

as a whole. This seems to me to explain both what the missing books were (the organisational rather than spiritual parts of living "The Holy Life") and why they are so completely absent from the manuscript tradition (they were commonplace—every Dominican knew them; though Daniel suggests that they might have been translated for inclusion in the overall work).

This contextualises the work well. Written for a particular Dominican community in the early years of the Dominican expansion into Wales (roughly 1240–1260), it appears to introduce mainstream theology to new Dominicans, many of whom may have had need of such a work in the vernacular. Daniel fails to narrow down which of the various Dominican priories is the best candidate for the text. Though the use of the vernacular does tend to suggest a priory in the north, such as Bangor or Rhuddlan, other factors suggest a southern location, such as Brecon, Haverfordwest, or Cardiff.

Daniel's further arguments are less convincing. He suggests, on the basis of the obvious literary skill of the author, and similarities between the text and a medieval Bardic Grammar, that both works come from the hand of his postulated author of the grammar, a bard called Cnepyn Gwerthryniion. The argument depends on a number of highly unprovable theses, and on the reliability of textual comparisons as proof of common authorship. On the other hand, his general suggestion that much of the translation work which can be found in manuscripts like *The Book of the Anchorite* is actually the work of Dominicans is attractive. A number of these translators identify themselves as "Brother", and the tendency in the past has been to assume that the translators who gave birth to this golden age of Welsh prose were Cistercians, based on the prevalence of Cistercian houses in Wales and their evident favour with royal patrons. But Daniel rightly asks what, for Cistercians, would motivate this translation work. Rather, he says, we should attribute it to those whose job was preaching and conversion, and who most needed accessible and orthodox works in the vernacular: the friars, both Franciscan and Dominican. Here and elsewhere he has gone further to suggest that the religious works of this period, both translations and original compositions, hold greater import for the native literary tradition, especially for narrative prose, than has generally been recognised.

There are niggling complaints about this edition which are not the concern of readers of this journal, but Daniel has brought a masterpiece of Welsh religious prose into an excellent modern edition. This should provide the springboard for this work of spiritual education by a Welsh Dominican to acquire a greatly deserved wider audience.

THOMAS OWEN CLANCY

DAVID JONES: THE MAKER UNMADE by Jonathan Miles and Derek Shiel, *Seren, Poetry Wales Press Ltd. Bridgend, 1995. 328 pp. £29.95.*

In 1942, after David Jones had seen the restored El Greco painting *Christ and the Money-changers*, he wrote to a friend that it looked about twice as 'real' as the people walking about in front of it. Clearly anyone trying to understand Jones's own art or poetry must come to terms with a complex mind and a combative aesthetic sense.

The two authors of this book announce by their chosen title their delicate task; the unmaking of a maker. Having considered over a thousand images by Jones they reproduce and discuss a portion of them. The

illustrations are plentiful, although being chiefly in black and white there is a certain loss, and the numerous footnotes sustain the text's argument. Their work is well researched, readable and thought-provoking even when it generates disagreement. Of Jones's art the authors say that what we see on the wall is ultimately what counts, but history and art history contextualise the work and biography can explain the pattern of making.

The authors then proceed to contextualise and to explain. The various relevant contexts are indicated rapidly and are to the point, whether in presenting other painters and artistic movements or in illuminating remarks such as that there was no tradition of painting still life in English art prior to this century. Their descriptions of individual works of art by Jones generally make the reader see, or consider, more than the untutored eye would left to itself. All this is especially necessary with an artist as allusive and historically minded as Jones.

The use of biographical material poses more problems than the providing of contexts. The authors consider that when an emotional life so affects the artist's ability to work either at his best or even at all, then perhaps such biographical elements will prove pertinent. The chronicling of Jones's emotional difficulties, especially as regards his sexuality, seems well-informed and not voyeuristic. Some of the uses made of Jones's biography are arresting. The paths that fail to reach a domestic destination or lopped off branches gain a disturbing prominence. There is also much to ponder in the authors' remark that whilst Jones's male portraits were generally straightforward, the women he painted were often mythologised to harness their strong emotional attraction for the painter. In any case, we know much about these difficulties from Jones's own letters and notes, many already published. The chief difficulty lies in gauging the actual impact and consequences of an artist's life on his or her output. To what extent is a work of art self-explanatory?

Jones became a Catholic in 1921 and a lay Dominican soon after, and this had enormous repercussions for him at every level. Regrettably, it is when dealing with the religious component of Jones's life and art that the authors are at their least helpful. A number of their observations can simply be listed to indicate that their approach is unlikely to render adequately either what Catholicism meant to Jones or what it means on its own terms. The page references indicate how these inadequate observations permeate the whole book.

We are told that Jones remained ideologically trapped in the tradition that had been forged by church and state (p.7); that the reconciliation of a sensuous artistic disposition with the strictures of a religion not only based on suffering but that also advocated the denial of any sensual urge not sanctioned by socially constraining codes, imposed a great strain on David Jones (p.142); the intellectual baggage with which Jones's chosen religion loaded him was to prove difficult to articulate in the context of modern art (p.166); and finally that Jones experienced the pressures of a belief system which ignored the physical facts of humanity (p.243).

Whatever his personal imbalances, David Jones believed that artistic creativity is gratuitous, delightful, sacramental and dependent on a love that is not the same as the enjoyment of fulfilling human relationships. Moreover, he was aware that psychology as such is less concerned than religion with hierarchies of perfection.

ROBERT OMBRES OP