

just now with full intention: Snow is a portent. He is a portent in that, being in himself negligible, he has become for a vast public on both sides of the Atlantic a master-mind and a sage. His significance is that he has been accepted—or perhaps the point is better made by saying ‘created’: he has been created as authoritative intellect by the cultural conditions manifested in his acceptance.” Leavis goes on to describe Snow’s reputation as a product of the arts of literary publicity, particularly of puffs in the metropolitan literary journals and such semi-official organs of government as the British Council—“he is a British Council classic.” Some such explanation has to be behind all the excited talk about Snow being a major novelist. On the basis of an admittedly inextensive acquaintance with the novels, I find them inferior Galsworthy.

But with the Snow essays, I had been somewhat more impressed, particularly with *Science and Government* and its demonstration that the massive bombing raids of World War II were not only criminal—they were aimed at the German population, not the German war plant—but criminally stupid as well, in that they were largely ineffectual. The book’s one excursion into literary criticism was unfortunate though. “Satire is cheek,” Snow wrote, “the revenge of those who cannot really comprehend the world or cope with it.” This observation was followed with a superscript, and while I paged back to the supporting footnote I thought of Horace, Voltaire, Johnson—all men who had practiced satire and comprehended the world and coped tolerably well. The footnote was a gem of bathos, “of purest ray serene.” It read: “I owe this remark, which seems to me truer the more I think of it, to Pamela Hansford Johnson.” Pamela Hansford Johnson is Lady Snow, and perhaps we may expect from that quarter a whole theory of the genres. All in exceedingly British monosyllables: “Satire is cheek”; “Epic is swank”; “Lyric is swill”; and so forth. Each definition to be followed by an abject sentence from Snow declaring that the more he thinks of it, the more he thinks it true. There is something very *rum* about the whole thing.

Leavis directs himself to the best known of all the Snow essays, *The Two Cultures*, and when he has done there is very little left of Snow the essayist. Leavis points out the carelessness in Snow’s handling of terms which permits the “literary culture” suddenly to become “the traditional culture” as though they were the same thing. Snow is thus able to belabor “literary intellectuals” for all the failings of society. Even the Yudkin essay, which is much less polemic than Leavis’s, points to the inadequacies and the distortions in Snow’s definitions: “Sir Charles himself makes a half-apology for his lack of precision, but curiously enough he is more concerned with the number two than the term ‘culture.’” Snow’s well known thesis, that the split between the scientific and literary cultures must be ended, is rejected sweep-

ingly by Leavis who says that what Snow is really calling for is capitulation to technologists and bureaucrats like himself. And Leavis is echoed by Yudkin, who says that Snow’s proposal is not only impossible, given the highly specialized state of science today, but not even, as Snow had assumed, desirable. Leavis is very destructive too with the Snow prose; he has a romp with that, as he well might: its frequent cliché, its tone, “a tone of which one can say that while only genius could justify it, one cannot readily think of genius adopting it,” and so forth.

One last point. The Snow faction have complained that Leavis’s lecture was personal and unfair. This is, first of all, untrue. And, secondly, coming from that quarter, it is most unbecoming. Snow has had so much to say after all about the “feline” manner in which literary controversy is usually managed. And he has been fond of contrasting with this the tough, open manner in which scientific chaps like himself proceed in these matters. Leavis has the exuberance of an imperfectly trained bullterrier. Snow will have found him, one ventures to guess, sufficiently unfeline.

—Warren Coffey

In Parenthesis. By David Jones. New York: The Chilton Press. 226 pp. \$5.75.

DAVID JONES is a painter, illustrator, and engraver by trade. Born in Kent in 1895 of a Welsh father and an English mother, he was sent at fourteen to an art school where he stayed until 1915 when he enlisted in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He served in the trenches and was wounded in the Battle of the Somme in 1916. After the war he returned to his study of art, and in 1921 became a Roman Catholic convert and went to live and study in the Eric Gill household. In 1928, he began the writing of *In Parenthesis*, with no intention, he has said, of publishing it, but only to set down his own impressions of the War. At the urging of a friend, we are told, he submitted the typescript in 1937 to Faber and Faber, where T. S. Eliot was an editor. Eliot, writing in 1961, said: “*In Parenthesis* was first published in 1937. I am proud to share the responsibility for that first publication. On reading the book in typescript, I was deeply moved. I then regarded it, and I still regard it, as a work of genius.” The book was very successful with the critics and in 1938 won the Hawthornden Prize. Since then Jones has written two other books: *The Anathemata*, which Auden has called “one of the most important poems of our times” and *Epoch and Artist*, a collection of essays.

In Parenthesis is the most considerable of Jones’ books: with *Parade’s End* and *Goodbye to All That* it is one of the three best books on World War I to come out of England. Having said this, I will be permitted to say that *In Parenthesis* is a weak and distant third to the

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 rank-est in Emyln 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 Emyln 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