

James D. Herbert

Study Questions for Coventry Artifacts

Coventry Cathedral

1. What are the different approaches to the ecclesiastical grouping of buildings? How does the experience of a passage through the cathedrals change depending on how one enters into the complex? How are the various entrances marked, either architecturally or by works of art?
2. What remains of the old shell? How does the experience of this space change with the loss of the roof? With the loss of the pews and other internal ornaments? What remains? What has been added?
3. How does the complex manage the transition from new to old?
4. What aspects of the new structure resemble an older church (either the old cathedral at Coventry, or other cathedrals)? What marks it as different?
5. What materials are used in building the new church? Is there a consistency of textures, colors, and weights, or striking contrasts?
6. In the main structure, what is the relation between the main nave and the side chapels? What sort of services would be appropriate in each?
7. How does the tapestry of Christ by Sutherland play a role in determining the nature of the experience (both content and feeling) of entering and moving down the nave? How does the experience of the tapestry change as one moves closer to it?
8. How prominent is the high altar? Does its prominence change as one approaches it? What is the relation between the tapestry and the altar?
9. How does the experience of the nave change when one turns around near the altar and heads south toward the porch?

War Requiem

1. The *War Requiem* consists of three different musical ensembles: a full orchestra and choir with soprano soloist; a 12-piece chamber orchestra with tenor and baritone soloists; and a boys' choir accompanied by a harmonium (small organ).
 - a. For each movement, consider which groups play, and how they interweave.
 - b. What is the nature of the words sung by each?
 - c. Does the music sound similar or different with each group?
2. Listen throughout for repeated musical motifs: melodies or melody fragments, intervals (distance between pitches), similar rhythms, etc. What connections or contrasts between sections do such motifs imply?
3. Does the music reinforce the words? Does it ever illustrate the words (e.g. "wailing shells")? Does it ever contradict, or set up a contrast with the words?
4. For each movement, map out a "story line" of the music (NOT the words). In what mood does it begin and end? Through what stages does it pass in between? Does it offer a "story" of forward progress, or of constant stasis, or of departure and return?
5. If we associate the Latin sections (words and music) with timeless tradition and the English sections (words and music) with modern warfare, where does religion (or God, or Christ, or angels, etc.) appear in each? If it appears in both sorts of sections: what is the relation between

the two (or more) types of divinity here presented?

6. The Dies irae incorporates the greatest number of poems (or fragments) by Wilfred Owen. Describe the nature of the passage back and forth between these “modern” sections and the interjections by orchestra/choir/soprano in Latin. Which side prevails? (and what would “prevail” mean in such a claim?).
7. How does this Requiem reach final resolution—if it does, in fact, reach final resolution? Have we (or “they”) been “granted peace”?