

(rather old but still available) version ascribed to the "English Dominican fathers" (accurate and literal for the most part, but sometimes misleading and often stilted by contemporary standards), and that of the more recent Blackfriars edition (more modern in its English than the earlier translation but often very deceptive and not, for the most part, still available). The result seems to me to be a good and readable edition, and the volume as a whole provides a fine entry into Aquinas's basic philosophical ideas about God for those who do not read Latin.

The editors are much to be congratulated on their decision to translate not bits and pieces of Aquinas but three solid chunks of a major and mature work. The Introduction to their volume is slight, and little serious guidance is given to readers who want an accurate overview of Aquinas on *De Deo Uno* to accompany the translations. The Bibliography is also slight. But the Glossary is good and should prove helpful to beginners. Since the volume is generous in its selection of texts (which come with notes independent of the Glossary), teachers and students looking for a book to accompany a course on Aquinas's philosophy of God should find it especially worth consulting.

BRIAN DAVIES OP

AT THE TURN OF A CIVILIZATION: DAVID JONES AND MODERN POETICS by Kathleen Henderson Staudt, *The University of Michigan Press*, 1994, ix + 216, \$39.50.

David Jones had extraordinary talents which still await widespread recognition; before he died in 1974 he already had the acclaim of W.H. Auden and T.S. Eliot. In the preface to his poem *The Anathemata* Jones tells us that in it he was trying to make a shape out of the very things of which he was himself made. In his own eyes he was constituted by being a Londoner, of Welsh and English parentage, of Protestant upbringing, of Catholic subscription. What he made from all that, and from his experiences as a soldier in the First World War and from a visit to Jerusalem in 1934, was given shape chiefly in poetry, painting, inscriptions, and essays. Having been a pupil of Eric Gill, and like him a lay Dominican, added to the quarry. He came to consider Aquinas as 'life-giving'.

Kathleen Staudt's aim is to see what kind of 'modernist' poet Jones was, when compared and (significantly) contrasted with the works of Eliot, Pound, Joyce and the historical writings of Oswald Spengler. Her interpretations are well-argued, and she makes telling use of Jones's letters and unpublished writings. The recent discovery of an unpublished 1939 essay on Hitler sustains an important discussion on Jones's response to the rise of fascism and the Nazis.

Like other modernists, Jones was keenly aware of living at a time of disjunction, when to be modern meant almost by definition to feel radically cut off from the past. Staudt is good at showing how Jones, sustained by an incarnational, sacramental view in an epoch often

inimical to human decencies and continuities, did not become totally pessimistic. While many post-Romantic writers and critics were concerned with draining, purifying, or emptying the signifier, Jones was eager to fill it, to restore the hidden affinities between words and the experiences they constitute. The sign-making impulse would thus enrich contemporary experience and help preserve our basic humanity. The poet's role recalls the exiled psalmist searching 'to sing the Lord's song in a strange land'. Jones's reclaiming of his Welshness gave him a sympathy for the dispossessed — a sympathy he extended to the Algerians in revolt against the French, the 'red Indians' of North America and the Arabs in Palestine. (Why does Staudt not indicate where the letters she quotes for this are to be found?)

Staudt's pages on Jones's understanding of the feminine, where she speaks of his unusually androgynous poetic sensibility, and on his attitude to war in *In Parenthesis* are particularly challenging. Jones was not one of those who equated the men 'sacrificed' in the Great War with Christ's sacrifice. That kind of sacrifice was 'neither approved nor ratified nor made acceptable'; in contrast with the use of those terms in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

His enduring if flickering hope was in the saving grace of the Incarnation and the sign of the Cross, and he sought to make something of that in words and paint. He had a strong sense of the corporeal nature of language, perhaps brought out most completely in his painted inscriptions. Staudt might have drawn more on this aspect of Jones's creative handling of form, expression and content. In *'Art and Sacrament'* he wrote that the body is not an infirmity but a unique benefit and splendour; a thing denied to angels and unconscious in animals. We are committed to body and by the same token we are committed to Ars, so to sign and sacrament. For Staudt, Jones's most original contribution was his presentation of poetry as a mode of verbal action. But then he liked to recall how the bards of an earlier Wales referred to themselves as 'carpenters of song'. David Jones set about retrieving and making connections with what he could of a fragmented past, rapidly dissolving. 'Of these thou hast given me have I lost none', was for him a kind of artistic programme nourished by a Christian faith centred on its sacramental expression.

As Staudt underlines the 'open' structure of Jones's poetry and the interrogative character of his writings, she may like to consider two more questions. Why does the Resurrection, the ultimate securing of our bodiliness against the dissolution of death, not figure substantially in her book? We know it was a belief close to Jones's deepest religious concern, and he thought it incompatible with the idea of necessary progress, no matter how spiritualised. And, relatedly, what does she make of his nuanced admiration for Teilhard de Chardin?

ROBERT OMBRES OP