



# The Poetry of Ernest Jones

*Myth, Song, and the 'Mighty Mind'*

Simon Rennie



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THE POETRY OF ERNEST JONES  
MYTH, SONG, AND THE 'MIGHTY MIND'

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*To Libby, whose love has been the prime mover  
in this project, and in my life*

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S.R., Exeter, July 2015

## ABBREVIATIONS



<i>BD</i>	<i>The Battle-Day: and Other Poems</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Court Journal</i>
<i>CTFC</i>	<i>Corayda: A Tale of Faith and Chivalry and Other Poems</i>
<i>EJMP</i>	Ernest Jones Manuscript Poetry
<i>MCRO</i>	Manchester County Record Office
<i>MP</i>	<i>Morning Post</i>
<i>NP</i>	<i>Notes to the People</i>
<i>NS</i>	<i>Northern Star</i>
<i>PT</i>	<i>Poetic Thoughts of E. C. J.</i>
<i>RT</i>	<i>Rhymes on the Times</i>

## PREFACE



This book studies the poetry of Ernest Charles Jones (1819–69) from 1840 to 1860. One of its aims is to cast further light on the critically neglected area of Chartist poetry, and to investigate the social, political, and aesthetic implications of poetry whose explicit function is that of propaganda or polemic. As well as offering close analysis of many poems which have not been studied before, this work presents previously unrecorded poems by Jones and, most importantly, a complete collection of his pseudonymous poetry. A study of original manuscripts has provided significant insight into Jones's process of poetic revision, and some of his German-language poetry has been translated for the first time.

My research covers Jones's first publications in conservative newspapers shortly after his arrival in Great Britain from the German Duchy of Holstein, his early Chartist period, his imprisonment, and his years as the effective leader of Chartism. Although the six chapters are in broadly chronological order, each addresses a conceptual or contextual theme. These are, consecutively: poetic influence; mythopoeia; poet/reader relationships; prison writing; epic poetry; and poetic revision.

Themes recurring throughout the study include the political and literary implications of republication and revision; the relationship between poetry and politics in the early Victorian period; the figure of the 'gentleman radical' and his relationship with his readership; the influence of Romantic legacies on mid-nineteenth-century radical poetics; links between Chartist and Irish nationalist poetry; and intersections between radical and conservative imaginative conceptions of the past. Close analysis of the poetry is consistently related to its historical, political, and cultural circumstances — the declarative and socially-engaged nature of Chartist poetry demands it be studied alongside its extra-literary contexts. What emerges from this study is a new version of Ernest Jones, a political poet whose exceptional complexity is here fully mapped for the first time.

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# INTRODUCTION



This study of the poetry of Ernest Charles Jones (1819–69) reveals important aspects of the cultural intersections between Victorian social classes, between the conservative and radical imaginations, and between German and British literary cultures. The poetry that Jones produced as a Chartist ‘gentleman radical’ straddles the formal boundaries between poetry and song, poetry and polemic, poetry and propaganda. More than a century and a half after their composition, Jones’s most popular short pieces, ‘The Song of the Low’ (sometimes known as ‘The Song of the Lower Classes’) and ‘The Blackstone Edge Gathering’, are still occasionally sung, and beyond any evocation of radical nostalgia, they still possess the power to stir the singer and listener with sentiments which appear perennially relevant.<sup>1</sup> Bearing in mind this continued emotional agency, the thematic triumvirate providing the subtitle to this study — myth, song, and the ‘mighty mind’ — represents culturally generated, imagined futures or histories; poetry as a communal experience or as a means of mass communication; and the nature of the relationship between writers and their readerships.<sup>2</sup> The study of Ernest Jones’s poetry, and what that poetry can reveal about the cultures from which it emerged, and which it aimed to shape, leads to exploration of each element of this triumvirate, and their interdependent relationships.

It is a critical commonplace that canonical mid-nineteenth-century poetry inherited and adapted the Romantic lyrical voice, but it is less widely appreciated that the radical poetry of the same period embraced and modified Romanticism’s political legacy. The Chartists, through widely-read newspapers including the *Northern Star and National Trades’ Journal* (hereafter referred to as the *Northern Star* or abbreviated to *NS*), brought to political poetry an unprecedented immediacy, redefining the nature of radical poetics for a working-class generation undergoing the social upheaval brought about by rapid industrialization and urbanization. Perhaps because there is no real modern equivalent to this kind of politico-poetic discourse, the study of politically declarative mid-nineteenth-century poetry has been critically neglected. Successive artistic movements subsequent to this period, including aestheticism and modernism, tended to create distance between poetry and politics by the construction of walls with variable degrees of permeability, and our understanding of the nature of the relationship between poetry and politics in the early Victorian period is skewed by our absorption of this attitude. This work, through the study of Jones’s poetry, aims to enhance our understanding of the radical poetry of his time, to look beneath its polemical surface, and to explore its purpose and properties in greater depth.

## The Critical Field and a Chapter Overview

Critical material that deals directly with Chartist poetics is growing but much remains to be studied and written. In many ways, the only comparable precedent to this work is Mike Sanders's *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History*.<sup>3</sup> Sanders's book was the first serious critical work to deal exclusively with Chartist poetry and provided a valuable critical survey of the *Northern Star* poetry pages through the crucial years of the Chartist struggle. Needless to say, Ernest Jones featured in that work and this study attempts to narrow the critical focus to that particular writer, but also to broaden the critical field into his pre- and what might be termed extra-Chartist poetry. I have also made use of two notable journal articles on the specific subject of Ernest Jones's poetry which are Ronald Paul's "In Louring Hindostan": Chartism and Empire in Ernest Jones's 'The New World, a Democratic Poem',<sup>4</sup> and Roy Vickers's 'Christian Election, Holy Communion and Psalmic Language in Ernest Jones's Chartist Poetry'.<sup>5</sup> Works which deal more broadly with radical or working-class Victorian literary production but include critical material on Jones include Isobel Armstrong's *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (1993),<sup>6</sup> and Anne Janowitz's *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (1998).<sup>7</sup> The latter in particular contains an invaluable sustained engagement with Jones's writings. In common with the present study, these works are indebted to the pioneering work of Mary Ashraf in *Political Verse and Song from Britain and Ireland* (1975)<sup>8</sup> and Brian Maidment in *The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self-taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain* (1987).<sup>9</sup>

The biographical material on which this study relies so heavily has been collated from contemporary sources (including Jones's diary material stored at the Manchester County Record Office) and accounts from the twentieth century, including the introduction to John Saville's *Ernest Jones: Chartist* (1952).<sup>10</sup> But by far the greatest debt of gratitude in this regard is due to Miles Taylor's *Ernest Jones, Chartism, and the Romance of Politics 1819–1869* (2003).<sup>11</sup> There may be points at which different conclusions or interpretations are reached by this study, but Taylor's accuracy and depth of research is largely unassailable, and his work will provide a central basis for Jones scholars for many years to come. While Taylor's work contains a useful bibliography of Jones's writings, my own research for this study has uncovered previously critically unknown, published poems, and even, most importantly, a complete, though pseudonymous, poetry collection. Other primary sources have been Jones's own manuscripts, and newspapers and collections held at the British Library. An invaluable resource has been the digitization of the *Northern Star*, along with many other nineteenth-century newspapers, accessible through Gale online. Needless to say, the ease of accessibility and collation made possible by the on-going digitization of historical texts has been of great benefit to this work. However, a measure of British critical neglect of the peculiarly British cultural phenomenon of Chartist poetics is that the most useful collection of Chartist poetry remains Y. V. Kovalev's excellent *An Anthology of Chartist Literature* (1956).<sup>12</sup> Volumes consulted which are more broadly concerned with Chartist history include Malcolm Chase's *Chartism: A New History* (2007),<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Thompson's *The Chartists: Popular Politics*

in the *Industrial Revolution* (1984),<sup>14</sup> and works exploring the cultural implications of Chartism including *The Chartist Legacy* (1999), edited by Owen Ashton, Robert Fryson, and Stephen Roberts.<sup>15</sup> In this last volume, Timothy Randall's essay, 'Chartist Poetry and Song', has been of particular use.<sup>16</sup>

Jones's habit of re-using poetic material, with or without revising or renaming, has led to some critical confusion in the past, but also poses a challenge to the chronological approach with regards to the question of when to discuss poetry which has been published twice, or sometimes even three times, many years apart, and in different political contexts. The fact that Jones increased this practice toward the end of his poetic career has led to the first and final chapters of this study being closely linked in theme and content, even as the same or similar poetry is encountered by sometimes very different readerships. Chapter One discusses Jones's early, pre-Chartist poetry, but also assesses the influences on his work which carry through to his radical phase. As one might expect, British Romantic figures including Byron, Wordsworth, and especially Shelley, feature heavily in this discussion, but Jones, uniquely, also brought to Chartist poetics the influence of German writers including Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860), Friedrich Leopold von Stolberg (1750–1819), Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862), and Friedrich Schiller (1755–1805). Jones translated the poetry of each of these writers but his work also displays their influence, particularly in its mythic representations of youth, war, and rural idealism. The interaction between Jones's Germanic approach to these themes and British Chartist political concerns including the physical/moral force argument or the Land Plan contributes largely to his early Chartist poetry's distinctiveness and its undoubted popularity with working-class readers.

Chapter Two focuses on the poetry that Jones published in the *Northern Star* between 1846 and 1848, and approaches this work through a mythopoeic critical perspective. The links between poetry and myth have been discussed by critics from Horace onwards, but the reliance of political poetry on mythic formations and tropes has largely gone unstudied. Jones's Chartist poetry provides numerous examples of mythopoeic adaptations of narratives of deliverance and fertility, and also exemplifies how the seemingly conservative Victorian preoccupation with all things medieval can be filtered through a radical re-reading of history. There is also discussion of the barely-studied links between the Chartist and Irish nationalist poetic traditions. Chapter Three analyzes poetry from the same period, but uses it to assess the nature of the evolving relationship between Jones and his predominantly working-class audience, exploring how Jones used his poetry to negotiate this relationship, and incorporating discussion of phenomenology and reader response theory. There is also broader discussion of the response to Jones's poetry in the mainstream and conservative press. Because of its contemporary popularity and the multiple issues it raises with regard to Chartist culture and the nature and function of poetry itself, the poetry that Jones produced in the first two years of his Chartist involvement justifies the attention of two separate chapters approaching it from different critical perspectives.

Similarly, the poetry that Jones produced during his time in prison between 1848 and 1850 provides material for two chapters. Chapter Four concentrates on the



lyrical poetry that Jones wrote while in prison which was published on his release in the *Notes to the People* newspaper in 1851.<sup>17</sup> These twenty-four poems, which are presented almost as a discrete collection in Jones's own newspaper, represent a retreat into the writer's own consciousness but serve as evidence of his suffering for the Chartist cause, and of his intellectual fitness to lead the Chartist movement. They also provide the basis for a discussion of the nature of prison writing by political detainees throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Chapter Five is devoted to 'The New World', the visionary epic that Jones conceived in prison, which also appeared in the pages of *Notes to the People* in 1851 but was republished in 1857 as *The Revolt of Hindostan* to capitalize on its apparent prediction of the Indian Uprising of that year. Because of its length and status as Jones's magnum opus, the contemporary and modern reception of 'The New World' is discussed before a canto-by-canto analysis explores the themes and arguments of the poem.

The sixth and final chapter provides a survey of Jones's poetry 1852–60, from the post-prison *Notes to the People* material to the *Corayda* collection, which was his last published poetry. This period sees a diffusion of Jones's poetic styles but also an increase in the amount of republished material. There is also discussion of two pseudonymous collections, *Rhymes on the Times* (1852), which appears to be an attempt to attack the Whigs by supporting the Tories, and *Poetic Thoughts of E. C. J.* (1856), which is a largely apolitical volume containing Romantic and 'light' material. Neither of these collections has been critically discussed to any degree; indeed the latter has never been critically identified as the work of Jones. Jones's poetic shift toward the mainstream in the mid-1850s, with collections dealing either ostensibly or explicitly with issues raised by the Crimean War (1853–56) from a relatively patriotic perspective, forms the basis of an exploration into the nature of Jones's politico-poetic response to the decline of Chartism. As some republished material is directly or contextually depoliticized, the question of Jones's indeterminate social status as a gentleman radical is raised once more, as his poetic identity enters into something of a rapprochement with his pre-Chartist self, and his political identity shifts towards the centre ground.

### A Brief Biography and Historical Survey

As a historical figure, Ernest Charles Jones has attracted controversy. The first major history of Chartism, R. G. Gammage's *History of the Chartist Movement 1837–54* (first published in 1854), was consistently critical of Jones both personally and as a political leader, as evinced by one entry in the index: 'Jones, Ernest, [...] dishonourable conduct of'.<sup>18</sup> Jones's modern biographer, Taylor, concludes his work, *Ernest Jones, Chartism and the Romance of Politics 1819–1869*, with a paragraph that contains the following assessment of his subject's character:

Even if the conventions of romanticism required Jones to blur fact and fiction, he still emerges at times as duplicitous and unpleasant: in short, a liar, a cheat, an anti-Semite, a racist bigot, an absent father, and a neglectful husband.<sup>19</sup>

If a more sympathetic observer were to note that the last two character flaws might be attributed to Jones's unstinting dedication to the cause of Chartism and the plight

of the early Victorian working class, then an even more recent historical survey could be cited to render the Jones family's personal sacrifice politically worthless. In Chase's *Chartism: A New History*, Jones is characterized as a major contributor to Chartism's post-1850 decline: 'Jones's second coming as a Chartist leader [...] split an already fractious movement further rather than helped heal it'.<sup>20</sup> However, the century-and-a-half span of this kind of criticism should be considered alongside more positive opinions of Jones's contributions to mid-nineteenth-century radical politics contained in the biographical introduction to Saville's *Ernest Jones: Chartist*, and in Dorothy Thompson's *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution*. Indeed, Jones was widely celebrated as a Chartist hero and martyr during his lifetime and subsequently, mainly due to the incontrovertible fact that he was imprisoned for two years for his activism in 1848 and immediately returned to the cause on his release.

But what of Jones the poet? It is part of this study's ambition to engage with Jones's poetry without entering too much into the debate about the man, but in the case of this body of work any attempt to separate the text from its surrounding social, historical, political, and even biographical context would be counterproductive. A significant proportion of Jones's poetry was directly engaged with the political and social questions of the day, and altered its form and content in direct response to events in his life. For this reason, though the text is always the primary concern, its relevance to the outside world, and the outside world's relevance to it, is almost always part of the discussion. Jones lived an extraordinary life in extraordinary times, and as the title of Taylor's biography suggests, poetry was a large part of that life's social and political development.

Ernest Charles Jones was born into the royal court of Berlin on 25 January 1819, the year of the Peterloo Massacre, a long way, geographically and socially, from the struggles of the British working class. He was in part named after his father, Captain Charles Jones, and the man to whom his father was equerry and aide-de-camp, Ernst Augustus, the Duke of Cumberland (1771–1851), uncle to the future Queen Victoria, fifth son of George III, and the future King Ernst of Hanover (1837–51). Young Ernest was something of a child prodigy; when he was eleven his family had a volume of his poetry published entitled *Infantine Effusions* (Hamburg: F. H. Nestler, 1830), which contained several lyric efforts and a section of Voltaire's *Henriade* translated from the French. In the same year he also had a short story entitled 'The Invalid's Pipe' included in *Ackermann's Juvenile Forget Me Not*, a London-published anthology of writing for children. Although primarily anglophone, Jones grew up absorbing the cultural influences of his family's adopted country, being taught at home by German scholars before being formally educated at a German language school, St Michael's College in Lower Saxony, from 1835. He did not live in Great Britain until his family returned there in 1838, and the influence of Germanic culture on his poetry was considerable; indeed, he composed poetry in that language and translated several works from it.

Once settled in London, Jones's young adulthood progressed for a time much as one would expect for a man of his social class and status. He was presented at the court of the young Queen Victoria, studied law and was called to the bar, and

made a good marriage with Jane Atherley, who came from a Cumbrian family with extensive legal and political connections. Between 1840 and 1845 Jones published original and translated poetry in the *Court Journal* and *Morning Post* newspapers, and German poetry in the London-based *Deutsche Londoner Zeitung*. He also produced prose fiction in the shape of a novel called *The Wood-Spirit* (London: Boone & Co., 1841) and a serialized story in the *Court Journal* called 'Confessions of a King' (1843). In 1845 he published a long poem in the form of a dramatic monologue called *My Life* (London: T. C. Newby, 1845) under the pseudonym Percy Vere.

It was the encouraging reviews of *My Life* that Jones used as proof of his poetic credentials when in 1846 he presented himself at the London offices of the *Northern Star*, the official organ of the radical Chartist movement. Over the next two years Jones published forty poems in the pages of the *Northern Star*, co-edited with Feargus O'Connor (1794–1855), the Chartist movement's then leader, a magazine companion to the *Northern Star* called *The Labourer: A Monthly Magazine of Politics, Literature, Poetry, &c* (hereafter referred to as the *Labourer*), and forged ever closer links with the mass movement which sought the franchise for the working man. He was a tireless orator and travelled the country attending meetings and conventions.

There has been speculation over what might have driven Jones, at the age of twenty-seven, to become a class renegade, a gentleman radical whose life would be subsequently dominated by the cause of democracy. It may have suited Chartists to have imagined that he was drawn to their cause organically, purely through a sense of moral obligation. But they were not privy to the fact that Jones was in considerable financial difficulties, having speculated badly in the housing market the year before. Another factor may have been that Jones began to take an interest in Baptist and Presbyterian denominations of Christianity at this time, shifting away from the Anglicanism of his family. Nonconformist Christianity had strong links with political radicalism in the mid-nineteenth century, and Jones's Chartist poetry was to become frequently critical of the Church of England. But aside from religious or financial drivers of Jones's political and social apostasy, perhaps the most persuasive factor is that encapsulated by Taylor's chosen subtitle for his biography — 'Chartism and the Romance of Politics'. Financial desperation may have driven Jones into the arms of Chartism, and his attraction to the moral absolutes that characterized his faith may have kept him there, but his affinity with Romanticism, both in the emotional and literary senses of the term, informed his reactions to the many challenges he faced during his association with Chartism. In this he shared a character trait with arguably his chief literary influence (whose writings almost certainly precipitated Jones's interest in social justice), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822).

On 4 June 1848 Jones gave an inflammatory speech to a crowd of several thousand Chartists at Bishop Bonner's Field in East London that led to his imprisonment for two years on a charge of seditious speech-making. He served his term in Tothill Fields Prison in Westminster, enduring solitary confinement and periods of enforced silence. He emerged from prison in July 1850 with several poems in complete or draft form, including the epic 'The New World', and launched himself back into the Chartist movement, eventually taking over as *de facto* leader from

the ailing Feargus O'Connor. He spent the next ten years editing a sequence of Chartist newspapers and attempting to revitalize the declining Chartist movement, producing several poetry collections which increasingly relied upon re-published material or work which had been composed some years before.

By 1860 Jones had published, and as far as we know written, his last poems, and had abandoned active politics to return to the legal profession. He worked out of offices near Albert Square in Manchester, occasionally defending cases of political sensitivity, including the famous 1867 trial of the Fenians accused of the murder of a police officer who became known as the 'Manchester Martyrs'. In 1865 he returned to political agitation with the Manchester Manhood Suffrage League, and lectured for the Reform League in 1866. Since the mid-1850s, Jones had softened his stance on courting middle-class attempts at partial franchise reform, which he had once denounced as undermining the cause of Chartist 'full' suffrage. It was largely the influence of the predominantly middle-class Reform League which led to the substantial concessions to democracy encapsulated in the 1867 Representation of the People Act (known informally as the Second Reform Act), which gave the franchise to some working-class males in England and Wales for the first time. After standing for Parliament unsuccessfully in 1868, Jones died of pneumonia in Higher Broughton, Manchester, in January 1869, just as his Conservative opponent was declared ineligible to sit in Parliament, and preliminary votes made it almost certain that Jones would become the sitting MP for Manchester. It was partly this expectation, partly his work with the Reform League, but mostly the memory of his Chartist years which encouraged many thousands of Mancunians to line the streets for his funeral cortege. He died just one day after his fiftieth birthday.

The Chartist movement had begun with a document calling for widespread enfranchisement of working-class males which was composed with the help of radical MPs by members of the London Working Man's Association in 1837. This 'People's Charter' was published in 1838 and contained six main points which were largely consistent through Chartism's history: the vote for all men over the age of twenty-one; secret ballots; the withdrawal of property qualifications for Members of Parliament; the payment of Members of Parliament; equal constituencies; and annual parliaments. Except for the last point, all of these demands are now enshrined in British constitutional law, but after several petitions to Parliament Chartism faded in the 1850s without success as a mass movement. As noted previously, its function was partially revived by the largely middle-class Reform League (with which Jones also became involved in 1865 after a political hiatus of five years), which campaigned from the mid-1860s for less fundamental reforms which were to some degree met by the 1867 Reform Act. But while Chartism existed, it was a mass working-class movement whose active national membership peaked at over 50,000, and whose petitions to Parliament were signed by British and Irish people in their millions. The movement has been defined by key events including the Newport Rising of 1839, the collection of over three million signatures for the 1842 petition and that year's attempted General Strike, and the mass demonstrations of 1848 which coincided with revolutions across Europe and led to the imprisonment of many Chartists, including Ernest Jones. However, beyond its agitational and

political functions, Chartism was also an attempt to create a working-class culture — the movement had its own newspapers (of which the nationally-distributed *Northern Star* was the most prominent), songs, hymns, and, of course, poetry.

It is beginning to be recognized that Chartist poetry is a lot more than merely the formalized expression of Chartist desire. It functions as a sophisticated medium for political discourse, and it has a culturally formative and cohesive agency. Most of the leading figures in Chartist politics turned their hand to poetry at various times and with varying degrees of success. As Sanders has suggested, the ability of the Chartist movement to produce poetry, to express itself by intellectually significant and aesthetically refined means, in some sense demonstrated the capability of the working class to hold the franchise.<sup>21</sup> But the broader radical agenda of many in the Chartist movement — the re-alignment of British society with the needs and wishes of the majority — also triggered the mythopoeic potential of poetry. The ambition to create a new culture necessitates the creation of new myths; though, of course, myths are not created, but adapted. Jones's early Chartist poetry appropriated pre-existing conservative Golden Age myths and Victorian neo-medievalism and synthesized a radically re-imagined history which suggested the attainability of a revolutionized future. The idealization of the rural lifestyle inherent in these myths, which also chimed with Jones's bucolic German childhood, proved particularly appropriate to the promotion of the Chartist Land Plan. This subscription scheme championed by Chartism's leader at the time, Feargus O'Connor, and supported by Jones, aimed to provide viable plots for self-sufficient agriculture for working-class families drawn by lot. Several areas of land were purchased by the National Land Company, but the scheme collapsed in 1848 amid schisms within the Chartist movement, accusations of organizational mismanagement, and a parliamentary select committee deeming it financially untenable.

Beyond providing poetic support for the rustic utopianism of the Chartist Land Plan, Jones recognized poetry's significance as a formative cultural agent. In the introduction to 'The New World' and elsewhere he called for the creation of a democratic literature, insisting on the central place of literature in the formation of the moral and political definition of a people. It is in this context that Jones attacked Tennyson and Browning in the pages of the *Labourer* for their perceived dereliction of social responsibilities in their poetry (see Chapter Two), recognizing that poetry which does not challenge the status quo implicitly supports it. However, Jones could be inconsistent: as his own poetry retreated from its former radicalism in the mid to late 1850s, he increasingly began (as he had once accused Tennyson of doing) to 'do no more than troll a courtly lay'. Jones could adapt the tropes of Victorian literary medievalism to produce a radical re-reading of history, but he could also use those tropes as a gateway to a depoliticized poetry with ostensibly aesthetic ambitions and a generalized, even broadly conservative, morality.

Despite some good reviews for his pre- and what might be termed his post-Chartist poetry, it is quite possible that Jones would have been almost forgotten as a writer had it not been for the infusion of purpose that radicalism gave his work. Jones's poetry is perhaps less nuanced than that of some of his contemporaries, and if much canonical Victorian poetry appears to engage with doubt almost as a

guiding principle, Jones largely appeared to lack this quality in his writing and in his life. However, what Jones's poetry does possess is a strong sense of rhythm and image, and a keen wit. The latter qualities contribute significantly to his success as a Chartist poet as his work defamiliarizes aspects of British society and attempts to re-present them from a radical perspective. This often involves a process of moral inversion, whereby the reader is invited to re-assess the prevailing wisdom in light of a radical reading of society and history. Inversions range from the commonplace characterization of the 'nobility' of the working class in 'The Blackstone Edge Gathering' (1846) and other poems, to the inventively positive embrace of hate as an emotion in 'Christian Love' (1851). Many other works by Jones depend on inversion and defamiliarization as their central functions; indeed, his ambitious epic, 'The New World', might be described as an attempt to defamiliarize the forming processes of human civilization, from feudalism through to the present and on into the future. The explicit aim of these poems is to raise the consciousness of their readers — to entertain and encourage, but also to educate. An oft-quoted diary entry from the time of Jones's first success as a Chartist poet not only provides part of the title of this study, but encapsulates the ambition of an attitude to poetics which gives primacy to poetry's social, rather than aesthetic, function: 'I am pouring the tide of my songs over England, forming the tone of the mighty mind of the people'.<sup>22</sup> Whatever else it may contain, the relationship between Ernest Jones and the 'mighty mind' is central to this study.

## Notes to the Introduction

1. For example, 'The Song of the Low' is a regular feature of the repertoire of the Yorkshire-based a cappella group, Chorista, and 'The Blackstone Edge Gathering' is sung each year on May Day at its eponymous location to commemorate the Chartist meetings there.
2. The 'mighty mind' is a phrase Jones used to describe his readership in a diary entry of 1846 (see Chapter Three).
3. Mike Sanders, *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History*, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
4. Ronald Paul, "'In Luring Hindostan': Chartism and Empire in Ernest Jones's *The New World*, a Democratic Poem", *Victorian Poetry*, 39.2 (Summer 2001), 189–204.
5. Roy Vickers, 'Christian Election, Holy Communion and Psalmic Language in Ernest Jones's Chartist Poetry', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 11, 1 (Spring 2006), 59–83.
6. Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1993).
7. Anne Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
8. Mary Ashraf (ed.), *Political Verse and Song from Britain and Ireland* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975).
9. Brian Maidment, *The Poorhouse Fugitives: Self-taught Poets and Poetry in Victorian Britain* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1987).
10. Saville, John (ed.), *Ernest Jones: Chartist* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1952).
11. Miles Taylor, *Ernest Jones, Chartism, and the Romance of Politics 1819–1869* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
12. Y. V. Kovalev, and A. A. Elistratova (eds.), *Antologiya Chartistskoi Literaturui (An Anthology of Chartist Literature)* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1956), hereafter referred to as Kovalev.
13. Malcolm Chase, *Chartism: A New History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

14. Dorothy Thompson, *The Chartists: Popular Politics in the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
15. Owen Ashton, Robert Fryson, and Stephen Roberts (eds.), *The Chartist Legacy* (Rendlesham: Merlin Press, 1999).
16. Timothy Randall, 'Chartist Poetry and Song', in *The Chartist Legacy*, ed. by Ashton, Fryson & Roberts, pp. 171–95.
17. Ernest Jones, *Notes to the People*, 2 vols (London: Merlin Press, 1967), hereafter referred to as *NP*. It was published between 1851 and 1852, and all further references to it will indicate in which year the poem in question appeared.
18. R. G. Gammage, *History of the Chartist Movement 1837–1854* [1854] (London: Merlin Press, 1969), p. 432.
19. Taylor, p. 258.
20. Chase, p. 338.
21. Sanders, p. 85.
22. Ernest Jones, Diary, 8 October 1846, Manchester County Record Office (hereafter MCRO), MS. f281.89 J5/30.