the second year", December 1915 and already the war has gone on too long.

In common with the Waste Land it is studded with footnotes in which Jones explains some of the military terms, his use of cockney rhyming slang, and the poems which influenced his writing including Y Gododdin and in part 3 The Ancient Mariner. Jones explained 'this poem was much in my mind during the writing of Part 3'. I like the footnotes although I'm tending to read each each part through first for the sound and feel of

it. I am finding it harder and harder to put down.

Updated end of September
I'm now reading with an increasing sense of dread. They are at the front and

p121 *"Dai Davies and the Sibyl do agree - and they reckon we're in the first wave, for sure"*

p131 *"They moved within the hour, in battle-order, in column of company where the road cut a face of downland chalk....*
After an hour they halted; to move forward with long extended intervals between each platoon, but before they left their gully, for the wide ridge, they halted again, to advance by section...
Now in this hollow between the hills was their place of rendezvous."

Early October – Reading Part 7 of the poem I am finding I have to break off from this final section to walk around the house and to remember to breathe. Men are being picked off on either side of him.
Some like the recently married Wastebottom die quietly;

"He maintained correct alignment with the others, face down, and you never would have guessed."...

and others

"Talacryn… a-slither down the pale face – his limbs a girandole at the bottom of the nullah,
but the mechanism slackens, unfed
and he is quite still"...

Then they are into Mametz Wood (not named in the book) and he kills an enemy soldier who has tried to kill him with a stick bomb, by loosing a grenade into the underbrush

p169 *"you scramble forward and pretend not to see,*
but ruby drops from young beech-sprigs-
are bright your hands and face.
And the other one cries from the breaking-buckthorn.
He calls for Elsa, for Manuela"

What are left of them have to

"assemble your entrenching-tool parts and dig-in where you stood,"

But they are still being killed -

"and the next one to you, where he bends to delve gets it in the middle body… how could you stay so fast a tide, it would be difficult with him screaming whenever you move him ever so little…"

"The First Field Dressing is futile as frantic seaman's shift bunged to stoved bulwark, so soon the darkling flood percolates and he dies in your arms."

For the narrator there's no time to pause, much less grieve.

"And get back to your digging can't yer

this aint a bloody Wake."

I finished the book with the feeling of having been with these men and awed by David Jones' determination to remember them as he says in the preface;

THIS WRITING IS FOR MY FRIENDS
IN MIND OF ALL COMMON AND HIDDEN
MEN …
AND TO THE ENEMY
FRONT-FIGHTERS WHO SHARED OUR
PAINS AGAINST WHOM WE FOUND
OURSELVES BY MISADVENTURE

Adriano Bulla says

Hallucinatory as the experience of the trenches must have been, this novel takes the reader deep into a world where time ceases to make sense, where forms warp and melt, where the self extends to the whole of perception.

This self, though, is presented to us as descending into a subconscious made hellish by the horrors of the war. The narrative becomes more and more surreal as the 'plot' (as the plot itself becomes a backdrop that reminds me of the background of Munch's 'The Shout', a bit like the whole novel does) proceeds. The very dynamics of a story set in a monotonous, confused and unrealistic situation, I believe, requires a gradual subjugation of action to feelings, and this is possibly the greatest achievement of this novel.

The prose becomes morphs into poetry by degrees, first in short bouts, then more and more consistently and for longer sections, reflecting the very melting down of experience the narrator suffers on the frontline... Frontline itself is not an appropriate ord, as the perception stretches across No Man's Land, an action often symbolically introduced by horizontal lines, such as the barbed wire, and what appears to be pure experimentalism in the first pages becomes meaning itself.

This is a unique novel, a novel that requires the reader to understand the unfamiliarity of life in the trenches and abandonment to its hallucinatory nature. It demands a lot in terms of open-mindedness and willingness to abandon the pre-conceived idea of what a novel should be like on behalf of the reader, as well as the accetance that reality, and the way we perceive it, is not a permanent state, but is subordinate to the very breath of History and the situation in which the Human Soul finds itself: normal prose and traditional narrative are simply not suitable to express the experience lf life in the trenches. *In Patenthesis* does, howeverm reward the reader immensely amd, what is more, I believe permanently: I remember reading it many years ago in Corsica, where the sky and the sea in front of me were of the purest blue, yet every time I think about it, the barbed wire, the wattle, the desperate escape into a distance where streaks of dark and surreal colours follow each other with no apparent ending coming from my reading f it slowly, a bit like verse over prose in this book, fade into the beautiful Cirsican landscape, intensify and lowly become it. Absolutely unique!

BlackOxford says

The Liturgical Transformation of War

David Jones was an artist who also wrote poetry. His most important poetic work, In Parenthesis, is a profound memorial of his experience of the Great War. Critics have read the message of In Parenthesis as both pro and anti-war, the former largely because of its apparent celebration of the armed man through the ages, the latter on account of the detailed depiction of the suffering and oppression of the common soldier. But it is more likely that In Parenthesis is not a commentary on the desirability or inevitability of war as it is Jones's effort to create a plausible theory of his experience, a theory which provides a judgement not on war but on God. T. S. Eliot captures this in his preface, "We search how we may see formal goodness in a life singularly inimical, hateful to us." Put another way, the poem is a theodicy, a reconciliation of the ways of God to man, a form not used with greater effect until the literature of the Holocaust, which it anticipates.

In Parenthesis was first published in 1937, almost 20 years after the events that it recounts. Although highly emotional in parts, this is not a work of the immediate or unmediated emotions of the trenches. And although its structure appears as a straightforward chronological history of Jones's life from his initial military training in 1915 to the Battle of the Somme in 1917, the underlying form is one of religious liturgy in which time is contained in an eternal timelessness. The liturgical pervades the work and creates a particular kind of theodicy, one which is merciless in its judgement about the imbecility of the created world but which is conducted from a stand of faith in its creator. This is what gives the work its ambivalent tone of irony and respect. It is also what makes the poem profound and not merely moving.

Jones converted to Catholicism in 1921. By his own judgement he was first attracted to Catholicism not for dogmatic or intellectual reasons but because he happened upon the celebration of the Mass one night while he was at the front. He experienced not just a place of calm within the chaos of war but a set of actions, a ritual, that had a reality of its own while being part of the other reality of filth, pain, and fear. Jones seems to allude to this event in an early part of In Parenthesis as a moment of revelatory import when a shell explodes without warning near Pvt. John Ball:

"...out of the vortex, rifling the air it came - bright brass-shod, Pandoran; with all air-filling screaming the howling crescendo's up-piling snapt. The universal world, breath held, one half second, a bludgeoned stillness. Then the pent violence released a consummation of all bursting's out; all sudden up-rendings and rivings-through - all taking-out of vents- all barrier-breaking - all unmaking, Pernitric begetting - the dissolving and splitting of solid things. In which unearthing aftermath, John Ball picked up his mess tin and hurried within; ashen, huddled, waited in the dismal straw."

This alternative reality became, after his conversion, a controlling aspect of his life. Jones joined the Ditchling Community, a Dominican-inspired fraternity initiated by the artist Eric Gill. The community combined artistic work with Catholic religious practice and Jones was known to abruptly leave whatever he was busy with to attend various daily offices and devotions. In the preface to his other major poem, The Anathemata published in 1952, Jones points out that the work is structured around the Catholic Mass. It would clearly be an overstatement to say that Jones was obsessed by liturgical ritual but not that this ritual provided something fundamental in his appreciation of the world.

Ritual is a constant theme throughout In Parenthesis. It is a ritual of military parade that opens the poem. The rituals of the common soldier in daily life, the rituals of entry into, survival within, and relationships shaped by the trenches are on every page. Rituals are what brings some sort of order amidst the chaotic environment

of the front-line. They bring some sort of peace during the crisis of bombardment and death. They constitute a place of retreat and regeneration. During the move from camp to ship transport Jones's attitude toward ritual is made clear: "...the liturgy of their going-up assumed a primitive creativeness, an apostolic actuality, a correspondence with the object, a flexibility." The respect for tradition-driven action is explicit. It is creative. It is reliable because ancient. It is in some mysterious manner capable of eliminating the Kantian separation of subject and object.

The expression is, unlike that of other great writers who reflect their religious background in their work - like Milton, Melville, Thoreau, or even Hopkins - Jones's concern is not with dogma, metaphysical explanations or biblical directives. It is a liturgical transformation of war. Hence its objectivity, it's detail, it's routineness even in crisis, one might even say its flatness. To learn that Cockney is the lingua Franca in the ranks consisting of diverse, often mutually incomprehensible dialects is not just interesting, it is a reference to liturgical Latin as a binding force in the Catholicism of the period. We get almost nothing of feelings in the first six parts but rather are overwhelmed by behavioural specifics: how to walk, how to stand guard on a firing step, how to set the range precisely on ones rifle sight, how to clean the 63 parts of the Enfield rifle, how to treat NCO's and commissioned officers, how to submit creatively to direction, how to be around death. In short, how to live.

The structure of In Parenthesis is, although not explicitly stated, similar to that of Jones's other major work, Anathemata, namely the Tridentine Mass which begins with a procession before the altar. The procession is accompanied by the Asperges me, sprinkle me, during which the congregation is blessed with holy water, just as the soldiers of Company A are rained upon before their departure during part 1. Part 2 describes the initial period of deployment in France, a time of instruction in the practicalities of military life at the front. This corresponds to the Mass of the Catechumens, the first major part of the Tridentine Mass, which is also a period of instruction for the uninitiated. It is at the end of this part that Ball has his experience of the enemy shell, his baptism of fire, through which he, and the rest of the company, become different people. War has entered their souls. They are now ready to proceed.

Part 3 opens the Canon or essential portion of the Mass, the first act of which is the Offertory during which the objects that are to be given (back) to God are identified and presented at the altar. In the Mass, these objects are the unleavened bread and the wine. In the poem the objects in question are the men themselves, who are now part of the sacrificial community, "And you too are assimilated, you too are of this people." They are to be offered, not just to the Enemy but also to the trench rats: "You can hear his carrying parties rustle our corruptions through the night weeds - contest the choicest morsels in his tiny conduits, bead-eyed feast on us; by a rule of his nature, at the night-feast on the broken of us."

The central mystery of the Mass is the Consecration, the divinely authorised human action through which the eternal enters into time. Although dogmatic tradition since the early Middle Ages has emphasised the action of the priest in calling the Body of Christ into existence, a parallel tradition that the congregation simultaneously forms the Body of Christ through its liturgical solidarity is equally valid. Both traditions are reflected in the poem. "An eastward alignment of troubled, ashen faces" (the traditional alignment of Catholic Churches is toward the East) awaits expectantly the Consecration. Rifles are cleaned with oil and water in emulation of the cleansing of the priest's hands in preparation for his consecratory act. Suddenly the act is done and an ontological change has occurred, "...up shrouding, unsheafing - and insubstantial barriers dissolve. This blind night-negative yields uncertain flux....The flux yields up a measurable body."

At this point the Roman ritual calls for the Elevation of the consecrated bread and wine, its exhibition to the congregation. The equivalent poetic moment occurs in sequence, a call to attention, "Stand to, Stand to, Stand to arms." But it is also the congregation that is the object of (self) sacrifice, to itself, each on behalf of

the other, "The hanged, the offerant: himself to himself on the tree...honouring this rare and indivisible New Light for us, This concertina'd Good News of these barbarians, them bastard square-heads." The imagery edges on the blasphemous: the gospel as barbed wire, those whom we sacrifice ourselves for, as well as to, namely the enemy.. These front-line soldiers are honoured as, "scape-beasts come to the waste-lands." Rations are distributed but this is not yet Communion. "You could eat out of their hands..." but the food is inedible: tepid tea, hairy cheese and sodden bread. Real Communion awaits.

It is at this point that Jones speaks directly to the reader, "You ought to ask: Why, what is this, what's the meaning of this..." The ambiguity is profound. What is the object of the question? This war? All war? The consecrated bread? The troops as sacrifice for each other? Or for the enemy? He makes no clarification but simply points out, "You live by faith alright in these parts." He then alludes to the prayer in the Mass that addresses the Body of Christ in all its forms, the Agnus Dei, Lamb of God. The men have become little more than "bleating sheep [who know not] the market of her fleece."

Part 5 is the beginning of the act of Communion which then continues on in Part 6. During Communion first the priest then the congregation consume the consecrated bread and wine. They also enter into one another, paradoxically dying to themselves. This is not just mysterious, it is unnatural, " ...they've tampered with the natural law...We all want the Man hanged." Who is this Man? The Kaiser? The officer class? Mankind? Christ? Ourselves?

It is at this point that the first company deaths occur, two dead, two missing on patrol, one German prisoner. One of the deaths is an officer hung up on the wire, the Communion of the priest perhaps before the congregation is served. Jones makes a further nod to the physicality of Communion emphasised by Catholic doctrine in his reference to the old Latin daily office said by priests and religious. The rubric specified that where possible these prayers should pronounced not just read contemplatively, "...to watch the lips move beneath the beaver's shade, where a canonical wise nests conserved in an old man's mumbling, the validity of material things, and the resurrection of this flesh."

Communion is intended to be Catholic, that is universal. Hence "...all these types are catered for, but they must know exactly how to behave ...there's neither bond nor free in this outing, Greek nor Bulgarian." Once again Jones is concerned about action, correct action. The men then consume the gifts of food they have received from home. Seed cake becomes the substance of their shared life under the apocalyptic din of an artillery barrage. This is simultaneously a trivial and solemn moment, "...how is a man to know the habits of his God, whether he smiles suddenly or withholds, if you mishandle the things set apart, the objects of his people he is jealous of. You sit with circumspection and you rise with care." At this point the litany of names of those about to go over the top is parallel to the brief litany of the saints in the Leonine prayers (now suppressed) of the Tridentine ritual.

Part 7 might be considered a more developed view of Communion. But given its depth of emotion and feeling, it seems more likely to be a sort of recapitulation of liturgical ritual in the 'real life' and death of the men of the company. The Mass is now put into the attack whereas the prospective attack was included in the Mass up to this point. This is signalled, among other places, in the oblique reference to the prayer Quam Oblationem, Bless and approve our offering, from the Latin Canon. The men have been sanctified as they walk toward the German lines, "Each one bearing in his body the whole apprehension of that innocent...." The designation of this 'innocent' is vague but it includes them certainly. The description of their deaths is almost unbearable in its understatement,

"By one and one the line gaps, where her [Sweet Sister Death's] fancy will - howsoever they may howl for their virginity
She holds them - who impinge less space

And limply to a heap
nourish a lesser category of being"
And finally we are led back to the beginning of the poem as, " ...and dew apserges the freshly dead."

Like any great work of art there are countless interpretations that can be made of In Parenthesis. The one above has the (perhaps sole) advantage of allowing the work to be free from political presumption. Like any theodicy, the poem cannot come to a conclusion which abandons God without plunging into a Manichaen abyss. So it leaves open its theological interpretation. By concentrating on ritual rather than metaphysics, Jones promotes an investigation and judgement which is beyond dogmatic logic. This is I think its essential and enduring genius.

Warwick says

A supermassive, hyper-allusive, unclassifiable piece of writing about some things the author ‘saw, felt, & was part of’ during the First World War. It is one of the most fascinating examples of the modernist project that I've ever read, though it also suffers from modernism's most conspicuous flaws – chiefly that kind of dense rebarbativeness that perhaps encourages study more than immediate enjoyment.

Not to say there isn't lots to enjoy, because there is. Jones is detail-driven, with the mystical, somewhat spaced-out tone of someone running on too little sleep, so that the smallest routines of daily life acquire a gentle transcendence:

> How cold the morning is and blue, and how mysterious in cupped hands glow the match-lights of a concourse of men, moving so early in the morning.

The book begins in rhythmic, free sentences of this sort; but increasingly, even that flexible prose is not enough, and line-breaks become a crucial element of Jones's punctuation, his descriptions shattering into poetry. Sometimes this happens halfway through a sentence, as for instance when he comes across an artillery crew:

> Night-lines twinkle above the glistening vegetable damp: men standing illusive in the dark light about some systemed task, transilient, regularly spaced, at kept intervals, their feet firm stanced apart, their upper bodies to and fro…
> slid through live, kindly fingers
> cylindrical shining
> death canistering
> the dark convenient dump, momentarily piling.

These techniques are used gradually to build up layer after layer of allusion on to the basic story of Private John Ball's part in the assault on Mametz Wood, during the First Battle of the Somme. The conceit of *In Parenthesis* is that nothing here is really new; what the soldiers are enacting, in this industrialised way, is the same story that has been told again and again through history, literature and (especially) legend. The point is

not to reclaim some kind of glory, but rather to mark everything that happens with an element of timelessness – and also, I think, to set up a series of unexpected contrasts that allow you to see both the war and its mythic progenitors in a new way.

So, for Jones, a piece of mangled iron protruding from a waterlogged shell-hole is a ‘dark excalibur, by perverse incantation twisted’. Men he sees unconscious in their trenches are like barrow-wights, ‘tranquil as a fer sídhe sleeper, under fairy tumuli, fair as Mac Óg sleeping’. And comrades machine-gunned in the woods are

> like those others who fructify the land
> like Tristram
> Lamorak de Galis
> Alisand le Orphelin
> Beaumains who was youngest
> or all of them in shaft-shade
> at strait Thermopylae…

But this is barely to touch upon the scope of the referential network Jones constructs for his story. For a better look at his approach, consider the following passage, where John Ball's unit first sees the entrance to the front-line trenches, lit up by a sudden flare:

> This gate of Mars armipotente, the grisly place, like flat painted scene in top-lights' crude disclosing. Low sharp-stubbed tree-skeletons, stretched slow moving shadows; faintest mumbling heard just at ground level. With the across movement of that light's shining, showed long and strait the dark entry, where his ministrants go, by tunnelled ways, whispering.

This is not easy to unpick, unless you know that Jones has in mind a passage from Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*:

> Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,
> Lyk to the estres of the grisly place
> That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
> In thilke colde, frosty regioun
> Ther as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.
> First on the wal was peynted a forest,
> In which ther dwelleth neither man ne best,
> With knotty, knarry, bareyne trees olde,
> Of stubbes sharpe and hidouse to beholde,
> In which ther ran a rumbel in a swough,
> As though a storm sholde bresten every bough.
> And dounward from an hille, under a bente,
> Ther stood the temple of Mars armypotente,
> Wroght al of burned steel, of which the entree

> Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.

Chaucer's description underlies Jones's; the ‘knotty, knarry trees’ from Chaucer's painting have for Jones been made horribly real as ‘tree-skeletons’ in no-man's land; the ‘rumbel’ in the forest has become a ‘mumbling’ of shells. And indeed the entire episode in Chaucer from which I've taken this extract influences how you read Jones, full as Chaucer is of black smoke and explosions and evil people moving half-underground.

This is a simple example, because there is only one primary source. Many other passages of *In Parenthesis* draw simultaneously on two, three or more sources, of which Chaucer and Malory are just the most prominent. And underlying the entire work is the early Welsh poem Y Gododdin, about a band of Celts raiding an English town; extracts from *Y Gododdin* are placed at the head of every chapter.

In a sense, Jones is writing not on blank paper but on older manuscripts; *In Parenthesis* is not an individual work but a palimpsest.

The denseness of what results means that when Jones gives you a straight, simple line of his own, it has an extraordinary power. When John Ball is shot in the legs, we have this, which in its tone of mild reproach seems to me one of the most exquisite comments on the whole conflict:

> He thought it disproportionate in its violence considering the fragility of us.

There is nothing adversarial about *In Parenthesis*. Indeed it is dedicated in part to ‘the enemy front-fighters who shared our pains against whom we found ourselves by misadventure’. And this is one effect of Jones's carefully-layered context: what he describes is applicable to all sides, indeed to all times. Though the conflicts men are forced into are obscene, insane – still they're just men, and, as Jones concludes, ‘they're worthy of an intelligent song for all the stupidity of their contest.’

Michael Cayley says

This book is a masterpiece. It describes a small part of the war on the Western front in World War One seen from the point of view of the ordinary soldier. It combines passages of compact prose with more poetic passages. The language ranges from soldiers' slang and swearing through sharp military commands and the jargon of warfare to the more poetic. The work is highly allusive, with references to, among other things, popular songs, the Bible, Shakespeare's 'Henry V', old Welsh literature and defeats, and, above all, Sir Thomas Malory's Morte d'Arthur. The overall effect is to give an archetypal feel to what is described. I doubt whether even the most well-read reader will grasp all the detail of the allusions, but this does not matter - the effect still comes over. This is an anti-war poem. It conveys powerfully the tedium of much of the ordinary soldier's experience, the accompanying horror, the appalling conditions soldiers faced, the muddle and chaos of trench warfare, and the pointlessness of the slaughter.

Sammy Abdelhadi says

The book is great.
it tries to show just how ordinary war is to our species, in that it has many references to works of art; whether its painting or plays by the likes of shakespeare.
The references proves to be a double edge sword though, because of it the book can seem a bit of a mess. i suppose thats what Jones did aim for, because war is messy.

Steve says

Eliot, in the book's Introduction, calls *In Parenthesis* a "work of genius." It may well be, but for the most part I found the book impenetrable. Usually, this sort of thing (Lost Generation, Modernism, Poetry (sort of), Religion) is right up my alley. I'm quite ready to do the heavy lifting, since in the end (in my experience) the work proves worthwhile. Oh, in general I can follow the arc (which has some beautiful and profound poetic nuggets) of what's going on, but trying to cut through the dense Welsh trench lingo to get to the specific just wore me out. In addition, I'm not totally sure I buy into the corresponding mythologies (Arthurian, Homeric, Catholic), at least not in the way Jones intended -- and Eliot followed. If you follow that line, there's something noble here. For me, these undercurrents (or overlays?) read as sad but necessary strategies for a sensitive soul to cope and survive in the dehumanizing shit that was Ypres. I'm sure a few more readings could allow for this gaining another star, but I have little enthusiasm to do so.

Abi says

You see the words 'WWI' and 'poetry' together and the mind inevitably turns to Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, Isaac Rosenburg and so on. You know the sort of thing. Now, I very much enjoy this sort of WWI poetry, but a lot of people are unaware of this richer offering from the Welsh artist David Jones, which really challenges. The work operates outside of the received clichés that had, before I read this, seemed inextricable from the WWI experience. *In Parenthesis* is something that Owen or Sassoon could not have written - their poems are the railing of the soul against the injustice and the tragedy of what they had been through, the pain was still too fresh for them. Not that there isn't beauty in that, but David Jones has taken the same subject matter and mastered it, rather than allow it to master him. The result is far more moving and thought-provoking than any instant emotional payoff that you get with the usual WWI canon. Jones' language, mixing the rough colloquialisms of the soldiers with the ennobling imagery of mythology, is just phenomenal. Here's an example:

Childs-bane! - old wall-eye sees your dirty billikin through your navel.
She'll nark Gertie's grubby shift.
He smells your private ditty-bag from afar.
Amanuensis Nancy can't jot his damaging hogs-wash fast enough.
Cotsplut! there's bastards for you.
They'll feel the pinch alright at
Daffy Shenkin's Great Assize.
Roll on the Resurrection.

Send it down David.
Rend the middle air.
Send it down boy.

James Murphy says

I believe In Parenthesis to be the best fictional work to come out of WWI. It's a rich combination of poetry and prose that makes heavy use of allusion to the Old Testament, Arthurian legend, Welsh folklore, Coleridge, Chaucer, and Norse myth and relate them all to the war. Jones believed that to try to describe the war as a conventional historical event wouldn't begin to present an adequate picture of what it was like. Whether or not Jones, who served at the front, came to see the frontline environment and action there as enchanted, the folk and literary references he uses tend to create that atmosphere. As a narrative it follows the formula of many war novels: leaving home, shipment to the theater of war and to the front, first experiences and acclimatization, times of rest in the rear, and a climactic battle, in this case the first day of the Somme Offensive. The book does a good job of depicting the life at the front with all its details of equipment, jargon, and daily life. However, it's Jones's rich attempt to use traditional elements of religion and literature to see the soldiers as representative of all the soldiers of history and to picture the war in a heroic, folk tradition sense that gives the book its weight. Sometimes it's a thorny bramble of motifs and references but Jones's extensive notes guide the way through minefields laid with Celtic cycles and the Song of Roland. That the narrative can be seen as an authentic tale of soldiers at war at the same time as a movement to apotheosis is a testament to the elegance and intelligence with which he arranged all this detail. It's been charged that his use of such things as Arthurian and medieval romance results in a work diluting the horror because it ultimately makes the war romantic. I think I can see that. In his desire to find a new vision for the war he experienced and believed couldn't be understood in conventional ways, Jones described the torn up area between the lines in terms of wood nymphs, knights, church ritual, sacred and popular song, mythic figures from the Welsh landscape, and much more. It may be the battlefield is so crowded with allusion one can't see the combat as the insanity it is. But it is the Great War, nevertheless, and I don't believe any fiction renders it better.

And now in 2018, having finished the most recent biography of Jones, I'm reading this again.

Tony says

This was beautiful:

So they would go a long while in solid dark, nor moon, nor battery, dispelled.
Feet plodding in each other's unseen tread. They said no word but to direct their immediate next coming, so close behind to blunder, toe by heel tripping, file-mates; blind following, moving with a singular identity. . . .

And unintelligible:

Obstacles on jerks-course made a wooden planking -- his night phantasm mazes a pre-war, more idiosyncratic skein, weaves with stored-up very other tangled threads; a wooden donkey for a wooden hurdle is easy for a deep-sleep transformation-fay to wand
carry you on dream stuff

up the hill and down again
show you sights your mother knew,
show you Jesus Christ lapped in hay with Uncle Eb and his diamond dress-stud next the ox and Sergeant Milford taking his number, juxtapose, dovetail, web up, any number of concepts, and bovine lunar tricks. . . .

And sometimes both:

The sap of vegetables slobbered the spotless breech-block of No. 3 gun.

World War I inspired poetic brilliance. Be warned though, this is not Siegfried Sassoon or Wilfred Owen. This is something else. Part-prose, part-poem, in alternating voices and language. But as deeply felt and real for all the experiment.

I could appreciate the beauty, the wonder of this soldier:

The terrain of bivouac was dark wrapt; the moon was in her most diminished quarter.

Yet I struggled with the bulk of it, appreciating its importance as both a testament and a song, while not following the allusions and the dialect enough, and not caring enough to research what was flying past.

Ah, but they were *bovine lunar tricks* he played. A soldier's dreams.

Bryan Alexander says

This is one of the most inspired and complex fictional treatments of World War I that I have yet to come across. *In Parenthesis* is also a great work of British modernism, which doesn't get discussed nearly enough.

As a WWI book this is very strange. On the one hand it has a very classic war story structure, following a group of soldiers from training into combat. Here this is a Welsh unit which ends up on the Somme. Jones introduces us to a variety of characters, mostly enlisted men, and we see them experience boredom, extreme violence, loneliness, comradeship. We don't get far beyond introductions, however; this is not a psychological novel. Even our protagonist, John Ball (this is whom I first thought of) is not realized in depth.

On the other hand *In Parenthesis* is a work of surrealism or fantasy, because early British mythology and literature mixes into the trenches of 1916. This happens by allusion and reference, by characters' visions, and through the act of writing itself. Arthurian legend looms large, mostly through old Welsh poetry and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. It reminds me of subsequent war novels that partake of fantasy and surrealism, like Tim O'Brien's *Going After Cacciato* and, to a lesser extent, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* and Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, but Jones creates an unusual and very moving interpretation of the British experience of WWI that seems almost unique.

At the same time readers should know that this is a work of subtle and mysterious complexity. *In Parenthesis* mixes prose and poetry, for starters. Moreover, Jones is capable of shifting tone, speaker, register, and time period between sentences, usually without hints to the reader. For example, during a description of wounded soldiers and people helping them, we see this:

> Lower you lower you - some old cows have malhanded little bleeders for a mother's son.
> Lower you lower you prize Maria Hunt, an' gammy-fingered upland Gamalin - down cantcher -

low - hands away me ducky - down on hands down and flattened belly and face pressed and curroodle mother earth
she's kind:
Pray her hide you in her deeps
she's only refuge against
this ferocious pursuer
terribly questing.
Maiden of the digged places
let our cry come unto thee. (176)

Daily speech shifts to heroic/mythic discourse, prose to poetry, each word capable of mutation. It's a version of stream of consciousness, if you realize that the consciousness isn't a single Woolf or Joyce character, but a combination of a military unit with a mythic imagination. This is serious literary modernism, even featuring author's extensive endnotes to explain what he and his first readers thought was too obscure. And those references are rich beyond the Arthurian, from Shakespeare to popular songs, paintings and minute soldierly bureaucratic details.

You cannot skim this, but have to pick your way carefully along each line (or paragraph). And it is worth every second.

I very much want to tell you about the passages I annotated, except I wrote on every other page. I really want to include this in a WWI or war lit seminar. For now, let me share some highlights and notes.

There some minute scenes that portray the war, like a Tim O'Brien-like things they carried list (90), a classic encounter between two enemy soldiers (168-9), a soldier falling asleep on sentry duty (53-55), two bored soldiers shooting the breeze (139-40), or Ball dealing with a comrade's horrible death (174). There's Ball, wounded, struggling with his rifle. Then there are stranger scenes, like Dai Greatcoat's awesome and epic boast (79-84), which ranges through history, like something from Flann O'Brien , or the astonishing visit of the Queen of the Wood, who gives magical gifts to soldiers transformed into mythic heroes (184-6).

Here is aerial combat, seen from the vantage point of a ground-bound soldier:

Fair-dressed young men about the hanger-stays
(heaven itself would hasten to the south sky)
Break throttle on you sudden, just over;
disturb the immediate air at take-off,
bring you on the napper you'd think, bearing so low
over the long column
getting up the fluence
making the four horsemen speak comfortable words, and smooth her tossing manes; her black-beauty quivering.
Barely clear the poplar top
at cant and obliquely
as Baroque attending angels surprise you with their air-worthiness - but fleet, with struts braced, to mote in the blueness, to discover his dispositions... (124)

Here is the protagonist's first experience of bombardment:

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

Here is Ball under fire, facing German machine guns and rifles...:

> he [Germans] finds you everywhere.
> Where his fiery sickle garners you:
> fanged-flash and darkt-fire thrring and thrrung athwart thdrill a Wimshurst pandemonium drill with dynamo druv staccato bark a you like Berthe Krupp's terrier bitch and rattlesnakes for bare legs...
> rattle a chatter you like a Vitus neurotic, harrow your vertebrae, bore your brain-pan before you can say Fanny - and comfortably over open sights:
> the gentlemen must be mowed.(182)

...then being shot:

> And to Private Ball it came as if a rigid beam of great weight flailed about his calves, caught from behind by ballista-baulk let fly or aft-beam slwed to clout gunnel-walker
> below below below.
> When golden vanities make about,
> You've got no legs to stand on.
> He thought it disproportionate in its violence considering the fragility of us. (183)

In British WWI literature *In Parenthesis* may be unique. It is certainly visionary and powerful.

Paul says

This is another one of the reads related to the First World War and one of the better ones. It is also one of the most difficult to define. Its author, David Jones was a painter, poet, designer and wood engraver. His father was Welsh and he was strongly influenced by the Welsh literary tradition. It is effectively a prose poem, using both mediums following Private John Ball (In this work there are many layers of meaning, John Ball was a Lollard priest and one of the leaders of the Peasant’s Revolt) over a period of seven months from England to France and finally to the Battle of the Somme, more specifically Mametz Wood.
There are copious notes and these are necessary as the references to other works are numerous and I think very few would come close to getting them all. There are numerous Shakespearean references, especially Henry V, Lewis Carroll, Coleridge’s poems, The Song of Roland, Malory (especially Morte D’Arthur). The

Bible (especially Revelation) and two Welsh texts in particular. The Gododdin, the Mabinogion and the sixth century poem Preiddeu Annwn (The Harrowing of Hell). There are also lots of references to popular songs from the music hall and Jones makes good use of soldiers' slang.
Jones was influenced by Eliot, Pound and Joyce and they are his starting points. This was published in 1937 to immediate critical acclaim. Eliot, in his introduction called it a "work of genius". W H Auden went further; he also felt it was a masterpiece and was the "greatest book about the First World War". Auden went further and felt in terms of greatness and quality it was comparable to Homer and Dante's Divine Comedy.
Jones also includes an archetype of the universal soldier; here a Welshman called Dai Greatcoat who has fought in all wars:

"This Dai Adjusts his slipping shoulder-straps, wraps close his misfit outsize greatcoat – he articulates his English with alien care.
My fathers were with the Black Prince of Wales
At the passion of
the blind Bohemian king.
They served in these fields,
It is in the histories that you can read it, Corporal – boys
Gower, they were – it is writ down – yes.
Wot about Methuselem Taffy?
I was with Abel when his brother found him,
Under the green tree."

Some critics have argued that Jones romanticises war; however that is really only a surface interpretation. He parallels and compares the Somme with Camlan and Catraeth (both actual battles suffused with legend where the Celtic/Briton cause was defeated by the invading Angles and Saxons). Fussell has argued there is a deep conservatism here; however I think what Jones is doing is trying to ennoble those who have been lost. This is best illustrated by a remarkable passage from near the end of the book where most of John Ball's comrades have fallen in Mametz Wood; men we have been with throughout the book. The Queen of the Woods is acknowledging the fallen:

"The Queen of the Woods has cut bright boughs of various flowering.
These knew her influential eyes. Her awarding hands can pluck for each their fragile prize.
She speaks to them according to precedence. She knows what's due to this elect society. She can choose twelve gentle-men. She knows who is most lord between the high trees and on the open down.
Some she gives white berries
some she gives brown
Emil has a curious crown it's
made of golden saxifrage
Fatty wears sweet briar,
he will reign with her for a thousand years.
For Balder she reaches high to fetch his.
Ulrich smiles for his myrtle wand.
That swine Lillywhite has daises to his chain – you'd hardly credit it
She plaits torques of equal splendour for Mr Jenkins and Billy Crower.
Hansel with Gronwy share dog-violets for a palm, where they lie in serious embrace beneath the twisted tripod.
Sion gets St. John's Wort – that's fair enough.
Dai Greatcoat, she can't find him anywhere – she calls both high and low, she had a very special one for him.

Among this July noblesse she is mindful of December wood – when the trees of the forest beat against each other because of him.
She carries to Aneirin-in-the-nullah a rowan sprig, for the glory of Guenedota. You couldn't hear what she said to him, because she was careful for the Disciplines of the Wars. "

The reference at the end relates to a Welsh Bard and is also a direct reference to Henry V and the Welsh officer Fluellen.
The language is sublime but you cannot get aware from the senselessness of the slaughter as friends and comrades "sink limply to a heap". Jones adds to the feel and sense of his work with illustration and painting. It is easy to forget he was primarily a painter and illustrator. The frontispiece of the original edition (painted by Jones) has been reproduced in the Folio edition that I have. The best description of it is one I found by a blogger called Alex Preston and I can't better it, so I won't try.

"The soldier, staring out of blank eyes, hangs crucified against the background of broken trees. Rats scuttle through the barbed wire that trains up his body towards his shrunken genitals – symbols of his emasculation in his final moments. Tiny figures reminiscent of C. R. W. Nevinson or Wyndham Lewis struggle with enormous guns in the background as the night sky smudges into a riot of stars. "

This is not a work that is sentimental or romantic about war. Jones has taken on board the lessons of Eliot and Pound about the presence of the past and the whole work weaves the past and the present together. It is important to stress the Welshness of the work. The lead character is John Ball, not John Bull. Ball and his comrades are portrayed throughout as being done unto by those in power and authority. They were ordinary men and Jones as I argued earlier ennobles them to mythical levels. Jones portrays the realities and brutalities of the Battle of the Somme and warfare in general in a way that we are not used to, and with a modernist twist. It may be that one of the reasons this work is not as well-known as it should be is that is not so easily accessible as other works and poetry. The description of Lt. Jenkins dying as a result of gassing is every bit as powerful as Wilfred Owen's description in "Dulce et Decorum est".
The most interesting critical account I came across was written by Joseph Cohen in a magazine called Poetry Wales where he makes use of the term simultaneity (simultaneous action) to describe Jones's work. It is a term he borrows from relativity theory and he argues that it is the key to understanding In Parenthesis. Jones juxtaposes various events and Cohen argues that this is justified by drawing together the commonality of military experience with the commonality of "the futility of sacrifice and the suffering in combat". Cohen goes on to say that simultaneous occurrences and simultaneity make these juxtapositions explicable. This means, he argues the bare structure of In Parenthesis is very similar to Lowry's Under the Volcano and Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow.
Cohen sums up the argument as follows;

"Simultaneous occurrence is the key to structural coherence. The relativity theory, as literary people employ it, concentrates on the principles of simultaneity and uncertainty, and the invalidation of the principle of causality. Modern combat, where simultaneous action closes in on the participant, provides us, microcosmically, with one of our most convincing demonstrations of multiplicity, or clutter, in the universe; of the futility of planning actions based upon previously acquired temporal and spatial measurements; and of the breakdown between cause and effect. Causes are generated and set into motion, only to collide with one another, modifying effects. This was the nature of the Western Front though we have been slow to recognize it. In Parenthesis is authentic in its reflection of Jones' distillation of that experience."

The task of the poet here is to bring order out of chaos and Jones does that. It is a remarkable work which should be one of the standard works. It is challenging and not easy to read and is well worth the effort. I think it is one of the greatest works ever written about war.

James says

Written in 1937 and based on Jones' experiences of the Great War – 'In Parenthesis' is a poetical work based on Jones' impressions of his experiences of what he saw, felt and was part of during that war.

Whilst I felt that I should be able to appreciate this as a piece of literary art, unfortunately I found 'In Parenthesis' densely written, almost impenetrable, occasionally verging on the incomprehensible, wilfully obscure and ultimately difficult to understand.

There are endless notes accompanying this piece, which if read along with the main text would I think prove a constant distraction from the main piece – why so many? Why so necessary?

Written almost as a stream of consciousness, I found this hugely confusing – even when one is not expecting or wanting a traditional, straightforward, linear narrative.

Again, this I imagine is a piece that benefits greatly from extensive study and analysis – unfortunately, I for one do not generally appreciate literary works that require studying – especially even if only to be understood.

Not for me – unfortunately.