

Spring 2019

## Who is Paying for God: A thematic analysis of Henry Arthur Jones's religious plays in relation to the modernist trend

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WHO IS PAYING FOR GOD: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS  
OF HENRY ARTHUR JONES'S RELIGIOUS PLAYS  
IN RELATION TO THE MODERNIST TREND

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A Thesis

Presented To

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Theatre Arts

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by

Jay Tyler Sharma

April 2019

CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies

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## ABSTRACT

### WHO IS PAYING FOR GOD? A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF HENRY ARTHUR JONES'S RELIGIOUS PLAYS IN RELATION TO THE MODERNIST TREND

by

Jay Tyler Sharma

April 2019

This thesis project argues for the value of Henry Arthur Jones's work in the late 1890s and seeks to illustrate that Jones's contribution to the larger Modernist movement in the theatre. Using a close textual analysis of Jones's plays *Michael and His Lost Angel*, *Judah*, and *Saints and Sinners*, this project examines Jones's use of popular theatrical genres to provide commentary on the religious and fiscal tensions in the surrounding Victorian society. The critical commentary in Jones's plays is then used to draw a connection between Jones's work and his fight for dramatists to have greater freedom in the topics they sought to portray onstage, demonstrating that Jones used his own work as part of the "National Drama" that he sought to create in England. Ultimately, this thesis ties together the elements of religion, Victorian society, and the theoretical foundation of a National Drama to justify Jones's place in the Modernist movement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I discovered Jones on a whim and began writing about him over a year ago now, and I have received a lot of help along the way. I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone who has helped me with this project. I want to say thank you to all of my friends who helped encourage me and keep me on track. A thank you to my family for your love and support. I would also like to thank my friend Dylan for his advice and counsel on the project. Lastly, I would like to say thank you to Professor Ramon Esquivel, Dr. Sarah Watkins, Dr. Emily Rollie, Dr. Natasha Lindsey, and Dr. Lily Vuong. I could not have accomplished this project without your help. I will be forever grateful for your support on this document and the counsel you all provided along the way.

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## CHAPTER ONE:

### INTRODUCTION

Despite debates regarding genre, style, or intention, most scholars and artists agree that a movement or change in art does not happen instantaneously. As the grip of naturalism began to fade in the late 1800s and modernism began to appear, a period of change became apparent. Within this aesthetic transition, Henry Arthur Jones came to the stage. A writer with a Victorian melodramatic flair and a propensity for arguing for the everlasting value of drama, Jones wrote plays in the late 1880s and expanded his writing to include essays and other forms until his death in 1929. In terms of style and structure, Jones was familiar with the melodrama of the previous era in England. He incorporated these elements into his own work and weaved in more taboo subjects, like religion, which allowed him to expand the critical and cultural conversations happening on the modern English stage.

I was drawn to the study of Jones through a biography of his life published in 1930 by his daughter, Doris Arthur Jones. In the book, she describes her father's quest to write and make drama worthy of study. Through Doris's fascinating text about his life and some subsequent research, I found that Jones has not often been studied, examined, researched, or even noted in the canon of theatre artists of the period. Part of the reason for this may be related to the lack of sustained studies in melodrama of the 1800s due to some resistance to considering the art form as high art, or art that is worthy of scholarly attention. Matthew Buckley discusses the challenges melodrama has faced in a 2009 article titled, "Refuge Theater: Melodrama and Modernity's Loss." Buckley argues that

melodrama “seems from the start to have been a genre bound intimately to exile” (175). Despite melodrama’s exiled status, Jones utilized the genre and was a prolific melodramatic and comedic writer with a passion for writing and elevating drama. This thesis argues for renewed consideration of his work, particularly in Jones’s commentary regarding social implications of religion and the place of drama in English national identity, through an evaluation of three of his religious works — *Saints and Sinners* (1884), *Judah* (1890), and *Michael and His Lost Angel* (1896) — in conjunction with his essays on a “National Drama.”

#### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Henry Arthur Jones was a playwright who wrote and was involved in the production of English theater from the late 1870s until 1917 (D. Jones 411-424). Much of the information for Jones’s life was recorded by his daughter, Doris, in her book *The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones*.<sup>1</sup> Jones was born in the Victorian Era and was described by his daughter as both a Victorian and Puritan (D. Jones 26-27). Understanding these character traits is valuable to note when considering that Jones was born in a period of dramatic transition between naturalism, realism, and modernism and during a time when religious conversations in public forums were often controversial – a controversy evidenced by the reception of some of his plays.

Although not often studied today, Jones was a man who, through perseverance, became financially successful and well known in his own era. He was the kind of man who was well versed in literature. His daughter wrote that he was almost fired from his

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<sup>1</sup> As anecdotal testament to the lack of study and awareness of Jones’s work, the copy of Doris Jones’s text owned by Central Washington University has not been checked out since the year 1941 (as of 2018).

job in a draper shop as a young man because “one day, deeply engrossed in *Paradise Lost*, he was annoyed when an extremely fussy woman came in to buy some ribbon; he showed her one or two boxes, but she wasn’t satisfied; so he cleared the counter, got solemnly every box and tray of ribbon in the shop, spread them all out, and said, ‘Make your choice, Madam’ and returned to Milton” (D. Jones 33). In a letter penned in July of 1918, Jones would later refer to Milton as “the greatest musician” and “a brother Puritan of mine, too” (D. Jones 32-33).

Initially, Jones was not successful with his writing career, as his one act plays were turned down by the managers to whom he sent his early work (D. Jones 35). He tried his hand at writing novels afterwards, but he was not successful on that front either. As Doris notes, her father’s commented that his novel “was declined with this comment: ‘It is not a good first-rate novel ; I cannot honestly say that it is a good second-rate novel, but I think it may be classed as a good third-rate novel’” (35). Despite these initial setbacks, Jones persevered and his career as a dramatist arguably took off after his play *The Silver King* ran for 289 nights and was subsequently revived multiple times (75). Jones’s career would continue from 1882 until his death in 1929. Although Jones changed from writing drama to essays and political discourse in the last 10 years of his life, Jones was considered an avid advocator for the drama. Jones’s daughter catalogued 83 plays he had written as well as numerous books and other theoretical writings on the subject of drama (411-424). Over the course of his career, some of Jones’s religious plays caused particular controversy and thus are worthy of study. Analyzing these plays helps illustrate Jones’s interest in developing a national English drama as his plays speak directly to what he wanted to place onstage: the political and religious lives of English

people, thus elevating drama from merely entertainment to a political tool, worthy of intellectual attention.

This thesis utilizes a close textual analysis of three of Jones's religious plays: *Saints and Sinners* (1884), *Judah* (1890), and *Michael and His Lost Angel* (1894). The examination will pay close attention to the themes of love and faith in juxtaposition with commentary on financial gain in religion. After identifying thematic trends in the plays, this thesis will analyze them in relation to the essays Jones wrote on the subject of a "National Drama" to show his relevance in the discussion of early English dramatists like George Bernard Shaw and J.M. Barrie and the ways he advocated the use of drama to offer social, national critique.

To be clear, Jones was writing before the "Modernist" trend of the early 1900s that took place around World War I. Modernism, in contrast to Naturalism, pushed away from using a scientific rationale in drama where characters were examined under a metaphorical microscope. Jones was part of this Modernist trend, but he was certainly earlier than many of the famous artists associated with the movement. The three plays referenced above contain a wealth of religious commentary in relation to fiscal politics, but simultaneously examine complex themes related to love and faith. Religion, which was previously not considered a typical topic of discussion in English modern drama, is brought to the stage by Jones (Weales 4). This, combined with Jones's involvement in the elevation of drama through his fervent essay writing, is the foundation of the National Drama he sought to create. The subject of a National Drama is summarized in the condensed version of a lecture he gave to the Royal Institution of England on Albermale street (Foundations 1). Doris notes that she attended the lecture and she chose to

summarize some of the main points of that lecture. To do so, she quotes from an article that was later published in *English Illustrated Magazine* which contained a summarized version of the aforementioned lecture. For frame of reference, the original article she quotes from was titled “State of The Drama II, An International Symposium.” This article had 15 contributors and asked the playwrights questions about drama in England (Beauguard et. all 495) In this article Jones begins by saying, “In reply to your letter asking me for my ‘views on the best means of ameliorating the drama in England,’ I cannot do better than repeat the summary of my recent lecture at the Royal Institution” (Beauguard et. all 496). Doris’s summary of Jones’s commentary in the article (using his own words) is as follows:

We must separate...the drama from popular amusement—we must found a national or repertory theatre—ensure that a dramatist shall be recognised and rewarded when he has sincerely painted life and character—bring our acted drama into living relation with English literature—and ensure that plays shall be read and judged as literature. We must inform our drama with a broad, sane, and profound morality, give our actors and actresses a sounder, better, and more thorough training...and bring the drama into relation with other arts. (D. Jones 226)

This quotation is part of Jones’s nine tenants of a National Drama and illustrates Jones’s desire to elevate the drama by the foundation of a theater, a change in societal view of the dramatist, the elevation of the written word into the academy, a “profound morality” written into the drama, and the training of actors. Jones had lofty goals and he fought to achieve them.

## A SMALL NOTE ON MODERNISM

The term “Modernism” will appear throughout this text in conjunction with the phrase “The Modern Drama.” As these two terms appear often, a small discussion of Modernism and what that presented is merited here. When considering how to define Modernism and what that represents, the problem is quite complex as the term is remarkably wide in scope. There is no defined start date for Modernism but one could argue the timeframe for the movement is somewhere around the start of World War I, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Modernism, like many movements in art, is generally described as a move away from what came before, particularly in regard to aesthetics. Realism is one such movement that came before Modernism. Jones was certainly not a realist and rallied against it:

I have not time here to do more than explain in the briefest way that I am not contending for a realistic drama. In the past the greatest examples of drama have been set in frankly poetic, fantastic and unrealistic schemes. But whether a play is poetic, realistic, or fantastic, its first purpose should be the representation of life, and the implicit enforcement of the great plain simple truths of life. (*Foundations* 9)

Jones was not a realist and by that same token definitely not a naturalist, as he did not seek that level of “reality” in his work. Jones sought to represent life onstage in a different way.

*Modernism* by Michael H. Whitworth highlights the vast scope of the “isms” presented in the Modernist movement. His text focuses on literature as opposed to drama,

but still helps provide context of what “Modernism” is. Whitworth notes that Modernism escapes a simple definition and is instead something rather difficult to define. He states,

“Modernism” is not so much a thing as a set of responses to problems posed by the conditions of modernity. The recognition that modernism and modernity are related but not identical is crucial to most recent work in the area. At one time it was possible to write of there being “two modernities”, one being the modernity of technology and social life, and the other being aesthetic modernity. (Whitworth 3)

What is critical to note from this passage is that Modernism is not a single point in time or a specific “thing.” Rather the Modernist idea is a response to modern conditions, whether technological or in relation to aesthetics. Whitworth later introduces key questions that writers could ask themselves to determine if one might be identified as a Modernist (Whitworth 6). Per Whitworth, one important aspect to note is that “these problems are best posed as questions, but this should not be taken to imply that the writers were fully conscious of them” (6). The argument is that the writer may not be fully conscious of the questions with which they are grappling that qualify them as Modernist. Similarly, Jones may not have recognized fully what he was asking in his dramatic work during their creation, but he certainly wanted to be part of a larger aesthetic, theatrical movement. Thus, I propose that Jones, in the period of transition to modernism, was engaging (perhaps unknowingly) with some of the larger socio-political changes in Europe and the effects of a post-industrial world. He rallies against realism and looks for representative work which would perhaps not align with the famous naturalists and realists of his former age. To a contemporary reader, Jones certainly reads

as a Victorian in terms of character and form, but his desire to argue that England was in the midst of something larger moves him toward the Modern lens and is what will be argued in this thesis.

One cannot write about Jones without researching and grappling with two phrases: “the Modern Drama” and “the National Drama.” These terms are used to identify and track significant change and movement in art. Jones’s book *The Foundations of National Drama* is dedicated to Brander Matthews, and Jones says, “My dear Brander Matthews, I have so often quoted you in the following pages, that I am urged by duty, no less than by friendship and sympathy, to dedicate this book to you” (Jones n.p.; dedication). This quotation illustrates that Jones connected with American academics in his discussions of a National Drama which further demonstrates Jones’s influence. Jones discussed the world around him and wrote essays to track what he saw. These terms represent part of that movement and will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.

#### METHODS AND SUBJECTS OF ANALYSIS

The plays will be examined in chronological order, starting with *Saints and Sinners*. Produced in 1884, Jones’s drama is steeped in the world of a minister grappling with the complex relationships he has with his parish and his personal tragedy of having his daughter kidnapped. A pair of middle-class businessmen find out the truth and oust the minister from his position due to some complex societal structures that will be discussed later. Within the world of the play, Jones comments on the middle class through the commentary of two middle class businessmen and their search for financial gain. This is juxtaposed with Fletcher and his daughter and their fall into poverty due to the businessmen’s actions. The play spurred controversy over scriptural quotations made

in relation to financial gain, and evidently many who attended did not take kindly to Jones's interpretations of religion in middle-class English life. Chapter One will outline this controversy, including discussions of how the businessmen's dialogue could have been controversial and how the character Hoggard's quoting of scripture may have been one of the largest objections to the play. In a letter written to *The Ninetieth Century* in 1885 and then published later in the appendix of his play, Jones defended his portrayal of religion in *Saints and Sinners*: "But when a playwright is challenged by a part of a first-night audience as to his right to depict any section of the community, or rather his right to depict them truthfully and make them use the language that is natural to them" (*Saints and Sinners* 119). Jones defends his characters, calling them truthful portrayals, and he upholds his right to depict religion in the communities he observed. The choice to defend religion as a viable topic for the stage is significant because Jones was actually fighting a larger battle for a playwright (in any capacity) to be able to tell their story onstage rather than be regulated by the interests of the public. Through Jones's depiction of religious communities, he contributes to the canon of new national English drama that he sought to create.

After the controversy of *Saints and Sinners* (1884), Jones avoided bad press but still managed to discuss religion and faith again in a comedy titled *Judah* (1890). Much like *Saints and Sinners*, *Judah* offers a comparison between love, faith, and duty as well as a look into how fiscal politics are embedded in religion. The commentary differs from the previous play as *Judah* is a comedy attacking "miracle workers," and much of the critical discussion is hidden within the comedy, which thus avoids many melodramatic tropes. The story follows a scholar, a minister, a terminally ill daughter, and a spiritual

healer. All four characters play off one another to complicate thematic structures in the narrative. Jones's use of comedy allows him to subdue and camouflage larger social critiques. Naturally, the "vile" characters are trounced in the end which perhaps reinforces the Victorian value set. Although not a melodrama like the other two plays explored in this thesis, *Judah* offers a valuable look at the subversive nature of comedy and the ways Jones was able to further his discussions of finances, love, and faith by burying them beneath the farcical tomfoolery.

The last play addressed is *Michael and His Lost Angel* (1894), a play of which Jones was particularly fond. Similar to the other two plays, the drama encompasses a complex web of love and faith while it also offers commentary on economic politics. This play contains perhaps some of the most overt commentary on love, faith, and finances but also includes the more emotionally visceral response to such topics given how the play ends with the characters Michael and Audrie's final moments. Although there is no definitive answer as to why the play was not successful with audiences, I follow some critical commentary from scholars of the period to examine the possibility of Jones's heavy critique of religion and money together contributing to the play's downfall. Looking at all three plays, Jones sought dramaturgical freedom as a playwright to look at the world as he saw it without being censored by Victorian values.

Jones's journey to make religion a viable topic for the stage and the beginnings of his ideas for a national drama are catalogued in his text, *Renascence of the English Drama*. Albeit featuring an oddly spelled version of "Renaissance," the piece is a grand collection of essays Jones wrote from 1883 to 1894 (n.p.). This collection and Jones's point of view are certainly not subtle, and Jones argues for recognition of the revival of

the stage occurring in England. Within the collection Jones states that his friends did not want him to speak out on the matters of English drama, yet he does not state why (vii). Perhaps this may have been because Jones was going against the grain of Victorian thought and his friends tried to advise him otherwise. Perhaps his friends were trying to protect him and did not want him to be attacked by enemies he would inevitably make. Although Jones does not ever say definitively, what does become clear through the collection is his dedication to his passion: drama. “I have fought for a recognition of the distinction between the art of the drama on the one hand and popular amusement on the other” (vii). Jones argued for drama to be elevated above popular amusement and to illustrate dramatic literature’s value as something worthy of critical study, and this collection sheds light on Jones’s intentions in writing and persisting with his religious dramas.

Another famous text that Jones published to highlight his discussions of drama is his 1912 *The Foundations of a National Drama*. This is another useful compilation of essays that brought a great deal of inspiration and context to Jones’s contributions to modern drama, including essays about the subject and lectures he delivered to various institutions and clubs. A historiographical discussion of this source provides useful commentary about Jones’s goals and the scope of his work, which will be discussed at length in Chapter Five.

In addition to these primary texts by Jones, a collection of authors who published books about Jones will be used to provide additional support for the study of Jones’ work. As previously mentioned, Doris Arthur Jones’s book *The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones* offers significant context. However, Doris also gave all her father’s letters,

notes, and work to Richard A. Cordell who used them to formulate his own text titled *Henry Arthur Jones and The Modern Drama* (Cordell, ix). The source is filled with discussion about Jones's work and its significance. In the preface of Cordell's text, William Lyon Phelps discusses the rise and fall of Jones's popularity: "It was with poignant regret that Mr. Jones, as an old man, remembered as he passed certain street-corners in London, that he used to see the queue forming in the daylight to witness the coming performance of one of his plays" (Phelps v). According to these scholars, Jones was once popular playwright, who fell out of style, and Cordell's analysis offers invaluable information about Jones's contribution to the development of modern drama in Europe. Part of the goal of my research and this thesis is to further the discussion of Jones's work beyond England, building upon Cordell's argument.

Finally, Clifford G. Weales's *Religion and The Modern Drama* (1961) dedicated a chapter to Jones and discusses his lasting impact on those who came after. Weales's text is not always complimentary of Jones, but nonetheless credits his religious contributions to drama. The text also provides another lens for discussing how Jones fits into the canon of early Modernists.

#### JONES, VICTORIAN RELIGIOUS SENSIBILITIES, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF WORSHIP

Although Victorian religion is not the primary focus of my study nor my primary discipline, this thesis discusses three plays that use, reference, or make religion a primary topic within the scope their narratives. The religious scope of the Victorian era is one of growth, according to Jeffery Cox in his *World of Victorian Religion*. The framework Cox provides is helpful in placing some contextual items about how Victorian religion manifested in society. Cox refers to religion in the Victorian age as a "bell shaped curve"

(433). His theory revolves around the idea that “the most interesting characteristic of Victorian Christianity is that it was becoming more rather than less important. It is the upward slope of the bell-shaped curve (which curved downward in the twentieth century)” (433). Cox’s argument for importance of religion in the era is valuable when discussing the context of Jones’s work, particularly Jones’s religious plays. Cox further notes that one of the most remarkable parts of Victorian religious study comes from a census of religious worship distributed in 1851 (433). The survey was evidently administered at the “top” of the “bell shaped curve” as “Government officials attempted to count every Single Sunday worshipper in England and Wales on a rainy day in March” (433). The results of this survey were equally interesting noting that, “The number of overall people who attended church ranged from 41 per cent of the total population to 58 per cent of ‘eligible’ population” (433). While Cox alludes to who wouldn’t be surveyed such as young children as well as people who would be required to work and states that the estimations of who could attend were a “wild guess,” he observes that, if the results were accurate, “roughly half the adult population actually attended a place of worship on an ordinary Sunday. Yet instead of dealing with it as a success story, Victorian observers concluded that churches were a failure” (433). Thus, while the numbers indicated high attendance and participation in the church, the Victorians still viewed the numbers as lacking, which illustrates how important religion and, by extension, morality was in the Victorian ideology.

Tied to the overall importance of religion in Victorian England is a topic that will be analyzed closer in *Saints and Sinners*: attendance of Sunday mass. Cox argues that in 1851, the individual was allowed to choose whether to attend church or not (although

there were denominational exceptions) and there was a complex conversation around church attendance (433). Although nuances existed, Cox specifically stated that, “Sunday church attendance was a marker of concern for the moral health of society” (435). Cox’s discussion investigates the value of religion in society and how Victorians viewed the subject. In conjunction with the census and interpretations, the moral choice of being religious and attending church was deemed critical for a strong moral standing. Cox points to John Stuart Mill and, echoing Mill, posits that “the building of Christian institutions would be beneficial to British society” (435). This places importance on the construction and foundation of these places of religious worship. Additional information and discussion of building these institutions appears in both *Judah* and *Michael*.

What is also gleaned from the evidence of the growth of churches during the Victorian era is the social implications of the need for more places of worship. “It was a conviction that religion and religious institutions were food for the individual, and good for society” (Cox 435). The societal need for more religious institutions led to a discussion of religious anxiety:

At the intersection of religious practice and general health of society came the family. It was family churchgoing that filled the churches, and behind the public display of concern for society was anxiety about the state of Britain’s children. The fact that Christian faith and practice could no longer be taken for granted drove anxiety about a downward slope into irreligion and immorality, and that very anxiety drove the upward slope of church and chapel building. (435-436)

The physical building of churches plays a significant role in Jones's plays and my analysis and is connected to several other conversations happening about religion in the plays that require some context.

One element of religion that is present in Jones's plays is the crisis of rationality and religion, and those two ideas particularly manifest in the play *Judah*. For framework, Victorians were grappling with changes in thought in their society due to the scientific revolution. A. D. Gilbert's *Victorian Society in Industrial England* contains a subsection about "The Victorian crisis of faith" (176). Gilbert notes that, "The popularization of radical and potentially subversive ideas in Victorian society added a new dimension to the relationship between the churches and the wider intellectual world" (177). On the same page, Darwinism is mentioned in passing and other examples of intellectual discussions and controversies around religion are presented (177). Later in the chapter he includes another subheading called "The crisis of plausibility" which points to changes in the way people interpreted reality in the industrial era "far more important for the future of English religion than the specific challenges of Darwinism or biblical criticism, or the internal adjustments which these challenges demanded of the churches, was the gradual divergence, increasingly evident during the Victorian era, between religious and secular modes of interpreting reality" (184). Although the commentary on religious and secular interpretations is not the exact discussion as that which appears in *Judah*, the discussion of a miracle worker and her "plausible" abilities are debated by a rationalist and a man of faith. The contrast between the two illustrates part of this "crisis" alluded to above and illustrates how two diametrically opposed individuals view something like miracles in the Victorian era. How the play ties in with larger Victorian trends in religions could likely

provide enough research for another thesis, but in this moment I seek to provide a rough idea of the trends in religion Jones would have been observing: a larger conversation about religion in relation to the scientific revolution in the 1800s.

At the core of each of these chapters, there is some discussion of money and finances and how they related to religion and religious practice. In some cases, this may be finances for a physical structure, and in other cases a monetary reward for an action. In some way, all three plays grapple with this concept. Timothy Alborn's article "Money's Worth" will be used in each chapter as Alborn discusses the value of money in the Victorian era and argues that, "Morally, money sat precariously between the sacred and the profane" (209). Money is established in the article as problematic using a Victorian lens and Jones finds ways to utilize this problematization. Alborn further notes that the conversation around how money functioned in Victorian society was quite complex: "Socially, money went from being a largely local means of exchange to being a symbol of national greatness by the end of the nineteenth century, reinforced by financial institutions that consistently refined credit's reproductive powers even as they periodically brought the economy to the brink of ruin" (209). Much of this article will be extrapolated and analyzed later in the chapters. For the purposes of framework in this introduction: money was important to Victorians, both socially and from a more nationalist perspective. The conflict then lies when the quest for financial gain falls into the immoral, which Jones certainly discusses in his plays.

Jones's own personal background would have familiarized him with the aforementioned commentary about money, faith, science, and moral value of religion in Victorian society. Jones, as described by his daughter Doris, was raised in a Puritan

world. When discussing religion with her father and his growth as a young man she remembered,

When she [Jones's mother] was dying, she said to my father, "Oh, Harry, you'll want it when you come to lie where I am." When telling me this, H.A.J. said that she was worried because he was not a believer, and added, "My mother was a real Christian woman; she believed in the Puritan ideal." (27-28)

Between his Puritan upbringing and the larger surrounding Victorian religious world, Jones presumably grew up in a period where religion was an important moral marker for society and his mother was afraid that Jones was not a believer in Christian (and presumably Puritan) ideals. Doris later added to the discussion, "To the end of his life he remained what we should call Early Victorian in many of his ideas and feelings ; in reality they were Puritan. I believe it was his mother's teaching and example which left an imprint on his character" (28). Jones was deeply embedded in the discussions around Puritan ideals due to his mother's teaching. He was likely familiar with many of these debates around building churches (after all, *Michael* is all about the construction of one) and Jones was plausibly familiar with the conversations surrounding bolstering England's morality through religion.

Puritanism and Puritan ideals are not primary focus of this paper, but they are worth noting to contextualize how Jones may be approaching the subject of religion. In the book, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order*, Margo Todd discusses a working definition for Puritanism from its foundations. In this definition, Todd looks at a number of different existing definitions and lands on one created for the text stating that the original Puritans,

were a self-conscious community of protestant zealots committed to purging the Church of England from within of its remaining Romish “superstitions,” ceremonies, vestments, and liturgy, and to establishing a biblical discipline on the larger society, primarily through the preached word. (14)

Although the definition goes much further, what I seek to draw from this quote is the “preached word” in a “biblical society” when referring to the initial foundations of Puritanism. Todd notes later in the introduction that “The importance of puritans as social thinkers lies in the fact that they contributed heavily to the propagation of a belief in social reform, which they, along with contemporaries both protestant and Catholic, had derived from the Renaissance and its classical sources” (17). The argument proposed is that Puritans were part of the moral discussion around social reform. Although Jones did not appear until around two hundred years later, Jones was being brought up in this same Puritan ideal.

In the chapters that follow, the moral communities, church foundations, and discussions around how characters embody religion in the plays will be looked at in depth. The commentary that will appear in each of the chapters is specifically related to the moral, religious, or fiscal discussion being had in the present chapter and how that ties in with a larger Victorian worldview. Although the primary focus of this paper is on National Drama and Jones’s contributions to such, the framework of Jones’s life and religious surroundings are helpful in better understanding what Jones was choosing to discuss in his drama.

## THE ARGUMENT

Jones's contribution to depicting and critiquing religion in early Modernist English drama can be found by a close examination of the plays themselves in conjunction with his essays. This commentary ties in with the national English drama that Jones was attempting to create by elevating drama as an art form.

The second chapter contains a thematic analysis of love, faith, and financial politics in *Saints and Sinners* and provides context for the religious debate within the play's narrative. Using the thematic framework presented in the play as a base, the structural connotations of what religion and finances present within the play are closely examined. The chapter analyzes many complex relationships between the church, the businessmen, and two juxtaposed philosophes. Upon doing so, the chapter provides a closer examination of how these symbols and themes were viewed as controversial to provide context for the historical implications of the play and the drama's lasting significance to studies in modernism.

The third chapter explores Jones's religious comedy *Judah*. Like the previous chapter, Chapter Three discusses money in relation to religion. The key difference between *Judah* and *Saints and Sinners* is in the ending and how Jones uses the theme of "truth" to frame the final part of the narrative and illustrate what is considered proper in his lens. Additionally, Jones's discussion of love and faith is also included as this is intimately intertwined with the complex nature of the financial discourse in the play. Posthumous criticism of the play's merits is examined and applied to the play in preparation for Chapter Five.

*Michael and His Lost Angel* is the final play examined as a part of Jones's religious dramas. *Michael* was Jones's favorite and arguably least successful play. The

controversy surrounding the play is closely analyzed in context with Jones's discussion of love and duty to faith. Characters in the play make choices without knowledge of the implications, which is what ultimately leads to the tragic ending. The actions of the characters Michael and Audrie are intricately intertwined with Victorian morality and money. Like the other chapters, further discussion provides critical context for the work and creates a framework for the final chapter.

The final chapter includes a close textual analysis on the complex relationship between love, faith, and financial politics to identify how these three religious plays significantly functioned as social commentary on Victorian life. The final chapter ties together these religious plays with Jones's quest to make religion a viable topic for the stage. The discussions of religion and the stage are used to illustrate Jones's grand quest to create a National Drama. While Jones does not directly cite or reference his own work in his discussion of National Drama, I argue that he uses his plays as a platform to write essays advocating for the non-censorship of modern playwrights. Ultimately, I argue for the value of Jones's writings as an early Modernist and suggest that Jones's works of drama represent and are a product of the transitional movement away from Naturalism.

## CHAPTER TWO

### SAINTS AND SINNERS, A RELIGIOUS DRAMA ABOUT FISCAL FORCES

We begin with *Saints and Sinners*, the first of the three plays that are significant for understanding Henry Arthur Jones's contributions to the creation of an English National Drama. *Saints and Sinners* was controversial upon opening and spurred a great deal of discussion around how religion is used within the dramatic narrative. The play's discussion of religion and social class, an examination of the controversy surrounding the opening, and a connection to the National Drama will be provided in this chapter as foundation for chapter five, which considers the contribution of all three plays toward Jones's ideal English National Drama.

According to Jones's notes in the 1891 publication of the text, *Saints and Sinners* was first produced at the Theatre Royal, Margate on September 22, 1884, and the Vaudeville Theater, London on September 25, 1884 and ran until Easter of 1885 (Jones xxvii). The Vaudeville Theater performances were produced by Tom Thorne (D. Jones 89). Doris Jones quotes her father's letter to James Waldo Fawcett discussing the play's resemblance to Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* (87-88). What is valuable about Doris Jones's quotation of Fawcett's letter is that she reveals her father's intentions for his play: "The setting for my play was mainly that of my own early life in a small English Dissenting community, and that view I took of English middle-class life was that of Matthew Arnold" (88). Jones took on the task of painting a picture of what middle-class life looked like in England from his own perspective and experience.

The story follows Jacob Fletcher and his daughter Letty. Fletcher is a minister at a local parish that is not fiscally successful. They struggle to ensure they have enough

money to keep the parish running. A captain in the army takes an interest in Fletcher's daughter Letty and kidnaps her. Letty's disappearance to London with Captain Fanshawe is kept a secret as Fletcher does not want to harm his daughter's reputation. Fletcher, with the help of George (Letty's betrothed), is able to save his daughter from the army captain, but not her reputation when a wealthy businessman uncovers the truth about her disappearance. In a dramatic climax to the fourth act, Fletcher announces what happened to his daughter to the entire congregation and resigns his post. Fletcher leaves the parish with his daughter and attempts to make enough money to survive. In a melodramatic twist of fate, Fletcher is re-offered his position at the parish, but tragedy strikes again. His daughter's illness takes hold, and she begins to die. Just as this happens, her betrothed, George, arrives from Australia with his fortune. George is too late, and Letty passes away from an unnamed affliction in front of her father and her betrothed before Fletcher can return to the parish, thus tragically and melodramatically ending the drama.

Jones's play fits within the genre of a Victorian melodrama and is composed of a five-act structure. The work is rather lengthy, and according to Jones's own notes was to run around two hours and thirty-eight minutes (Jones n.p.). As previously mentioned, the play was subject to scrutiny by an opening night audience due to the quotation of scripture (D. Jones 89). The scripture is quoted by Hoggard, a middle-class businessman who believes that religion and finance are neatly intertwined. Using Hoggard and another man named Prabble, Jones critiques the middle-class through these two characters who embody the discussion of the "love-hate relationship with money in the realms of morality and social class" (Alborn 209). The aforementioned paradox between money and morality is explored through Hoggard's actions, as Hoggard quotes and manipulates

scripture in order to fit what he sees as his idealized world and to justify his actions to achieve his desires. Hoggard and Prabble are characters who discuss best business practices and religion through the same lens. Their presentation in the narrative creates a complicated structural relationship between fiscal and religious matters, and they seem to be at the focus of the play's controversial reception. Jones, however, defended his choices and sought to make the subjects covered in the play viable for the English stage. In the 1891 publication of the script, he included a critical preface to the work and an appendix in which he defended the merits of his play and his right to present religion as a viable topic for the stage in modern drama.

At the end of this chapter, the controversy surrounding the play will be placed into context with the content of the play. However, it is important to note here that Weales posits Jones as the first playwright to re-introduce religion as a topic for the stage which presents the idea that Jones sought to give dramatists freedom to discuss their truths onstage (4). Although that will be discussed later in reference to how the play is part of the early Modernist movement, additional elements of the Victorian moment are included in the chapter to provide further context as to what was controversial about the play.

#### FISCAL POLITICS IN THE CHURCH

Jones creates a complex social hierarchy within the world of his play and ties this closely to the fiscal politics in the play. For this the scope of this thesis, I define "fiscal politics" as any discussion of how money manifests as a morally precarious object in the narrative and creates a financially based relationship between two forces. Jones, born a Victorian and a Puritan in 1851, paints a picture of society in England with rigid class

distinctions (D. Jones 28). As mentioned in the introduction, Jones grew up in a Puritan household engaging with many of the discussions about religion at the time.

In his article “Money’s Worth,” Timothy Alborn discusses fiscal politics in the Victorian Era. He comments on how Victorian sensibilities about money can be found, “in the realms of morality and social class” (209). Alborn continues, “Morally, money sat precariously between the sacred and the profane: bankers and politicians defended the sacrosanct nature of gold as a basis of value, even as evangelicals and radicals condemned society’s worship of mammon” (209). In other words, the Victorian society battled with the moral value of money in society. Thus, a fine line existed between money being held as sacred or profane. In *Saints and Sinners*, money has the power to aid religion or hinder progress, and the relationship between the two is examined through the depiction of the “Church Folk” and the middle class as embodied by Hoggard and Prabble.

Using the first act of *Saints and Sinners* as a basis for social class analysis, Jones begins his narrative by creating an ideological difference between his characters regarding how money should be used. Lydia, the minister’s housekeeper, criticizes Fletcher while he is not present for his choices about what he does with church funds, saying, “If I let him have a sixpence, he’s safe to give it away to the first undeserving beggar he meets. It makes me wild, and me working off my fingers to keep us all decent on less than eighty pounds a year” (*Saints and Sinners* 2). Lydia’s statement simultaneously reveals two separate pieces of information about the world of the play. The first statement places a clear differentiation between Lydia and Fletcher in terms of how they see the church’s financial relationship to those the church serves. The church,

morally, stands as a place that could be helpful to others in the word of the play. Lydia is directly commenting on the idea that there are “undeserving” individuals who are not worthy of the support (i.e. money) available in the church. Lydia is making distinctions as to where money “should be placed.” Lydia is in a position of power and thus is ethically precarious as she is then the gatekeeper of church funds and their use. Her perspective of what money should be used for varies from Fletcher’s egalitarian church views. Their differing views on how money should be used is exemplified by her use of “undeserving beggar” to describe an individual who receives financial support from the church.

The juxtaposition of Fletcher and Lydia in the first pages of the first act illustrates the moral precariousness of money. The point of contention is the character Greenacre, a well-known village drunk. Lydia does not care for him as she notes that his actions are cyclical: “You don’t mean to say you’ll let this old drunken vagabond impose on you again, master?” (*Saints and Sinners* 4). Greenacre functions as the foil for Lydia. When Greenacre arrives, he has spent all of his money on gin, but Fletcher says, “We can’t let him starve, can we?” (4). The choice not to let Greenacre starve reveals that the minister is willing to continue to give financial support to someone who neglects their own wellbeing and continually runs out of money without learning from their mistakes. Evidence of such behavior appears later in their conversation:

GREENACRE: I’m a regular in my place at the Chapel every Sunday evening,  
Muster Fletcher.

JACOB: You are, Peter, and every week-day evening you’re just as regular in  
your place at the public-house. (5)

Such a statement again reinforces Greenacre's activities as a cyclical event, and Lydia goes as far as to say so later in the scene. Greenacre is a habitual drunk and only arrives in church to have his soul cleansed weekly. The distinction here lies between Lydia and Fletcher and how they choose to handle church finances. Lydia points out that the church is struggling to maintain their current financial status, whereas Fletcher continues handing out money to those who do not learn from their mistakes. Fletcher chooses to help others even when they do not learn for presumably moral reasons. In both situations, the money places both characters in positions of power but what they choose to do with that power differs greatly.

The ideological contrast between Lydia and Fletcher is further explained to provide context for why the characters make the choices they do. Lydia has a conversation with Lot, a man who is currently employed by Hoggard and is in love with Lydia. In this conversation Lydia identifies herself as part of "us chapel people" in contrast to those who would be considered "church folk" (*Saints and Sinners* 3). What is being implied here is that Lydia is of a different class than Greenacre, although both are part of the church. As Greenacre is portrayed as a drunk and a person of ill repute; Lot and Lydia do not associate with him and do not wish to aid him as they see him as a drain on the resources the church has to offer like food, shelter, and financial assistance.

On the other side of the argument is Fletcher. His fiscal and social ideological morality tries to remove those class barriers by continued service. There is a curious comment later in the act where he says, "There are plenty of places where the poor have to take back seats; we'll keep one place where the rich and poor shall meet together and be equal" (*Saints and Sinners* 7). Fletcher is innately aware of the class distinctions at

play in the society around him, yet he chooses to breach those barriers of class through religion. Recall Alborn's earlier comment on moral precariousness of the Victorians and religion. In this moment, the use and value of money are illustrated to be different among Lydia, Fletcher, and Greenacre thus presenting the idea that money represents function versus charity.

The complex fiscal ideological difference of function and charity described above ties to Alborn's article, "Money's Worth." Alborn notes that Victorians were a paradox in the way that they treated fiscal matters as "morally precarious" and that there was a condemnation of the worship of "mammon" (209). Alborn is discussing how there is a level of moral precariousness in worshipping money. This ties into the discussion as Lydia and Fletcher are both in a place of power deciding what to do with their money. Lydia focuses on function, and Fletcher focuses on charity and using money to help others. Once the businessmen are introduced later in the chapter, the view of money will be further complicated as they seek to blend religion and finances together for their own personal fiscal gain. In this first act, characters are arguing about the function and use of money which illustrates their own social and ethical values pertaining to how money is handled in the church. Lydia looks at the donations given by the church as something that should go to someone "worthy," while in her eyes Greencare certainly is not. Lydia is placed in a position of power to decide who is "worthy" and who is not, and she makes statements that lead the reader to think that she sees the money in the church being used for a functional purpose. Fletcher, however, does not share this view and chooses to provide aid to Greenacre despite this cyclical reappearance of a sober man who spent all his money on booze. The heart of the problem, of course, is that the money is being used

to support someone who does not learn from his mistakes. However, Fletcher's actions may have been considered more "moral" in the larger Victorian society. Alborn highlights this moral paradox: "Victorians...were famously moral. And money, besides being the engine of Victorian prosperity, was famously the root of all Evil" (210). In the first scene, Fletcher's moral compass sends him towards not valuing money so much in a functional capacity, but rather as a charitable force. Thus, he chooses to spend what he has to help those that need him. Lydia sees money similarly (as in using it to aid someone) but the complexity lies in how she judges the usefulness of the funds donated.

The previous discussion of the ethics of how money is used continues to be present in the play as other characters also have a view for how money should function. Later, in Act IV, when Fletcher is grappling with keeping the secret about his daughter's disappearance, there is a conversation in the church about the day's service. One such conversation in the lobby is between Lot and Greenacre about the sermon on the previous Sunday. Greenacre remarks that he quite enjoyed the sermon but Lot, "Well, you wanted refreshing, after getting into such a state on the Saturday night" (*Saints and Sinners* 79). Lot implies here that Greenacre also comes to the church to feel cleansed after his night of drinking. He does not appear to donate money to the church; instead he is given support by Fletcher on what is (presumably) a weekly basis from what is understood from Lydia's commentary in Act I. This creates a class differentiation and Lot assumes a higher status because of his ability to support himself by his own fiscal means.

Uncle Bamberry is another character of arguably similar social class origins to Greenacre. Uncle Bamberry enters the church in the same scene and engages in the discussion with Lot and Greenacre, "I work in the brickfield all week, and I be knocked

up every Saturday night, and I can sleep a deal more comfortable in chapel nor anywhere else—picks me up for a week; and my missus wants me out of the way, while she does her bit o’ cooking and cleaning” (*Saints and Sinners* 79-80). The comment reveals that Bamberry also drinks excessively on a Saturday night so he can sleep through church on Sunday as his wife wants him out of the house for a few hours. When Lot asks him to relinquish his front spot due to excessive snoring, he says, “I pay eighteen pence a quarter pew-rent, and if I be awake I can’t hear a blessed word, so what’s the harm in going to sleep?” (80). Bamberry’s use of money illustrates more of a business model than other characters in the conversation. Bamberry’s comment establishes that his perspective is that he is a “customer” paying for a place in the pews and sees church not as a place of worship, rather a place of relaxation. Consider Fletcher’s egalitarian model of worship where location in the pews should not be determined by fiscal representation. In some ways, Fletcher does this by allowing anyone to reserve a spot anywhere regardless of financial prowess, but the meaning is complicated as Bamberry views the whole process as partially a transaction and partially as a cleansing experience as he notes that he enjoys the sermons despite not being able to hear them (80). The egalitarian ideological model is not shared by Lot, who directly asks that Bamberry move to another seat in the pews by stating “we can’t have it, especially in the front pews” (80). While Lot is also asking that people be courteous and not make noise during a sermon, Lot is specifically asking Bamberry to move. Yet, Bamberry treats his seat in the pews like a purchased location.

The class implications of paying for a seat in church also have historical ties which illustrates Jones was writing about what he knew best. L. E. Elliot-Binns, author of

the exhaustive *Religion in the Victorian Era*, notes that there was once a minister that who removed locks from private pews because he did not believe in having them:

John Bird Sumner, became Bishop of Chester in 1828, and displayed a like energy and ability. On one occasion, finding that many of the congregation were standing in the passages whilst a number of pews were empty, he stopped the service to enquire why they were not occupied. "The pews are private property" he was told, "and the owners have shut them up." "There can be no such thing," he said, "In the House of God. Send for a blacksmith to take off the locks. We will sing a hymn while he does it." (44)

Elliot-Binns points to a minister who did not value the concept of "owning" or "earning" a place in the church due to status, wealth, or influence. Bishop Sumner would be classified as an example of a religious parson similar to the one Jones creates with Fletcher. Both of them share the view that the church is a place of egalitarian meeting and that the pews should not be a place of fiscal or private ownership. The discussion of money and paying for religion return to Alborn's complicated paradox of looking at money as sitting precariously between sacred and profane as the characters have distinctly different ideological values about how money can be used.

Jones's Fletcher wants his church to be a place of egalitarian worship and to avoid financial ownership of the pews, but he problematizes the ideological values with financial politics. In a conversation with Lot, Lydia notes that the pew rent had fallen to "fourteen pounds odd" (*Saints and Sinners* 6). Lot then suggests that the pew rents be raised arguing, "But they've [the riff raff] got the best seats in the Chapel, and they don't pay pew rents" (6). Much like the anecdote that L.E. Elliot-Binns introduces about the

historical minister who chose to make the pews an egalitarian space, a discussion of the private nature of the pews is examined within this play. The moral question lies with whether or not people should have a right to purchase a seat within the pews, and for what purpose. Lot and Lydia's ideological value set places emphasis on the way that money can be used to support and stabilize church function. They use their positions of power to argue that there needs to be some form of financial support for the church in how the others come to worship. The juxtaposition to the fiscal relationship lies with Fletcher's egalitarian ideals in how the church should be an equal space. Much like the anecdote from Elliot-Binns, the pews cannot be purchased in Fletcher's world: "We'll keep one place where the rich and the poor shall meet together and be equal" (*Saints and Sinners* 7). Fletcher seeks to have an egalitarian place of worship, but he faces fierce opposition from the financial burdens of running the parish. The two sides of the argument create a fiscal relationship with the church as if the church was balancing between a business and a place of worship. The conversation is problematized further when analyzed in conjunction with Hoggard and Prabble's commentary on how religion and business are related. Thus, the scope of argument moves beyond just the church survival and into what happens when a church is seen to be a money-making facility.

#### THE MIDDLE CLASS AND TRANSACTIONS WITH RELIGION

Jones further problematizes his narrative of religion and finances by the inclusion of two middle class businessmen, Hoggard and Prabble, who seek to use the church for financial leverage. Hoggard and Prabble's use of money as a tool to get what they want is problematized when they are placed in juxtaposition with Fletcher and how he values helping others in a more egalitarian model.

In Hoggard's first entrance onstage, he attempts to scam Fletcher on a land deal and turn a profit. Such a bold entrance in the first act sets the tone for the "middle-class businessman" in the world of the play. For context of what is happening in the plot, Fletcher is tasked with selling a piece of land that was owned by someone in his parish. The dead man's family leaves Fletcher in charge of the negotiations in selling the piece of land. Lot warns Fletcher that Hoggard has done a false appraisal and is attempting to undercut the price. Fletcher learns the truth and decides not to sell the land (8). Lot, in response, warns Fletcher about the dangers of going against the church's largest supporter: "Don't you thwart him sir; he's a great support to Bethel [the church]. He pays twenty pounds a year pew-rent. He's a hard man and if you go against him, he'll pay you home, sure as his name's Hoggard" (*Saints and Sinners* 8). If we consider what Lydia said about the amount that the church had been making (roughly £80 per year) Hoggard contributes around 25% of the total rent to the church. Hoggard's contributions place him in a position of power presiding over the wellbeing of the church financially. Given this morally complex situation, Lot explains that Fletcher should try to placate Hoggard. The quandary facing the protagonist embodies Alborn's discussion of the morality of money. Will he give up his religious values for the financial support, or will he venture forth as an evangelical moralist and fight against Hoggard? If one considers Lot's point of view, the man of the cloth should placate an individual of great wealth who arguably controls matters in the church based on his fiscal power. Such ethical structure is utilitarian as the ends would justify the means. Furthermore, Lot seems to think that such action will be necessary for Fletcher to keep his job. This particular mindset could be a reference to the growth of utilitarian ideals over the century. As Elliot-Binns observed, "During the first

quarter of the century Utilitarianism was, as Mr. Chesterton has put it, ‘The philosophy in office’” (134). Jones may be utilizing some of the ideological and philosophical viewpoints he is familiar with in the creation of his characters, like Lot. What is significant here is that Lot is arguing using the utilitarian mindset against the middle-class businessman to keep the parish afloat and keep Fletcher’s job. This will naturally be juxtaposed by Fletcher’s resolutely moral compass and Fletcher will directly confront Hoggard.

After Lot and Fletcher talk, Fletcher greets his guest but explains that he will seek a second appraisal from another source for the land which in turn drives the conflict. Fletcher takes a hard stance against Hoggard and chooses to follow his moral code. Hoggard responds by calling him an “unbusiness-like idiot” (*Saints and Sinners* 9). Hoggard uses this insult against the minister but the connotation positions Fletcher as a pastor with a level of business understanding. Still desiring to get what he wants, Hoggard switches tactics and attempts to bribe Fletcher to see what his response would be. He attempts to hand him a few notes and Fletcher replies, “No, Mr. Hoggard. I can’t take a bribe blind to my eyes, and prevent my judgement” (10). Here again we have Fletcher attempting to stand resolute with his moral compass against Hoggard. Fletcher will not accept a bribe as this appears immoral and harkens back to the idea that money stands precariously between the sacred and the profane. Hoggard does not fear the relationship between the sacred and profane and he chooses to utilize his own fiscal strength to get what he wants. Hoggard’s indignation sparks piety within Fletcher as Fletcher says, “We are what they call professors of religion; let us act up to what we preach—don’t let us say one thing with our lips and another with our lives” (11). Fletcher

makes a moral, steadfast claim that he refuses to be coerced by money. Hoggard, defeated, says, “Look here Fletcher, you’re my minister, but I won’t be preached to on week-days” (11). Hoggard concedes that he can be preached to on Sundays; however, every other day of the week he does what he wishes. He uses his monetary power to potentially gain more money through the land deal. Even at the end of their argument, one of the last insults Hoggard tells Fletcher is, “Very well sir. I have half-supported you all these years, and this is your return for my kindness, you beggarly conscientious pauper” (12). In this sense, “beggarly” alludes to a class difference in which Hoggard sees himself as fiscally superior and therefore objectively “better” than Fletcher.

The stark contrast between Hoggard and Fletcher continues to manifest in Hoggard’s discussions of financial elements in conjunction with religion. In a conversation he has with Lot after being refused by Fletcher, Hoggard says, “Oh he’ll [Fletcher] come around I daresay. If he doesn’t, I’ll make Bethel too hot for him. I’ll turn him out. You know Lot, when I set my back up, I’m a very nasty *customer*” (36, emphasis mine). Hoggard’s use of the word “customer” when attending mass creates the connotation that he pays for his religion, and thus salvation, like someone buying groceries at the market. This view appears later in the story when Hoggard complains that one of Fletcher’s sermons is too short. He says, “If I pay twenty pounds a year for my religion, I’m not going to be done out of it” (54). Hoggard’s fiscal relationship with religion recalls Alborn’s discussion of religious paradoxes in Victorian society.

Without necessarily intending to do so, moral outrage about money and its associated vices...made it easier for most Victorians to live with money’s contradictory tenancies at the level of class and politics, by diverting attention

from institutions to individuals. The personal vices of avarice, idolatry, and speculation emerged as immoral exceptions to the rule, which explained away the underside of Brittan's ascent as a world economic power. (209-210)

Hoggard's actions and immoral avarice with money were part of that moral outrage that Alborn points to in his argument. Later in this chapter, the extent of the Victorian moral outrage to Jones's character will be looked at in the larger context of the significance of this play. At this point however, what is relevant to this discussion is that Hoggard embodies the tenets that Alborn alludes to as problematic to a Victorian sensibility. He views himself in a position of power over his church because of his financial status and the contributions.

Although Hoggard and Fletcher act as foils, additional voices in the portrayal of the middle class appear with the character Prabble. One may note that Prabble is much less extreme but still embodies that "customer" relationship with religion. In a conversation between Hoggard and Prabble over Fletcher's actions, Prabble says, "I've asked Mr. Fletcher more than once to preach against them [the stores]. I'm a grocer, and I've got eleven children, and how can I pay my rates and taxes and bring up my family if the stores are allowed to undersell me?" (*Saints and Sinners* 52). Prabble asks the pastor to preach against the stores that have undercut him because he does not want to lose profits. The relationship that Prabble desires between religion and finances is that the pulpit should be used take a stance on matters outside the scope of worship. Hoggard and Prabble finish their conversation with one another and then turn to Fletcher when he walks in. Prabble says, "If I support your chapel, I expect you to get the congregation to support my shop. That's only fair. I've got to live, haven't I?" (53). The middle-class

voice appears in the play asking for assistance with financial matters that support a capitalist view of society.

The middle class is presented as a strong force with financial power that seeks to link both religion and business together. This is exemplified through a conversation Hoggard and Prabble have about removing Fletcher because he does not support their views. Hoggard explains the benefits of a new minister: “Yes, one with a louder voice, and more business-energy. Religion’s no good nowadays brother Prabble, unless it’s combined with business-energy and push” (*Saints and Sinners* 76). The financial model that is being presented weaves together the religious energy combined with “business-energy and push.” Hoggard bluntly correlates religion functioning more efficiently when there is a level of emphasis on business. He further explains why his model is necessary: “Why does one chapel prosper while another goes to the wall? Business-energy and push” (76). Hoggard is equating business with faith whereby the success of a church depends on the business drive of the individual parish. Additionally, Hoggard makes the claim that religion depends on the same model used in businesses: “Push yourself to the front; cut the ground from under your neighbor’s feet—get up a big sensation’ that’s the secret of success in business, brother Prabble; and the same applies to religion” (76). The theory Hoggard presents is linked to the idea that business is a cutthroat profession, and religion needs to be viewed in the same way. Hoggard’s view are problematic, but they also represent the beliefs and practices of the Victorian era.

Hoggard’s discussion of the business model of churches may have been linked to the large influx of growth in religious places of worship during Britain’s 1850s to the 1870s. In Jeffery Cox’s article, one of the key points of analysis is the growth of churches

and some of the financial machines that are behind them. Although this discussion will be revisited when looking at *Michael and His Lost Angel* (1884), the growth of churches and potential competition for patrons should be discussed here as Hoggard is specifically linking business and religion and how parishes need to be more successful. Cox says,

Historians have struggled to find a common label for the characteristics of the revival of religious institutions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, often settling on some variant of the word 'Evangelical'. The 1851 census, though, reflects a common effort to Christianize or re-Christianize Britain that cannot be contained within one theological category...Sunday church attendance was a marker of concern for the moral health of society. (434-435)

Recall that this revival was during a “bell shaped curve” of religious growth and the above census looks at how many people in England was attending service. As stated previously, the census revealed that religious attendance in England was considered a “failure” by Victorian standards (433). During this religious revival there was “common motive for the immense amount of voluntary effort that went into building of religious institutions” (435). Additional parishes were being built and Hoggard’s comments illustrate that he is comparing Fletcher’s parish to others he has seen. He specifically states that he knows of a more successful model. Hoggard’s comment about business energy and push being required in modern religion seems to be influenced by the religious resurgence and growth of churches in England. Structurally, the view of what “religion” means seems to contrast sharply when compared with Fletcher. Hoggard and Prabble, as the men of business, view themselves as “the source of England’s greatness”

(*Saints and Sinners* 52), which may explain their skewed understanding of the purpose of religion.

Jones's creation of Hoggard as a "customer" of religion is significant for his creation and understanding of the middle class. Scholar Richard A. Cordell notes that the creation of the characters came from Jones's own experience. "The characters and the picture of non-conformist provincial life came out of Jones's own experience. (His unloved uncle never discovered that he was the prototype of Haggard.) 'I made use of my experiences in those years [at Ramsgate] in *Saints and Sinners*'" (53). For Jones, Hoggard's character represents the middle-class and its complicated relationship with religion.

Hoggard and Prabble eventually decide to remove Fletcher, and the justification extends beyond just fiscal politics and religion. Jones has his moral antagonist quote scripture to justify his aims. In one quotation, Hoggard says, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before Kings" (*Saints and Sinners* 34). Hoggard is pulling this particular quotation from Proverbs, Chapter 22, which states, "You see a man skilled at his work? / He will stand in the presence of Kings; /he will not stand in the presence of obscure men" (Senior et al, 771). Notice that Hoggard is specifically using the word "business" as opposed to the biblical reference of being skilled in work. The two have different connotations as one is based on ability and the other is worshipping the money Hoggard is desperate to make. Using Hoggard's version of the phrase, "a man diligent in business," implies that he will stand "before" kings which is giving Hoggard status. The appropriation of scripture is used to justify his actions and in turn provide support to his arguments of religion and business together.

To return to the cultural context of the Victorian age to examine the significance of Hoggard's controversial statement, Alborn critically analyzes the correlation between the Bible and fiscal matters. He notes, "William Tweedie observed in 1855 that 'we must extract a large portion of the Bible if we would really set forth its teaching on the use and abuse of money' and several generations of Victorians did exactly that" (210). Alborn, supported by Tweedie, posits that there is a connection between the Bible and the abuse of money articulated within the scripture. Hoggard is part of the image of the middle class Jones is presenting. Jones writes one of his principal middle-class characters as an individual mis-appropriating scripture for his own gain. To further illustrate the connection, Alborn also notes that, "Victorians found ample biblical testimony that God approved of their choice of gold as an arbiter of worldly worth" (211). In this case, Hoggard is using gold as his mark of success with both the religious affairs of a church and in his own personal life.

Hoggard's desire for a fiscal religious model that supports his private interests leads to a dramatic fourth act confrontation where he takes advantage of information he has acquired about Fletcher's daughter. He attempts to use the information as leverage to get what he wants from Fletcher. In this confrontation, Hoggard offers Fletcher an ultimatum: resign from the ministry due to the secret with his daughter or accept the land deal that Hoggard originally offered (*Saints and Sinners* 90). Despite contradicting his sentiments in Act III by not directly attempting to remove Fletcher, what is evident is that Hoggard is willing to negotiate as long as he gets what he wants. Although such an ultimatum could be viewed as a poor business deal, Hoggard reveals that he does not particularly care who the minister is or how he receives his sermons.

Jones sets his middle class characters in stark contrast with Fletcher to critique Victorian society. Hoggard is deemed abhorrent through the resolutely moral Victorian lens and his actions in the play's narrative are judged. This will become more relevant later during the discussion of how his scriptural quotations caused a great deal of controversy. Alborn uses the biblical story of the golden calf, when Moses returned from Mount Sinai, to discuss idolatry as well as the historical context of greedy land acquisition and speculation (Alborn 212). Alborn notes that Victorian religious writers use the story for several reasons and one of them was to attack worshippers of mammon (212). Evidently several novels in and around the period held the title *The Golden Calf*, and one of them was about the rise and fall of a British railway speculator John Snobson (Alborn, 212). Alborn notes that the book was actually about someone by the name of George Hudson and the story of Hudson implies that the thematic discussion around Hoggard's actions could tie in with an actual story in the Victorian era (212). In the story, Snobson had his shareholders raise a huge subscription right before his financial empire fell (212). Alborn's anecdote reflects Hoggard's arc in the play as Hoggard is also involved in the worship of money and is viewed negatively as his actions are immoral. Although Jones may not be commenting on the story of Hudson or any other related events, he is talking about the larger issue of worshipping money. Hoggard and Prabble's actions illustrate a critique on the Victorian middle class and Jones complicates his narrative by using the framework that has been previously mentioned in the final act of the play.

## THE CULMINATION OF TWO FOIL PHILOSOPHIES

Jones uses the final act of the play to comment on the morally correct choice in relation to the financial ideologies that appear in the first four acts of the story. After Fletcher resigns from his parish due to Hoggard's actions, he has a difficult time finding work. Lydia explains to Lot, "He's had the offer of several ministries, but when Hoggard wrote to 'em about Miss Letty of course they wouldn't have him" (*Saints and Sinners* 97). Jones creates a strictly rigid Victorian society that is intolerant to Fletcher's daughter being coerced against her knowledge to go with Captain Fawnshawe to London. Although there is significant commentary that could be made on that point alone, the primary interpretation here is that Jones is creating a complex paradigm where the values of living and the values of financial gain are placed against one another. Hoggard's quest for fiscal superiority and vengeance led to Fletcher's downfall as Fletcher has little agency to escape the social pressures he faces. Fletcher is unable to find a ministry anywhere nearby and the values he held to so closely in the first act of helping anyone who needed aid are brought into question. Fletcher is at a loss; a man who gave everything to help other people is not given the same opportunities as he gave others.

The forces Jones places against one another are closely tied to Victorian ideals of morality. Cox notes that religion was closely linked to perceived respectability: "As Sunday attenders expressed their voluntary assent to a campaign to make the next generation of Britons more Christian, other motives drove the growth of religious institutions. Churchgoing served as a visible sign of a commitment to respectability (for lack of a better word), a social marker that ran across social classes" (436). This concept of respectability is fascinating to look at in the scope of this final act as Fletcher has fallen to a point where he continues to perform in a role which is seemingly deemed

respectable – the parish minister, yet he is unable to maintain a basic standard of living. Fletcher says, “I can’t get a ministry, so I get a Sunday’s preaching in the villages. They don’t give me much, and sometimes there’s twelve miles to walk for it; but it keeps the wolf from the door, and he’s been very near us a lately, Lot” (*Saints and Sinners* 99). The “respectability” of the Victorians appears flawed as Fletcher is unable to support his family because his reputation is destroyed, and he is left to try and make whatever he can to support his family while providing the service that society deems valuable for moral health. Additionally, Fletcher was egalitarian in his church views earlier in the narrative and used money as a tool to help those in need as opposed to using money for a specific function to aid himself or the physical structure of the church. Furthermore, at this point in the story the fiscal thievery of Hoggard seems to be winning over Fletcher’s morality. Jones does not let the play end this way and instead shifts the lens back to comment on the wrongdoings of Hoggard.

After many rather dubious business decisions, Hoggard is on the run, and in his desperation to escape capture, he hides in the closest house he can find: Fletcher’s house, unbeknownst to him. Hoggard is soon discovered and pleads, “Don’t give me up to them, Mr. Fletcher! I know I deserve it, but have mercy on me—mercy!” (*Saints and Sinners* 103). Fletcher takes pity on Hoggard and decides not to give him up to the authorities and distracts the guards by asking them not to come in because of his sick daughter (105-106). This changes the moral lens as Fletcher still chooses to give up what he has to help others, even though this is the man who cost him everything. This resolutely moral action is representative of Fletcher’s character, but also places him in a position of being “right” in the thematic resolution. What further illustrates the lens shift to Fletcher being correct

is the discussion of how Hoggard is now in financial trouble, which would have been considered a problem in England. Alborn discusses the complications of bankruptcy in the Victorian era: “Money—or rather, its absence—also increasingly signified punishment in the Victorian period.” (211). Alborn states that bankruptcy was heavily punished. He went on to quote Barbara Weiss who once argued that the concept of bankruptcy was, “The hell of the English” (211). These heavy societal pressures around bankruptcy are brought into context when looking at Fletcher and Hoggard. Fletcher is a man nearly bankrupt and at the bottom of the fiscal and social ladder and is faced with the man who took everything from him. The interesting part is that Hoggard who now also in financial peril. Thus, for the first time in the narrative the two are now close to the same level of financial disparity and Fletcher’s action saves Hoggard from the law. Hoggard’s moral failings come back to haunt him and Fletcher’s choice to save his nemesis places Fletcher in a position of moral superiority.

Jones does not, however, leave his narrative so clearly defined. Jones re-introduces Prabble attempting to return Fletcher’s job after Hoggard’s departure. Prabble reveals that Fletcher’s replacement was offered “twenty pounds a year more” by another ministry in another location (*Saints and Sinners* 108). Jones’s choice to have the minister accept another job based on financial gain illustrates the ministry as more of a “job” than a socially and morally esteemed vocation which was likely an intended commentary. Prabble does not give any other explanation as to why the replacement minister left, which reduces the number of possibilities for the other minister’s abrogation of the position to financial reasons. Additionally, Prabble ends their conversation with a suggestion, “and—and—and I was about to say that—perhaps some of these days you

might take up the question of the stores—it's iniquitous, and it's getting worse and worse" (109). Despite offering the ministry back at a higher salary, Prabble still asks Fletcher to denounce the stores undercutting prices (108). Prabble, much like Hoggard, sees the religious parish something that should be merged with business. Fletcher will presumably return to his post, but he will still face the complicated nature of the "customer and service" relationship that he previously faced.

#### FRAMING A NATIONAL DRAMA: A POSTHUMOUS DEFENSE OF *SAINTS AND SINNERS*

As previously mentioned, the play was steeped in controversy due to the portrayal of religion onstage. Hoggard and Prabble are both morally foul based on their actions, and only Prabble is slightly redeemed by the end of the narrative. According to Doris Jones, her father was seeking to draw on Jones's "own early life in a small English Dissenting-community, and that view I took of English middle-class life was that of Matthew Arnold" (D. Jones 88). Recall from the introduction that Jones's young adult life was informed by Puritanism and Puritan values. Drawing on his own background, Jones used his lens of the world to portray how he viewed his community onstage. By analyzing this inspiration and the historical criticism related to the piece, a framework for Jones's National Drama can begin to be formed.

Much of the uproar surrounding the work exists because of the religious connotations of the play. Doris quotes her father and notes that the play's opening night received "a very mixed reception, as some of the pit and other parts of the house objected to the scriptural quotations used by the characters, and the audience hissed and booed loudly" (D. Jones 89). The play received a negative reaction from the audience upon opening and Jones theorized that the scripture being used to justify fiscal gain may have

been deemed controversial. Such a supposition seems likely given that Hoggard deliberately misquotes from biblical scripture and adds his own interpretations. Jones is commenting on and asking his audience to consider the middle class character's use of scripture and religion in his play; by extension, he is asking the middle class audience to consider their own faith. For another viewpoint, Cox provides her own commentary after looking at the Greville Memoirs and Horace Mann (the individual in charge of the 1851 census), "It is very difficult to quantify the growth of religious 'seriousness' in households, but many observers, including Mann himself, commented on the perception that more and more families, especially middle and upper-class families, were taking religion more seriously at home as well as the church or chapel" (436). Cox argues that religion was something that people were taking more seriously, and Jones is asking his audience to take the discussion of religion seriously onstage. Consider Richard Albert Cordell's defense of *Saints and Sinners* 40 years after publication and what Jones was attacking with the use of religion in his drama. Cordell notes that the play was, "The first 'Modern' Drama, a hard-hitting attack on religious hypocrisy and narrow minded-ness" (12). Cordell argues that Jones is fighting against religious hypocrisy which supports the idea that he wants his audience to take the subject of religion onstage seriously.

Jones defends his choices of the characters and their religious views onstage and staunchly supports his portrayals. Doris quotes her father's initial defense of his own work against the audience and unfavorable critics which was originally in a letter to the *Daily News*: "I can see no reason why large fields of modern life should be closed off to the treatment of the stage merely because the truthful portraiture of them is unpalatable to the *Unco Guid*" (D. Jones 90). Jones defends his work as a truthful portrayal of modern

English life. Jones presents Hoggard and Prabble as representative of complex middle-class religious values. He goes further to say, “I will vouch for the absolute faithfulness of the types of characters I have presented in ‘Hoggard’ and ‘Prabble’ and for their widespread dispersion among the Dissenting classes” (D Jones, 90). What Henry Arthur Jones begins to do is fight for his right to portray religion onstage despite potential critique against doing so. Jones delves farther into the discussion of the creation of Hoggard in a critical preface to the published edition of *Saints and Sinners* by noting that Hoggard was received as, “censured as impossibly vile” (xxii). Jones acknowledges that the discussion with his play may partially come from a distain for Hoggard’s character, yet Jones goes further. He says, “But allowing for the necessary sharpness and swiftness of stage portraiture, and the impossibility of exhausting or even suggesting all the minute motives and aspects of character in theater, I think Hoggard may be claimed as a not unfair representative of a very widely-spread class in narrow English religious communities” (xxii). Jones defends his position with the discussion of Hoggard in the play and argues that his representation is prevalent within the scope of English religious communities. The defense of Jones’s characters as true to life ties back in with the discussion of the National Drama as Jones seeks to allow the dramatist to create characters as they appear to the author in the cultural moment.

Jones’s public defense of his work provided fuel for his writings on National Drama. He wrote an article to the *Nineteenth Century Review* which would later be published within the appendix to the published version of his play. Jones wastes no time getting right to the main point: “A recent production at a London theater has obtained greater success perhaps than its merits, because it has incidentally raised the question of

how far it is lawful or expedient for a modern playwright to touch religious questions and to put modern English religious life upon the stage” (*Saints and Sinners* 117). Jones directly addresses the controversy before him: the nature of the content in his play. Furthermore, Jones asks for an opportunity to defend his work, his portrayal, and publish a defense even when advised not to,

When a playwright is challenged by a part of a first-night audience as to his right to depict any section of the community, or rather as to his right to depict them truthfully and make use the language that is natural to them; when he is counselled and counter-counseled upon the expediency of altering what is distinctive and what he conceives to be faithful and life-like in his portraiture—in such a case he may be perhaps permitted a word of apology and explanation.

(*Saints and Sinners* 119)

Jones spends the remainder of the essay offering an explanation and defense for playwrights to be able to portray individuals as they are seen. Jones believes that he was merely trying to present an honest portrayal of what he saw in relation to class, attitude, and religion in a local parish.

Jones reinforced his stance on the play by discussing the literary content in play and defending the subject matter. Jones’s first portion of the preface focuses heavily upon his growing ideas about a National Drama. He writes, “Every great literary critic of the age has contemptuously spoken of the modern drama, or has more contemptuously ignored it” (*Saints and Sinners* ix). What Jones eventually builds to is the idea that “English drama is, or should be, mainly and chiefly the art of representing English life and not the art of sensational and spectacular illusion” (xi). Jones begins to plant the idea

that drama and a national English stage is something that should be worked toward. As a part of that goal, Jones notes that the English stage should contain and represent English life on a whole. Further evidence of this can be found in his letter to the *Nineteenth Century Review* as he calls for “the future development of the English drama and its right to press on and possess itself of the whole of human life, is more or less raised when any veto is placed, or sought to be placed, upon the dramatist’s perfect freedom of choice of subject, persons, place, and mode of treatment” (*Saints and Sinners* 119).

#### THE BEGINNING OF A NATIONAL DRAMA

Cordell posits the idea that a modern audience (in 1931) may not fully notice how serious Jones’s decision was to attack the religious hypocrisy in the 1880s. Reflectively, the audience can look back in time and notice that Jones is using drama to point to a social ill that had not previously discussed. “It is difficult to realize now (1932) to realize the audacity of Jones’s attack on religious hypocrisy in the ‘eighties, his searing portrait of the pillars of society who not only use the church to fatten their business, but also half deceive themselves with apt quotations from the bible to justify sharp practices” (Cordell 53). Thus, Jones is a trailblazer of sorts in making religion and dramatist freedom subjects of discussion. These elements link him to the growing Modernist trend, a movement that disturbed the previously established norms.

Jones’s commentary on social issues with the goal of raising awareness and making drama a form that can discuss topics like religion on the stage links *Saints and Sinners* to a larger discussion of “A Modern Drama.” Gerald Weales writes about Jones in his book *Religion and Modern English Drama* and uses *Saints and Sinners* as one of the discussion points. He writes, “Yet, in its crude and sentimental way, *Saints and*

*Sinners* reintroduced the possibility of religion as a serious consideration in the English drama” (4). Weales defends the play as a starting point for the discussion of English drama onstage. Furthermore, Weales notes that “Jones knew his audience” (4). Weales explains that Jones knew exactly what he wanted to comment on within the scope of English life and “made a forceful statement of his position in the use of religion on stage. He attacked ordinary playgoers with ‘The idea of human life being about six-sevenths secular and one-seventh sacred keeps possession of them, and they do not wish to have this convenient friction disturbed or examined’” (4). Jones was commenting on religion and the idea that people may only embody those values one day a week. Hoggard certainly fits the aforementioned description because of some of his commentary of not wanting to be preached to on weekdays. Weales credits the play’s use of religion onstage as significant in the growth of the Modernist trend, “Beginning with those of the unlikely groundbreaker, Henry Arthur Jones, had already given the consideration of religion a legitimate place in the commercial theater” (23).

Jones’s discussion of fiscal politics, class, and religion woven together compose the spine of *Saints and Sinners*. Jones received significant backlash from some of the community who did not see his work as something that should be placed upon the English stage. In turn, then, Jones fiercely defended his work and his position on Hoggard as an accurate portrait of modern English life. Jones portrays Hoggard as he sees him, and he positions Fletcher as the moral foil. This juxtaposition, in conjunction with the other characters’ discussion of finances and the church, arguably creates the first modern English drama to offer critical discussion of religion. Although *Saints and Sinners* was written early in his career and the first compilation of his essays would not

be published until the mid 1890s, what is clear is that Jones is trying to find a way to elevate drama beyond popular amusement like the music halls. In Jones's own way, he is also elevating melodrama as an art form as well. Cordell even cites *Saints and Sinners* as the play that "helped pave the way of uncontested presentation of the plays by Bernard Shaw, Somerset Maugham, Ibsen, Monkhouse, and others" (54). What is significant to note here is that Henry Arthur Jones began a career of pushing boundaries and attempting to make religion (and other themes) viable topics of discussion for the stage. These pieces in turn illustrate that Jones is part of a larger movement away from naturalism and into the world of modernism.

*Today our modern drama should lay hands upon every providence of human life and thought, and be satisfied with nothing less than sovereign sway and masterdom over the whole realm.*

*25<sup>th</sup> April 1891 (Saints and Sinners, 123)*

## CHAPTER THREE

### JUDAH, A SUBVERSIVE COMEDY WITH SCIENTIFIC RATIONALISM AND RELIGION

Following the 1884 production of *Saints and Sinners*, in the spring of 1890, the first production of *Judah*, a comedy discussing religion, was performed at the Shaftesbury Theater in London (*Judah* n.p.). In 1894, Jones published a copy of his play with MacMillan and Company for the reading public. *Judah* was not subject to the same criticism that faced *Saints and Sinners*. Jones avoided using direct scriptural quotations from businessmen and instead wrote a farcical comedy that explores some of the funding of religious projects and religious persons. The prevailing conflict in the play exists between those who seek to make money off a fake religious idol and those attempting to do the “right” thing, who are guided by their moral compasses. Jones hid his commentary within the play’s humor, and at the end of the play used the theme of “truth” to bring forward a discussion of love and faith, thus proving the immoral financial actions earlier in the play were ill-founded. By utilizing the aesthetic distance of comedy, Jones was able to craft a play that discussed religious content and avoided conflict with his audience.

The discussion of love and faith in this play is evident because of the characters’ engagement with moral questions while trying to balance their own feelings. In the scope of Jones’s work, Gerald Weales notes that, “Love and faith was Jones’s most effective vein” (8). There is an embodiment of these ideas in the play alongside other religious commentary. In *Judah*, Jones noted that he sought to write a play that sought to mine and heighten the emotion that Weales alludes to. According to Jones:

To the bulk of English and American theater audiences such a passion is incomprehensible, incredible, absurd. I am content to yield a point. But constantly, or perhaps under the debris of some societal scandal, I get hints and confirmations of the actually and permanent truth of such heightened love passions as I have tried to depict in the plays I have named [including *Judah* and *Michael*]. (Cordell 83)

Jones argued that the passions of the characters may be hard to interpret but can be found outside of the drama in real life by looking at modern scandals of the period. In a way, Jones used some of the scandalous events in his plays to consciously heighten the passions and thus raise the stakes in his work. Recall that Weales called “love and faith” Jones’s most effective vein. This is indeed true, but there is also a semblance of emotion and duty, and the stark contrast in how they are accepted by the society around the characters is infused within *Judah*. The contrast between duty and emotion takes the forefront in the play while Jones hides his moral commentary on the fiscal politics associated with religion behind the aesthetic distance of comedy.

*Judah* tells the story of a remarkable girl by the name of Vashti Dethic (Vashti hereafter) and her magical abilities to heal people with terminal illness and chronic pain by fasting for two weeks. Her story is heard across Europe due to the publication of 17 editions of a book about her exploits written by Mr. Prall. The Earl of Ascarby hears of her miraculous cures and seeks to have Vashti come to his home to save his ailing daughter, Lady Eve. At Ascarby’s invitation, renowned minister Judah arrives with Vashti, praising her abilities.

Complicating the action, Vashti's father, Mr. Dethic (Dethic hereafter) reveals in the first scene that Vashti does not have any special powers and he is using her to make money. Dethic seeks to fool the Earl by stating that Lady Eve is healed by Vashti's mystical force. The incredulity of the situation prompts a scholar by the name of Jopp, to test the Dethics to find out if Vashti really does have supernatural abilities. Jopp then has Vashti locked in jail to test her abilities, but Dethic attempts to circumvent the test by feeding his daughter while she is imprisoned. Farcical entrances and exits allow for Dethic to come close to hiding the truth, but Judah becomes aware of the conspiracy. Complicating the plot further is the fact that Judah falls madly in love with Vashti and ultimately decides to hide her secret. The deception then weighs heavily on Judah's conscience causing him to eventually reveal the truth. Despite the revelation and lies, in true comedic form, all is forgiven and the pair are married as opposed to going to jail. Vashti and Judah decide to better their futures without deception and "build our new church with our lives, and its foundation shall be the truth" (*Judah* 104).

This story and Jones's weaving together of passions and duty present another religious narrative that can be analyzed with his other plays through the lens of modernism. Although the commentary is subtler in *Judah*, Jones is still fighting for religion as a viable topic for the stage, thus it is relevant for his discussions of the development of a National Drama. The discussions about love and faith, passions, duty, and emotions, as well some of the defenses of the drama included at the end of the chapter will help tie this work into the larger scope of Jones's National Drama and thereby modernism.

## A RELIGIOUS IDOL AND A WAR BETWEEN EMOTION AND REASON

The religious character that Jones presents in Vashti is made to be satirical as she is a miracle worker without any inherent abilities. Throughout the play the audience becomes keenly aware that Vashti does not possess any powers and does not have the ability to heal. In order to examine love and faith alongside the complex financial aspects of this play, a closer look at the symbol of the miracle worker is necessary. In the first scene of the play there is a moment in which Ascarby departs the room, leaving Dethic and Vashti to discuss the nature of her mystical powers. What is revealed in this conversation is that she is a fraud and does not have the ability to save anyone. Vashti, after being called a savior by Judah, says “I’ll go no further...I’m tired of it. I hate this deception. I’ll have no more of it” (*Judah* 18). Vashti finally decides she wishes to end the farce. This response should be noted as a “morally correct” response which is juxtaposed with Dethic who says, “Take my word for it, my darling, there’s some sort of magnetic influence about you that you don’t quite understand yourself” (19). Dethic attempts to reassure Vashti that she is in fact powerful in ways she does not understand, thus perpetuating the deception. Dethic then changes tactics and threatens Vashti to remain on her current course: “Either you stay here, and act according to my instructions, and are rewarded with a happy and honored competence the rest of your life, or you confess yourself a fraud, disgrace your trusting father, and let Mr. Llewellyn [Judah] know exactly what you are, besides getting yourself lodgings inside Beachampton jail” (21). Dethic has a vested interest in his daughter’s success in fooling the public into presenting her as a miracle worker; he seeks to turn a profit from her status. To Dethic, religion is tied structurally with financial gain. The composition of Vashti’s image is morally precarious to the audience as they know the entire story is a lie. Dethic is indeed

worshiping Mammon and like Hoggard in *Saints and Sinners*, Dethic falls on the side of the immoral.

The miracle worker's abilities are aggressively doubted by Professor Jopp, and his dissent provides the conflict for the play. Jopp's rational philosophy can be mined from some of his early commentary on miracles. When asked if he believes in miracles, Jopp responds, "Not in England in the nineteenth century" (2). The scientific rationale Jopp uses may tie in with larger constructs in Victorian society, like the scientific revolution. The argument proposed is that the rationalist specifically denies the existence of miracles in his world. Jopp's denial positions him as the foil in Dethic's plan as Jopp already has experience in looking into wonder-workers:

I have investigated too many of them. The exact point at which self-deception ends and the deception of other people begins has ceased to interest me. I made up my mind when I exposed those radically spiritualists last year, that I would waste any more time on such nonsense. (*Judah* 9)

Jopp represents an intellectual force that works against the financial gain associated with miracles and thus is a force of doubt of Vashti's powers.

Jopp's view of the Dethics' actions are negative, for he does not believe in her status as a miracle-worker. Jopp goes a step further with his attack and also calls the actions "occult" (28). When talking directly to Lord Ascarby about his interest in allowing Vashti to "treat" Lady Eve, Jopp asks, "And it is with your consent that she treats Lady Eve in some mysterious, *occult* way?" (28, emphasis mine). Dethic presents his daughter as a spiritual healer, but Jopp is not fooled, classifying her actions as magic. This dichotomy between the magical and the scientific illustrates the tension around

Vashti's status as a religious symbol. Earl Ascarby notes that he has allowed his daughter to be treated because he says "I've no faith in them [doctors]. They all gave me hopes of the others to the very last, and they all [his previous children] died" (29). This action illustrates a social commentary on doctors by presenting the desperation of a father trying to save his children by any means possible. The dialogue demonstrates a negative view of the scientific prowess of physicians and sets up a scenario in which Vashti can be viewed as a potential savior for his daughter. The complication lies in the fact that Jopp is determined to disprove Vashti's "divine powers" as he also has a vested interest in Ascarby's daughter's health because wishes to see her well.

The background of Jopp and Dethic's opposing positions may be influenced by the scientific revolution, the period in which Jones's play takes place. Elliot-Binns comments on this intellectual and cultural transition in his *Religion in the Victorian Era*, noting that, "The result of this acceptance of the scientific method has been not only to transform scholarship; it has also, in many cases, affected the individual thinker, driving him back from the spiritual, and compelling him to find only in material things any kind of certainty" (158). The scientific revolution Elliot-Binns refers to is, in part, the theories of Darwin and the publication of his world-altering text *Origin of Species* (155). The "compelling" draw toward rationality is what Jones uses within his play. In the world of the play, Jones uses Jopp as the voice of the "scientific realist" as Jopp doubts miracles and anything he cannot prove. Judah represents the other side of the argument as the spiritualist in his actions as a character and also perhaps in the biblical connections to the name. To further unpack Jopp's previous discussion of miracles, in Elliot-Binns's text uses a quotation from Aubry Moore about divine interventions, "There are not, and

cannot be, any divine interpositions in Nature, for God cannot interfere with himself.... A theory of 'Super-natural interferences' is as fatal to theology as to science." (159). The argument Moore proposes is that a God cannot interfere with their own creation and that external influences or events would be problematic. Elliot-Binns comments on her theory to expand upon the ideas further, "This admission seemed to take away the evidential value of what were called miracles, for a single creation ruled by natural law they must be regarded either as a "Breach" of such law, or as a confession by the creator of imperfection in His work" (159). According to Elliot-Binns, Victorian era miracles were problematized in theology; according to Victorian thought, miracles would not make sense because God cannot interfere with himself and as such would acknowledge a flaw in creation. In this sense, Jopp's aggressive rationality can be brought back into focus. His antipathy toward miracles, his distrust towards Vashti as a religious miracle worker, and his attempt to disprove what she represents all tie in with his disbelief that she possesses divine power and can heal. Jopp's character embodies Victorian hesitation, the focus on scientific logic, and the theological critique of the belief in the supernatural.

Jopp's aggressive rationality acts as a foil to pastor Judah and his belief in the religious supernatural. The two are cordial but hold sharply opposing views on the nature of Vashti's powers, and their arguments manifest as a debate between emotion and reason. For instance, Judah begins the play believing in Vashti's abilities whereas Jopp does not. An example of how the two view the world differently can be seen in an early discussion of oratory skills in which Jopp asks for the secret to Judah's success. Judah responds, "*I believe what I say*" (*Judah* 13). Jopp responds that he also believes what he says, but Judah comments that Jopp's lectures are on the "unseen world" (13). Jopp

responds, “Ah!—there I can’t follow you” (13). The fact that Jopp cannot discuss elements of spirituality illustrates that Jopp could not would never be able to believe in a “miracle” worker. Jopp is overtly rational and does not directly engage with the “unseen” forces, whereas Judah, according to his own words, seems to be intricately and intimately connected to them. Judah comments that he hears voices of which Jopp is skeptical. Judah responds, “I hear it as plainly as I hear yours [Jopp *smiles*]. Why do you doubt me? Is the spirit-world so far from you that you don’t believe in it? Its nearer to me than this earth I walk on” (13). Jones sets up these two characters to be diametrically opposed in the way that they see and view the world. One displays a clear and ever-present rational train of thought while the other is inherently spiritual, which creates natural tension and is representative of Jones’s social commentary on the topic. Elliot-Binns’s view that miracles are not viable in the Victorian world allows Jones to set up the conflict between two opposing positions: those who believe in miracles such as the religious, i.e., Judah; and those who do not who make up the scientists or rationalists, i.e., Jopp.

Jopp’s doubt of Vashti’s abilities creates a point of contention as Jopp and Judah begin on opposing sides of the issue when they all meet in Ascarby’s estate early in the story. Jopp says that miracles are “the perfectly natural means by which they [the miracles] are always accomplished” (*Judah* 15). What Jopp is stating is that the miracles can always be explained logically. This juxtaposes starkly with Judah who instead says,

You know the secrets of life and death then? You hold the keys to the grave?

Explain?! Explain to the mother the mystery of the love that gives a living child to her arms! Explain to the husband what hand snatches back his wife from the gates

of death! Explain?! They do not need it. They hold their dear ones to their hearts—safe. They do not question, they love. (15)

Jones creates opposition between the characters from the start for the purposes of a reversal in Judah's views that will occur in Act IV. This example also ties in with other moments of their opposition such as the discussion of Vashti's abilities. Jopp asks, "Miss Dethic, what is the precise nature of the cure you propose to work upon Lady Eve?" (*Judah* 27). She responds, "That is my secret," but Jopp is not convinced by her vague answer and seems bothered by the incredulity of the situation (27). Judah retorts, "It weakens the body, but gives beauty and strength to the spirit. [Jopp shakes his head] Why should it seem strange to you? Can you not see that Miss. Dethic is not as others" (27). In the battle between emotion and reason, between Judah and Jopp, there is no clear winner cited in the first act. The audience knows, however, that Judah is being deceived. On one side there is someone who doubts the logic, whereas on the other, there exists one who seeks to defend the intangible.

Jones uses the previously mentioned tension and contrast between Judah and Jopp and how they feel about Vashti's powers to provide the framework for the tension when the truth about Vashti is first discovered by Judah. As Jopp's investigation continues, Dethic resumes his religious deception. He has a hidden key that he plans to use to get food up to his daughter who is supposed to be starving herself in order to access the superpowers necessary to save Lady Ascarby (35). Jopp's daughter does not think Vashti has any powers at all and comments on Vashti's failing health, "It is absurd, yet, absurd as it is, your daughter's health and spirits, which had kept up precisely as if she were being fed, declined from the very day that my father and I had a wire-gauze put over the

window, Mr. Dethic” (37). The sarcastic comment is delivered to raise tension and illustrate that the plan is about to fail. Soon, Jopp enters and Vashti comes down from the tower in which she is locked away. Despite Jopp’s rational resistance to Vashti’s abilities, when discussing the mental stability of Lady Ascarby he says, “If you wish to keep her alive, don’t let her excite herself as she has done tonight. You understand?” to which Vashti responds, “I understand” (56). There is a mutual acknowledgement in this moment. Jopp knows the truth about Vashti and has almost proven his point, and Vashti’s response seems to state that Vashti knows she is running out of time. By this point, Vashti and her father’s deception seems to come to an end. Vashti is unable to continue in her current state, thus placing Jopp in the position to best the religious frauds. Jopp goes as far as to call her religious status as flawed in one of the play’s few longer speeches:

If you don’t know the secret of this mysterious power of yours, I’ll explain it to you. These good folks whom you cure are all suffering from different kinds of nervous diseases, where only volition is required to make them better. Their faith in you gives the necessary shock to their volition, and beings its powers into exercise. But in all cases of organic disease I assure you[,] you are as helpless as—as any regular practitioner; and that’s saying a good deal. (*Judah* 59)

Jopp takes this moment to explain what he thinks about Vashti’s powers and give her an opportunity to examine her religious and spiritual status. Although Jopp is the scientific rationalist, even he doubts the abilities of modern medicine. Vashti, who has no actual powers, is honored with the undeserving title of saint or miracle worker. Jopp takes this idea and reinterprets the effects she has on the afflicted not as an authentic miracle, but

rather as the result of the placebo effect. Jopp specifically address the faith that others have in her and explain how this faith is misguided. Noteworthy, however, is that Jopp does not condemn religion; rather he condemns what he sees as improbable and also easily explained through his own experience.

The final act creates a reversal for both Judah and Jopp as they are left to interpret new information that they did not previously consider or have available. Beginning with Judah, he learns of Vashi and Dethic's deceit in Act II, and because of his love for Vashti, Judah lies to Jopp about any knowledge of the crime (72). Judah's decision to lie in order to preserve Vashti's reputation causes him deep guilt resulting in his inability to effectively minister: "I ought to be able to proclaim the truth, for I know what lying is" (77). Judah is haunted by the lie he told and eventually breaks down: "Every sentence I spoke I heard shouted in my ear, 'Lies; lies; come down liar! Come down! Lies! Lies! Lies!'" (77). Judah held Vashti in high esteem, and the audience sees that Judah is trying to preserve the image that is created around her through books and fame, all with the intent of protecting her. Judah's guilt has caused him duress and he is left to decide how to deal with his lie. Despite the complex moral scenario and guilt, Judah and Vashti remain together. Judah says, "Not for every blessing in this world will I part from you!" (79). They both are left to decide what they will do and how to best move forward.

At the same time, Jopp has gained the evidence he needs to prove the falsehoods of the Dethics. However, because he is trying to protect Judah, there is indecision in his comments. This is revealed through a conversation the two men share,

I know that value of men such as you. It is the man who believes in something, believes in himself, believes in his fellow men, in the woman he loves, and in the

faith his fathers have taught him—that's the man that's good for something in this world. [Dryly] I don't believe in anything myself, so I'm good for nothing. (83)

Jopp is at war with the idea of miracle workers. He presents the idea that faith is still valuable and does not discount what is represented. Jopp specifically states that believing in something should be considered moral. As Jones chose to make religion the subject of his plays, and since he has his professor appear as the rationalist without faith, Jones gives Jopp this moment to pause and grapple with the concept of belief. Jopp's indecision and emotional burden continues when he has a conversation with Ascarby. To Jopp's surprise Ascarby states that he already knew of the deception, "blame me if you like, Jopp—I know I'm being duped—I know I'm a coward, and a fool perhaps—but I can't deny Eve anything. When I think she is the last of us, and in a few years I may be left alone—" (94). Ascarby already knows of the deception but has chosen to ignore the situation as his daughter is more important to him. The dialogue above presents that she may be "the last of us" which may be an allusion to Eve from the Bible. In this sense, Lady Eve's health is a marker of hope and everyone around Eve is aware of the present deception. Her health improved, and presumably Ascarby did not want to upset the status quo. Lady Eve did not overhear the previous conversation between Jopp and Ascarby but still says, "But what's the use...Of proving all fairy tales are false; it only makes the children unhappy" (95). Jopp responds, "[Taking her hands very tenderly] And the grown-up people too" (95). Lady Eve's comment illustrates a self-awareness that fairy tales proved false can bring sadness. Jopp seems to recognize this and notes that placebo effect has had a positive effect on Eve. When he is alone with his thoughts, he says to himself, "After all, why not believe in fairy tales?" (96). This section of the play has

some wonderful dialogue that changes the tone of the play; headed for tragedy, it ends instead as a comedy. The structure is similar to that of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as there is a change of heart near the end of the story when Prospero changes his mind to avenge his lost dukedom and Ariel reminds him of his humanity. In *Judah*, Jopp has a change of heart and chooses not to publicly expose the Dethics for their crimes.

Jopp and Judah come together and both illustrate a character change upon their final meeting illuminating what they have discovered. Jones concludes by having Jopp engage in a tense conversation with Dethic, revealing to the audience that Dethic was formerly a false magician. Nevertheless, Jopp chooses to let Dethic go free as long as he leaves England (98-99). Jopp tells Judah that he was "mistaken" about Vashti and does not expose the truth. Judah and Vashti however, reveal the truth anyway, despite Jopp's attempt to cover up the situation. At the end, only Lady Eve is left in the dark, a decision made to ensure the improvements in her health continue. Jones's decision to keep the validity of Vashti's divine powers alive in the eyes of Eve complicates the portrayal of religion the narrative. Both Judah and Jopp represent dynamic characters who learn and have the capacity to change and evolve throughout the narrative, coming to their own complicated conclusions about what is right and wrong. What is significant in the larger discussion of Jones and religion onstage is that Jopp, despite being starkly rational, does not discount or discourage religion in any capacity. Rather, Jopp supports belief in something even if that is another person. Jones positions the moral discussion in this play around the search for truth. Jopp and Judah's reactions in the story create may be crafted around larger conversations at the time about scientific and theological rejection of miracles. In addition, Jones uses their diametric opposition to allow for not only moral

and character growth but the discussion of financial elements which will be used in discussion with the National Drama.

#### THE SEARCH FOR FINANCIAL GAIN (THE WAR AGAINST REASON)

The play revolves around the sizeable secret that Vashti is an ordinary human without spiritual healing powers, resulting in a major conflict between Vashti, Jopp, and Dethic who represent opposing views on religion and science. The opposing positions are complicated by the fact that it is revealed early on those who represent religion are frauds and only wish to make a profit off of Vashti's fabricated abilities. All of this is hidden beneath the overt farcical nature of the play, and thus the subtextual conversations around finance demonstrates Jones's interests in religion as a viable topic for the stage and the National Drama.

The first part of the argument is the ethics of using a false religious figure for financial gain. Dethic uses his daughter's "abilities" to try and advance himself in society and financially. Vashti looks to escape her situation but remains stuck for fear of imprisonment and the knowledge that her father has borrowed "several hundred pounds" from Mr. Prall who also makes money off of Vashti's powers through publishing a book of her "miracles" (21).

Vashti and Dethic's scheme is indeed problematic when looking back at the discussions from chapter two and Alborn's note about the worship of Mammon. Money is morally precarious in Victorian sensibilities, and there is a clear sense that Dethic and Vashti look at the morality of the situation differently. When originally asked what Vashti would want as compensation for healing Earl Ascarby's daughter, she replies,

You have heard Mr. Llewellyn [Judah]. He is spending all his life doing good. You do not know how great a work he is doing. If Lady Eve is well a year from now, will you build him a new church, a place worthy of him and the truths he speaks? This is the only thing I will take from you.” (26)

A surface reading of this statement presents Vashti as taking the high road by refusing to accept any payment for attempting to heal Ascarby’s daughter. A closer analysis of this moment also reveals the customer and service relationship between Vashti and Ascarby. Although Vashti is taking the moral high ground and moving away from her father’s immoral monetary desires, she is still engaged in a business transaction. Jones continues to paint a complicated relationship between services rendered and religious practices which could be considered morally grey per Alborn’s commentary. Dethic stands clearly in the world of the immoral as he lacks Vashti’s sense of altruism. This is illustrated through his actions near the end of the play when he attempts to take money from Earl Ascarby for Vashti’s alleged healing of his daughter. Lady Eve notes this when she says, “Here’s that dreadful Mr. Dethic. He’s always hinting about money. I’m sure Vashti won’t like him to live with her and Mr. Llewellyn [Judah]. Can’t you pension him to live away from them?” (73). By sending Dethic away, Lady Eve attempts to negotiate on behalf of both Vashti and Judah when they are about to get married. Dethic seeks to take advantage of a situation and looks to take money from the Ascarby estate. Ascarby has a conversation with Dethic after the chat with his daughter and explains that Vashti will not accept any form of payment. Dethic responds, “It’s ungrateful of her. I’ve argued it with her scores of times. I know your lordship will never suspect us of mercenary motives; but still, if any trifling way of showing your gratitude should suggest itself—” (74). Dethic is

still looking to establish a financial relationship for services rendered. Dethic is fiscally motivated and similar to *Saints and Sinners*' Hoggard in that he uses the situation to increase his financial situation.

A closer look at Hoggard and Dethic reveals that both characters use money as their primary motivator. Hoggard's actions discussed in Chapter Two revealed a man who quoted scripture to justify his ideological link between religion and business. Hoggard was also willing to negotiate with Fletcher as there were multiple circumstances where Hoggard either tried to bribe Fletcher or offer an ultimatum. These actions are linked to Dethic as he also is highly motivated by fiscal gain. As previously mentioned, Dethic was revealed to be a training magician before his performance with Vashti. He is no stranger to taking people's money for his own interests. Furthermore, Dethic also has the same instinct to bribe, barter, or steal what he needs to complete his task. Morally, the two characters use money as their main standard for how they conduct themselves.

Dethic is certainly not the only businessman of note in the world of this particular play who is making a profit off of Vashti's abilities. Mr. Prall exists in the narrative as a man of some financial renown who continues to make more money off a text being sold as a mass market paperback regaling the story of Vashti Dethic and her healing abilities.

The book Mr. Prall writes is yet another representation of the religious miracle-worker, Vashti. Mr. Prall is a man who discovered Vashti and has since followed her story, constructing a narrative text about her abilities. Juxton Prall (Prall's son) calls his father's book "the most deplorable farrago of unsound logic, sickly sentiment, and blatant ignorance that I have ever read" (9). The text, of which apparently 17 editions are published, is presented in the play as initially problematic (14). The problematization

exists to act as another object of worship as the text is being argued as false by the doubters of her abilities. Similar to Hoggard in *Saints and Sinners*, Mr. Prall essentially also has a customer and service relationship with the “religious miracles” of Vashti Dethic. The more miracles Vashti performs, the more editions of his book that he can publish and ostensibly make more money from the sales. Plausible evidence for the sales exists in an early conversation between Vashti and Dethic who discuss the nature of the book’s contents. Dethic, while explaining that Vashti must “fast” and put on a performance, notes, “We must throw ‘em the fasting in. Mr. Prall has written a book about it, and laid special stress upon it” (19). Vashti responds, “Mr. Prall is deceiving himself and his readers” (19). Dethic finally responds,

Just so my dear. Mr. Prall is a fool—that’s the reason he’s been of such use to us. And his readers are fools—that’s why his book has so many editions. It’s ungrateful to repine at Providence for having made the world so full of fools, when it’s quite plain they are put here for our especial benefit. (20)

In this particular moment, Jones exposes Prall’s readers as fools who continue to support the false religious miracles Vashti is supposedly able to perform, thus solidifying Jones’s critical commentary on financial gain for spiritual practices.

Eventually, Mr. Prall is confronted by his son Juxton, who explains that he has learned the truth about the text. Juxton does this as his inheritance was previously stripped and he is seeking financial support for his new wife: Jopp’s daughter (88-91). The truth that Juxton discovers places his father’s text in a negative light as the book is now just words on a page without any truth. Recall that truth is one of the major thematic items in the narrative and the whole story revolves around people not telling the truth and

then coming to accept the moral. Jones problematizes his narrative by not letting the subject go without some thought. Mrs. Prall, in response to Mr. Prall's query about what do, says,

Mrs. P: You've said nothing in it that wasn't true.

Prall: No—at least, of course if Jopp has been inquiring, there's no telling what construction may be put upon my truths.

Mrs. P: Nobody shall ever make me believe the girl's an imposter. James, whatever you do, don't withdraw your book from circulation. (*Judah* 92)

The truth begins blur as the Pralls live in denial about the nature of the girl to whom they've been devoted. Juxton exposes them to Vashti's truth, yet they deny the plausibility and eventually the argument leads to Prall saying, "if...the girl's an imposter, it will place my truths in a very awkward light" (93). Despite this, Mrs. Prall still responds, "Never mind. Repeat them over and over again, and in the end someone will believe them" (93). Jones has many characters learn from their mistakes and grapple with truth, but he does not give the same treatment to the Pralls. Both of them are in denial and do not see the value of coming forward with the truth, and they adopt a skewed view of what is real and what is not. Prall has been the author of a successful book series and rather than accept the nature of what his books are, he chooses to continue to publish them, egged on by his wife who has convinced him that someone will believe him even if it is lies. In this moment Jones offers a double-edged critique of both fiscal gain from religion and against individuals who do not see the moral choice.

In this play, money is continually treated in an awkward light as characters are use "miracles" as a source of financial revenue. Reaching back to *Saints and Sinners*, this

play also discusses the complexities of church finances. In *Saints and Sinners*, the church was already built and the characters were debating how to use church finances whilst struggling to stay running with limited funds. In *Judah*, the church is not yet built but someone (Ascarby) is the wealthy man funding the project. The complicated conversation about what the church represents, and the moral implications of the structure and its financial support are continually complicated in the third act. Recall that the church was the reward requested by Vashti for saving Lady Eve. The church is for Judah, and the pair would presumably live there and start a life together. Lady Eve talks about the structure, “It is to be the most magnificent building in Beachampton, and it is to be endowed while you are its minister, so that you will be perfectly happy, both of you, for all your lives” (*Judah* 75). This particular church will continue to be endowed for the remainder of the time that Judah will be the minister, meaning that the church will continue to receive monetary support. The moral dilemma involves a minister receiving financial support for something he knows is a lie. The irony is that Mr. Prall does not want to reveal the truth and is more than happy to keep the money and reputation earned as a result. Judah stands for truth and says to Vashti about the structure, “It won’t stand. If they lay the foundation as deep as the roots of the hills, and build the walls twenty feet thick, it can’t stand. It’s built on lies” (78-79). Judah sees the church as something built upon a false promise, a false foundation. He is well aware that Vashti does not actually have healing powers and he knows that he has helped cover the lie for the past year. This pressure has caused him to reflect upon the church’s purpose and mission. Given that there was a significant increase in church constructions in England during the Victorian era as the result of a

perceived moral necessity, Jones's focus on the building of a church in this play allows the audience to grapple with and reevaluate this so-called religious ideal.

The ethical conundrum about the church being established on unstable foundations is resolved through means that appear resolutely moral. Jones ends the play with Judah and Vashti revealing the truth to everyone and cancelling the foundation of this new church. Judah says, "Yes, we will build our new church with our lives, and its foundation shall be the truth" (*Judah* 104). This is the last line of the play. The intended message is that the church does not need to be a physical building, and the moral is indeed rather didactic. Judah and Vashti plan to create a new life using their newfound truth as the foundation. This is the opposite of the Pralls, who decide that they must not let the truth about their book become apparent and they chose to hide their secrets. Ending the play on a positive note and having truth be the main theme is a safe ending for Jones. The calm, moral, and collected ending is a far cry from *Saints and Sinners* with a conflicted catharsis dealing with middle class businessmen taking money and quoting scripture for their own gain. Jones plays this ending much more in alignment with the Victorian sensibilities outlined in Chapter Two. The ending is morally satisfactory in nature and the ending implies "truth" as a virtue of utmost importance.

#### CONSIDERING THE TRUTH IN RETROSPECT: BUT MONEY COULDN'T SAVE EVE

Dethic's quest for financial gain, Jopp's fervent quest to attempt to stop what he deems immoral, and Mr. Prall's financial racket with a false textbook are discussed in the scope of Jones's religious comedy and are noted as immoral activities. At the end of the play these acts are replaced by what is presumably the correct moral action: telling the truth and realizing that the church is in the heart not a building. A retroactive examination

of other actions in the play would lead the audience to view financial worship of Mammon as immoral in the world of the play per Alborn's notes about how morally tenuous money was. Alborn stated that money went was "precariously" placed between "sacred and profane" in Victorian society (209). The moral ending rings true and is proven because money is shown not to be able to save someone from death. The core of the play centers on Lady Eve dying of an unknown affliction, unable to be saved by the physicians of the Victorian era. Although Ascarby could be the most financially secure person in the entire county, he cannot use his wealth or power to save his daughter. Eve gives a speech about death in the first act before disappearing offstage:

It's action I want. This world is all for the strong. To do something, and then die.

How sweet Death seems sometimes! Like a kiss from an unknown lover! He comes and touches you and says, "Don't you know me? I have loved you all these years. This is our wedding -day. You must come with me. You must come."

*(Judah 6)*

Jones has Lady Eve give a speech about death. What is later revealed is that Ascarby has lost six children before Eve, thus when one considers how important truth is thematically in the play, Eve's commentary reveals that the worship of money means nothing.

Ascarby is desperate to find a solution to avoid the loss of his daughter and he says, "I am worth nearly sixty thousand a year, and I am poorer than the poorest laborer that can give blood and vigour to his race" (7). Unlike Dethic, who seems to have an intimate relationship with money giving him power, Ascarby has all of the money (and presumably power) in the world but cannot save his daughter.

Salvation does not manifest in the form of financial power. Instead there is an emphasis on Vashti as the only one who can save Eve, even though she does not actually have any powers. Vashti, through some kind of placebo effect, gives Eve a second chance at life. Thus when truth and financial gain are examined at the end of the play, the more important of the two is the former because money was proved to be worthless in trying to save Lady Eve.

#### A POSTHUMOUS DISCUSSION OF THE PLAY AND THE ROAD TO A NATIONAL DRAMA

Jones's play delves into discussions of "mythic powers" and miracle workers and how that is illustrated through how characters handle truth and money. Jones's work, although appearing comedic in form, discusses the ethics of financial affectations in relation to the money Vashti generates. This, of course, is complicated by Jopp and Judah, who both have their own opinions on the supernatural that they have to come to grips with by the end of the drama, with Jopp becoming more understanding and Judah dedicated to an honest life.

Joseph Knight, in the forward to Jones's play, writes as a contemporary and admirer of Jones's work. Unlike *Saints and Sinners*, Jones did not need defense from an onslaught of critics who condemned his use of religion in *Judah*. The play did not need an elaborate defense of the merits of the drama or the nature of the content. In Knight's opinion, Jones's plays (including *Judah*) were worthy of publication as literature:

If any doubt existed as to their right to so be considered, the publication consecutively of *Saints and Sinners*, *The Crusaders*, and *Judah* must have set it at rest. As picture of English life to-day, these works have a fidelity at which the

dramatists of previous centuries did not always aim, or, at least, a prosperity to which they did not always attain. (Knight vii)

Knight compliments Jones's work and comments that Jones was able to mine a vein in his work not previously attainable by other dramatists. Knight's praise for *Judah* also extended to *Saints and Sinners* as he sees both being able to do something rather remarkable in English drama. In Knight's eyes, Jones creates an accurate picture of English life onstage. Knight notes that *Judah* is, "A satire in the main—the satire, primarily, of aristocratic patronage of fads; and, secondarily, of new forms of social priggishness" (x). Knight sees the text as a commentary on fads and social arrogance, which presumably refers to the abilities of Vashti. Knight further notes that he sees each character as "a breathing, genuine human being" (xi). Knight uses words that would signify Jones's characters as alive. This is worthy of critical response as Knight's commentary ties in with the idea Jones' desire to put middle-class life on stage. Jones's characters are praised for being genuine and for accurately reflecting the intersections of middle-class life and religion in the Victorian era. As such, Jones's play successfully elevates drama by proving that dramatists can and should paint pictures of life as they see it. This also fuels Jones's National Drama as others are also taking notice of the significance of his work. A step further still, the Modernist discussion can also be had looking at this critical reflection as Jones is introducing new work to portray the world in a non-naturalist way.

Some 38 years after the initial publication of *Judah*, Richard Cordell also discusses the play and offers commentary to fuel the National Drama and Modernist discussion. Cordell looks at the characters that Jones introduces and analyzes how they

functioned in the text. Cordell writes, “Into this story Jones introduces a group of interesting people: a scientific realist (one of his most successful characters) suggested by Herbert Spencer; a wealthy victim of numerous passing fads” (Cordell, 77). Cordell cites a number of different character inspirations for the play. These inspirations are indeed interesting, but perhaps the most remarkable element of Cordell’s critique was that “the play is undoubtedly interesting—the 1890 audiences found it gripping; it is still timely and, moreover, beautiful” (77). Cordell is complimentary of the play and notes that the play was successful when looking at the audience reception. He furthermore cites that the play was “timely” and addressed relevant Victorian discussions onstage. The positive review of the play contrasts drastically with reviews of *Saints and Sinners*.

Consider the success of *Judah* play in comparison to *Saints and Sinners* and how *Judah* avoided the controversy the former play could not. Knight states that the play is a critical “satire” and would presumably then be commenting on relevant social topics (Judah, x). Although later in the quotation Cordell argues that the play missed the mark of being great, his previous commentary argues that the play was successful, and the audiences found it “gripping” (Cordell, 77). The play *Judah* seems to be regarded as a success in the time that the play was produced and published. Both *Judah* and *Saints and Sinners* discuss religion onstage but only one avoids controversy. Although the argument of why one was successful while the other was not may be hard to define, but one plausible argument is that Jones managed to utilize the vehicle of comedy to create aesthetic distance. By avoiding tragedy, Jones may have been able to separate his audience from the content and allowed a more distanced engagement with what was seen onstage. For example, Jones handles the immoral, financially motivated characters in the

plays quite differently. Hoggard and Dethic have similar character traits but their trajectories in their respective plays are different. At the end of *Saints and Sinners*, Hoggard is set free by Fletcher for reasons unclear but perhaps moral. Hoggard does not necessarily learn a lesson and is portrayed vile in a rather serious way. In *Judah*, Dethic is also set free, but he is thoroughly berated by Jopp in a comedic way. The comedic berating of Dethic may have let the audience laugh and distance themselves from the social commentary. Furthermore, note that Dethic does not ever quote scripture which was one of the primary complaints against *Saints and Sinners*. Although there are many nuances here that could be explored in future research projects, the difference between how the plays were received is worth noting.

*Judah*, fundamentally less controversial than *Saints and Sinners*, turned out to be a success for Jones. Furthermore, the play seems to have also been well received by critics like Weales and Cordell. Jones's play focused on the relationship between money and religion as well as other themes discussing truth and religion as manifested through the characters of Jopp and Judah. The contrast between the characters and their opinions on spirituality meld well with Vashti and Dethic's trajectory in the play, and both Jopp and Judah are left to examine the ramifications of their actions, not only financially but spiritually. One may think that the play may be headed for a tragedy much like Shakespeare's *Tempest*, but the play ends in a wedding and follows traditional comedic form. Jones writes a play with complicated fiscal and religious themes and explores concepts that link to his interests and desires for a National Drama. In the published version of the text, Joseph Knight is emphatic in his belief that Jones's work should be considered literature. What is critical to note before moving on is that the play is again

retuning to the subject of religion as Jones is continuing to try and make the subject something discussable on the modern stage. Furthermore, Jones is including his own critique and criticism in the play and offers a viewpoint on the argument with his work. These two points tie the work back to *Saints and Sinners* which is also part of the discussion of modern drama. For this play, Jones gets one of his contemporaries to support him which illustrates that his work was being recognized in his own time. Cordell, many years later, also offers critical support of Jones's work. The posthumous support of the play places Jones on the road to the National Drama he fought for.

*“... ‘What is or is not permissible in the modern drama?’ I am only careful to claim for Judah that it is literature, and as such deserves to be accessible in a printed form such as not assigned to it”*

*- Joseph Knight, 1891 (Judah xxi)*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL, A MELODRAMA ABOUT LOVE AND RELIGION

The past two chapters discussed fiscal politics, love, duty, faith, and religious themes in Jones's plays. *Saints and Sinners* melodramatically engaged with fiscal politics and immorality through a middle-class businessman quoting scripture. The financial commentary was on how the businessman combined religion and fiscal gain. The commentary, made more palatable through a comedic lens, in *Judah* discussed moral truth, financial gain, and how the characters engaged with miracle workers. Two characters, Prall and Dethic, made a great deal of money off the miracle worker Vashti. In *Judah* there was also a foundation of a church that was never actually built. Instead the characters used "truth" as the foundation for their new lives and the foundation of their new church was based on their new moral standing rather than a physical building. In *Michael and His Lost Angel* (hereafter, *Michael*), there is a church being built and the building is actually finished. Unlike *Judah*, however, *Michael* is a drama and deals with the foundation of the physical building intertwined with a complex love story. Much like *Saints and Sinners*, *Michael* stirred up quite a controversy when first produced. In her book, Doris Arthur Jones introduces *Michael* as "the greatest failure Henry Arthur ever had; it ran for only ten days in London and for eleven nights in New York, but it was always his favorite play" (172). *Michael* is fundamentally a complicated love story that looks at how two individuals are drawn together but forced apart by societal forces. The nuance in the play revolves around what is deemed socially "right" and what people do to protect the concepts of "duty" and "honor." Through these investigations, the moral

efficacy of the structure of the church is questioned. Using the love story between the characters Michael and Audrie as the foundation, this chapter will focus on the hypocrisy and social stigma that complicate their relationship. The hypocrisy that Michael faces will then be analyzed to provide a foundation for the discussion of the moral foundation of the physical church built in the play. Lastly, an analysis of why the play stirred controversy will be used to discuss how this play's discussion of emotion and societal commentary tie in with Jones's project of a National Drama and his relationship to Modernism.

*Michael and His Lost Angel* begins with Reverend Michael Feversham on a quest to fund a church restoration project. When Rose, the daughter of Michael's research assistant, Andrew, has relations with a man outside of wedlock, Michael convinces Rose to confess to the church about the affair. After her confession, the characters change conversation topics to how Michael can finish raising the funds needed to complete the church restoration. As part of his quest for funds, Michael meets Audrie Lesden, a woman who has been secretly donating to the restoration project. The two grow closer and care for each other deeply, but Michael's dedication to his work strains the relationship. Conflicted by his feelings for Audrie and his devotion to his work and faith, Michael leaves, seeking space to contemplate the matter on a private island. Audrie visits him on this island, and in a dramatic turn of events, she reveals that she has been the secret benefactor for the church restoration project. The timing of Michael and Audrie's visit to the island is impeccable, as they find themselves alone and without any boat to take them back home. Whilst there, the two elope, thus committing the same "sin" to which Michael made Rose publicly confess. However, Audrie's long-lost husband

unexpectedly returns from overseas which prevents the possibility of Michael and Audrie's marriage. Michael must then contemplate his hypocrisy as he endeavors to keep his sin a secret. Eventually, Michael restores the church, with the help of Audrie's donations; however, he is haunted by his feelings for her and the fact he cannot marry her because of her husband's return. Overwhelmed by the guilt he feels for the church being restored under such pretenses, Michael resigns and exiles himself, traveling to unknown locations for many years in an attempt to find peace. In a final dramatic scene, Michael returns home and finds Audrie dying. Michael realizes he should have been with her instead of leaving in search of the peace he never finds and declares, "There is no peace for me without her. In this life or the next!" (*Michael* 101). Like many other melodramatic pieces, the moral lesson becomes clear at this moment, as Audrie, who has taken ill, ultimately dies, leaving Michael to ponder what love means in the world and his own morality.

#### SOCIETAL PRESSURES AND MARRIAGE VOWS

*Michael* may vary from Jones's other work, but similarities like the discussion of love and faith are still present. Unlike *Judah*, that ends with truth as the main idea, this play ultimately values emotional connection in conjunction with faith. In *Michael* there is a heavy focus on the societal pressures and rules that are placed on the characters and how they react to them.

The social stigma Jones presents in the world of the play revolves around sexual intimacy outside of wedlock. The play's climax is the moment when Michael and Audrie become intimate, despite not being officially wed. Although the action is frowned upon, the crisis comes later when Audrie's long-lost husband returns, prompting Michael to

confess to his own congregation in Act IV: “I have sinned—as David sinned. I have broken the sanctity of the marriage vow. It is my just sentence to go forth from you” (*Michael* 94). Michael undergoes a great deal of change throughout the play and the pivotal moments in act four solidifies his dramatic arc as well as Jones’s critical commentary. The play’s entire narrative revolves around the breaking of the marriage vow and the import yet complexity of honesty. Michael begins the narrative resolute in his views but changes over the course of the play. Through Michael’s actions, Jones problematizes public confessions and illustrates religious hypocrisy.

Jones begins the play *in medias res*, with another Reverend named Mark and Andrew onstage discussing the events unfolding inside of the church proper. Although much more nuanced, the general plot point occurring in the church offstage is as follows: Andrew learned that his daughter had been sleeping with a man out of wedlock and a child was conceived, but she suffered a miscarriage (*Michael* 2). Andrew then tried and keep his daughter’s affair a secret, but he was unable to do so. Thus, he was urged by Michael to come forth with the truth publicly (3). Rose’s confession is held in church, and Reverend Mark responds to Andrew’s lamentations with, “You may be sure Mr. Feversham wouldn’t have urged it unless he had felt it to be right and necessary” (3). Mark supports Michael’s decision to have Rose publicly declare what occurred. This is presented as a “morally correct” choice in the world of the play. By identifying this as the accepted moral choice, in Michael’s world, Jones also establishes a baseline, which makes way for Michael’s significant reversal that comes in the subsequent acts. Michael eventually realizes the value of love and recognizes the errors in his own actions, actions which place love and duty to faith in conflict. Therefore, to raise the stakes and heighten

the commentary, Jones portrays Michael from the start as the individual who can be trusted in matters of great turmoil and thus is seemingly a solid foundation of morality.

The dialogue used to describe Michael in the first scene implies he is a calm and collected moral force with which to be reckoned. When Michael walks onto the stage for the first time after Rose's confession, he maintains this highly moral persona. At this point, Mark, Andrew, Michael, and Ros, are together inside the church. Michael looks out the window and sees community members staring inside, interested to see what happens to Andrew and Rose. Michael responds to the individuals at the window,

Those of you who are filled with idle foolish curiosity, come and look in. Those of you who have been moved by the awful lesson of this morning, go to your homes, ponder it in your hearts, so that all your actions and all your thoughts from this time come forth may be open as the day, as clear as crystal, as white as snow.

*(Michael 6)*

Michael appears ideologically resolute. Confident in his choices, he presents a strong, stern front, insisting that he is making the right choice for Rose. He also uses the situation as an educational platform to publicly teach the witnesses and church patrons about the morality of sexual intimacy outside of wedlock. The words he delivers from the window give his actions a performative quality because of the public, educational nature of the societal and theological lesson he tries to teach. He expects others to learn from these actions and then take these lessons into their own homes. Again, a societal and theological norm is being established. The performative quality of Michael's public actions will be explored throughout the play, as Michael changes when he learns the errors in his presuppositions. After the dialogue at the window, Michael turns to speak

with Andrew. Maintaining his performative mask, he says, “Believe me, Andrew, if my own sister, if my own child had been in your daughter’s place, I would have counseled her to act as your daughter has done” (8). Michael is steadfast in his choice and argues for its validity. When asked if Michael would ever have sex outside of wedlock as Rose had done, Michael responds, “I pray God to keep me. But if I ever did, I should think him my true friend who made me confess and rid my soul of guilt. And you think me your true friend, don’t you, Andrew?” (9). Michael asks Andrew to force him to confess if Michael ever broke the religious and societal standards, and this request is put to the test later in Act III. Jones uses these moments to establish the perception of Michael as a resolute man who believes strongly in his own moral compass and sees no perceivable error or miscalculation in anything he has done. Performing his role in a way he thinks is right, Michael sends Andrew’s daughter to the nunnery, away from the influence of town.

Audrie’s first appearance reveals the first cracks in Michael’s performative side while also alluding to the hypocrisy of his actions. Her entrance instantly changes the tone of the scene because of the dialogue she initiates with Michael and thus provides a new lens through which to view the actions taken by Michael in handling Rose’s public confession. Audrie’s opinion of the proceedings is different than that of the three men who see the confession as a moral matter that upholds the sanctity of “character.” I highlight “character” because the agreement between both reverends in the first scene is that Michael was right to have Rose confess in order to uphold her status. The men illustrate their opinion on the matter in the first scene, but the discussion is one sided until Audrie presents her lens as a woman observing the events that unfolded. What is not fully presented in the first scene is that the public confession is quite cruel and reflective of a

colder patriarchal Victorian society. The people appearing in the window looking in on Rose and Andrew paint the surrounding social world of the play as harsh and eager to enact judgement. Michael and his fellow clergyman, Reverend Mark, give no external thought into how Rose's public confession may affect her and how she might need protection. Jones is criticizing this practice. To do this he uses Audrie's dialogue,

You must allow she was the heroine of the occasion, though you were certainly very impressive yourself, and you did your part very well. Still, after all, it's the man who is to be hanged who is the central figure in the proceedings. And the poor creature looked exquisitely pathetic and graceful, so sweetly innocent—quite good enough to go to heaven right away, I thought. A Sunday-school teacher told me once that it is nearly always the good girls who are betrayed. Is that so?

*(Michael 18)*

Although part of this is extracted from a larger quotation, Audrie is changing the lens on what the "confession" actually was. She criticizes Michael's actions and illustrates that Rose was actually hurt through the process while the men were only protecting themselves. Furthermore, the connotation of Audrie's words is that Michael was a supporting actor in the confession and that he played his role well. Michael is left with this new perspective he had not previously considered and thus forces him to question his actions by the time we reach act four and his own public confession. By having the principal characters engage in a discussion about how such confessions are more like a performance, Jones problematizes the moral rigor of the Victorians by critiquing public confessions and illustrating who they actually protect and who they hurt.

Thus in this first act, a baseline is established. Like the previous plays, Jones is using yet another religious drama to forward his notion of a “National Drama.” This play depicted the main character, Reverend Michael, as someone who believes he made the right choice morally and does not see the nuance in emotion. Audrie represents the opposite, as she critiques what others have said and looks at the situation with a different lens. This moral contrast is established early to tie in with the major shift in Michael’s character, where will go before the congregation and claim he has sinned like David, in Act IV.

#### CHALLENGING WHAT IS CONSIDERED RIGHT

As the play continues, Michael’s perception of what is considered morally correct begins to blur and shift as his performative nature begins to crack. One of the best examples of this is when Michael escapes to an island to ponder his emotions in a self-imposed exile. Through a series of convenient circumstances, both Michael and Audrie arrive on the island together with no way off until the weekend is through. The dialogue that follows illustrates the shift in Michael’s demeanor, and he comes to acknowledge his own feelings. During his conversation with Audrie, Michael coincidentally brings up the story of Saint Decuman and Saint Margaret, who were, like Michael and Audrie, also placed on islands. Michael says that the legend of St. Margret references a love that, “They denied themselves love here that they might gain heavenly happiness hereafter” (*Michael* 43). Audrie responds, “Now that their hearts have been dust all these hundreds of years, what good is it to them that they denied themselves love” (43). The item to note from this conversation is that there is a difference how each character values emotion. While Michael favors the duty to religious and societal standards – especially in the first

act, Audrie values emotion. The contrast between the two, one who values love and the other his duty to faith and societal standards, creates the tension Jones needed in the play. This tension makes Michael's transformation more significant and thus illustrates which Jones, as the playwright, places in higher esteem.

After the discussion of St. Margaret and love, Jones uses Michael and Audrie's discussion of "marrying for money" to illustrate a change in Michael's performative front. When Michael asks about Audrie's marriage, she says, "I married as thousands of girls do, carelessly, thoughtlessly. I was married for my money. No one had ever told me that love was sacred," to which Michael responds, "Nobody ever does tell us that, till we hear it from our own hearts" (*Michael* 46-47). The dialogue demonstrates a change in Michael as he acknowledges his understanding of emotion's value. He and Audrie agree that love is sacred. Although previously opposed in their ideas about the import of emotion, in the scene, the agreement they share marks a significant change. Shortly thereafter, Michael and Audrie come to the realization that they are trapped alone on the island as there are no more boats traveling that day (52). The act ends with them presumably making love, which marks a major shift in the narrative as Michael actively chooses emotion over his duty to his faith.

When Michael and Audrie return to the mainland, they discuss the repercussions of their actions on the island and whether they would be punished. Once again, their conversation brings the tension between love and societal as well as theological values to the forefront. Michael says that the matter of their actions will only be "In our two hearts, and in the High Court where such cases are tried," to which Audrie replies, "Don't preach, and—don't regret" (*Michael* 57). Michael refers to heaven as the place where the

case of his love for Audrie will be tried, whereas she asks him to remain in the moment and live without regret. He accepts his love for her, but he does not know how to grapple with his actions while tied to his guilt. The guilt he harbors for what he forced Rose to do, his own actions, and the fact he is unable to understand how to remedy the situation is revealed through the following dialogue:

How men try to make their religion square with their practice! I was hard, cruelly hard, on that poor little girl of Andrew's. I was sure that It was for the good of her soul that she should stand up and confess in public. But now it comes to my own self, I make excuses; I hide, and cloak, and equivocate, and lie—what a hypocrite I am! (58)

Michael uses the word “square” to describe something that he once viewed once as black and white. He is now faced with nuances he did not understand before and is left to grapple with what decision to make going forward as he questions the choice he made for Rose. When faced with the idea of confessing himself, he does not wish to do so.

Audrie's commentary on who is being protected and who will be judged becomes apparent. Michael, much like Audrie suggested, would be confessing to protect his “duty and honor.” Audrie would be the one left to bear the judgement of the township and illustrates the patriarchal Victorian societal flaws.

Michael examines his guilt and decides to directly ask his Andrew about Rose and how she is doing in the convent (65). Andrew's response, however, reveals his suspicions about Michael and his knowledge of Michael and Audrie's inappropriate relationship. Andrew calmly replies, “Nobody but me suspects anything. Your character is quite safe—her character is quite safe. They're both safe in my keeping” (*Michael* 64). Andrew

already knows about Michael's internal debate between love and faith. Instead of a making it a public affair, Andrew chooses to keep Michael's secret, forcing Michael to grapple with it in private. Michael, in response to Andrew's verbal affirmation to keep the secret, then reveals the full extent of his guilt about how he asked Rose to confess in front of the church: "*(Breaking down)* I was harsh and cruel to Rose. I punished her more than she deserved. I was a hard, self-righteous priest!" (65). Michael here again recognizes his own failings and critiques his previous belief in what the correct "duty" was in that moment. His indecision and realizations are further exacerbated by the entrance of Audrie, who reveals that her long-lost husband has returned. Jones uses this mysterious husband character as a device in *Michael and His Lost Angel* to amplify the tension between Michael and Audrie.

Michael's calm nature is destroyed by the return of Audrie's long-lost husband as he fully realizes the sin he committed. Michael decides he will leave Audrie, as that is the proper moral and religious way. He goes farther, too, demanding that they must not meet again or reflect upon what has occurred. Michael attempts to revert back to how he was in Act I by trying to regain his performative mask. However, Audrie complicates his attempt in the most interesting bit of dialogue to have been written by a straight white male in the 1800s: "I was right about man's love. You are all cowards. There's not one of you left that doesn't think first of his comfort, or his pocket, or his honor, or his skin, or his soul, and second of the woman he thinks he loves" (68-69). Jones has Audrie directly point out Michael's fear and interest in preserving his own image. Her commentary is direct, blunt, and likely thought-provoking for the audience, as this is the second time Audrie pointed out that men are always trying to protect their honor, which then leads to

situations like Act I in which Rose was forced to publicly confess her impropriety. There is clear commentary here on Victorian sensibilities as Jones is commenting in a larger sense on the fallibility of those beliefs. He does not include this kind of commentary in *Judah*. However, if one recalls *Saints and Sinners*, Fletcher goes in front of his congregation and resigns because Hoggard threatened to report the truth about his daughter's disappearance. Jones returns to this theme again in *Michael* but is much more direct about the fallibility of Victorian society and the issues with the public confession.

Michael's guilt over sleeping with another man's wife forces him to make a decision about how to best handle his feelings. The day before the church opens he tells his father and Reverend Mark, "To-morrow before the dedication service begins, I shall stand where I'm standing now and confess that I have been guilty of deadly sin and deceit. Then I shall go from this place and never return" (79). Michael, at this point in the play, believes that publicly confessing will set him back on the right path. He thinks the decision he is making is correct, returning to what he had Rose do in Act I. Jones specifically chooses to make Michael think that he is making the right choice and that exile will help him attain the comfort he seeks. Jones continues to reinforce this idea by having Michael meet with Rose. Jones uses this meeting between Rose and Michael to express the "false theme" that was just mentioned. Rose claims that she found comfort in being in the company of nuns and says, "Yes, I am happy—at least, I'm peaceful, and peace is better than happiness, isn't it?" (83). Rose's dialogue leads Michael to think that he will find "peace" through this restorative journey. He had previously been offered the idea of "peace" by Father Hilary (34). What Michael seeks may seem similar to a dictionary definition of peace, "freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or

emotions” (“Peace” n.p.). The kind of peace that people seem to discuss with Michael revolves around the idea of being free of emotion, more specifically love. Michael thinks he will be able to escape his love for Audrie by reinforcing his duty to his faith. The irony in such an action is that he discovers the exact opposite. When he is about to leave, he delivers a speech to the congregation confessing that he had broken his vow. In the speech he says, “I can find no repentance and no peace till I have freely acknowledged to you all that I am not worthy to continue my sacred office” (*Michael* 94). He also tells his congregation that he had sinned the way David had in scripture (94). This public confession illustrates that Michael decides that he can find “peace” through self-imposed exile. At this point, Audrie is under the impression that Michael will be going away forever due a conversation he had with her the day before in the church (92). The ending of Act IV may lead some audience members to believe that his duty is the answer; however, Jones directly circumvents this by having Michael realize that “peace” was a lie.

The fifth act undermines Act IV by having Michael realize the value of love and emotion *in conjunction with* his duty to faith. Jones directly undermines the previous definition of peace as freedom that was sought out in Act IV when Michael leaves his congregation. After a year or so of traveling, Michael returns to the parish. When the act begins the characters Sir Lyolf, Michael’s father, and Father Hilary are discussing Michael and Audrie. Sir Lyolf and Hilary are foils of one another in the scene, balancing perspectives on Michael and Audrie’s relationship. Sir Lyolf is of the opinion that Michael and Audrie could be together, saying, “I wish there was a good English doctor in the place [as Audrie is dying]. And I wish Michael was here” (96). Lyolf’s desire to see

Michael and Audrie together contrasts with his partner in the scene. Lyolf accepts their relationship and goes on to say, “But love is love, and whether it comes from heaven, or whether it comes from the other place, there’s no escaping it. I believe it always comes from heaven!” (98). Sir Lyolf’s commentary here is significant because he is affirming love and seems to be interested in a degree of societal forgiveness. He does not criticize the actions taken or judge Michael and Audrie for their actions; rather he is essentially wishing for his son to be happy.

Father Hilary, much like Michael early in the play, takes the opinion that Michael and Audrie should be separated. He says, “If she is passing away, better it should all be over before he returns” (98). Father Hilary does not share the same value in love and he still seems to align ideologically with the confession from Act I. Father Hilary prefers that Michael finish his restorative journey to find peace, the irony being Michael does not find it. Through convenience of the typical melodramatic plot, Michael returns to the parish, and Sir Lyolf tells him about the pending death of his lover. Michael initially maintains a performative front by hiding how he truly feels about Audrie. However, he cannot contain his emotions and responds in an outburst: “Why should I deceive you? Why should I deceive myself? All this pretended peace is no peace! There is no peace for me without her, either in this world or the next!” (101). This is one of the most significant lines in the play as the “peace” that he sought was not found in being away from his love; instead the answer to his question and search for peace was to be with her.

The dialogue also proves the truth of some of Audrie’s earlier comments in the play. Michael, in great fear of his own image, confesses what he has done to the whole congregation with the idea that he would go on a restorative journey. Michael originally

considered this the correct moral choice, yet this was false. The so-called “correct moral choice” was really nothing more than societal influence and it brought Michael no peace. Directly undermining the decisions his characters make in Act IV, Jones now has Michael recant his choice to leave Audrie behind: “A flower she threw me in the church that last time I saw her. And I wouldn’t take it! I sent her away! I sent her away! And her flower was trampled on. The night next I got up in the middle of the night and went over to the church and found it on the alter steps” (101). In a complete reversal, Michael realizes that his plan was flawed and that his actions throughout the story have been incorrect. He realizes that love was more important than he originally thought and was a valued part of his life that he should have accepted. Michael’s value for emotion contrasts him with Father Hilary, with whom he once agreed about Rose. Father Hilary says, “This [Michael’s state] is weakness. Be more brave! Control yourself!” (102). Michael takes time to respond at length stating that he trained himself but “to what end?” (102). This particular line is powerful as the audience is asked to what lengths Michael went to follow protocol and to evaluate where he ended. He is not happy, he is not restored, and he has not found the peace the societal and theological narrative suggested.

Although Father Hilary tries to gain control of Michael, Audrie’s entrance changes the tone as all attention is now on her. Michael and Audrie then stay together until she dies minutes later. Michael is given the final line of the play and says, “Take me! I give my life, my will, my soul, to you! Do what you please with me! I’ll believe all, do all, suffer all—only—only persuade me that I shall meet her again!” (107). Jones offers himself to the divine with the desire of seeing his beloved again. There is a level of desperation in the dialogue, almost a sense of feeling and regret. This particular moment

is powerful and further illustrates a change in Michael as he now values love and specifically his love for Audrie. He seeks to be with her.

During the course of the play, Michael has undergone a complete reversal. He did not place value on love at the start of the narrative, but by the time he is left watching his love die, he understands the power and import of emotion and love. This shift also acts as a societal commentary on those who suggest that peace can be found through a restorative journey of confession and denial. Even Rose notes that she is not happy and may be putting up the same performative front that Michael always does in Act IV. The transformation completely questions the inciting incident of the play and Andrew's initial response: "You've done what you thought was best for us, sir" (*Michael* 10). Evidently, Michael was wrong and the societal and theological structures in the world of the play are flawed.

#### FINANCES, LOVE, AND FAITH

The complex balance between emotion, societal pressures, and sin are all juggled within the scope of this narrative. Each piece ties in with the larger argument that the play is part of the National Drama Jones presents. Within this, however, is the discussion of fiscal politics we have returned to each chapter that ties together all three of these works. Jones utilizes the flawed morality of the first act and a false peace to drive the plot. Buried within this, however, is also his commentary on the moral efficacy of the financial morality of the church being built.

The church's financial foundation exists as a morally grey area in the world of the play. One of the first plot points revealed about fundraising for the project is that Michael is the author of a text that has helped to gain him a notable amount of prestige (11). The

production of this text functions as advertisement but also a source of income for Michael and his project. The implication created by Michael's project is that he can use the text as a viable source of advertisement and revenue. Reverend Mark Docwray, one of Michael's colleagues, suggests that he return to London to raise additional funds for the restoration (11). Docwray's comment reveals that London holds more financial opportunities for the restoration project and is the place to garner more support. Furthermore, the funds must be "raised" which usually implies that donors are involved with the project. On the subject of donors, Reverend Michael tells Docwray that he has just received an anonymous fifty-pound donation with no source donor (11). Despite this donation (and presumably others), Michael still does not have the funds he needs to finish the restoration and he needs to find more money.

The moral complexities of raising donation money are continually tested as Docwray offers other suggestions. He suggests that Michael speak with Audrie Lesden about supporting his project and "cultivate her" because "she's very rich, and would be an immense help" (12). This phrase reveals that Reverend Mark is in the "business" of "cultivating" individuals. From a semantic perspective, there is an argument to be made that Reverend Mark treats wealthy patrons of the church like individuals that need to be "cultivated" or brought in as donors for major projects, which could be considered morally precarious. Recall Alborn's commentary on the worship of Mammon and the fine line between moral and immoral. This particular comment walks the line, as on one hand they need the money for something Victorian society deemed necessary (i.e. the church), but also questions the means by which they obtain that money. Mark's commentary implies other reverends seek money for their restoration projects. If the

churches in Victorian society were symbols of decency and morality, the utilitarian ethics of collecting money would be justified in the world of the play as a service that is deemed respectable and moral to society. However, as mentioned before, a fine line is being skirted as the concept of actively cultivating donors complicates the relationship between religion and finances, which illustrates that Jones wanted to offer this problem up for discussion in the world of the play.

Cox's article provides an actual historical example of a parish growing exponentially through means of recruitment that will be used in context to discuss Michael's project. "Taking charge of a parish church with only 50 communicants, he [Walter Farquhar Hook] raised funds (public and private) for a new parish church that seated 4000 people, doubled the number of Anglican churches, and expanded the number of Church of England schools to 30" (437). This example of a church that was developed and grown through the use of donor funding directly ties to the discussions featured within Jones's play. The process that Father Hilary refers to as "cultivation" had historical precedents and may have been not considered improper by a late Victorian audience. Jones offers these discussions onstage and does not necessarily give a right or wrong answer. The only consistent theme for Jones is love, but the financial aspect of the church is left up to the audience to decide.

In Act II, Michael learns that he has "all the money" he needs for the restoration (*Michael* 33). Audrie donated all of the money for the project and when Michael learns of her significant contribution, he remarks, "I knew it was you! How glad I am to owe it all to you!" (42). Michael is overjoyed upon learning Audrie was his donor for the project. However, the complicated moral paradigm here is that Audrie and Michael then become

intimate, resulting in questions regarding how Michael will explain the donations to his peers and congregants. He winds up keeping the knowledge of where the money came from a secret. In one sense, Audrie is donating to a cause that is morally sound in Victorian society and to a person that she loves. The question of whether Michael is more grateful for her or the money at this point in the narrative brings up questions to be answered about whether the love expressed is tied in with financial contribution. From what occurs in the fifth act, Michael seems to turn full circle in valuing his love for Audrie and appears to truly care for her in addition to his faith and his dedication to the church. However, depending on how this moment is played by the actor, one could present and create a moral quandary. Jones is careful to create this awkward relationship between the fiscal needs of the church and the lovers for the purposes of further mystifying the discussion around the financial morality of the church's creation.

As the narrative progresses the relationship between finances and faith and love and faith are again brought into question. The next key development occurs in Act IV when Michael is considering leaving his church to go on his spiritual journey to find peace. The moral complexities of the situation are explored by several characters. Audrie comments that "Many churches are built with sinner's money" (*Michael* 70). Audrie implies that many churches had been built with money that was obtained through means not normally deemed acceptable by the church. In their case, Audrie donated the money because she loves Michael and he loves her in return so there are good intentions; however, she is also married, which complicates their relationship on multiple levels. The complex relationship between Audrie, Michael, and the church is exacerbated by the fact that a clear delineation of who "owns" the space is not present. In that same scene,

Audrie enters the church and the lovers have an awkward conversation about the church itself and the question who owns the property. Audrie, feeling as if she is being pushed away, asks, “Mayn’t I come into my own church? And such a sinner as I am?” (*Michael* 89). Audrie implies that the church, at least partially, belongs to her as she was presumably the only funder of the project who contributed any substantial amount. The complicated commentary is that Audrie is may be claiming the church on financial grounds. Jones is not specific here and leaves this moment grey as opposed to directly telling the audience what he meant. Audrie and Michael love one another but the church that is created becomes a symbol of contention. On one hand, Michael feels a pull towards the church and on the other a pull towards Audrie. The donation to the church blurs those lines. After Audrie’s query, Michael admits, “The church owes much to you” (89). The dialogue is complex as Audrie would presumably own most of the church if one considers the church a business. When the pair part at the end of the scene, she replies, “Very well. It’s hard lines that I mayn’t decorate my own church” (91). When Michael asks Audrie to not place flowers on the church steps, the question of who has ownership of the space is brought to the forefront.

In previous paragraphs the discussion revolved around commentary about foundations of the church and financial efficacy. What is being stated here is that the lines are not clear, and Jones is leaving the commentary up to his audience to decide what is ethically proper and what is not. Jones does not come out and say that the church should not exist, as he has Lyolf specifically state that Michael can still do a great deal of good (*Michael* 79). Cox links the growth of churches to the sense of “a constituency for their [the church’s] services, among the people at higher levels of society who believed

that state churches were instruments of moral good” (437). In this sense, the power of the church to do “good” in the society is valuable as a social marker. This again complicates the issue as one side of the argument presents the idea that the church is an important moral marker and should be created and used to help the public. The other side of the argument looks at the morality of the church foundation and some of the complications therein.

#### *MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL AS AN ARGUMENT FOR THE MODERN DRAMA*

So where does this play fall in terms of audience reception and the development of a modern English National Drama? *Michael and His Lost Angel* was indeed remarkably unsuccessful financially. This claim is supported by Jones’s daughter’s own account of the events and response to the play as they unfolded. Yet, despite not being particularly successful, the play is part of the larger conversation about Jones’s National Drama and making religion a viable topic for the stage.

Like *Saints and Sinners*, *Michael* caused debate upon opening. Doris Arthur Jones stated, “The play aroused a storm of criticism and discussion” (176). Critic Joseph Knight, in the published edition of the play, defended the drama. Knight called the play the best of Jones’s work and “a masterpiece” (*Knight* xxi). He gives Jones and the project high praise and articulates some of the controversial response specifically related to the title of the work,

That the name itself involved as some seemed to think a gratuitous insult to any form of religious connection or was even ill chosen I am not prepared to grant. Michael is not a scriptural character and his functions... and his place in the celestial hierarchy are assigned him by uninspired writers. (vi)

Knight notes that part of the controversy surrounding the production of *Michael*, like *Saints and Sinners*, returns again to a discussion of scripture. Some evidently considered the name of Jones's title character to be insulting and did not like the comparisons being drawn to the biblical character. However, Knight is of the opinion that Jones's character Michael is not a scriptural character and the name Michael is not a reference to anything biblical. Knight's commentary illustrates that he was separating the name of the character from any potential scriptural allusion and took offense to those that were trying to ascribe meaning where there was not any. Knight clearly did not agree with the controversy surrounding the play and felt confident in arguing his point in a critical preface to Jones's play.

Knight also takes aim at the audience of the play as part of the problem in its failure. Knight's commentary, although occasionally elitist by contemporary sensibilities, is worthy of critical discussion (*Michael* viii-ix). Knight also insists on the elevation of the discussion of drama much like Jones does which illustrates that there are others fighting for a National Drama and/or the growth of new drama. He notes, "We have not, however, made great progress in our education, and seem yet to have to learn that the most telling drama is the psychological, and that dialogue moves us, or should move us, more than incident" (ix). Knight, much like Jones, wants a critical discussion of drama, and he asks for broader education about the art form. There is a clear sense of the growing trend Jones is part of seeks to self-identify as a new age of drama. The commentary is representative of a change. Although this change will be discussed more deeply later, the discussion of drama in the critical preface to *Michael* illustrates that

there was a movement underway. That movement, perhaps small, was the Modernist trend.

When compared with previous works utilizing the lens of religion and money, Jones's narrative in *Michael* entertains some of the same argument as *Saints and Sinners*. The characters reflect on the ongoing dilemma of acquiring income to support church functions or restoration. Reverend Mark reveals that he seeks to "cultivate" wealthy patrons into becoming donors of the church, which implies a business relationship. The word "cultivate" has a negative connotation, perhaps one seemingly unbecoming for a religious institution. The reason for the moral paradox is the delicate line that Alborn discusses about worship of Mammon and Cox's discussion of the necessity in Victorian society for the growth of religious worship. The aforementioned religious discussion also plays out *Judah*. Jones is discussing social acceptability of money and religion in his work.

Where does that leave Jones and the religious drama? Fundamentally, the argument that religion is a viable topic for the stage serves as a basis for not only this play but also *Judah* and *Saints and Sinners*. The plays have pushed forward the discussion of religious drama by not only discussing some of the same points repeatedly—such as love, emotion, and faith—but also discussing where characters' values lie. In *Judah* that may have been truth, but in *Michael* that may have been love. The contrast offers a continuing dialogue and expression of new ideas instead of the same ones. *Michael*, argued to be one of Jones's finest by some and regarded as his personal favorite play, was a financial failure. Pulled from the theater after 11 performances, the nature of the play would seemingly note disaster (Cordell 124). What becomes apparent,

however, is that some like Knight defended the merits of the play, and *Michael* is remembered for being not only controversial but also an important critique of Victorian society's relationship to religion. These discussions are what fuel Jones's ideals for a modern National Drama and places him among the growing Modernist trend. Through these three plays, we see several key traits of Jones's view for modern drama and his argument for what should be performed on a national stage, ultimately contributing to his overall views of modern theatre and, more broadly, modernism.

*"... 'Michael has done more for my reputation than any success I ever had.' I believe his estimate to be very nearly correct. It has an enduring greatness widely recognized, not only by great literary critics and men of letters, but by an enormous number of the general public"*

- Doris Arthur Jones, quoting a personal discussion with her father 1930 (*D. Jones 180*)

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A NATIONAL DRAMA AND JONES AS AN (EARLY) MODERNIST

This chapter builds on the previous chapters to formulate an argument for Jones as an early Modernist playwright by analyzing his religious plays in conjunction with his writing on the idea of a National Drama. The previous chapters demonstrated Jones's critique of the worship of Mammon presented through characters like Hoggard and Dethic in their respective plays. Additionally, the discussions of morality, truth, and the value of love exist in all three of these plays in varying capacities. Jones stood behind these themes and ideas in his written defenses of his published works. Others who read his works seem to agree with some of Jones's sentiments regarding Victorian society or at least agree that the function and form of his works were worthy of being called literature. Looking closer at Jones's plays alongside his essays provides additional insights into what Jones valued as part of drama and how his work was relevant in shaping the transition into Modernist theatre. Ultimately, this final chapter seeks to highlight Jones's theories for a National Drama and some of its main tenets through the lens of his religious plays as a way to prove his presence in the modern canon.

Jones's quest to expand the value and education of modern English drama was a lifelong project. Jones desired to make the university a place of discourse about modern English drama and prove that the subject was worthy of critical analysis as an art form. In his quest, Jones published several books of essays, speeches, and thoughts on the study of drama. Jones was both an artist and a theorist as he wrote many plays but also wanted people to value drama in an intellectual capacity on the page and on the stage. His prolific theorizing can be found in his essays, which feature a clear arc of theoretical

ideas that encouraged movement toward a National Drama. His theories in these texts also help illuminate his plays and what he sought to achieve in their performance and publication. Using the lens of both the artist and the scholar, one can note that Jones was by no means an individual who just wanted drama to be in a book. He strongly advocated for the education of audiences on theater as an art form as a way to encourage critical discourse.

This chapter begins by examining Jones's earliest compilation of dramatic criticism and then moves on to explore a second volume published later in his life. The second volume of Jones's work includes copies of speeches he gave in the United States. To enable a more rigorous discussion of early US academics, Shannon Jackson's *Professing Performance* provides some background information to help contextualize the period and intellectual developments of the time. Additionally, Doris Jones's recollections of her father's work place some of the larger trends of his life into context with his work and theoretical writing. Finally, this discussion of Jones's plays and theories will demonstrate that Jones's work was significant in the growth of Modernism.

#### THE FOUNDATIONAL TENETS OF A MODERN DRAMA

Often, Jones, in his attempts to make modern drama more well respected by the public and intellectuals, went against his own judgement and the requests of his friends to not cause a stir. In the introduction to *The Renaissance of The English Drama*, Jones ruefully notes that he caused a degree of unrest in some communities via his essays and lectures, in addition to his plays:

I can well understand and sympathize with the feelings of impatience and resentment which these essays and lectures have aroused in many quarters during

the last ten years, and I have always known that there was much worldly wisdom in the advice of the many friends who have so constantly urged me to hold my tongue upon the subject of drama. (*Renascence* v)

Clearly, Jones was not afraid of some controversy over his work and was interested in initiating conversation about modern drama. Jones's unwavering focus on discussing what he wanted onstage is evident after his response to the controversy surrounding *Saints and Sinners*. Jones continued to push forward despite rather strong opposition from the public to his play, and he went on to write *Michael* which was also subject to some controversy. Originally published in 1895, *The Renascence of English Drama* covers the years 1883 to 1894 and his musings about drama, placing this theoretical text chronologically alongside all three of the plays discussed in this thesis.

Within this collection of essays, several key tenets of Jones's Modern Drama emerge. In the introduction to *The Renascence of English Drama*, Jones points to three key values which he argues are necessary in the development of a modern drama. He first argues for a distinction between popular amusement and high art (*Renascence* vii). Jones directly addresses critics who would label him as an elitist: "the theater exists for the one end giving pleasure, that it can instruct and educate only as the other fine arts do; that is, incidentally and indirectly, never with set purpose" (vii). Jones seems to support the ideals of the Roman dramatic theorist Horace, positing that drama is something that can both entertain and teach. Jones goes on in the preface to *Renascence* (and in subsequent articles within the text) to argue for the value of popular entertainment and does not fight against it. Rather, Jones merely seeks a space for intellectual discussion of dramatic literature and performance. To that extent, in his second declaration in his preface, Jones

argues that the author should be able to use their own dramaturgical lens to place stories onstage, specifically calling for religious freedom onstage:

I have fought for the entire freedom of the modern dramatist, for his right to portray all aspects of human life, all passions, all opinions; for the freedom of search, the freedom to phrase, the freedom of treatment that are allowed to the Bible and to Shakespeare, that must necessarily be allowed to every writer and to every artist that sees humanity as a whole. (*Renascence* viii-ix)

Here he specifically asks the dramatist to portray the world as they view it. He does not want dramatists to be censored by popularity. In his artistic work, Jones certainly models for what he argues in the above quote, as evidenced by his passionate defense of his religious dramas like *Michael* and *Saints and Sinners*. What is also significant in Jones's second declaration is his choice to use the word "opinions." By using this term, Jones implies that the dramatist should be able to portray their *opinions* of the people and then model characters after them. Jones seems to go against the Victorian decorum and disrupts the status quo in how he portrays characters as his use of scriptural quotations by a character like Hoggard caused quite a stir. Jones fights for acceptance of the lens he has crafted through observation to portray the world as he sees it rather than how his audience wants the world to look.

Lastly, Jones uses this argument for the freedom of interpretation to break away from the conventional grasp of realism. Jones despised the realist movement in theatre and instead wanted to allow the "sanity and wholesomeness, for largeness and breadth of view" (*Renascence* ix). He writes, "I have fought against the cramping and deadening influences of modern pessimistic realism, its littleness, its ugliness, its narrowness, its

parochial aims” (ix). Jones was a far more melodramatic writer than a realist, as he seemed to be searching for a way to mine and perform heightened human emotion. Jones believed that art contained four chief qualities: “beauty, mystery, passion, [and] imagination” (x). When one considers Jones’s religious works, specifically the three examined in the previous chapters, these four qualities emerge in content, theme, and style, demonstrating Jones’s artistic and philosophical ideals. He was an artist pushing against realism, arguing for a modern drama, and seeking new ideas.

Melodrama is heavily steeped in emotional gravity. Matthew S. Buckley, in his *Refugee Theatre: Melodrama and Modernity's Loss*, notes that there is a distinct relationship between “emotional force and intensity of effect with the historical discussions of crisis” (180-181). Jones mined the emotional force of the Victorian Era in his work. There is a clear sense that, in his plays, Jones wants to debate and rally against societal ills whilst using the framework of religion and fiscal politics in drama as the vehicle to argue. Rather than utilize realism to do so, Jones employs the melodramatic flair of the period, making the narrative more emotional. To describe Jones’s ends, one can borrow from Dryden’s dramaturgy; Jones used “nature wrought up to a Higher Pitch” (Huntley 55).

Using the context of melodrama with the four qualities and the three key tenets of drama Jones advocates, consider *Michael*. The emotional gravity of the play seems played to a “higher pitch” as Jones rails against social ills, and there is a clear sense that he is trying to offer content that his audience would understand and relate to. More specifically, Jones points to the flaws in the public confession at the start of the play, arguing that love is a particularly powerful emotion. Jones stated he was trying to create a

picture of what he saw as true, and by doing so he also created a piece that intensified the emotional discussion around fiscal politics with the creation of the church. In terms of Jones's own tenets, the plot is filled with devices to develop and heighten tension, and the narrative explores beauty in the sense of the attraction between the main characters. There are elements of mystery pertaining to the mysterious donors and Audrie's lost husband. The passion returns again to the affair between the main characters and the tragic ending. Lastly, imagination is explored through the seemingly impossible circumstances that bring the characters in the story. They are all from different social classes and are "worlds apart," yet they meet, and their story is told onstage.

*Judah* also embodies these same qualities. Although not a melodrama in structure, *Judah* again focuses on religion. Jones uses the religious framework in conjunction with scientific thought to talk about miracles, hypocrisy, and the complicated relationship between science and theology. The passion and beauty that Jones discusses appear in Judah and Vashti's relationship. The two are drawn together despite their opposite circumstances, and they decide to base the foundation of their life on truth. There is also Jopp and Judah who, although different ideologically, learn how to understand one another in the end. Jopp, perhaps most significantly of all, learns how to let his desire to peruse the truth lie as he chooses to not prove "fairy tales...false" to protect Lady Eve (*Judah*, 95). *Judah* highlights the tension between miracle workers and scientific rationalism onstage while still valuing theology. Although Jopp does not denigrate theology, one of his monologues is about the value of believing in something. These elements embedded within the play make the work part of Jones's National Drama, simply without the melodramatic structure.

While *Saints and Sinners* is the earliest of Jones's plays surveyed in this thesis, all the elements Jones discusses in his preface are evident in it as well. The play is melodramatic in form and intensifies the emotion to a higher pitch using the given circumstances and actions of Hoggard, Fletcher, and Fletcher's daughter. Some of the circumstances involving the entrances and exits of characters might be considered contrived, but Jones was not interested in realism. Rather, he was making his drama representative. In the play, Jones paints a heightened picture of middle-class life as a way to provide commentary relatable to his audience. That relatability reduces aesthetic distance which may in turn be the reason for the outrage against the play. The religious implications that Jones offered in the play tied business and religion together in the eyes of Hoggard and Prabble, who were presumably representative of the middle class. Alborn and Cox's arguments illustrate similar complexities in Victorian religion and morality, and the supposition made is that the content of the play was close to the viewers. Thus, the controversy makes sense. Jones defends his play in his critical preface where he passionately fights for the right to speak his truth onstage. In terms of his own tenets of drama, the beauty and passion in this play again embodied his lovers. The passion also exists between the middle class businessmen. Although Fletcher's moral compass is proved true in the end, the middle-class businessmen are indeed passionate about their beliefs. Fletcher's egalitarian morality and forgiveness also could be highlighted as passion as Fletcher is left to make many challenging decisions that test his moral compass, but he refuses to give in. The mystery develops in the minds of the characters as they do not know what has happened to one another, yet the audience is invited into the world of the play so they can see all that is happening. Finally, Jones's love for

“imagination” manifests in how the plot is constructed. A seemingly disparate set of characters are all brought together around a religious parson and his family. The characters intertwined nature is significant as without these elements, the play’s themes and ideas would not function. As a realist play, this would not work. Jones needs the heightened circumstances and sometimes circumstantial entrances and exits to further exacerbate and heighten the emotional elements of the story. The audience’s imagination is key to allowing all of this to occur.

What these works also illustrate is a collection of pieces that are unified by related ideas and demonstrate Jones’s contribution to the canon of modern English drama that he sought to establish. Jones utilizes anti-realist performance and plot structure to accomplish and model what he wants to see in drama. These three plays present a small part of Jones’s larger discussion around a National Drama. In an open letter he wrote to the *New Review* in January 1892, Jones replied to a discussion about modern drama where he took a strong stance defending English works as Jones was an anti-realist author. Jones fights back against H. D. Traill, a man who Jones claims does not respect modern drama. Jones quotes Traill, who posited that there was no “literary” English drama worthy of study (*Renascence* 102). However, Jones notes that the play that provoked Traill’s article, *The Times*, was a play that Jones rather enjoyed (103). Jones argues against realism and cites what he perceives as Traill’s logical flaws in his argument: “All through his article Mr. Traill insists on the necessity for absolute realism in stage-work. He even rates Shakespeare for not being a modern realist. Pressed home, Mr. Traill’s argument is, ‘You must be absolutely realistic; nobody in real life ever did talk about literature; therefore you can never be literary’” (106). The defense presented

by Jones illustrates his own artistic gravitation away from the rigid construction of realism and thus (perhaps unknowingly) his advocacy for a Modernist trend on the English stage. This in turn presented an opportunity for Jones to stand out as a Modernist himself. Jones uses the word “Renaissance” in the title of his essays, referring to growth and revival of art and literature. Jones attempted to mark a new period for English drama and fought vehemently against those who ignored the movement.

Jones’s desire to prove he is part of a new, growing movement is further illustrated through a discussion about playwrights’ perceived value as artists: “I come to that part of Mr. Traill’s article which denies to poor living playwrights any pretensions to be artists at all, and places their vocation on a level with Punch and Judy man in the street” (*Renascence* 108). By defending playwrights, Jones is defending their right to portray their truths on the stage in whatever artistic manner they see fit. Jones does this in the plays previously mentioned by discussing religion onstage. Later in the article Jones notes that “literary possibilities” are engaging “the best intellects of the day to take a delight in the drama as an art instead of a mere pastime, there is no limit to its influence and scope” (113). Yet again, Jones is pointing to an idealized, modern world where the playwright is available to explore topics and themes onstage that can then be looked at with a critical, intellectual lens. The expansion he seeks is both in form and content, and he essentially encourages playwrights to use freedom to explore new ideas.

Expanding to a larger frame of argument, Jones rallies against forces that would seek to devalue the work of the modern English playwrights. Jones, in “The Future of English Drama,” notes that he once read a critic from Westminster who said “drama was a virtually dead art” (*Renascence* 124). Jones’s English National Drama exists as a

counter to this, and he breaks down his argument into six parts. Most valuable to his argument is his discussion of an “intellectual public” (125). Jones argues that intellectual interest in theater was growing and that the distinctions between intellectual drama and popular amusement were being drawn (126-127). Of course, Jones sought representation rather than literal embodiment as he was an anti-realist. Jones had to fight against others who sought to devalue his art, and his lamentations with the public discourse around drama can be found in an open letter to Dr. Pearson where Jones argues against Pearson’s notion that drama has fallen “beyond all hope of resurrection” (*Renascence* 133).

Although Jones may be speaking in hyperbole and potentially exaggerating Pearson’s argument, this letter provides another example of Jones putting on a public performative defense for drama. Jones, ever the optimist, says in the letter, “To sum up, I believe that the English drama has never since the days of Elizabeth had such a chance of establishing itself as a national art and has as great power in our national life as it has to-day” (*Renascence* 143).

#### THE VICTORIAN AUDIENCE

Jones was living in the midst of a transition between a Victorian audience and a complex pre-World War I world. Although he lived through the late Victorian era and through WWI, he wrote and produced plays primarily in the former. Jones’s quandaries and grievances revolved around the specific content and form of the drama, yet Katherine Newsey, in “Victorian Theatricality,” discusses the Victorian Theater on a whole and specifically points to the art form’s entertainment value and societal paradox. Newsey argues, “In considering Victorian theater, we are faced with a paradox. The nineteenth century was one of the most active, innovative, and playful periods in the history of

British theater” but “the theater was an embattled profession, struggling for recognition” as a legitimate art form, rather than a form of easily-dismissed, popular entertainment (569). That struggle for recognition of drama as both entertainment *and* legitimate art with societal commentary, which Jones desperately sought, seems to be the basis of the grievance that Jones has with English drama. While Newsey’s comment speaks to Victorian theatre overall, the argument remains that there was a complex relationship between the Victorians and the theater. In this case Newsey argues, “Victorians understood the danger of theatricality, but were continually seduced by its energy and the possibilities it offered” (569). There seems to be something intangible and illusive about the possibilities that are offered by the Victorian stage. Newsey also states that any historiographical look at the period must also look at the “anxieties about theater and theatricality” (572). These anxieties could be tied to Alborn’s discussion of Victorian morality and money in the sense that there was a strong paradox in the moral compass. Additionally, the discussions of Victorian religion provided by Cox and Alborn further illustrates how theatricality could cause anxiety for the Victorians. Jones appears to be in the midst of this anxiety as he fought for a National Drama using his own work filled with societal commentary on theology, truth, love, and fiscal politics.

If the Victorians were afraid of the theater, yet drawn toward what could be offered in its embodiment, a fine “line,” similar to that which Alborn argues exists between money and religion, is present. As previously noted, the scriptural and biblical references in *Saints and Sinners* and *Michael* drew some unwanted attention. Audiences seemed to dislike how either the scripture was handled or how the biblical references were made. In *Judah*, the title of the play and Judah’s name appear biblical. That being

stated, no controversy surrounded the opening (or at least not enough to be catalogued in the history of the production). I previously noted that there could be an entire research project revolving around what exactly was controversial about the content. However, I offer one plausible choice as to where they differ: the genre employed through which to offer the commentary. *Judah*, the comedy, was well received by audiences whereas the two tragedies discussed were largely denounced. The comedic form of *Judah* may have given the audience the aesthetic distance they needed to engage with the content, rather than be offended by Jones's implicit commentary. In contrast, the tragedy in *Michael* that surrounds Michael and Fletcher may have reduced the aesthetic distance for the audience, as Jones noted that the inspiration for his plays came from what he saw with his own lens. In another way, perhaps the outcry against these two plays proves that Jones was making a realistic representation of English life on the stage as the audience was uncomfortably close to the content. Although no other scholars have theorized on this particular aspect of Jones's work, I posit that the change in genre from tragic melodrama to comedy in *Judah* is why the two dramas spurred controversy whereas the comedy did not.

#### JONES AND ACADEMIA

In 1913, Jones wrote his final compilation of essays entitled *The Foundations of a National Drama*. The text is dedicated to Brander Matthews, a famous American professor of dramatic literature at Columbia University in the early 1900s. At this point in Jones's career, he began to interface regularly with academics from the United States. During this time, many artists and intellectuals in the US were confronting and debating similar questions as Jones was regarding the perception and legitimacy of drama as an art form. In *Professing Performance*, Shannon Jackson discusses this development as it

relates to the early evolution of the academic discipline of theater. Jackson points to Matthews as the author of *The Development of The Modern Drama*, a text that outlined “performance’s epistemological predicament” and “laid the foundations for the anti-traditional break that would eventually become the tradition of theater studies methodology. [...] Matthews addressed dubious interlocutors, attempting to assure them that theater existed as a research object at all” (Jackson 60). Like Jones, Matthews was a strong voice in the debate surrounding the intellectual value of drama and shared Jones’s view regarding the value of theater as an object of study in the academy beyond its role as popular entertainment. In fact, Matthews invited Jones to Columbia University in 1911 to talk about the proliferation of a National Drama in the United States (*Foundations* 69). Jones was particularly known and evidently well received among Americans, as he lectured at both Harvard and Yale in 1906 (*Foundations* 20, 44).

Jones also was well known by another American professor, Pierce Baker, who also fought against many of the same issues with the establishment of drama and theater as a subject of study. Jackson offers an anecdote in which Baker attempted to establish a reading group of intellectuals and theater makers, but one of his colleagues refused, saying “I want to have nothing whatever to do with theater people” (Jackson 76). Like Jones, Baker faced resistance regarding engagement with theater intellectuals. Although Jones was never directly an academic or professor, he was similarly engaged in elevating drama while also engaging in the making of the art. Jones was a playwright; indeed, he was a prolific writer who wrote 83 plays. He also had arguments for a national theater, training actors, and growing theater’s relation to other arts (*Foundations* 84). These arguments illustrate that Jones was indeed a practitioner and shared that desire for a mix

of the artist and scholar. Jones recognized Baker for his scholarly pursuits, “I have said that professor Baker did a notable and courageous thing in recognizing the modern English drama at Harvard” (*Foundations* 41). This was, of course, before the first drama department in the United States was founded at Yale by Baker years later (Jackson 71).

The framework of these relationships between Jones, Baker, and Matthews are used as evidence to support Jones’s engagement with and advocacy for a change in theater, a “Renaissance” if you will. Jones was part of the change himself as he was engaged with writing a great deal of content engaging with religion as well as a host of other themes. Jones was also involved with several groups who engaged with drama and literary form. In England he lectured to first the Playgoers club in 1884 and then later to the Original Playgoers Club, which also contained a collection of individuals who all were interested in intellectual discourse about drama (*Foundations* 153, 160). In this second speech to the club, he reminds them of their mission and what originally said to the first club in 1884:

To be a member of this Club implies a devotion to the interests of the Drama for its own sake, not as an idle amusement for a vacant hour, but as a serious and fine art which has for its end the portrayal of all the varying passions of the human heart, and all the chances and changes of our mortal life. (162)

Jones not only elevates the position of the club by stating that they have high, valued ideals, but he also places heavy value on drama. He discusses passions and chances which are all closely tied in with emotions. The discussion of American academics, playgoers clubs, and Jones’s audience are all part of the discussion of Jones’s contribution to the drama he sought to create.

#### JONES'S FINAL PUSH FOR A MODERN DRAMA

In the first article within his second compilation of essays, *The Foundations of a National Drama* (1912), there was one particular article that held a collection of nine key tenets of a National Drama. Much like the three key tenets of modern drama that Jones laid out in his first set of essays, *The Renaissance of English Drama*, his later works build on his ideas of Modern Drama by tying them to National Drama. Although not all of them are relevant to the scope of this argument, a specific few of them will be taken in context with his plays. One particularly longstanding and relevant standard discusses the literary qualities of drama, “a national or repertory theatre where high and severe literary artistic standards may be set; where great traditions may be gradually established and maintained amongst authors, actors, critics and audiences” (*Foundations* 17). Jones set the bar high for what he saw as valuable National Drama.

Further, in the fifth tenet, Jones discusses what is of value in dramatic composition: “To inform our drama with a broad, sane, and profound morality; a morality that neither dreads nor wishes to escape from the permanent facts of human life, and the permanent passions of men and women” (*Foundations* 17). Jones refers to plays that explore human emotions and the potentially hard to discuss facts of life. In Jones's own plays he addresses these emotions; in the plays surveyed above, each surround some facet of Victorian religion.

In *Saints and Sinners*, Jones contributed to the discussion of the modern drama in the way he integrated an examination of life and passion into the play amid its religious framework. The social environment he created in the play was rigid. The smallest detail

could cause the minister to lose everything, as the world of the play casts judgement heavily upon what would be considered social ills. Jones's narrative looked at these societal structures and an unscrupulous businessman whose only passion appeared to be financial. In a turn of morality however, Hoggard is felled by his own hubris and forced to run from the law. When faced with the moral decision, Fletcher decides to protect Hoggard as Jones's character is bound by a "profound morality" (*Saints* 17). The moral paradox then lies in the juxtaposition of Hoggard and Fletcher. Because part of the motivation for Hoggard was inspired by an uncle of Jones's, the character on the stage is "true to life" in the experience of the playwright. The "permanent facts" of human life in addition to "passions" are present in the way that the characters act upon what they want and how they want to protect what is important to them (17). In this case, Hoggard has his money and Fletcher is a moral religious minister who sought to do what he considered right even when all of the odds were stacked against him.

The ending of *Saints and Sinners* also reflects the discussion of passions and other elements of Jones's modern drama. In addition to the ending discussed in Chapter two, a modified version of the ending exists. This altered ending came from "accept[ing] a kind of suggestion from a well-known critic, and chang[ing] the last scene into a happy union between Letty and George" (*Saints and Sinners* xxiii). However, Jones restored the original ending in his published version, saying he was "acting not only in Harmony with my own feelings, but also with the judgement Mr. Matthew Arnold" (*Saints and Sinners* xxiv). Arnold appears to prefer the original ending and the restoration of such reflects Jones's discussions of morality, passion, and the life that he argued for in his essays. Jones said in his preface, "For I do not claim any great merit for *Saints and Sinners* apart

from that of representing with some degree of faithfulness, and with due regard to the requirements of the modern stage, some very widely-spread types of modern middle-class Englishmen” (xxv). Thus, Jones uses the religious background as a framework to depict something he knew and understood well. I previously noted that Jones pulled much about the characters from his own young life and used it in conjunction with the middle-class commentary to create his own social commentary using his preferred elements of drama.

Jones’s *Judah* also embodies the facets of the modern National Drama he argued for in 1912. Although not facing the same stark criticism of biblical characters and religious quotations, Jones still managed to explore and the human emotions, morality, and passions. Beginning with the discussions of morality, the confrontations between Jopp and Judah illustrated a complex web of moral discussion about right and wrong, both spiritual and scientific. Jopp, resolutely rational, exists as a foil to Judah who leaves his own moral compass behind for the person he loves. This thus illustrates a grey morality that perhaps Jones sought to mark as a “real” or “truthful” representation of human life. Additionally, Jopp decides not to attempt to prosecute the offenders after he has found the truth. Part of the influence for this choice is the conversation he has with Lady Eve, in which she asks him not to spoil the secrets behind miracles. Jopp’s action may be representative of the morality and emotional gravity that Jones searched for, in that Jopp learns a lesson and changes his worldview for the betterment of someone else. The ending of the play, as previously noted, reads as if Jones is catering to the Victorian audience, yet there is a sense that complexity remains with how Jopp and Judah come to an understanding about one another and that they both undergo a change in the final act.

The “passions” within *Judah* exist in a variety of capacities. All the characters certainly have strong wishes and desires and act on them to get what they want. Jones looked at love and faith through both Vashti and Judah and their love story. The secrets kept from one another in conjunction with their choice to stay together for better or worse with the big “secret” of Vashti’s power may have been part of what Jones was trying to discuss onstage because the characters themselves had to learn from their mistakes. Instead of separating or a tragic ending, Jones has them stay together and find common ground in founding a new church based on truth with their lives as the foundation.

Finally, *Michael and His Lost Angel* reveals the passions, human condition discussions, and moral paradoxes that Jones sought to put onstage. Consider the fiscal relationship that is revealed between the creation of the church and that of Audrie and Michael’s affair. The pair become intimate, yet their love cannot be realized because of the societal forces that bear down against them. The money is given by Audrie and thus Michael wonders about the morality of the foundation of the church being paid by his forbidden love. This moral paradox is evident in the narrative and is not hidden in subtext. Characters debate the efficacy and morality of their decisions onstage, and this is the discussion of the human element of Jones’s National Drama in addition to looking at morality and how they intertwine as morality varies from character to character. The intense passion that he alludes to is clear in the play as every action revolves around Audrie and Michael’s affair, thus the play ends with a with a conflicted catharsis as the main character has learned his lesson about love and valuing emotion far too late. In *Michael*, perhaps more so than the other two plays, love stands as the strongest affective force in the world of the play. This is significant as this was the last of the three plays

examined in this thesis, and it was Jones's favorite. Although perhaps he never described it specifically, there was something about the play that caused Jones to be so attached to the content. I would argue that the connection between the characters and how they argue the moral efficacy of the church's foundation in relation to the tragic love story would add this play into Jones's modern drama as it fits the broad definition defined above: "To inform our drama with a broad, sane, and profound morality; a morality that neither dreads nor wishes to escape from the permanent facts of human life, and the permanent passions of men and women" (*Foundations* 17). Jones did not want his audience to "escape" what was happening onstage; he wanted them to observe and critically reflect.

#### A POSTHUMOUS LOOK AT EARLY MODERNISM

Jones is not the most commonly discussed playwright of the period, and his work is generally overlooked. He had influence on the growing Modernist trend in theatre and the last part of this chapter seeks to create a few links to this by using the framework of his work to interface with American academics above. Doris Arthur Jones, who has been quoted often in this thesis, provides a unique view of Jones and puts his work into context. As she wrote in his biography, Jones was awarded an honorary degree from Harvard in June 1907: "He said, and I believe he was correct in the assertion, that it was the first degree ever conferred by a University on a dramatist" (236). This particular moment stands as rather significant in the scope of looking at Henry Arthur Jones's impact as a dramatist as his works seemed to give him a degree of recognition and fame that led him to be well respected by American dramatic critics in academia; yet, Jones was English. Doris notes that her father "received wider and more grateful recognition, praise, and admiration from the American people than he did from his fellow-

countrymen” (235). The commentary here seems to allude to the idea that his work may have been better received in places other than England. As for the National Drama, this illustrated that Jones had a hard time making drama worthy of study in the UK and his lifetime of work would have to be recognized posthumously.

Additionally, Richard Albert Cordell speaks to Jones’s legacy regarding the consideration of drama’s artistic and intellectual merits. Writing in 1932, Cordell not only summarizes Jones’s life but also offers commentary on the development of Jones’s work and what he accomplished as a dramatist. The introduction to Cordell’s text, written by William Lyon Phelps, another American and professor of English at Yale as well as one of Jones’s closest friends in America (D. Jones 236), praised Jones’s work and dedication to promoting the drama and his work on the British stage: “he [Jones] has earned a permanent place in the history of the British stage. No historian could possibly omit his name” (Phelps vii). Phelps placed Jones in the history of famous dramatists and someone who should not be forgotten. Further, Phelps declared, “Henry Arthur Jones did more to force dramatists to publish their plays and thus to challenge literary criticism than any other man” (Phelps vi). Phelps, in part, represents the American perspective and is complimentary of Jones’s work and his efforts to bring a modern drama to the stage and change the way people looked at modern drama.

Furthermore, Phelps says, “He had done more than almost anyone to prepare the way for the great modern creative period in theatre, both by precept and *by example*” (Phelps vi, emphasis mine). The phrase “by example” becomes particularly important to note here, as Phelps is complimenting Jones’s work not only in theory, but also in practice. The main body of this paper has focused on three of Jones’s religious plays and

has argued that Jones contributed to his own National Drama. As Jones did so, he also was part of the Modernist movement with both his plays and his essays as others have taken notice of his work and desired to place it in the history books. Furthermore, Phelps says that Conan Doyle<sup>1</sup> “believed and said that the prose of Henry Arthur Jones, as expressed in his essays on the theatre and on religion, was almost perfectly adapted for the expression of his thought. This is true” (Phelps viii). Jones expressed his ideas on the stage in a fashion that allowed him to be recognized by many of his contemporaries and by some that came after him.

Cordell notes that Jones’s accomplishments were great, and that Jones was able to succeed in getting English scholars to be drawn back to discussing drama “in greater numbers than at any time since 1600” (Cordell 248). Cordell goes as far to declare, “the fight to win for the drama a place among the arts had been won” (248). The argument Cordell presents is that Henry Arthur Jones is indeed worthy of study in the canon of English playwrights of the period. He is credited by Cordell for being a pathfinder and someone who helped pave the way for the future of drama in critical study. Cordell says, “they [the plays] form an important foundation stone in the structure of modern English drama” (250). This places Jones at the forefront of the development of the modern drama in England, and he is credited by American academics for his work in making drama a viable subject for the English stage. However, Cordell also recognizes that Jones was perhaps too far ahead of his time, noting that his “personal tragedy was that of the seer and the pathfinder who is eclipsed by those for whom he has cleared the way; a

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<sup>1</sup> Phelps does not specify if he is referring to Arthur Conan Doyle or another person by the name of Conan Doyle. My theory is that Phelps might be talking about Arthur Conan Doyle as Doris Jones includes several examples of letters that Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Conan Doyle sent one another in her text (D. Jones 300, 396).

conservative at heart he fought for a new freedom, which appalled him when it was finally achieved and was utilized by the less orthodox” (251- 252). Jones not only lived in but was also writing about a period of transition. He was not completely Victorian in the sense that he fought for new ideas and freedom, yet he was not the full Modernist who was looking at the world with a different, more avantgarde lens. That last supposition may be why we do not study him today, as he lacks the gritty cynicism that some point to in the Modern period after the war that can be traced from many famous texts by Authors and playwrights such as George Bernard Shaw, Somerset Maugham, Eugene O’Neill, and Earnest Hemmingway.

Gerald Clifford Weales also credits Jones as the founder of the modern religious drama. Writing in 1961, Weales comments on Jones’s accomplishments, specifically tracing his religious dramas over the years of his long career and the authors that then may have been influenced by his actions. Although Weales is not always complimentary of Jones, he still credits Jones for his works and his value in historical context. “That they [Jones’s plays] flourished, however, is important to an understanding of the return of genuinely religious dramatists to the commercial stage” (23). What is significant is that Weales credits Jones’s religious works as part of the developing Modern religious drama in the English canon in the 1960s. Weales calls Jones an “unlikely groundbreaker” but still notes that Jones deserves credit for making religion a viable topic for the modern English stage (23).

Although not largely studied today, Jones is a dramatist worthy of critical review. While his focus on melodrama, Victorian religion and morality, and social issues are perhaps not fully translatable to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, making many of his plays difficult to

stage, Jones's ideas and influence continue to resonate. In the words of Arthur Wing Pinero, which are pulled from Cordell's text, "In dealing with the stage you must judge an author's work in relation to the age in which he writes, the obstacles he had to grapple with in the shape of ancient prejudices and seemingly impassable barriers" (Cordell 12). Jones was a progressive Victorian that tried to pave the way for others after him. Jones himself recognized that one does not know what will be studied as "literary drama" and those decisions are made in the future (Renascence 112). In fact, Doris Arthur Jones observed that "I do not think he was ever whole-heartedly convinced that any of his work would live" (407). This offers a rather sad ending for the man who spent his life fighting for drama, as he too was deeply embedded in the transitional moment that he could not see any of the changes he made.

A progressive thinker yet solidly Victorian, Henry Arthur Jones sought artistic freedom for the modern dramatist and defended the religious dramas that he placed upon the English stage in the late 1800s as a movement toward a modern, National Drama. This discussion of his work and the development of Jones as a modern dramatist are worthy of consideration. He was one of the first to make religion a viable topic for the stage in his time period, and he sought a more expansive consideration for what dramatists include on stage in form and content. In addition, his grand quest to make drama a subject of study in both an academic and theater-going context seems to have come true, as the contemporary proliferation of the hybrid artist-scholar indicates. As an American artist and scholar, I admittedly have not met many who are aware of Henry Arthur Jones and his work; however, the fact he was so intimately connected with the American academics who would later form the first drama departments makes him an

important object of study in an American lens. Although Jones may not be the most well-known pathfinder, he does deserve critical attention for the dedication of his life to the discussion of modern religious drama and his subsequent impact on British drama and beyond.

*“I have been accused of discontent with my actors, my managers, my audiences, and my critics, and of my rebellion against them. There is a great difference between the discontent with one’s art and discontent with one’s own personal status in it.”*

*(Renascence, xii).*

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