

books of Ford and Graves and give reasons for saying so. *In Parenthesis* is a novel in seven parts about the experiences of a British private soldier, John Ball, between December, 1915 and July, 1916. We follow him as he is marched to an embarkation port and onto a troopship bound to Flanders. Then into the trenches and through an attack in the Battle of the Somme in which Ball is wounded and a good many of his fellow soldiers killed. Of all this Jones often writes very movingly, as here: "the rifle strength, the essential foot-mob, the platoon wallahs, the small men who permanently are with their sections, who have no qualifications, who look out surprisedly from a confusion of gear, who endure all things . . ." Even here, though, Jones skirts sentimentality: the emphasis on *smallness*, on the inability to cope with big *male* equipment is out of Charles Lamb, the "Gentle Elia" touch on which E. B. White has taken out the exclusive North American rights. Only the wryness of "who permanently are with their sections" and the sternness of "who endure all things" save the passage from becoming wan. And thus we are led to the main fault of David Jones's writing: he does the Welsh business pretty thickly.

Kingsley Amis has written best on the Welsh cult, the "wild valley babblers, woaded with pit dirt and sheep shit, thinking in Welsh the whole time and obsessed by terrible beauty, etc."—a cult formed in the wake of Dylan Thomas and to be perceived at its rankest in Emlyn Williams, who from impersonating Thomas on the stage has grown a manufacturer of what he takes to be bardic prose. *In Parenthesis* was around, of course, well before Dylan Thomas, and David Jones is a writer of another water entirely than Emlyn Williams. But he has been taken in by his Welshness and cultivates it quite a lot. Only one example can be given. In Part Three, Jones uses the word *glast*: "Do dogs of Annwn glast this starving air. . ." The reader turns to the footnote—*In Parenthesis* has thirty-four pages of footnotes—only to find "Glast is an obsolete word meaning, apparently, to bark a lot." The *apparently* is revealing: Jones often uses words not for their meaning but for their sound and their look on the page, presumably in the belief that this habit is Welsh or Celtic and therefore poetic. The British have encouraged their Celtic subjects to think this way in order that they may be more easily ruled. More or less as the British starve the Irish, or turn the artillery on Dublin, or send in the Tans, they produce literary critics who exclaim, "The Celt, how beautiful his soul!" or "The Irish have a genius." And good men on both sides continue to be deluded. As good a mind as Matthew Arnold's could go all soft in rhapsodies about the Celt or, through the years, as good a poet as Yeats. Yet the fallacy in it all is plain. And it is a large part of the explanation of why David Jones's *In Parenthesis* is not a first-rate novel.

Jones seems torn between the desire to write a novel

and the desire to write a lyric poem, very possibly a lyric poem in Welsh. His prose is full of borrowings from poets, like this one from Hopkins: ". . . you implicate your tin-hat rim with the slack sling of it." The characters seem sometimes to exist as pegs on which the author can hang poetic reveries full of Welsh proper nouns with multitudinous l's and n's. Jones has a fondness for archaic words and spellings that is more highly developed than anything since "the boy, Chatterton." The section of his novel which deals with John Ball's introduction to trench life in Moggs Hole and Cats Post has to be called "King Pellam's Launde." Behind all of this, of course, is the very laudable desire to see twentieth century warfare, the experience of twentieth century men, as somehow continuous with a tradition that gave meaning and order to life. But Jones is unable to make the Celtic legends part of the consciousness of his characters: somebody standing in a trench called Moggs Hole is not very likely to think he is in "King Pellam's Launde." Yet David Jones, it must be admitted, came out of such a trench and is able in the lyric, if not in the narrative, sections of his book to make us see the trench his way. At least part of the time he can set "the horns of Elfland faintly blowing." But his Welsh lyricizing gets between him and the action of his book: he is always pursuing reveries instead of writing about characters who are doing things.

In Parenthesis lacks the large, robust plotting and characterization of the *Parade's End* novels of Ford, and it lacks the no-nonsense power of Robert Graves' autobiographical *Goodbye to All That*. But David Jones is a writer of uncommon imagination and an uncommonly fine ear. Many of his passages of Cockney—I do not want to omit mentioning these—provide a delightfully comic counterpoint to the lyrical strain of his book. Since Hemingway, those who have written about war have usually had only one object in view: to show how well their heroes take a punch. David Jones made a brave try at something else.

—Warren Coffey

Twenty German Poets. A Bilingual Collection. Selected, translated, and introduced by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House. 305 pp. \$5.00.

IT IS NOT EASY to review dispassionately any one of the "dozen books" which, according to the publisher's blurb, Walter Kaufmann has authored. Born in Freiburg, Germany, in 1921, Kaufmann holds a Ph.D. degree from Harvard and a professorship in philosophy at Princeton. Among his publications, his *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1950) and his excellent translation of some of Nietzsche's works in *The Portable Nietzsche* (1954) rank highest. Unfortunately, the success of these books seems to have had some unbalancing effect on Kaufmann's subsequent

production. Like Heinrich Heine, his *Abgott*, Kaufmann is gifted with *unverschämt viel Talent*—a superabundance of talents which appear to have seduced him to engage in several ventures of *haute vulgarisation*, such as his *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (1956), his *Critique of Religion and Philosophy* (1958), or *From Shakespeare to Existentialism* (1959), works which are as shallow as they are over-ambitious.

Kaufmann's bilingual edition of selected poems by twenty German authors belongs to the last mentioned category of Kaufmann *opuscula*. This time the panorama presented extends "from Goethe to Hermann Hesse." These publications have in common some rather unpleasant characteristics: first, an overbearing self-assurance amounting to a sort of infallibility complex; second, a growing subjectivism and a correspondingly increasing lack of just and sober critical judgment; and last but by no means least, a pontifical lofty *hauteur* which is not at all redeemed by Kaufmann's linguistic-stylistic versatility and his undeniable broad perspectives and often acute intellectual intuitions.

Those familiar with Kaufmann's ways as an author will not be surprised that in this present volume both his selections and his brief prefatory appraisals exhibit unabashedly the editor's likes and dislikes: Kaufmann loves Goethe, Heine, and Nietzsche; he intensely dislikes Schiller, and he has only lukewarm praise, mingled with strictures and censures, for most of the remaining poets. And let it be observed parenthetically that Kaufmann's hatred of the philosopher Martin Heidegger and all his works is an inveterate ingredient of his thinking and writing. It is slightly amusing to see this emotional bias crop up on several unlikely occasions, e.g., in connection with the discussion of some poems by Hölderlin, Rilke, and Trakl. Missing completely—for reasons only known to Walter Kaufmann—are poems by Claudio, Brentano, Platen, Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, Gottfried Keller, Carossa, Bergengrün, Gertrude von Le Fort, Ricarda Huch, F. G. Jünger, and Bert Brecht. The critical reader is really amazed, therefore, to find the all but forgotten Felix Dahn represented with the *urdeutsche* "*Hagen's Sterbelied*." Admirers of the *Nibelungenlied* will be mildly nauseated by Dahn's involuntary caricature.

In his general Introduction Kaufmann states that his selections are to "facilitate a better understanding of German poetry.... My aim has been to make the translations extremely faithful, not only in meaning but also in tone.... I have generally followed the original meters and rhymes.... The sequence of the poets, and of the poems by each poet, is roughly chronological.... Prefaces precede the selections from every poet.... No suggestion whatsoever is intended that poems omitted here are necessarily inferior to all those included, or even that all the poets represented here are superior to all the rest." This latter statement is of course intended

to ward off in advance the reproach of arbitrariness in the choice of poets and their poems. But this avowed impartiality is controverted by the many apodictic value judgments pronounced in the individual prefaces. The two pages, for example, which precede the Schiller poems, give evidence of a complete failure to appreciate (or even refer to) the greatness of Schiller, the man, the poet, the playwright, the historian, and the philosopher. To inveigh against Schiller's "excessive moral preaching" and to say that (despite, or because of Schiller's "solid decency"?) "as a poet he is not in the same class with Goethe" is rather ludicrous. The preface to the Hölderlin poems fails to mention the decisive *Diotima* (Susette Gontard) experience. Eichendorff, without doubt the greatest among the poets of late German romanticism, is represented with one poem (*Der Einsiedler*), while Heine is represented with six, none of them, however, related to the great tragic climax in Heine's progress as a man and a poet—the poems of the *Matratzengruft*, moving literary documents of a spirituality seasoned by great suffering. Kaufmann's "Heine-fixation" assumes at times almost grotesque proportions: "In the period from about 1830 until at least 1880, if not 1900, Germany had only one world-historical poet, Heinrich Heine." And "Heine was the herald of Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Gide, Joyce and Mann, Morgenstern, Benn, and Kästner." *Sapienti sat!* We have here a case of racism in reverse. This explains also Kaufmann's strange attack on the great literary historian Gundolf who, as a member of Stefan George's *Kreis der Blätter für die Kunst*, had once dared to say of Heine that with him "begins the anarchy of the German language." Therefore, *écrasez l'infâme!* "Friedrich Gundolf, himself born a Jew with the name of Gundelfinger" had actually criticized a fellow-Jew!

Without entering into a further analysis of the strong and weak points of Kaufmann's entirely too sketchy and superficial prefaces, it should be noted that in the portrayal of Christian Morgenstern as well as in the selections from his poetry any reference to the spiritual dimension which Morgenstern owed to his association with Rudolf Steiner and his Anthroposophy is missing. And, similarly, in the cursory discussion of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, the reason why they appear to Kaufmann "somewhat overrated" lies in the simple fact that Kaufmann lacks the organ that would permit him to appreciate the Elegies' metaphysico-religious content and significance.

The quality of Kaufmann's translations ranges all the way from awkward and mediocre to fair, good, and excellent. Perhaps Kaufmann is at his very best as a translator in his rendition of Nietzsche's *Die Sonne sinkt*. The first stanza may serve to illustrate:

Not long will you thirst,
burnt out heart!
A promise is in the air,

*from unknown lips it blows at me
—the great chill comes.*

*My sun stood hot over me at noon—
be welcome that you come,
 you sudden winds,
you chilly spirits of afternoon!*

*The air moves strange and pure.
Does not with warped
 seductive eyes
night leer at me?
Stay strong, courageous heart!
Do not ask: why?*

—Kurt F. Reinhardt

Young Man in Chains. By François Mauriac. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. New York: Farrar, Straus & Cudahy. 124 pp. \$3.75.

THIS ENGLISH translation of the great French writer's first novel, written between 1909 and 1912, completes the English edition of Mauriac's narrative works, begun shortly after the liberation of France by Gerard Hopkins. Mauriac's novelistic *oeuvre* spans more than half a century. *Young Man in Chains* (*L'Enfant chargé de chaînes*) though lacking the spiritual depth of some of the author's more mature works, such as *A Woman of the Pharisees*, *Thérèse*, and especially the masterful psychological character portrayals of *Vipers' Tangle*—is nonetheless a genuine documentation of Mauriac's genius as a novelist.

Generally speaking, Mauriac has never claimed to be either a theologian or a philosopher. Each of his novels expresses a view of life and reality distinctly his own, born of unmistakable personal experience; and each of them accentuates one specific facet of his total *Weltanschauung* as well as a highly personalist reaction to some unique existential situation. Perhaps the one all-pervasive theme, providing a sort of *leitmotif*, is the experience of loneliness with its concomitant mood of profound melancholy.

When seen in historical perspective, Mauriac's novelistic *oeuvre* is marked by a decisive conquest of certain aspects of reality which by and large had remained *terra incognita* to the traditional and conventional Catholic novel, aspects and dimensions which were fractionally embodied in the works of Zola, Flaubert, Stendhal, Gide, and Proust, wholly incarnate perhaps only in the religious experience of Pascal, with whose thinking Mauriac was already thoroughly familiar during the formative years he spent at the *lycée*. What was missing, however, in the works of the French naturalists and symbolists alike was the dimension of *the eternal*.

Notwithstanding the fact that Mauriac realized and emphasized the vital significance of the massive influences of environment and heredity, he was convinced

that what was needed to counteract and counterbalance these determining factors was *une sur-naturalisme* which alone could eventually break down the prison walls erected by biological and social determinants and could thus aid the individual in his struggle for self-determination, liberation, and salvation. In other words, Mauriac fought his way through to the clear visualisation of the nature of *grace*: only divine grace could resolve the otherwise hopeless entanglement of man in the thickets of depravity and perversion. And Mauriac came to regard it as the appointed task of the Christian writer to unveil the divine image in sinful man—a task which could be fulfilled only if the writer refrained from sentimental idealization and adhered to the strictest kind of natural-supernatural "realism."

"The giving of one's self," Mauriac wrote in an essay dealing with the art form of the novel, "the taste of purity and perfection, the hunger and thirst for justice, these too are part of the patrimony of man; and we novelists must bear witness to it. . . . We must dedicate ourselves to the discovery of the inner life, and we are not permitted to hide any of our discoveries." Mauriac has stated furthermore that the true cornerstone of his work is "the physical presence of grace." The simple and profound meaning of this phrase is—in the words of Bernanos and Graham Greene—that "grace is everywhere," regardless of whether the individual human being chooses to acknowledge or to ignore this omnipresence.

As is the case with several of Mauriac's novels, *Young Man in Chains* is in part autobiographical. Like the young Mauriac, Jean-Paul Johonet, the protagonist of the novel, is alone with himself as a student in Paris, feasting intellectually on the exultation deriving from his indulgence in the literary masterpieces of the *fin du siècle* (Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, etc.). This is the kind of life of which Mauriac speaks in his *Mémoires Intérieurs* (1960): "All that I write today had its beginnings fifty years ago in that little club room of the Bordeaux *Sillon*. . . . I was filled with intellectual pride, as a young man so often is who has led an isolated existence in a remote countryside."

Jean-Paul is one of the idle "rich" whom nothing and nobody compels to look for a gainful occupation. Yet Jean-Paul is profoundly nauseated by an acute sense of personal failure and uselessness. The scenes which he encounters on his annual expensive travels are "powerless to console him" or to mitigate the painful experience of being and remaining an "outsider": "All cities look alike," and "the little world which I carry within myself never changes." Jean-Paul's relationship to his fellow-students is decidedly a-social and non-existential, although he enjoys watching them live their lives, giving them advice, even acting as their director: "He turned their feet from the primrose path by telling them of his own struggles of conscience . . . and of the orgies in