

real need, and is certain to prove useful and convenient both to the readers of Shakespeare and to students of Johnson.

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From Shakespeare to Existentialism: Studies in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy. By WALTER KAUFMANN. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959. Pp. x + 404. \$5.95.

The student of Shakespeare can best profit from this book by starting with chapter four (on Goethe) and leaving the chapters on Shakespeare for last. Chapter two, a defense of the author's critical position, may put off the reader if he has not read the richly informed and seriously argued later chapters. The first chapter is the weakest effort in the book, but even there Mr. Kaufmann sets us right on one important point.

Throughout his work Mr. Kaufmann attacks writers who express a despair of finding a fruitful audience or a meaningful *Weltanschauung* in the twentieth century. He objects especially to idealization of the Middle Ages, reactionary acceptance of Christian dogma, and the use of esoteric styles. Beginning unfortunately, he argues that Shakespeare wrote down to a "boorish, lecherous and vulgar audience" and that he was no Christian. He would have done better to concede a Christian point of view to Shakespeare, making distinctions with the aid of Santayana's essay on "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare". Shakespeare's dramatic tone is notably independent of religious piety (as distinct from ethical or theological phrasing), but we must not make the mistake of equating Shakespeare with Macbeth or Prospero. Mr. Kaufmann is undoubtedly right, however, in arguing that the opening of Sonnet 94 is not ironic, as Edward Hubler thinks, thus restoring one of Shakespeare's great poetic conceptions, a remarkable anticipation of Nietzschean man.

Mr. Kaufmann argues well that psychological motivation is not essential to Shakespearian character and that the hero works out his fate in isolation from those around him. In the cases of Macbeth and Othello, he does not allow for sufficient irony of perspective, as he so effectively does for Goethe's Faust. Mr. Kaufmann has not done full justice to his view of the tragic hero in Shakespeare, which could be even more significant if employed with the fine sensibility he shows in reading Goethe and Nietzsche.

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Stefano Guazzo and the English Renaissance, 1575-1675. By JOHN LEON LIEVSAY. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961. Pp. [xiv] + 344. \$7.50.

Hitherto there has been no close investigation on the subject of Stefano Guazzo's influence, especially of his *Civil conversatione*, on English literature in the Renaissance; so scholars will welcome this book, the results of much research work over a number of years in American, Italian, and English libraries, by Professor John Leon Lievsay, who, starting from an analysis of the Italian text of Guazzo's *Civil conversatione* (1574), remarks the differences between this and Castiglione's *Cortegiano* (1528), which preceded it by several years, and finds some points in favor of Guazzo's work, the character of the courtier being there more natural and consistent with real life than in *Il Cortegiano*, where he is extremely idealized.

The evidence of attention received by *La civil conversatione* and other